The Strength of Cities

Knight Frank

City attractiveness, office market, HR trends

Q3 2026	The office market sentiment, the investment potential of the city and the labour market.	*knightframk.com.pl/en/research*



Katowice

Prepared in cooperation with

KATOWICE *for a change*

Michael Page

Katowice

City area
164.7 sq km

Population
276,563
(Katowice, GUS 06.2026)
2,089,001
(Katowice, GUS 06.2026)

Population forecast
266,863
(2030)

Unemployment rate
1.9%
(09.2026, GUS)

GDP growth
107.1%
(GUS)

GDP per capita
PLN **136,440**

Average salary (gross)
PLN **10,072.25**
(in the business sector, 09.2026, GUS)

Investment attractiveness

Rankings

9TH PLACE in the **"Top 10 Large European Cities of the Future 2025 – fDi Strategy"** City's strategy for attracting foreign direct investment (fDi Intelligence)

2ND PLACE in the ranking of **Business-Friendly Cities** of "Forbes" - cities and municipalities of 150,000 - 299,000 inhabitants

3RD PLACE in the **"Polish Cities of the Future 2050"** ranking - in the sub-ranking of office, residential and "after hours" and **1st place in the school category**

TITLE: **"European City of Science" 2024** awarded by EuroScience Association

CERTIFICATE: **"Standards of Investor Service in Local Government"**



Investment incentives

The Investors Assistance Department is a special unit in the Katowice City Hall. It provides various services ranging from supporting investors who create business service centres, developers of the residential space, hotels and offices, to creating an ecosystem for start-ups and a friendly environment for the SME sector.

Providing investors with support based on their individual expectations and requirements: preparing market analyses, information on investment locations, offering image-building assistance, organising investors' visits, coordinating cooperation with universities, etc.

Katowice Special Economic Zone - the best in Europe and one of the best in the world (fDi Intelligence), offering income tax exemptions.

Structured educational projects to support the development of talent in the city from secondary school to higher education: FujitsuTech, Kyndryl Future Achievers, Technologiczny Kompas Kariery (Sopra Steria), CivicPUNK, Corporate Readiness Certificate (CRC).

A chance to invest inside a centre that has been implementing sustainable development policies based on Agenda 2030, UN.

Quality of life

Rankings

1 ST PLACE in Business Insider's ranking **- Best city to live in Poland**

2 ND PLACE in the "Europolis" ranking of the Schuman Foundation for **the most ecological Polish cities**

1 ST PLACE **for the Culture Zone** in the "Top Municipal Investment of the Decade" poll of Portal Samorządowy

2 ND PLACE among cities with over 100,000 residents in the **"Perły Samorządu 2025"** (Pearls of Local Government 2025) ranking

6 TH PLACE in Poland among cities with more than 100,000 residents in terms of **quality of life** assessment in the "Newsweek" ranking

Silver Award at the LivCom Awards 2024 in the category Technology and Solution Project, as part of the LivCom Awards for Sustainable Development Goals – The International Awards for Liveable Communities

Quality of life in numbers

- Implementationof the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of the City Development Strategy.
- Katowice 2030 – fair transformation, climate change and equity.
- Green urban transport: 43 electric buses, 22 hybrid buses and 8 CNG buses; 257 EV charging points for electric cars.
- Katowice Resident Card – 164,359 registered cards.
- Participatory Budgeting – over PLN 20m, including the Green Budget – PLN 3m.

