Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs
on Priorities of the Diaspora Policy

delivered in the Polish Senate

Warsaw, 26 November 2026

Madam Speaker,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the Senate,

Dear representatives of the Polish community abroad,

Let me thank the Senate for giving me yet another opportunity to present the main points of the Polish diaspora policy. The Foreign Minister's annual policy address to the Senate has already become a well-established tradition, which I hope will continue.

The policy towards Polish community and Poles abroad requires both setting specific goals and consistency in action. It is a long-term process of building relations in which Poland and the Polish diaspora are partners, not merely recipients of mutual expectations. This is the approach underlying the Government Strategy for Cooperation with the Polish Community and Poles Abroad for 2025–2030. This document's adoption provided a framework for better coordination of the state's activity and set its primary goals. These include:

Firstly, an active return migration policy, that is a shift from the passive waiting for Poles to return to providing comprehensive support for educational and professional mobility.

Secondly, modern teaching of the Polish language. Given the growing number of people who do not know the language of their ancestors, we have been focusing on the digitisation of education, the development of Polish schools abroad, and support for teachers of Polish language and culture.

Thirdly, a two-way integration and civic education. Poles should be included in the social and political life of their countries of residence to become influential ambassadors of Polish interests.

Fourthly, tightening legislation concerning the Pole's Card and repatriation. We must eliminate abuses whereby the Pole's Card is a fast track to obtaining permanent residence or benefits despite a lack of ties to Polish culture.

Fifthly, including the diaspora in building Poland's brand abroad.

Who exactly is our partner in this cooperation? According to Statistics Poland, there are nearly 9,000 Polish diaspora organisations operating worldwide, serving 22 million Poles and members of the Polish diaspora in 138 countries. These include organisations boasting a long history, such as the Polish Pastoral Centre in Adelaide established in 1856 and the Union of Poles in Germany, which has been operating for over a hundred years. Some of them were set up in Polish People's Republic era, such as the Ignacy Domeyko Polish Library in Buenos Aires. Others are fairly new organisations established in the 21st century like the "Polonia" Centre for Development and Partnership in Vinnytsia. We are also increasingly coming across active, yet unaffiliated, members of the young Polish diaspora.

Together, we are working for Poland's success and its positive image on the international stage.

Our compatriots contribute their knowledge, experience, professional expertise, and the understanding of the societies in which they live. They support Polish culture, develop civil society organisations, run educational establishments, create media, and build economic relationships. Their activities strengthen Poland's position. In turn, our country's economic and diplomatic successes enhance the capacity of the Polish diaspora to operate abroad.

In this year's Information on Polish foreign policy tasks delivered in the Sejm, I said that the promotion of our economy is one of priorities of our government's foreign policy and that the defence of our national interests often begins thousands of kilometres away from our frontier. The diaspora should play a significant role in carrying out these tasks.

In 2026, the budgetary funds allocated by various ministries and institutions for cooperation with the Polish community and Poles abroad totalled over half a billion

zlotys! This is more than we have earmarked for the East Shield border defence infrastructure programme, for instance.

Spending such amounts of money requires good coordination. This is ensured by the Interministerial Group for Polish Community and Poles Abroad established by the Prime Minister. Representatives of the Senate are invited to the Group's meetings and agree on the planned activities.

The effectiveness of the diaspora policy should be assessed not by the nobility of its intentions, but by the sustainability of the results achieved. The most important results include: access to Polish language learning, the ability of Polish communities to act independently, the involvement of successive generations in Polish community matters, and the activity of leaders of Polish origin in their countries of residence.

In 2027, a mid-term report will be prepared to assess the outcomes of the policy on the Polish diaspora implemented since 2025 in accordance with these guidelines.

Importantly, the report will assess the funding system, cooperation between institutions, and the coordination of projects. Still, we have been looking for additional sources of funding to enable Polish diaspora organisations to gain more independence and preserve the effects of their work. We have been trying to make better use of opportunities for cooperation with the administrations of individual countries, local institutions, and civil society organisations. This applies primarily to highly developed countries with large Polish communities and Polish businesses ready to support the activities of the Polish diaspora. For example, in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, companies such as Styl Meble, FireStop Holland, and e-Faktura.nl engage in ambitious projects aimed at the Polish diaspora, and also share their experiences with entrepreneurs who are just entering the Dutch market. I encourage Polish companies operating abroad and interested in cooperation with the Polish diaspora to get in touch with our diplomatic missions. We will help you establish relationships with suitable Polish diaspora partners.

