

TADEUSZ ADAM PILAT

UNION OF POLISH COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE.
THE CALENDAR OF MAJOR EVENTS 1993-2019
IT ALL STARTED IN KRAKÓW

The breakthrough in the integrative thinking of the Polish diaspora (Polonia) worldwide came in 1989, when Poland regained its independence. The Polonia movement has always been dominated by the American Polonia (a few million people) and its main distinguished organisation – the Polish American Congress. Their voice counted not only in America, but also in Poland and around the world. Canada, too, felt called to lead the global Polish diaspora movement, presiding over the Free World Polonia Coordinating Council and later the World Polonia Council from its establishment to the present day, with a brief hiatus of a few years for the presidency of the US lawyer Les Kuczyński (2002-2007) and the organisational collapse (2007-2013). In Europe, primacy undoubtedly belonged to the Federation of Poles in Great Britain, bringing together the most important émigré activists, some of whom held ministerial portfolios in the successive Polish governments in exile. An important figure in the Federation was Ryszard Zakrzewski.

At the First Congress of the World Polonia in Kraków in August 1992, it was Ryszard Zakrzewski who, in his ground-breaking speech, put forward the thesis that the main responsibility and burden would rest not with the world organisation, but with the continental organisations, the establishment of which he had strongly advocated. As it turned out, he was right, because already the following year, on two continents – in Europe and South America, integration processes were initiated and the first frameworks for future structures were established.

TADEUSZ ADAM PILAT – President of Union of Polish Communities in Europe, Sweden;
e-mail: tadeusz.a.pilat@gmail.com.

BETWEEN LONDON AND BRUSSELS

1993 In December, a meeting was held in London, called the 1st Convention of Polish Communities in Europe. It was attended by 6 organisations from Western Europe, which decided to create Europejska Rada Wspólnot Polonijnych (ERWP) – the Council of Polish Communities in Europe. At the meeting, the Rules of Procedure were adopted and the running of the Secretariat was entrusted to the Federation of Poles in Great Britain. Because of this, the first President of the Council was **Zygmunt Szkopiak**, who held this position until 2000. In later documents, this meeting was recognised as the First ERWP Congress. The aims were to promote Polish and Polonia-related affairs in the process of integration with the democratic West, to cooperate with Polish communities around the world and to assist Polish organisations in post-communist countries.

1994 The 2nd Meeting of the Council of Polish Communities in Europe was held in Brussels in October. It was attended by 26 delegates, representing 13 organisations from 7 European countries. The main item on the agenda was a talk delivered by Ambassador Jan Kułakowski on the European integration process and Poland's place in it. One of the main activists in the British Polonia at the time was the social democrat and the Federation activist, **Wiktor Moszczyński**, who in his co-speech proposed the creation of a European Polonia Centre in Brussels, aimed at integrating the European Polonia and, at the same time, providing an opportunity for a better promotion of Polish affairs in the European Union.

1995 This was a difficult year in the development of the organisation, a year that brought no solutions. The organisation failed to establish a close dialogue with the national organisations, with only 4 organisations out of 14 whose delegates sat on the Council making contact with the Secretariat in London. However, an important decision was made in London to convene the 2nd ERWP Convention in 1996 in Pułtusk.

NEW ENERGY FROM THE EAST

1996 In April, the ground-breaking 2nd Convention of the Council of Polish Communities in Europe took place in Pułtusk. Delegations of the national organisations from the countries of Eastern and Southern Europe, 9 of which had applied to join the ERWP, were invited to take part in the Con-

vention as agreed at the meeting in Brussels. The keynote address of the Convention entitled “The Council of Polish Communities in Europe – What is our origin and where are we going” was delivered by Wiktor Moszczyński. The delegates expressed the necessity of treating all organisations equally and, therefore, of urgently amending the rules of the ERWP so that it would also include the newly admitted Polonia organisations from “the East”. To this end, a small statutory committee was appointed, which I chaired. There was also an important proposal to establish a centre for the promotion of Polish and Polonia-related affairs at the European Union headquarters in Brussels and to set up a parallel office in Warsaw. This was the proverbial injection of positive energy and certainly a huge dose of enthusiasm. This could already be felt in the following year, 1997, when many organisations took action in support of Poland’s accession to NATO and took steps to organise emergency aid for the victims of the flood tragedy in Poland.

1997 In March, a debate was held in the Polish Senate concerning Poles living abroad. Meanwhile, most of the Polish diaspora organisations in Europe took action to organise emergency aid for the flood victims in Poland.