Selected investment projects in progress:

- Selected investment projects under implementation:
- Strategic project – District of New Technologies – Katowice Gaming and Technology HUB – PLN 929.24m
- District of New Technologies – development of the Poniatowski mining shaft area (documentation) – PLN 62.57m
- Tram to the South + Mobile Metropolis – Katowice Integrated Transfer Hub System – PLN 212.35m
- Construction of the Jerzy Kukuczka Himalayan Centre – PLN 100.88m
- Katowice "Kilar's House" Music Education Centre with a permanent exhibition – PLN 22.66m
- Modernisation of infrastructure at the Muchowiec Airport – PLN 33.6m
- Construction of two municipal swimming pools in Katowice – PLN 79.01m



Length of cycling infrastructure
208.9 km



Green areas
50%
of the city's area

Facts & Figures



Number of students
50,321 (Katowice)
95,817 (GZM)



Number of graduates
12,162 (Katowice)
23,377 (GZM)



Number of universities
12 (Katowice)
19 (GZM)



Airport - distance to the city centre
30 km



Airport - number of passengers
6.2m (09.2026)



BSS sector - number of centres
165 (Katowice and GZM)



BSS sector - number of employed
38,700 (Katowice and GZM)

Katowice

Q3 2026



Existing stock
731,000 sq m



Supply under construction
11,600 sq m ↓ (-65,5% YoY)



Vacancy rate
20.9% ↓ (-2.5 p.p. YoY)



New supply
5,200 sq m ↑ (+100% YoY)



Take-up
59,700 sq m ↑ (+81.0% YoY)

Coworking operators in Katowice

City Space | Regus
Własne B. | Cluster Offices

Standard lease terms in new buildings



Service charge
PLN/sq m/month
14.00-26.00



Rent-free period
1-1.5 month
for each contract year



Fit-out budget
EUR/sq m
350.00-500.00

The Katowice office market recorded strong occupier activity in Q3 2026 against a backdrop of limited development activity. Robust leasing volumes, dominated by new lease agreements, supported a further reduction in vacancy, while asking rents remained broadly unchanged.

SUPPLY

Development activity in the Katowice office market remains subdued. In Q3 2026, office stock increased by approximately 2,500 sq m following the completion of the office building at 193B Korfantego Street, developed by TMC. As a result, nearly 5,200 sq m of new office space has been delivered to the market since the beginning of the year.

The scale of ongoing development remains limited. Currently, around 11,600 sq m of modern office space is under construction, with completion scheduled by the end of 2028. The largest projects underway are Building D (4,800 sq m) and Building S (3,500 sq m), both forming part of the Core Business Hub complex developed by Epione.

TAKE-UP

In Q3 2026, nearly 24,800 sq m of office space was leased in Katowice, indicating tenant activity broadly in line with the previous quarter. Leasing volume was also 160% higher y-o-y, confirming a significant recovery in occupier activity over recent quarters.

Total take-up reached approximately 59,700 sq m between January and September 2026, already surpassing the total leasing volume recorded during the whole of 2025.

The leasing structure shifted significantly in Q3 2026, with the share of new leases increasing from 29% in the previous quarter to 83% of total take-up. Consequently, between January and September 2026, new leases represented the dominant form of occupier activity, accounting for nearly 59% of total leasing volume. Renewals generated 35% of leased space, while expansions accounted for the remaining 6%.

The manufacturing and IT sectors were the most active occupier groups, accounting for 19% and 17% of total take-up, respectively. Particularly noteworthy was the growing importance of the manufacturing sector, whose share doubled compared with 2025, when it accounted for 9% of leasing activity. The Business Services Sector (BSS) ranked third, generating 13% of total office take-up.

VACANCY RATE

Strong occupier activity and the dominant share of new lease agreements within the leasing structure in Q3 2026 contributed to a significant reduction in available office space. As a result, the vacancy rate in Katowice declined by 1.3 p.p. q-o-q, reaching 20.9% at the end of September 2026.

RENTS

At the end of September 2026, asking rents for office space in Katowice typically ranged between EUR 10.00 and EUR 15.00 per sq m per month. Service charges remained stable, ranging from PLN 14.00 to PLN 26.00 per sq m per month.