Next year, we also plan to organise a conference of consuls from around the world who deal with Polish diaspora matters. This will provide a further opportunity to assess progress in implementing the Strategy and to set out the direction for further

cooperation. The Interministerial Group will naturally present the results of the mid-term analysis to the Prime Minister.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A particular dimension of the Polish diaspora policy remains the maintenance of relations with Poles in the East who found themselves outside their homeland against their will.

Unfortunately, the situation of Poles in Lithuania is invariably a source of serious concern. More than three decades have passed since the signing of the Treaty on Friendly Relations and Good Neighbourly Cooperation, which ensured respect for national minorities' rights. Nevertheless, the main expectations of Lithuanian Poles remain unmet. We note the unequal treatment of Polish-language schools by the authorities—both central and local—and efforts to lower their status and number.

It is still not possible to write names in their original form, or to put up signs bearing place names in Polish in areas where Poles make up a significant part of the population. Which is enshrined in the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities. Lithuanians living in Poland enjoy all the rights to which they are entitled as a national minority, and schools where Lithuanian is the language of instruction operate unimpeded. Neighbourly relations with Lithuania—our ally in NATO and the European Union—cannot be based on glossing over these difficult issues. They will not improve until we find a solution that address the rights and interests of both parties. I keep saying this to my Lithuanian partners, and I encourage all of you to do the same.

Unfortunately, the situation is similar in Latvia. We understand the measures taken by the authorities in Riga to curb Russian influence, but they cannot adversely impact Polish educational institutions. We support the requests of the Polish community in Latvia regarding the reinstatement of state examinations in Polish in the final years of primary and secondary school.

Poles living in Ukraine find themselves in a particularly difficult situation. We appreciate that they keep fostering their identity even in the middle of war. Our diplomats are there

and, despite the danger—with Russian missiles landing just a few hundred metres from our embassy—they have been providing assistance wherever possible.

The situation in Belarus is quite different. We have consistently called for the rights of Poles in this country to be respected, particularly their right to freedom of association and to teach their mother tongue. We appreciate the release by the authorities in Minsk of many political prisoners, including Andrzej Poczobut. Yet we do not forget those of our compatriots who are still incarcerated.

We support the efforts of the Union of Poles in Belarus to become relegalised by the authorities in Minsk. We take a negative view of the discrimination of holders of the Pole's Card, particularly in the public sector. Let me reassure the Belarusian authorities—the Card confirms one's membership of the Polish nation, but does not prevent one from being a loyal citizen of Belarus or any other country.

We also expect the Belarusian authorities to stop pressing Polish priests, to allow them to carry out their ministry freely, and not to force them to choose between renouncing their Polish citizenship in favour of Belarusian citizenship or being forced to leave the country.

The policy towards Poles in Russia is severely limited due to the Kremlin's war against Ukraine and its aggressive stance towards the West as a whole. The Polish consulates in St Petersburg, Kaliningrad, and Irkutsk have been closed following a decision by the Russian authorities. As a result, only one consular post operates on the territory of Russia, namely in Moscow. In this difficult situation, support for Poles in other regions of the country is provided remotely by the consul on duty in the Russian capital.

I have already mentioned the Pole's Card. Alongside the repatriation procedure, this document is designed to help bring Poles in the East closer to their Homeland. The figures for the past three years show that the share of the Pole's Cards issued on the basis of a certificate from a Polish or diaspora organisation is on the rise. Sadly, the credibility of information contained in some such certificates is dubious.

The legislator conceived the certificate as a document issued to maintain the ties between foreigners of Polish descent living abroad and Poland. That intention was later reaffirmed in the white paper on Poland's migration strategy. Meanwhile, more and

more applicants for the Pole's Card are people living in Poland and looking to legalise their stay and obtain Polish citizenship. Such occurrences have convinced the Foreign Ministry to initiate work on amending the Pole's Card Act in order to seal the issuance system. We are discontinuing the possibility to obtain a Pole's Card on the basis of a certificate from a diaspora organisation while expanding the scope of data and documents required to apply for the document. A command of the Polish language and knowledge of Polish history and tradition must be demonstrated before obtaining a Pole's Card. This prerequisite will continue to apply. The reasons are obvious.

A command of the language helps access Polish culture and participate in the life of a community. It is also a practical skill that enables young people to study or work in Poland.

