

Dark Sky Protection in Poland

Warsaw city center by night – it's hard to see any stars



In 2005 POLARIS – OPP organized Polish and Slovakian Congress of Astronomical Organizations in Silesian Planetarium in Chorzów. Representatives of different organizations decided to spend money from taxes, which Polaris as the only one astronomical Social Benefit Organization would get, on dark sky protection. In 2006 Second Congress of Astronomical Organizations decided to submit an appeal to draw attention of Ministry of Interior and Administration and to Ministry of Culture and National Heritage to the problem of light pollution.

In Poland there is still lack of standards limiting emission of light, improper policy of street lighting and social ignorance for the problem. In 2004 POLARIS – OPP Association, an astronomical society which associates people from all parts of Poland, made a resolution that there should be a plan of dark sky protection. Then the "Ciemne Niebo" programme was created.

Sky in distant from city center district of Katowice





Panorama of Silesia.

Since that time main goal of "Ciemne Niebo" programme is raising awareness of society upon the dark sky matters. Programme includes actions like:

- creating a strategy for dark sky protection in Beskid Żywiecki - public opinion poll in places where the street lamps are switched off at midnight (execution in September)
- recording places where systematic observations are held
- in the future street lamps will be changed there
- creating a webpage www.ciemneniebo.pl
- public presentations about light pollution on astronomical conventions and the local events
- establishing contacts with local authorities in the matters of dark sky protection - e.g. since 2002 street lamps in Sopotnia Wielka are switched off
- promoting the subject in media - e.g. only in August there were two articles and one radio broadcast about the dark sky

For the next years it is planned:

- working out brochures informing about dark sky matters
- searching for institutional partners for the programme
- searching for funds to change street lamps and mainly building social awareness, especially persuading astronomers that the problem is worth fighting for.

On the left photo – popular old-type (mounted in 70s and 80s) street lamps and on the right photo much worse new type high pressure sodium street lamps. Sopotnia Wielka 2007

Jeleśnia – town in Beskid Mountains.