Office market in Poland

Q3 2026

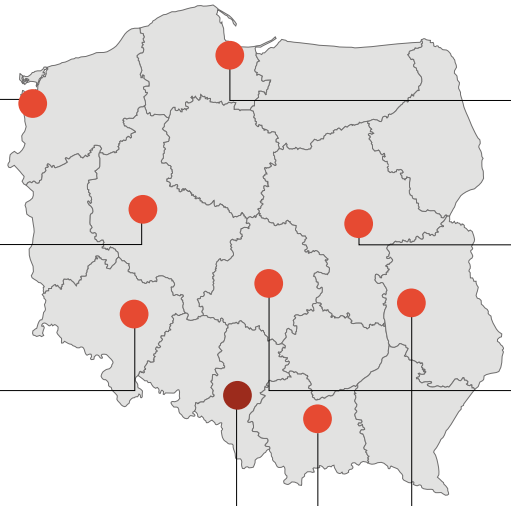
Existing stock **13m** sq m

New supply (Q1-Q3 2026) **124,000** sq m

Take-up (Q1-Q3 2026) **1.1m** sq m

Supply under construction **334,000** sq m

Vacancy rate **12.3%**



SZCZECIN
182,000 sq m
7.4%
EUR 10-14.5

POZNAŃ
678,000 sq m
10.9%
EUR 11.5-16

WROCŁAW
1.35m sq m
21.3%
EUR 11-16

KATOWICE
731,000 sq m
20.9%
EUR 10-15

TRICITY
1.08m sq m
10.3%
EUR 11-16

WARSAW
6.23m sq m
7.9%
EUR 12-32

ŁÓDŹ
655,000 sq m
17.6%
EUR 9-15

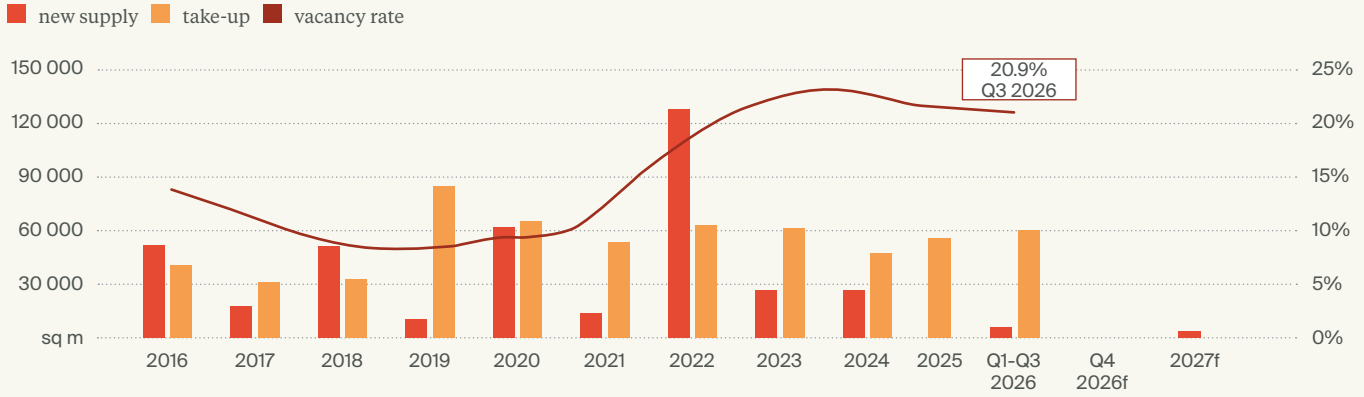
LUBLIN
225,000 sq m
10.6%
EUR 9-14.5

KRAKOW
1.87m sq m
17.7%
EUR 10-18

- office stock - vacancy rate
- asking rents (per sq m per month)