The Polish Language Development Institute came up with a framework programme for teaching Polish abroad that has been used by Polish diaspora community schools worldwide. This is a major step towards the unification of teaching standards and the alignment of teaching aids with the needs of young Poles.

In August 2026, the Institute awarded nearly PLN 1.2 million to 27 proposals submitted to the call titled "Polski bez granic" [Polish without frontiers], which had been announced with a view to supporting extracurricular forms of teaching Polish abroad.

We continue to discuss introducing the teaching of Polish into the education systems in the countries with large Polish communities. A good example comes from Ireland, where Polish is taught as a foreign language and is a subject of choice for the students taking the local secondary school leaving exams. We are making efforts for a similar solution to be introduced in the United Kingdom. We see no reason why Polish should be treated differently than, say, Spanish or French.

Advantage-driven arguments are needed to encourage young Poles and foreigners of Polish descent living abroad to learn Polish. Admission to Polish universities remains a major benefit in that regard. The enrolment procedures should be better adjusted to the different education paths. Just to be clear, this is not about lowering the academic eligibility requirements. The point is that procedural differences, such as admission deadlines in Poland that come before the dates of obtaining secondary school leaving

certificates in certain countries, should not be an obstacle for Polish diaspora candidates, as is sometimes the case now, and sadly so.

Prospective students are not in shortage, as evidenced by the popularity of the General Anders Scholarship Programme operated by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange. Since the Programme's launch in 2018, nearly fifty-five hundred people have been granted scholarship. Last year alone, support went to 565 individuals from 26 countries. Scholarship holders from Belarus, Ukraine, and Lithuania are still in the majority, but the number of the beneficiaries' countries of origin is growing.

Such programmes are also part of the return policy. We are supporting it by introducing various solutions that encourage decisions to relocate to Poland for good.

According to a report published by Statistics Poland last August, more people are now returning to Poland than emigrating from the country. People are voting with their feet, choosing Poland as a better place to live.

The situation on the other side of our western border is particularly striking. The data for 2021 show an evident decline in the number of Poles staying in Germany for no less than 12 months. Their estimated population figure dropped by about 21 thousand in a year.

The situation in the UK is similar. In 2025, about 25 thousand Poles left the country, compared with mere 7 thousand Polish newcomers. The same year saw the first-ever positive net migration rate in the group of Poles leaving to work in the Netherlands. A growing willingness to return to Poland is also observed in the number of beneficiaries of the returnee tax relief, which rose from 8 thousand in 2022 to 38 thousand in 2025, that is, by 375 percent.

A return to Poland does not begin by crossing the border. It can have its origins in learning the language, contacting a Polish university, getting a placement with a Polish company, or building relations with Polish institutions.

Madam Speaker,

let me express my gratitude for furthering the Polonia_Camp, a project for the Polish diaspora youth initiated by the Senate. It aims to build a global community based on the Polish identity and to develop international cooperation within Polish diaspora youth communities. This is a very positive initiative. I know what I am talking about. I took part in the two editions of the event to date. This year's Polonia_Camp gathered 1,500 participants from 50 countries.

Members of the academic community are the target audience for the Polish Returns, a flagship programme of the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange. The programme supports scientists of Polish origin who have gained research experience abroad and now wish to return to Poland to continue their careers. It aims to transfer knowledge and international cooperation networks to Polish scientific institutions. The project funding covers remunerations as well as research and development work.

Since its launch in 2018, the Polish Returns programme has disbursed nearly PLN 180 million in grants for a total of 109 scientists. The deadline for applications under the ongoing tenth edition is 22 December. Let me warmly encourage all potential grantees to apply.

Further opportunities for the Polish diaspora youth to form ties with Poland are offered by the Poland. Business Adventure internship programme managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Polish Investment and Trade Agency. I greet the participants in the second edition who are here today. I am very happy that you have joined us.

To date, the programme has seen nearly 200 interns. We are aware that not all participants are bound to remain in Poland. Nonetheless, the programme gives them other opportunities to cooperate with Poland. Here is an example. One of the participants was Ms Katarzyna Krawczyk, who earned her PhD in molecular biology in Düsseldorf.

What did she gain from the Poland. Business Adventure programme? Let me quote: "The programme offered me an internship with a Polish company developing microbiology solutions for agriculture and the environment. [...] It turned out that I can make use of my international experience while building something in Poland, and for Poland. I want

to be a part of Poland wherever life takes me, for Poland is a part of me." And that is exactly the point!