1998 The 3rd Convention of the Council of Polish Communities in Europe was held in Pułtusk in September. The Convention was attended by 41 delegates representing Polish diaspora organisations from 18 European countries. The Convention adopted a number of resolutions on church ministry, citizenship, national minorities and on “Karta Polaka” [Pole’s Card]. It was emphasised that the ERWP expects the Polish authorities and NGOs to consult them and communicate on plans concerning Poles abroad. I presented the convention with a draft version of the new ERWP statute, which the convention approved. For the first time, the statute provided for the election of a president, who was entrusted with setting up the secretariat, and for membership fees to be paid by organisations with delegates on the Council. The Council, however, has still remained merely a voluntary democratic forum of cooperation. Its first president was Zygmunt Szkopiak, elected for a two-year term, who, after consultations, invited Helena Miziniak – the Secretary General of the Federation of Poles in Great Britain, Emilia Chmielowa – the President of the Federation of Polish Organisations in Ukraine and Tadeusz Adam Pilat – the President of the Association of Polish Diaspora Organisations in Sweden - to cooperate in the secretariat. Already in October that year, we started close cooperation with the Polish authorities on legislative matters and, at the request of the Chairperson of the Committee on Emigration and Poles Abroad, Senator Janina Sagatowska, the ERWP issued an

opinion on the first drafts of three acts: on repatriation, on the Polish citizenship and on the Pole's Card.

1999 In April, in connection with the European Parliament elections, the Secretariat sent out informational materials prepared by the organisation "Poland Comes Home" to politicians in the countries of their settlement and to candidates for Members of the European Parliament. We also decided that our next meeting would take place in a completely different place from the previous ones, namely in Lviv. Despite some visa problems, 32 delegates representing 19 member organisations from 16 European countries came to Lviv, which meant that there was a significant revival in the Council, and those gathered supported the proposal of the "Polish Community" Association to organise a World Congress of Polish Diaspora and Poles Living Abroad in 2001.

THE UNION OF POLISH COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE – YEARS OF INTEGRATION

2000 It was a year of significant changes in our European structure based on a new legal document. The landmark 4th ERWP Convention was attended by 53 participants representing 29 organisations from 22 European countries. The new name of the organisation, Europejska Unia Wspólnot Polonijnych (EUWP) – the Union of Polish Communities in Europe, was adopted. For the first time, the document regulating the organisation's operation was the statute, not the rules and regulations. The statute was drafted by Tadeusz Pilat, and following a discussion, adopted by the statute committee and later by the convention. The same statute, with only minor amendments, is still in force today. The members of the EUWP were not the delegates of the individual organisations, but the organisations themselves. The Council was only a "forum for cooperation" and the Union became a full organisational structure headed by a president with a nominated secretariat. **Helena Miziniak** (the UK) was appointed the president, the vice-president was Tadeusz Adam Pilat (Sweden) and the secretaries were Janek Mokrzycki (the UK), Roman Śmigielski (Denmark) and Urszula Milczewska (Bulgaria). The convention awarded Zygmunt Szkopiak the title of Honorary President of the EUWP. For the first time, 14 youth representatives obligatorily took part in the convention. The Council of Youth of the Polish Communities in Europe was established at the EUWP, which later changed its name to NOEMP

(Niezależna Organizacja Europejskiej Młodzieży Polonijnej – the Independent Youth Organisation of the Polish Communities in Europe) in 2006 and was active for many years.

2001 It was a time of integration of the Polish diaspora in Europe, there are many regional meetings and conferences: in Ramsau (Austria), Budapest and Gemona (northern Italy). The most important event of the year was undoubtedly the 2nd World Congress of Polish Diaspora and Poles Living Abroad, which took place in April in Warsaw, Pułtusk, Kraków and Częstochowa. It was then that the first Consulting Council at the Office of the Speaker of the Senate of the Republic of Poland was established (2003), on which the current EUWP president has always been sitting since then.

2002 In February, the Conference of Polish Diaspora Organisations of the Baltic Sea Region took place in Stockholm, in May in Paris, and in September a Regional Meeting of the EUWP took place in Suceava. In July of that year, on Tenerife, the three continental organisations: EUWP, USOPAŁ (from Latin America) and RNPA (from Australia) concluded an agreement on joint actions for the integration of the Polish community movement worldwide. It was agreed that it was most appropriate to base the future activities of the World Polonia Council (WPC) on the continental structures, and the new draft statute of the WPC was ratified in the same year by all three organisations. In September, the long-awaited convention of the World Polonia Council took place in Pułtusk, in which the EUWP participated. Many years later, in 2013, it was the EUWP together with the “Polish Community” Association that led to the resurrection of the non-operational world organisation.

