The Muslim community in Poland is one of smallest religious-ethnic groups in the country. The main Muslim group comprises the Tatars, or more precisely Poles of Tatar origin. They have been a part of Polish history and its cultural and religious tradition since the 14th century. The case of the Polish Muslims provides a useful model of how Muslim communities can relate to the wider national communities to which they belong, for instance in Europe, and how, in doing so, they retain their own culture and identity, and contribute positively to these wider communities.

There are substantial discrepancies in data concerning practicing Muslim believers in Poland, but it is possible to gain reasonably convincing insight into the numbers involved from attendance of religious ceremonies and membership in relevant religious, cultural, and social organizations. On the basis of this, one should conclude that the most accurate figure of practising Polish Muslims is probably around 5,000 – most of them belonging to the Sunni tradition. The overwhelming majority of Polish Muslims are Tatars although the group also includes a number of recent Polish converts to Islam.

An Old Muslim Community of Poland: the Tatars

Mosque in Bohniki

Cemetery in Bohniki

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The name today applies to several related, but culturally diverse, peoples. Most Tatars cannot be regarded as direct descendants of the Tatar Mongols of Manchuria who overran much of China and Russia in the 14th century. They are distant cousins of the Turk-speaking Volga-Kama Bulgars, to whom they owe their Islamic heritage.


