



## Transformation of Student Housing

Student Housing experiences big changes – from old boring dorms to a modern co-living/micro-living experience. Student preferences change, existing supply does not satisfy modern living needs and standards. There is growing demand for more private space, friendly customer service, cleaning services, high speed internet, bicycle parking, gym, storage rooms, coworking and social area, security, etc.

Mobility of students increases and is expected to pick up again after COVID-19. Demand for modern and high quality dormitories will increase again. There is surplus of students in comparison to modern dormitories available. Seismic shift emerges in Student Housing industry – new real estate asset class develops rapidly. Private developers enter the market with new and modern offers for students.

Universities (at least in Eastern Europe) have soviet-time legacy and keep big stock of old fashioned dorms – ineffective in terms of management, energy, planning, etc. There is question what to do with this stock? Invest and renovate? Sell? Engage in PPP with private operators to run this business? Should universities compete with private capital or it is better to cooperate and coordinate actions?

**Mārgers Počs**

*Director of Department of Infrastructure, University of Latvia*

## BSRUN online seminar

Taking into account the relevance of student housing issue, BSRUN is organising an online seminar on **Re-inventing Students' Housing** which will be held on **25 March 2021**. The seminar is aimed to discuss different practises and exchange ideas on the topic.

Why does student housing matter? Should universities compete with private capital in student housing market or better cooperate and coordinate actions? Should universities invest to redesign/renovate their dorms? Should dorms keep strict regulations and rules or trust in students' responsibility?



**Olli Niemi**

Adjunct professor, Tampere University, Finnish Education Group FEG Ltd.



**Margers Počs**

Director, Department of Infrastructure, University of Latvia



**Samuel Vetrak**  
CEO, BONARD

The seminar will include three keynote speeches. **Olli Niemi** will share his vast experience in student housing as part of campus development. **Margers Počs** will present LU case – existing stock, conditions, limitations, survey analysis, problems, financial challenges, market risks, solutions, feedback from students. **Samuel Vetrak** will present global market overview of private student accommodation solutions and latest developments, and will tell participants why student housing is useful for universities, what private student housing in Europe is and who can finance a student housing construction project. A panel discussion with university cases will continue the work of the seminar.



**Dariusz Mikielewicz**

Vice-Rector for Organisation and Development, Gdansk University of Technology



**Andrey Tyushev**

Head of International Admission Office, NWIM RANPEA



**Magdalena Gaete**

Senior Researcher, Higher School of Economics

# Members' Insights: Polish Case

## Student dormitories in Poland and Gdańsk

As of 31st December 2018, at Polish universities there were about 1.23 mln students, less by some 61.6 thousands compared to the previous year. About 73.3% of students were studying in public universities. Regretfully a steady decrease in the number of students is observed over the last decade, from a starting number of almost 1.9 mln in 2008. Since that time the population of students has been decreasing by ca. 4% year-to-year basis in the last years. Partially that can be devoted to demographic changes but also to the introduction of the new law in higher education limiting the number of students with respect to academic staff, the so called student staff ratio, SSR. The latter was an issue particularly pronounced in Pomeranian Region and eastern side of Poland, where at technical universities the SSR was exceeding in some faculties the value of 25.



In general, it can be observed that over one third of students in Poland live with their families. That is due to the fact that the first choice university is usually the local higher education institution (HEI). Those who



decide to move to a location outside their homes there is a selection of accommodation ranging from public dormitories, private dormitories to shared accommodation. Over the years it was rather difficult to get a bed in public dormitories, which immediately developed the option of flat sharing or living with landlords in the neighborhoods of university. The primary advantage of public dormitories was a vicinity to the university and a company of other students as well as transparent rules of operation. This applies especially to foreign students who, due to the lack of knowledge of Polish language and the fear of private owners (which results from cultural differences), choose university dormitories in the first

place. The comfort of living in public dormitories was somewhat requiring attention, especially one or two decades ago. Usually the successful applicant was lodged in 2, 3 or 4-people bedrooms with shared kitchens and bathrooms. The quality standard of such accommodation was also close to basic. Anyway, due to the high demand such places for students to live, it was necessary to book this sort of accommodation as early as possible in order to get it. Lack of accommodation somewhat opened the market for private dormitories and private accommodation, the latter usually in the form of sharing a flat or living with flat owners. About 50% of students are taking that option of living. Of these, about 40% decide to rent on the private market, and 7% use student dormitories. About 15% of wealthier students have their own flat (usually owned by their parents) [2].