2003 That year marked the end of a very good first term of office, which was obviously due not only to the enthusiasm of all of us, but above all to Helena Miziniak. The convention in London was combined with the carefully prepared 10th anniversary of the EUWP. Despite the intense activities of the breakaway group, everything ended well and Helena Miziniak was elected president for a second term. Tadeusz Adam Pilat was re-elected vice-president, Roman Śmigielski from Denmark became secretary general and the secretaries were: Urszula Milczewska (Bulgaria), Aleksander Zając (Germany) and Czesław Błasik (Russia). In Kraków, the EUWP made its debut with an invited speech at the conference “Polonia and the European Union – A New quality of Cooperation”. This later resulted in many years of cooperation and participation in the Congresses of Polish Scientific Societies Abroad organised by the Kraków Branch of the “Polish Community” Asso-

ciation and the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences. The initiators of the events were Professor Zygmunt Kolenda and Professor Andrzej Białas. The Union of Polish Communities in Europe played a significant role in these congresses, Tadeusz Pilat was a member of the Honorary Committees of the 2nd, 3rd and 5th Congress.

2004 The EUWP began cooperation in the field of sport with the “Polish Community” Association, the organiser of the World Polonia Games. At the Games in Szczyrk, the “Fair Play” Cup of the EUWP was awarded for the first time. Since then, the EUWP has been present at almost all the Summer and Winter World Polonia Games, with the president of the EUWP being a member of the Games’ honorary committees, presenting the EUWP “Fair Play” Cup and medals to the winners. For the 2022 Winter Games, this tradition has been slightly modified, as the “Fair Play” Cups in all disciplines was sponsored by the Polish Olympic Committee, and the EUWP award has been renamed the “EUWP Gold Youth Cup”.

2005 In January, the EUWP became involved in the debate concerning compensation for forced labourers of the Third Reich, with Janek Mokrzycki acting as the EUWP representative at the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). In April, an International Polonia Conference entitled “The European Dimension of Pastoral Ministry for the Polish Community” was held in Szczecin, organised jointly with the EUWP. In July, Vice-President Tadeusz Adam Pilat took part in the 13th World Festival of Polonia Folklore Ensembles in Rzeszów, marking the beginning of the EUWP’s cooperation with the capital of Polish folklore. In September, two important conferences were held with the participation of the EUWP representatives: the 1st Congress of Polish Scientific Societies Abroad in Kraków, and the 4th International Conference of the Polish Diaspora in Szczecin under the leitmotif “Europe of Polish Homelands”. In October, the EUWP Board met in Budapest. The year ended with the 2nd European Meeting of Polonia Youth held in Vilnius in December.

TWO TERMS OF INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT

2006 In May, the EUWP President, Helena Miziniak, attended a conference at the College of Humanities in Pułtusk. In June, at the 5th Polonia Education Forum in Kraków, the EUWP Vice-President gave a keynote address entitled “New Polonia, new situation, new needs”. In September, in

Warsaw, the EUWP organised a Youth Discussion Workshop, during which NOEMP – the Independent Youth Organisation of the Polish Communities in Europe was established. In October, the 6th EUWP Convention was held in Vilnius, at which Tadeusz Adam Pilat (Sweden) was elected its president, Aleksander Zajac (Germany) – the new vice-president, Roman Śmigielski (Denmark) – secretary general, and the secretaries: Andżelika Borys (Belarus), Emilia Chmielowa (Ukraine) and Edward Trusewicz (Lithuania). The main areas of activity in that term included trips to member organisations, conferences, meetings, festivals and celebrations. The member organisations not only invite, but even demand the presence of the members of the EUWP Secretariat at general conventions, congresses and festivals.

2007 The Speaker of the Polish Senate Bogdan Borusewicz appointed the EUWP President Tadeusz Adam Pilat as a member of the Polonia Consulting Council, in which he was joined by Helena Miziniak, Andżelika Borys and Emilia Chmielowa. In May, the Minister of National Education, Roman Giertych, convened a meeting on Polonia education, which was attended by the EUWP education activists: Tadeusz Adam Pilat (Sweden), Aleksandra Podhorodecka (the UK), and Piotr Małoszewski and Józef Malinowski (Germany). In August 2007, the matter of the “Pole’s Card” was nearing its finale; a demonstration was held in front of the Prime Minister’s Office, with delegations from Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus arriving by bus, the president of the EUWP Tadeusz Pilat was also present there. The matter was prepared by the Prime Minister’s advisor on Polonia-related affairs, Michał Dworczyk. Meetings were held with Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński and with the Speaker of the Sejm Marek Jurek. The Sejm passed the act on the “Pole’s Card” 14 days later.

