

27.2.2010 Poznan

## The spirit of the Olympic games and the fields of slush

Hey everyone! In Poznan, the beginning of the new year has been spent fighting against the weather, which greatly reminds me of Scandinavia. Usually this part of Europe get only a bit of snow or none at all, but this year, as everywhere in Europe, everything has turned around. Because of the weather, yet again I have found something that connects the Finns and the Poles. It seems to me that there is something about the Nordic nature of people, that one can never be too satisfied with what they have. In Finland, people have for ages been yearning after a "good old" frosty winter. Now that they have it, and they *really* have it, everybody has been sick of it from Christmas onwards. In Poland the feeling is mutual - everybody has been feeling blue about the constant lack of snow, and now that the ground has been white for a few months, everybody is eagerly looking forward to an early spring and summer. There might even be hope for that - for the last week or so, the snow has been vanishing away and even the elusive sun has made a few appearances for the first time in ages!

The first weeks of 2010 have been quite silent both in Poland and in Poznan. Following yuletide and new year's celebrations, people have mostly been getting back to their everyday routines. There haven't really been any events to report of. However, the ongoing winter Olympic games in Vancouver have gotten people together again. I suspect that in Poland people are less passionate about the prime event of all winter sports than in Finland. Still, due to the success of skijumper Adam Malysz and cross-country skier Justyna Kowalczyk, there have been occasional moments of national celebration. Poland is yet to win any gold metals, though, as is Finland. Finland still holds a little hope for one from the ice hockey team, as always. After the rocky start, I can only wonder how that will turn out!

Turning the calendar into 2010 has also marked emotions heating up over the upcoming presidential elections. For the last five years Poland has been managed by Lech Kaczyński, and now it is time for him to either step down from the golden seat or to try to run for another term. Because politics in Poland is a much more aggressive game than in ever-so-moderate Finland, the quality and quantity of speeches, columns and general talk have accelerated to a much more provocative level. The popular Prime Minister Donald Tusk surprised everyone in January by stating that he will not run for President in these elections. Therefore the deck has been properly shuffled, and new candidates are getting lobbied with increasing speed. How these games will turn out, that I will surely be keeping an eye on during spring!

Hoping you all a nice beginning of spring season,

Anna

