

TRAVEL

OVER

FLYING VISIT:
Zakopane offers
some of the best
winter sports
anywhere in
Europe

countrymen and women have been investing heavily in the main Polish cities such as Warsaw and Krakow.

Poland is among the new EU member countries to join in 2004 and the benefits are already evident with new roads, shopping centres, and buildings springing up all over the country.

And with Poland due to join the Euro around 2010, the future is certainly bright.

It was the first of the ex-Eastern Bloc countries to break from communism back in 1989 under the Solidarity movement and was certainly an inspirational catalyst for many other ex-communist countries to follow suit.

The Polish political situation is by no means as stable as some western European countries but it is certainly much more democratic than most of us might presume.

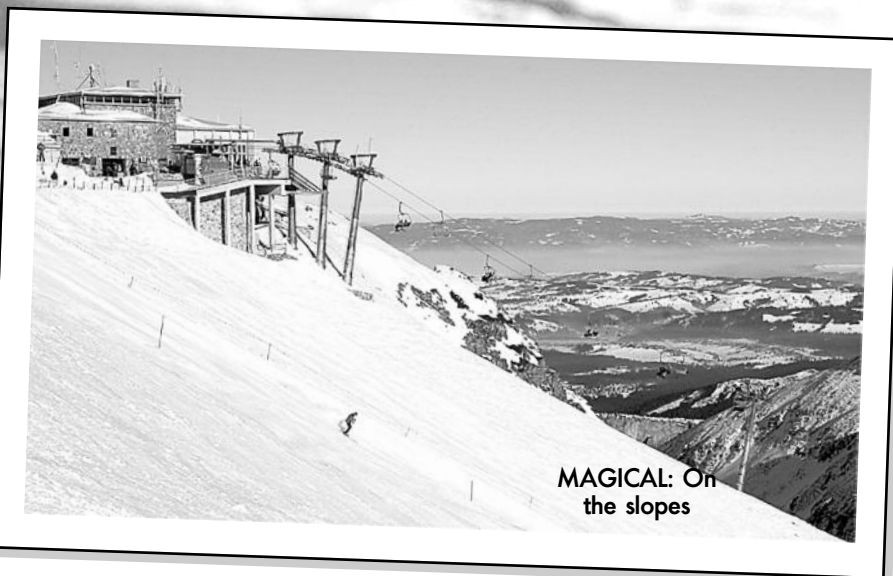
There are more than 40 million people in Poland and well over 15 million Poles working abroad. It's thought as many as one million are working here in Ireland.

Poland is by no means a country weakened by its tough history. Indeed the population seem to have grown wiser and stronger through the hard times - similarly to our grandparents who fought in World War II.

I believe that to underestimate Poland today is to miss out on being able to take advantage of a massively undervalued economy.

Short of World War III the Polish economy will continue to balance out with (and maybe one day overtake) the countries to its west.

Enough of the history the slopes are waiting - you won't be disappointed.



MAGICAL: On
the slopes



UP AND
AWAY:
Snowboards

LATE DEALS

FALCON BARGAINS

FROM Falcon Direct, all prices on a two sharing basis and departing Belfast International:

● LANZAROTE seven nights B&B December 7 from £180pp

● GRAN CANARIA seven nights self-catering December 9 from £190pp

● FUERTEVENTURA seven nights self-catering on December 13 from £200pp

● LANZAROTE seven nights December 21 from £330pp.

Visit www.falconholidays.co.uk/holidaydeals/ or call Falcon Direct on 028 90 389389

PHAROANS OF THE HEART

A 10-day family trip to Egypt exploring some of the greatest man-made wonders of the world, including the Step Pyramid at Saqqara, the Red & Bent Pyramids at Dashour and the majestic Great Pyramids of Giza.

Families can enjoy a camel ride on the banks of the Nile and an optional trip to Abu Simbel. In Luxor, visit the Valley of the Kings where the tombs



NATURAL BEAUTY: Lanzarote

of over 60 Pharaohs lay, and marvel at the giant 23 metre high pillars at the ruins of Karnak.

The trip finishes with a relaxing break by the Red Sea where you can explore the underwater kingdom take a boat trip or just relax on the beach.

Visit www.exodus.co.uk for details 0870 240 5550

CHRISTMAS CRACKER

As the Christmas season fast approaches, saving the pennies is of paramount importance.

Novotel have the solution. At the "New Generation" hotel children under 16 stay for free when sharing a room with their parents and don't even pay for breakfast. And Novotels, in London, Edinburgh or Cardiff serve breakfast until midday on Sundays and offer a 5pm checkout. Book online at www.novotel.com

MIAMI NICE

WHERE better to wake up on Christmas morning than in Obergurgl nestled in the Oetz Valley.

After a hard morning on the slope indulge your hunger at the new Top Mountain Star restaurant, at 3082m you will be stunned by the breathtaking views of the Ötztal Alps, the Dolomites to the south and the marvelous Tyrolean scenery.

Depart on December 23 and stay at the 4 star Hotel Deutschmann. Visit www.inghams.co.uk.



ANCIENT: Egyptian pyramids