2008 In June, an EUWP delegation led by President Tadeusz Pilat made an important visit to Prime Minister Donald Tusk. The delegation also included Helena Miziniak and Roman Śmigielski. A number of important problems of the European Polonia were raised and the negative opinion of the EUWP on the announced transfer of Polonia funds from the Senate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was presented. After an exchange of views, Prime Minister Donald Tusk declared that Polonia funds would remain in the Polish Senate. In November 2008, President Lech Kaczyński invited a considerable group of European and international Polonia activists to Warsaw to celebrate the 90th anniversary of Poland’s independence. The President also invited a large group of European Polonia youth to the celebrations, which finished with a concert and gala at the Grand Theatre. In 2008, at the 15th

anniversary of the EUWP in Berlin, **Janek Mokrzycki** proposed an idea of a permanent conference entitled Monitor of Economic Migration. The idea caught on and already the following year, in June, the “Monitor 2009” Conference was held in London under the leitmotif “*Problems of New Economic Migration to the EU Countries*”, which was funded by the British trade unions. The conference was attended by 58 delegates representing Polish diplomatic missions, the EUWP member organisations and new emigration circles. The project was continued in subsequent years owing to good cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The co-organisers of these conferences have always been the local EUWP member organisations together with the local Polish diplomatic missions. The principle of each conference was that three perspectives on the situation of economic migration was presented: the perspective of Polonia organisations, diplomatic missions and scientific experts. The conferences were an excellent opportunity for Polonia activists, consuls and academics to meet and confront their views.

2009 The 1st “Monitor 2009” Conference on the problems of new economic migration to the EU countries was held in June in London. The conference was attended by 58 delegates representing Polish diplomatic missions, EUWP member organisations and new emigration circles. In October 2009, an international conference on the future of Polonia schools was held in Malmö, Sweden, organised by the EUWP, the Association of Polish Diaspora Organisations in Sweden and the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Malmö. The conference was ground-breaking and was attended by the Minister of National Education, Katarzyna Hall, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Borkowski, the President of the “Polish Community” Association, the Speaker Maciej Płażyński, MPs, senators, numerous representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of National Education and 32 representatives of Polonia education in Europe. In October, at the 7th Convention of the Union of Polish Communities in Europe in Pułtusk, Tadeusz Adam Pilat was re-elected its president, Aleksander Zajac – vice-president and Roman Śmigielski – secretary general. The secretaries became: Bożena Bogdańska-Szadai from Hungary, Emilia Chmielowa from Ukraine and Edward Trusewicz from Lithuania.

2010 We began a long-standing close cooperation with Joanna Fabisiak’s “Świat na tak” [The World for Yes] Foundation and since the very beginning we have been patrons of its competition for children and young people entitled “To be Polish”. The beginning of 2010 saw a wave of protests by Polonia organisations against the persecution of Poles in Belarus. In April,

due to the eruption of the Icelandic volcano after the Smoleńsk plane crash, only a few representatives of the EUWP made it to the funeral ceremonies of Presidents Lech Kaczyński and Ryszard Kaczorowski in Warsaw and Kraków; these were: Tadeusz Adam Pilat, Andżelika Borys, Emilia Chmielowa, Gerwazy Longher, Halina Csucs, Janusz Rogowski and Franciszka Konieczna. In May, the members of the EUWP Secretariat took part in the European Day of the Polish Community “Europe without Borders” held in Aachen. A three-member NOEMP delegation composed of Robert Nowakowski (the UK), Andrzej Jurczak (Austria) and Danijel Simic (Croatia) attended the Quo Vadis II (QVII) Conference in Windsor, Canada. In September, the EUWP representatives took part in the 3rd Convention of Polish Language Teachers in Germany at the home of the Polish Catholic Mission “Concordia”. In October, the EUWP delegation took part in the Polonia Culture Forum in Rzeszów and the 2nd European Symposium of Polish Schools in Vilnius, combined with the Jubilee of the Lithuanian organisation. In October, the EUWP conference Monitor of Economic Migration 2010 was held in Malmö, its leitmotif was “The situation of new Polish family migration in the European Union”. It was co-organised by the Association of Polonia Organisations in Sweden and the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Malmö.

