

# THE OŁOWIANKA BASCULE FOOTBRIDGE IN GDANSK – A BRIDGE THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

Authors: Rok MŁAKAR<sup>1</sup>, dr. Viktor MARKELJ<sup>2</sup>

Affiliation: <sup>1</sup> Bridge Designer, Ponting d.o.o. (Ltd), Maribor, Slovenia – [rok.mlakar@ponting.si](mailto:rok.mlakar@ponting.si)

<sup>2</sup> CEO, Bridge Designer, Ponting d.o.o. (Ltd), Maribor, Slovenia – [viktor.markelj@ponting.si](mailto:viktor.markelj@ponting.si)

## Summary

It took 4.5 years from the original idea with which Ponting engineers won the design competition for the new Ołowianka Footbridge in Gdansk, to its construction and grand opening on 17 June 2017. During this time, many things changed, but the design of the Ołowianka Footbridge remained the same. The bridge was built exactly the way it was designed from scratch and became the most lucrative investment in recent years in Gdansk.

The designers and investor had to overcome many obstacles; politically motivated opposition, whimsical governing bodies and anti-propaganda directed by individuals who put personal interests before public. In the end, we conquered them all, expertise, patience and perseverance paid off, and Gdansk got its new much-needed bridge.

The Ołowianka Footbridge is a bascule bridge, spanning the Motława River almost at the heart of the city centre. The bridge connects the historical old town with the Ołowianka Island, where several cultural, tourist and recreation facilities are located. The bascule span length is 40 m, and together with the northern side span, the control building and approach ramps the bridge is 70 m long. It is no ordinary bascule bridge. The lifting mechanism is completely hidden to the naked eye and, due to its unique and smart design, there are no counterweights needed to operate the bridge within 2 min. The bridge operates 24/7.

Soon, the importance of the bridge to the city of Gdansk proved to be significant. The bridge has been awarded many times to date, among others by the Polish Ministry of Investment and Development, for outstanding creative achievements in the fields of architecture and construction, and by the late Mayor of Gdansk Mr Paweł Adamowicz, with the Gdansk City Award for the best architectural implementation of 2016–2017.



*Fig. 1. Opening sequence of the bridge*

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