
European Solidarity Centre

Solidarności 1 Square, 80-863 Gdansk



If you are visually impaired, be sure to visit the European Solidarity Centre; you can count on many amenities that will make visiting the exhibitions truly easier. Information about the exhibitions, tickets, opening hours, and facilities for people with disabilities can be easily found at <https://ecs.gda.pl/>, in the "Accessibility" tab. The European Solidarity Centre offers an audio guide with a path for people with visual impairments (with audio description) and typhlomaps (multisensory floor maps available on multiple levels). One of the biggest challenges is getting to the European Solidarity Centre building and locating the entrance on your own. The permanent exhibition is spread over two floors connected by elevators and stairs. Navigating the exhibition is quite convenient, and the audio guide is a great help. Visually impaired visitors have reported information boards hanging too high, small fonts in descriptions, poor legibility (contrast), narrow passages between some display cases, and sometimes limited ability to touch the exhibits. There was a problem locating the restroom, elevator, and stairs. The elevators are voice-activated, have raised buttons, and Braille markings. Be prepared for a long tour of the facility (2-3 hours).



Visitors with hearing impairments will find one of the best-prepared offerings in Gdansk at the ECS. The website is easy to read, and basic information about the facility is easy to find. The "Accessibility" tab describes the audio guide with a Polish Sign Language (PJM) track for the permanent exhibition and the accessible induction loop system. The PJM audio guide is a huge asset to the ECS (although Deaf visitors note that it is sometimes difficult to connect specific recordings to exhibits: there are no film numbers or clear floor markers). Some films in the exhibition have only English subtitles or lack full Polish subtitles. There are no translations of longer texts into PJM (e.g., biographies, summary tables), nor are there transcripts of content that can only be heard through headphones or the "radio" in the rooms. All descriptions, signs, and markings facilitating orientation are impeccable. The staff are good at written communication (cards and telephones), but using a communication card is not standard. There are also no problems using the café, bistro, or souvenir shop. There is no visible, illuminated alarm system visible either inside or outside the building. Thanks to the PJM guide, induction loops, clear descriptions and directions, and the dedicated staff, the ECS is generally friendly to people with hearing impairments.



If you have mobility impairments, you should know that the ECS is a modern facility that is largely physically accessible. The underground parking lot has eight spaces for people with disabilities, and the parking machines are adapted and feature a drop-down screen. Access to the ECS from the square and bus stops is challenging, with sections of cobblestone, narrow alleys, and fencing, and during events (e.g., book fairs) additional tents and stands that transform the space into a labyrinth. The main entrance is threshold-free and equipped with wide automatic doors, while the side entrance is inconspicuous and has heavy doors. The ticket counters are high, making communication and payment difficult, as are the ticket readers and some elevator buttons (this does not apply to the audio guide stand and cloakroom). The ECS features a wide elevator system connecting all floors, wide passageways in the permanent exhibition, and accessible restrooms on several levels. The rooms are large and spacious, allowing for easy viewing. Most display cases and multimedia are accessible, although some of the text was too small and lacked contrast. Many screens, buttons, and "hidden" materials (e.g., photos under curtains, flip charts, cameras, and interactive tables) are designed for standing use and for people with full arm strength. The observation deck is accessible by elevator, but the height of the railings limits the view. Using the bistro, café, and shop is easy, thanks to helpful staff and appropriately low counters. However, better direction markings are lacking. A major advantage is the accessible evacuation system for wheelchair users.



If you are a person with an intellectual disability or the companion of one, the ECS may be an interesting, if somewhat challenging, place for you. The website is clear and easy to use. You'll find simple exhibition descriptions, a price list, and information about discounts for people with disabilities and their assistants. Inside, the building features wide passageways, numerous screens and multimedia displays, and areas where you can touch certain elements. Many rooms have dimmed lighting. Clear floor markings provide clear directions. However, it's important to remember that the content at the ECS is serious, and exploring the entire exhibition can take up to 2.5-3 hours. This can be tiring for many people. The staff are helpful. The ECS has a quiet room where you can relax. It's also suitable for families with children, and there's a changing table. If you plan your visit carefully, perhaps in the morning or during the off-season, the ECS can be a good and interesting place for you to learn about history.