There are much more people like Ms Katarzyna in the world. When I am on a foreign visit, I always try to find time for a meeting with my young compatriots. I know that even if they are studying or working abroad, they want to maintain ties with Poland. In San Francisco, I spoke with people working at big techs and with start-uppers. Silicon Valley offers them enormous opportunities to gain experience, find business partners, and secure capital. Still, many of them would like to use these resources to start businesses in Poland and to promote the image of Poles abroad. I heard similar reassurances from people I met elsewhere: in Los Angeles, New York, The Hague, or London.

Thousands of talented and resourceful Poles starting their businesses in foreign markets are a chance for Polish scientists and research institutions to make swifter interactions with foreign partners and to carry on with joint investments.

Here is another example: Ms Zuzanna Stamirowska left Katowice in 2008, just after high school. She was admitted to the prestigious École Polytechnique in Paris and then earned her PhD from Sorbonne University. After years of hard work, in 2020, she launched Pathway, a start-up admired for its innovative approach to the development of artificial intelligence. The company was incorporated in California, but its founders are Poles, and one of the investors is Łukasz Kaiser, a co-inventor of ChatGPT.

When discussing Polish companies with global recognition, one cannot fail to mention Mr Mateusz Staniszewski and Mr Rafał Modrzewski. They are known as the founders of groundbreaking start-ups in their respective fields: ElevenLabs, a company specialising in artificial intelligence for the audio industry, and ICEYE, a provider of innovative solutions in the satellite services market. Poland is already benefiting from cooperation with them, and in a quite measurable manner.

Such people are an inspiration and the future of the Polish diaspora, and it is the duty of the state to support their activities and facilitate their access to local decision-makers. Honorary consuls also assist in this process. Currently, there are already more than 200 of them, operating on all six continents. Also in Silicon Valley.

All the aforementioned activities for the younger generation serve a single purpose: create opportunities for linking with Poland, regardless of whether a young person's final decision will be to return permanently, pursue studies, seek employment, or simply maintain ties with their country of origin.

Members of the House,

We are paying increasing attention to the necessity of engaging Polish diaspora leaders in local political life. We encourage candidacy in elections, strengthen cooperation with active politicians of Polish descent, and organise information campaigns on the voting rights afforded to migrants.

We welcome the fact that Poles or individuals of Polish descent are assuming high-ranking positions in their countries of residence.

Three weeks ago, Josh Turek, who has Polish roots, won in the US Senate elections in Iowa. He was formerly a basketball player who, prior to commencing his political career, won gold medals at the Summer Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo. The great-grandfather of the senator-elect had emigrated to the United States. However, the family's ties with Poland are much closer. His younger brother, John Turek, also a basketball player, represented Polish clubs—PGE Turów Zgorzelec, Rosa Radom, and Trefl Sopot—for several years. In 2012, he was even included among the stars of the Polish league.

On 29 September, Bronek Masojada, who hails from a Polish family, was appointed Lord Mayor of the historic City of London. It is a tremendous success. The position was established in the 12th century, and for the first time in history, it was held by a person of Polish descent. At the invitation of the new Mayor, the Polish community joined a London parade organised on the day of his inauguration. During the Lord Mayor's Show, numerous Polish flags fluttered alongside Union Jacks.

A significant objective of the Polish diaspora policy is to take measures aimed at developing leadership and organisational capacities among Poles residing abroad. We are strengthening the competences of leaders in the field of conducting social activities and integrating and strengthening Polish diaspora communities.

In the Foreign Minister's "Polish Community and Poles Abroad 2026" call for proposals, funding was awarded to over 40 projects aimed at training Polish community leaders and organising study visits for this group. The total amount of funding is nearly PLN 11 million.

In the leadership projects implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nearly 500 representatives of the Polish diaspora participated this year alone, including individuals from the United Kingdom, Germany, Argentina, Brazil, and Australia.

We are creating a corps of active diaspora leaders who will share best practices and cooperate with diplomatic and consular missions throughout the world. The Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in New York has established *Polish Young Professionals*, a series of networking meetings for young specialists, students, and creators of Polish descent residing or working on the US East Coast.