In 2020 in Poland there were 122 685 beds overall in 471 dormitories, of which 3186 beds were in 28 non-public dormitories [1]. That gives rise to public investments in the area of non-public dormitories. Obviously, that is a much more expensive option for living. Their advantage is possibility of a long-term residence - even beyond a full year. Before moving in, you must pay a deposit or the advance of rent for 2-6 months. In case

of the Pomeranian Region in 2020 there were 7163 beds overall in 34 dormitories, of which none were in non-public dormitories. Recently there however were two such dormitories opened with about 400 beds.

Last decade sees the huge progress in the standard of accommodation in public dormitories across Poland.



Most of them are, or soon be fully redecorated. They can also use the university's facilities at any time: library, wireless Internet access, café, etc.

Not to be forgotten is that students can save on commuting due to vicinity of dorms to the university. At the moment public dormitories are still the cheapest form of long-term accommodation.

The Student Housing Estate of the Gdańsk University of Technology offers a total of over 2 300 places in 12 student dormitories located in three locations in Gdańsk. There are single and double rooms in student dormitories, most of them with bathrooms in segments. Standard room is equipped with furniture (bed, wardrobe, bookcase, desk) and a refrigerator.

Residents can use the wired internet. In each building there are, among others: a kitchen, laundry room, study room, TV room, gym and bicycle room. Most of the student houses are adapted to the needs of people with physical disabilities.

As mentioned earlier student houses with the associated infrastructure are successively modernized. Over the last 10 years, half of the buildings underwent extensive renovations.

During their duration, the buildings were equipped with elevators and the structure of rooms was changed. In order to increase the comfort of students' residence, all 3-person rooms were converted into double rooms, the number of single rooms was also significantly increased.

In addition, the renovated dorms have been adapted to accommodate disabled people - ramps, rooms, toilets. Almost 90% of the rooms already have access to the bathrooms belonging to them, and those student houses that still have shared bathrooms will soon be subject to major refurbishment. Newly renovated dormitories are equipped with modern electronics and household appliances, and rooms with specially ordered furniture. Currently, a major renovation of the Student's House No. 13 is underway, where a kindergarten is planned on the ground floor.



The entire estate is covered by modern monitoring, which significantly affects the safety of its premises. Monitoring covers both the interior of buildings (corridors, common rooms) and the adjacent area. An

extensive fire warning system is also responsible for safety, which is in every building and is directly connected to the fire brigade. The 24-hour reception, operating in each dormitory, ensures compliance with the rules of coexistence.



Students can spend time outside of their studies on the multifunctional playground, which is located at the Student's House No. 3 or during meetings that can be organized in a specially designated place. For this purpose, a shelter with a grill and seats at DS2 and DS5 was built. There are also places with bicycle stands next to each dorm. Each dorm is equipped with board games, the subject of which corresponds to the preferences of the residents, because their purchase was consulted together with the students.

The funds from the Civic Budget of the Gdańsk University of Technology allowed for the creation of multimedia rooms in several student dormitories, which students can use for both research and

entertainment purposes. During the holiday season, student houses are used to rent accommodation for tourists (the so-called Summer Action). The most popular is Dormitory No. 11 due to its proximity to the sea.

Currently, in the light of attempt to federalization of three major Pomeranian universities, namely University of Gdańsk, Medical Academy of Gdańsk and Gdańsk University of Technology, under the name of Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit there are plans to introduce more complex approach to dormitories under auspices of these universities. There is planned optimization of governance costs and introduction of the system monitoring occupation of the rooms.