Source: Knight Frank

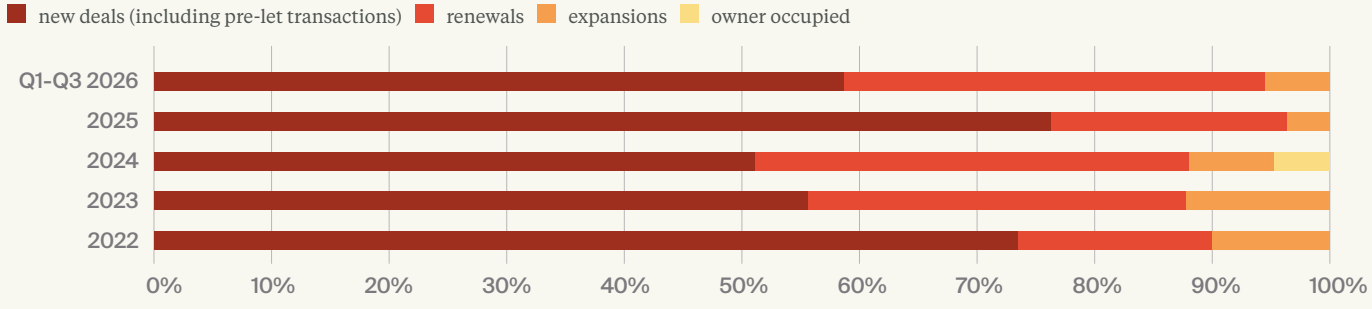
Annual new supply, take-up and vacancy rate in Katowice



f-forecast based on schemes under construction

Source: Knight Frank

Take-up structure in Katowice



Source: Knight Frank

Michael Page

How to find good people, and keep them

Employees rarely leave a company overnight. The decision to move on usually takes shape much earlier, as engagement fades, prospects for development dry up, people feel they have no real influence, or they become convinced their skills are not being put to proper use. By the time someone starts looking around for a new role, pay is only one piece of the puzzle.

IT'S NOT ONLY MONEY THAT KEEPS PEOPLE

Salary does, of course, need to be competitive. It is hard to expect loyalty from someone the company pays well below the market rate. A pay rise on its own, however, will not fix problems rooted in management style, organisational culture or a lack of opportunities to grow.

Trouble also arises when we reward good work with ever more responsibilities. For a while the company is happy: it has someone who "handles everything" and can always be relied upon. Sooner or later, though, that person may simply be overloaded and close to burnout.

"A pay rise on its own, however, will not fix problems rooted in management style, organisational culture or a lack of opportunities to grow."

That is why hiring and retaining good people is best treated as a marathon rather than a sprint. Pay matters, but so do the quality of the line manager, autonomy, a sense of influence, room to develop, meaningful work and fair treatment.

LOOK FOR POTENTIAL, NOT PERFECTION

The second challenge lies in how we recruit. Companies still too often look for someone who ticks every box in the job advert. Yet according to the Talent Trends 2026 report, as many as 41% of recruiters struggle to find candidates with the skills they need. In that situation, it makes sense to look first and foremost at potential.

Sport offers a good illustration. The best football clubs build their edge not only by signing star players but also by spotting talent and developing it within their own system. Business works in much the same way. We do not always need someone who can do every part of the job from day one.





"As many as 41% of recruiters struggle to find candidates with the skills they need. "

Sometimes a candidate who learns quickly and works well with the team is worth more. Specific processes are far easier to teach than a sense of responsibility or a way of thinking. This approach does, however, take courage on the employer's part.

THE BEST SPECIALIST SHOULD NOT ALWAYS BECOME A MANAGER

Many companies still follow a simple pattern: if someone is an outstanding specialist, the natural next step is a management role. Yet not everyone wants to manage people, and not everyone is suited to it. That is why it pays to build two parallel career paths, one for experts and one for managers.

Promotion should not be merely a reward for good results. It should be the next stage of a career, matched to the individual's ambitions, skills and aptitudes.

A GOOD LEADER KNOWS WHEN TO HAND OVER THE REINS

A similar problem crops up in fast-growing companies when the owner, often without realising it, starts holding the business back. In the early days they run the company with a handful of people and know every process inside out. As the organisation grows to dozens or even hundreds of employees, however, the management style often stays exactly the same. The owner still wants to sign off most decisions personally.

