

Poland goes cyber-smart for Euro 2012 fans

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Football fans gather to attend the opening ceremony of the new National Stadium in Warsaw in January 2012. Cyber-minded fans heading to Euro 2012 are set to find life easier at the championship after organisers launched smartphone applications to help them navigate their way around Poland.

Cyber-minded fans heading to Euro 2012 in Poland are set to find life easier at the championship after organisers launched smartphone applications to help them navigate their way around.

The free Polish Guide and Check-in Poland apps, rolled out on Friday, were billed as a landmark by Marcin Herra, boss of PL.2012, the body supervising Poland's preparations for the tournament, which kicks off next Friday.

"The Swiss told us they planned something like this when they hosted Euro 2008, but didn't manage it," Herra told reporters.

The smartphone Polish Guide comes in the wake of December's launch of a seven-language portal, polishguide2012.pl.

Both versions are meant to act as a one-stop-shop accommodation, travel and tourist information service for the hundreds of thousands of fans expected at the showcase football tournament.

They also provide practical tips such as where a team's training ground is, how to get to stadiums on matchdays, where the fanzones with big screen are for supporters without tickets, and up-to-the-minute alerts on transport delays.

Within the web portal and smartphone version, fans have the option of buying a "Polish Pass" with pick and mix options.

For example, they can pay in advance for public transport between and within Poland's four host cities: the capital Warsaw, Gdansk on the [Baltic Sea](#), Poznan in the west, and Wroclaw in the southwest.

The Check-in Poland app, meanwhile, offers a Euro 2012-themed [social networking service](#) to enable fans to locate and meet their compatriots, or chat with them online.

The app, commissioned by the Polish [foreign ministry](#), also contains details of security, consular services for fans from abroad, and emergency phone numbers.

Co-hosted by Poland and neighbouring Ukraine, Euro 2012 marks the first ever edition of the quadrennial tournament behind the former Iron Curtain.

Poland, which joined the European Union in 2004, is keenly aware that with most fans not having visited before, the championship means not

just short-term revenues but also a chance to boost future tourism if supporters are happy.

"Our goal is for all [fans](#), all our visitors, to feel at home," Sports Minister Joanna Mucha said at the app launch.

The apps are also part of a drive to use Euro 2012 to present an image at odds with communist-era clichés.

"This shows Poland to be the modern country that it actually is," Mucha explained.

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