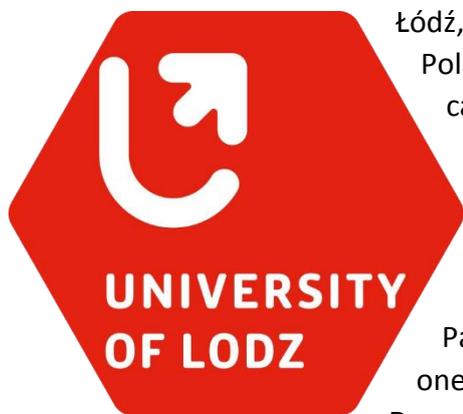
#### References:

1. Higher education and its finances in 2019, Statistics Poland, Statistical Office in Gdańsk, Warsaw-Gdańsk, 2020.
2. Private dormitories in Poland, ThinkCo – real estate research lab, Warsaw 2020.

**By Dariusz Mikielewicz**

*Vice-Rector for Organisation and Development, Gdansk University of Technology*

## Student housing in the University of Lodz



Łódź, as information signs at city borders say, is an “academic city” in central Poland, with numerous public and private universities featuring their own campus accommodation facilities. The largest school is the University of Lodz, having the largest student accommodation capacity in the Lodz region.

The student campus area of the University of Lodz is called Lumumbowo, and the name comes from its core street, named after Patrice Lumumba. Its first campus facilities were built in the 1950’s, and one of the first dormitories to have been built in this area was the UL Dormitory No. 2 called Balbina. It was built in 1951.

Currently, the UL campus includes 10 student dormitories with nearly 4,000 beds, mainly in double rooms with bathrooms and cooking appliances. For students in exceptional need, the University of Lodz provides single rooms and rooms adapted to the needs of people with disabilities.

At the dormitories of the University of Lodz, students can use: laundry rooms, drying rooms, gyms, study rooms, TV rooms, and Internet connections. We also have a multi-functional sports pitch for the residents.

In close vicinity of the dormitories, there is a well-equipped sports center with an athletics stadium with a modern running track and a sports hall with tennis courts, an indoor



swimming pool, as well as several rooms for team sports (basketball, volleyball) and individual sports ( judo, table tennis).

Physical education classes for students of the University of Lodz take place there, as well as the most important events, including competitions of national importance. In the neighbourhood, you can find many other kinds of services - photocopy shops, post office, pharmacy, hairdressers.

The proximity of UL Faculties, student canteen, UL Service Centre for Students and PhD Candidates, UL Academic Support Center (carrying out tasks supporting people with disabilities, helping out people with adaptation difficulties, as well as soft skills trainings for students and doctoral candidates), UL Career Office, city library, UL kindergarten, all within a short distance from the city centre and a railway station, the abundance of green and recreational areas, good infrastructure and location of shopping centres are the main advantages of the campus that can be considered by a future student when choosing both the place of study and the University itself.



The checking in of students / doctoral candidates in dormitories takes place throughout the year. The application process for UL students is simplified. Students wishing to stay at a UL Dormitory, including international students and students of the Polish Language Centre for Foreigners, can submit an application in an electronic format, which in the next stage is considered by the appropriate commission appointed by the Rector of the University of Lodz. We do not require any additional information regarding the student's income, so that every student can count on getting a place in the dormitory.

Accommodation in student dormitories at the University of Lodz is based on collective lists of persons entitled to accommodation. Application takes place in several rounds. Those who continue living in the next academic year, should apply in late May / early June. On the other hand, new students are enrolled in the dormitories starting in September after obtaining the student status of the University of Lodz. Students with Polish citizenship pay the reservation fee to keep their place, while international students are required to pay the deposit when checking into the dormitory. Accommodation fees vary depending on the standard of the dormitory.

The student campus is managed by the Head of the Service Centre for Students and PhD Candidates, who supervises the managers of particular dormitories. They are responsible for all matters related to the administration and operation of their dormitory. Each dormitory has a reception desk and cleaning service, and thanks to the work of these employees, we provide comfort and safety to all residents.