In Brazil, through the initiative of participants in MFA leadership programmes, the St Zygmunt Feliński Polish Immigrant Memory Institute was established in Áurea. It is an educational centre dedicated to promoting the Polish language and supporting the Polish community in preserving its linguistic and cultural heritage. The Institute is directed by Dr Fabricio Vicroski, one of the activists behind the significant success regarding the recognition of Polish as an official language in 23 Brazilian municipalities inhabited by the community of Polish descent.

While striving to build the competences of the younger generation and to strengthen the position of Poles living abroad, we also support the most vulnerable groups.

We address needs related to legal, administrative, career, and social welfare advisory services. We provide linguistic support, and occasionally psychological assistance.

This is served by the call for proposals entitled "Support for organisations working for the benefit of Poles in crisis around the world". This year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has allocated almost PLN 6 million to this purpose. Its target audience consists of Polish diaspora organisations that provide assistance to the Polish community and Poles abroad in crisis situations.

This year alone, support was provided to 26 projects being implemented, among others, in the UK, Ireland, Belgium, Norway, and the Netherlands. Improving the situation of

the most vulnerable groups of migrants is not only morally right. It is also in the interest of Poland, as it affects the image of our country and our compatriots.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of the Senate,

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs—as the sole Polish institution—conducts activities related to the Polish diaspora infrastructure. We have moved away from costly investments in favour of modernisation and renovations. This provides an opportunity to implement a greater number of smaller-scale projects.

Through our funding, it will be possible to undertake, among other things, the renovation of the Library at the Kultura Literary Institute in Maisons-Laffitte, as well as the modernisation of a number of Polish centres in the United Kingdom, which serve the practical implementation of the Strategy's objectives—ranging from teaching the Polish language and activating local diaspora leaders to providing assistance to our compatriots during crises.

Despite the ongoing war, with the active support of our missions, we are also operating in Ukraine—modernising the Polish House in Panka and renovating the Maria Magdalena High School in Lviv.

The allocation of approximately PLN 3 million annually for their modernisation serves as an expression of particular concern for the future of Polish schools and kindergartens across Lithuania and Latvia. The objective is to enhance the competitiveness of these institutions, so that a Polish kindergarten, and subsequently a school or a high school, becomes the primary choice for families in the Polish minority. Support for such entities also provides us with concrete arguments in dialogue with the authorities of these states regarding the enforcement of their own obligations towards the Polish minority.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Effective policy requires reliable knowledge of the communities it serves. In this context, an important result of MFA activities is the "Atlas of the Polish Community and Poles Abroad," which was created based on information collected by the diplomatic missions.

It gives an insight into the diversity of the Polish diaspora, the identification of its needs, and the planning of actions based on specific data rather than general estimates. The

information contained in the Atlas will be systematically updated, and its thematic scope expanded. This knowledge should translate into better decisions regarding financing, education, organisational cooperation, and the protection of Polish identity.

The online version of the Atlas is available on MFA websites, and its printed version is available today in this chamber for all interested parties.

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Today, government websites and publications are not the only vehicles for information regarding matters concerning the Polish diaspora. These are also local media outlets created by Polish diaspora communities. While traditional media—which we support financially—still play a significant role, effective communication requires the diversification of channels and methods of engagement. In the era of artificial intelligence, the importance of authentic stories told by credible individuals is increasing. TVP's modern International Media Centre and the Polish Radio's External Service will enable a simultaneous presence across multiple platforms.

Given the growing scale of information manipulation, journalistic competences, the ability to verify information, and knowledge of contemporary communication tools are all of particular importance. Therefore, in cooperation with the Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies of the University of Warsaw, we have offered diaspora journalists a postgraduate study programme entitled "New Media in Diaspora Organisations". This year, following more than 200 hours of instruction, 23 graduates representing 15 countries received their diplomas during a ceremony at the University of Warsaw.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Polish community and Poles abroad policy requires a perspective which extends beyond a single fiscal year and immediate measures. We measure its results by whether young people wish to learn the Polish language, whether they are able to study in Poland, whether Polish diaspora organisations are expanding their activities, whether the rights of our compatriots are being respected, whether Poland remains an important point of reference for them, and whether they wish to return home.

This requires consistency, but also readiness for change. Respect for the achievements of previous generations, as well as space for new leaders.

The Polish diaspora is not monolithic. It is characterised by a diversity of histories, needs, and opportunities for action. However, it shares a bond with Poland.

Our objective is a strong Republic that is capable of maintaining a vibrant, mutually beneficial relationship with our compatriots throughout the world. Such is our mission. This is the mission we will pursue.

Thank you for your attention.