I would measure a leader's maturity not by the number of decisions they take themselves, but by the number the organisation can take without them. That requires trust and a willingness to accept mistakes. If we give someone the "number two" role but do not let them make significant decisions, we are not preparing a successor. We are simply teaching them to ask the boss for permission.

"I would measure a leader's maturity not by the number of decisions they take themselves, but by the number the organisation can take without them."

An owner who wants to build a company that does not depend on them must also accept one more thing: it is worth hiring people who are better than they are in particular areas. That is not a threat but a precondition for growth.

Trusting the team and delegating responsibility make it possible to build an organisation that is strong not only because of its owner, but also because of the people they have entrusted with responsibility.

Author: Radosław Szafrański, Managing Director at Michael Page

Michael Page

Is Poland still an attractive investment destination? Talent and geopolitics are taking precedence over labour costs

Poland remains one of Europe's most attractive investment destinations, although the criteria companies use to assess the country are changing significantly. Over the past 15 years or so, Poland has been one of the biggest beneficiaries of globalisation, attracting investors with competitive labour costs, workforce availability and its strategic position between Western Europe and Central and Eastern European markets. Today, the depth and quality of the talent pool, alongside the ability to operate securely in an uncertain geopolitical environment, are becoming increasingly important.

Interest in the Polish market remains strong, as reflected in the volume of enquiries Michael Page receives about salary benchmarks, the availability of skilled professionals, location comparisons and cost estimates for new ventures. However, this interest is not translating into a proportionate number of investments moving forward. Based on our observations, only 10–20% of projects currently being assessed and prepared by companies and investment advisers are moving into implementation.

GEOPOLITICS IS SHAPING THE PACE AND DIRECTION OF INVESTMENT

Uncertainty is the main reason behind investors' cautious approach. Decisions that would have taken just a few months several years ago are now sometimes being postponed for several quarters. Management boards are assessing regional stability, the potential consequences of armed conflicts, the security of critical infrastructure and energy supplies, and supply chain resilience. These considerations have become an important addition to traditional investment criteria, such as operating costs, land availability and tax incentives. Many projects are not being cancelled but put on hold until companies can assess the conditions for proceeding with greater confidence. A decline in the number of investments going ahead does not therefore necessarily indicate that Poland is losing its competitive position.

At the same time, geopolitical developments are encouraging companies to bring operations closer to their end markets. Despite its proximity to the war in Ukraine, Poland continues to benefit from the nearshoring trend. For some organisations, establishing operations in Central Europe offers an opportunity to shorten supply chains and reduce dependence on distant Asian markets. Poland's geographical location therefore remains a major advantage, although it is increasingly being viewed through the lens of security and business continuity.

A STRONG INDUSTRIAL BASE SUPPORTS THE GROWTH OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

The nature of projects being considered by investors is also changing. While the automotive, household appliance and traditional manufacturing industries remain important, sectors linked to security, energy and advanced technologies are gaining prominence.

> "Based on our observations, only 10–20% of projects currently being assessed and prepared by companies and investment advisers are moving into implementation."

We are increasingly involved in discussions concerning defence electronics, energy storage, batteries and energy-related components, automation and power electronics. Investor interest also extends to cybersecurity, space technologies, unmanned systems and communications technologies.





Dual-use technologies, which have both civilian and military applications, are becoming particularly important. Rising defence budgets across Europe are driving demand for engineers, research and development specialists, and experts in electronics, automation and cybersecurity. Poland's established industrial base and experienced engineering workforce provide a strong foundation for such projects. Skills developed in traditional manufacturing industries can be applied to emerging sectors, broadening the range of investments Poland is well placed to attract.