The following are also found at the student campus: the Residents' Council for each dormitory and the University Campus Council, which represents the interests of all students living in dormitories. It is the duty of every resident of the student dormitory to read and apply the Rules of Allocation and Use of Housing in the University of Lodz Dormitories and other regulations of the University authorities. All matters related to living in dormitories (price lists, the content of the regulations and other legal acts) are agreed with the Rector of the University in consultation with the representatives of the Students and PhD Candidates' Council of the University of Lodz.

# Members' Dormitories Development

As COVID-19 pandemic disrupted normal communication between academic partners, BSRUN began weekly dissemination of the most interesting news of its members. We collected news related to Dormitories Development in various cities and countries in 2020-2021.

## Yaroslav-The-Wise Novgorod State University



The number of students at Novgorod State University has been growing steadily over the last three years. The issue of their accommodation is becoming more and more urgent. NovSU plans to build a new dormitory under the government programme. The first stage of design work is completed. The University wants students to have decent living conditions while studying. That is why the University is going to apply for federal funding for construction of a new dormitory designed to accommodate 500 students. [Link](#)

## Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University

A modern loft space was opened in IKBFU's dormitory. A project of multifunctional premises was developed by students in order to create a comfortable environment for students. The previous neglected space was renovated (painting walls, installing electrical appliances, purchasing equipment and furniture, decorating the premises). Now students will be able to arrange there film screenings, board game tournaments, theme nights and etc. [Link](#)



## Belarusian State University



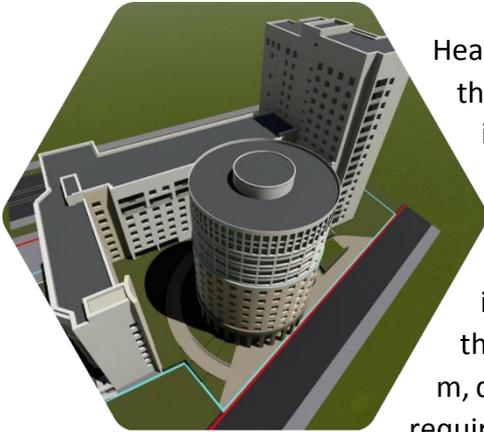
A Museum of the History of Student Dormitories was created to the 100th anniversary of BSU. The concept is based on a historical retrospective of the most significant events in student life since 1926. More than 300 exhibits are presented including photographs, books, models of buildings, household items, awards of students and staff, archival documents. A special place in the exposition is occupied by a model of a Soviet student's room, decorated in the style of the 80s. [Link](#)

## University of Latvia

On 5 October 2020, Rector of the University of Latvia, Professor Indriķis Muiznieks and the Chairman of UL Student Council, Deniss Celuiko signed an agreement on the development of UL student dormitories, which aims to jointly improve and modernise student dormitories to ensure a better quality of life. The agreement envisages the renovation of rooms and common areas, creating a modern environment. The agreement includes also financial optimization. As a result of the renovation, many triple rooms will be converted into double or single rooms because of high demand for this type of rooms. [Link](#)



## St. Petersburg Electrotechnical University



Head of the Property Development Department, Vladimir Pavlovskikh notes that the University is striving for modern campus standards. In his interview to newspaper “Electrician”, he was speaking about the work done to modernise the infrastructure of ETU “LETI”. Among others, a dormitory is planned to be built. The new 324-bed dormitory and the existing building to be reconstructed will have a combined engineering infrastructure and a functionally compatible set of premises. As a result, the university will receive a new complex with a total area of 20 000 sq. m, designed for a comfortable stay of 1125 people, that meets international requirements. [Link](#)

## Belarusian State University

More than 8000 places (nine dormitories) were allocated in BSU this academic year – this is about 77% of all those in need of housing. During the summer period, the dormitories underwent cosmetic repairs: wallpaper was pasted, and the floors, elevators, facades, ceilings, walls and windows were painted. The furniture was repaired and restored, the courtyards were renewed. The facade, the roof and the heating unit of the dormitory on Kurchatova street were repaired, all windows were replaced, and the adjacent territory was elevated. Along with contractors, 180 students participated in the improvement of dormitories. An electronic databank of apartments and rooms rented out for BSU students is also functioning. [Link](#)