A MATURE BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR GIVES POLAND A COMPETITIVE EDGE

The changing criteria for investment location decisions are also evident in the business services and IT sectors. For years, rising salaries have been cited as a factor that could undermine Poland's attractiveness to shared services centres, global business services operations and technology companies. However, employment costs are also increasing in competing markets, including Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia and Portugal, with double-digit wage growth forecast in some of these countries in 2026. As a result, the availability of a sufficiently large pool of qualified specialists is becoming an increasingly decisive factor in companies' ability to establish and scale their operations.

Poland benefits from the long-standing presence of international organisations that have established SSC, BPO and GBS centres, as well as technology hubs, across the country. This has helped develop a strong pool of managers and specialists with experience in business transformation, process migration, ERP implementations, artificial intelligence projects and the development of global operating structures. Investors can therefore recruit professionals who are already equipped to manage complex processes in an international environment.

This advantage is further reinforced by the size of Poland's labour market, foreign language proficiency and a well-developed network of technical universities. Together, these assets represent a competitive strength built up over many years. Replicating comparable conditions in other locations takes time, and lower employment costs alone cannot provide the same breadth of skills and experience.

SPECIALIST EXPERTISE AND STRATEGIC FUNCTIONS ARE BECOMING MORE IMPORTANT

As Poland's market matures, the structure of employment is also evolving. In the coming years, some simpler, repetitive processes may move to lower-cost locations or become automated, including through the use of AI. This will require employees to develop and adapt their skills, while increasing the importance of more advanced functions.

> "Poland is gradually moving beyond delivering relocated business processes towards developing specialist expertise and taking greater responsibility for international operations."

Already, a growing number of our conversations with investors focus on competence centres, data analytics, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, systems architecture, financial and digital transformation, product management and global strategic functions. Poland is gradually moving beyond delivering relocated business processes towards developing specialist expertise and taking greater responsibility for international operations. This shift offers a way to sustain the country's investment appeal through the value created by its workforce, even as salaries continue to rise.

Poland's future as an investment destination will therefore depend largely on its ability to continue developing the skills businesses need. Special Economic Zones, tax incentives and geographical location remain important factors supporting investment, but Poland's greatest asset is its skilled workforce. The knowledge and experience of its people are what enable the country to attract higher-value-added projects.

The biggest uncertainty remains the pace at which these projects will be implemented. Poland has strong foundations for continued growth, but realising this potential will also depend on companies' willingness to make long-term investment commitments in an evolving geopolitical environment.

Commentary by: Krzysztof Tuszyński, Head of Business Development Poland & Head of Katowice Office at Michael Page Poland

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As one of the largest and most experienced research teams operating across Polish commercial real estate markets, Knight Frank Poland provides strategic advice, forecasting and consultancy services to a wide range of commercial clients including developers, investment funds, financial and corporate institutions as well as private individuals. We offer:

- strategic consulting, independent forecasts and analysis adapted to clients' specific requirements,
- market reports and analysis available to the public,
- tailored presentations and market reports for clients.

Reports are produced on a quarterly basis and cover all sectors of commercial market (office, retail, industrial, hotel) in major Polish cities and regions (Warsaw, Krakow, Łódź, Poznań, Silesia, Tricity, Wrocław, Lublin, Szczecin) and PRS sector in Poland. Long-term presence in major local markets has allowed our research team to build in-depth expertise of socio-economic factors affecting real estate market in Poland.

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KATOWICE
for a change

INVESTORS ASSISTANCE DEPARTMENT

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linkedin.com/company/invest-in-katowice

Investors Assistance Department is a dedicated unit of the Katowice City Hall, which provides comprehensive services: from supporting business services investors, residential and commercial developers, to creating a friendly environment for start-up and the SMEs sector. Investors Assistance Department focuses on providing solutions customized to the needs of investment projects. Thanks to a wide range of innovative products an experienced team of experts supports investors in achieving their business goals in Katowice and in gaining and maintaining a competitive advantage.

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