2011 A new impulse to reactivate the World Polonia Council emerged in the EUWP. In 2011, the Organising Committee for the next World Congress of the Polish Diaspora and Poles Living Abroad was appointed. Despite the fact that the World Polonia Council was practically non-existent at that time, the newly established Committee set itself the objective of convening the 4th World Congress of the Polish Diaspora and Poles Living Abroad the following year. In 2011, the EUWP President Tadeusz Pilat participated in the Convention of the Polish Organisations in Germany, held in Berlin in February; the meeting of the Polonia Education Council in Sulejówek in March; and the 2nd World Convention of Polonia Teachers in Ostróda, held under the leitmotif “East, West – Poland Unites Us”. In May, the “Polish Community” Association, jointly with the Union of Polish Communities in Europe, the Polish American Congress and the World Polonia Council, organised the World Meeting of Polonia in Rome during the celebration of John Paul II beatification. The celebration was attended by 3800 compatriots from 30 countries. In Budva, representatives of Polonia organisations in the Balkans gathered and founded the Union of Polonia Organisations in the Balkans “Polonika Bałanika”, with Wanda Vujisić from

Montenegro as its president. In July, an EUWP delegation participated in the 15th World Festival of Polonia Folklore Ensembles in Rzeszów, and in August – in the 15th Summer World Polonia Games. The President of the EUWP Tadeusz Pilat attended the 3rd Congress of Polish Scientific Societies Abroad in Kraków, combined with the 4th Meeting of the Polonia Education Council. In September, the Polonia Consulting Council to the Speaker of the Senate of the seventh term, supported Tadeusz Pilat's motion for Polonia funds to remain in the Polish Senate. The EUWP delegation led by Tadeusz Pilat met with Minister Radosław Sikorski, the Speaker of the Polish Senate, Bogdan Borusewicz, and the Head of the Senate Office, Minister Ewa Polkowska to discuss this issue, and in November the EUWP Board in Pułtusk issued an EUWP statement on this matter.

2012 That year the EUWP was present at all games, festivals, competitions, and above all there were many visits in the member organisations. In August, the 4th Congress of the Polish Diaspora and Poles Living Abroad was held in Warsaw and Pułtusk under the motto "...to feel Polish". The three-day session of the Polonia Parliament was attended by over 300 delegates from 44 countries. The EUWP was represented by the President Tadeusz Adam Pilat and the Honorary President Helena Miziniak, who chaired both the Organising Committee and the sessions as Vice-President of the defunct World Polonia Council. Among the many important resolutions for Polonia, a motion was also passed to reactivate the World Polonia Council and to organise its Convention in 2013. In October, another Monitor Conference on Economic Migration was held in Berlin with the leitmotif "Return or Emigration?" In November, the 8th EUWP Convention in Pułtusk elected Helena Miziniak as the President of the EUWP for the third time. In addition to Roman Śmigielski and Aleksander Zając, the secretariat included Halina Romanowa from Russia, Teresa Kopeć from Austria and Wanda Wujisić from Montenegro. Tadeusz Pilat was awarded the title of Honorary President of the EUWP.

2013 In January, an EUWP delegation attended the funeral ceremony of the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Józef Glemp. On the occasion of the Polish Flag Day and the Day of the Polish Diaspora on 2 May, an EUWP delegation came to Warsaw to participate in a meeting of the National Council of the "Polish Community" Association. In July, the EUWP Secretariat took part in the gala of the "To be Polish" competition at the Royal Castle in Warsaw. The chairman of the competition's jury was the Secretary General of the EUWP Roman Śmigielski. In August, an EUWP delegation participat-

ed in Kielce, at the inauguration of the 16th World Polonia Games. In November, the Convention of the World Polonia Council was held in Pułtusk, under the chairmanship of the WPC Vice-President Helena Miziniak, organised by Tadeusz Pilat, with the participation of 65 delegates from 32 countries. Jan Cytowski, Vice-President of the Canadian Polish Congress, was elected president. In Rome, the 4th edition of the Monitor Conference on Economic Migration was held under the motto “Economic Migration in the Time of Crisis”, organised under the auspices of the EUWP by the Federation of Poles in Italy and the Polish Consulates in Rome and Milan.

2014 In April, Rome hosted the World Polonia Meeting in tribute to the Holy Father John Paul II. Poles from East and West came to Rome to participate in the Polish pope’s canonisation celebrations. The organisers of the World Polonia Meeting were the “Polish Community” Association, in cooperation with the Union of Polish Communities in Europe and the World Polonia Council. The EUWP marked its presence with a ten-member delegation composed of the presidents of the member organisations. In addition to the celebrations of the canonisation of popes John Paul II and John XXIII at St. Peter’s Square, the “Polish Community” Association prepared at the Hosianum Palace the opening of an exhibition and the promotion of an album by the papal photographer Grzegorz Gałązka, as well as a conference “John Paul II – Polonia Semper Fidelis”. In October, another EUWP conference on Economic Migration took place in Vienna, entitled “Youth, Education, Identity – Polish Citizens – European Citizens”, co-organised by the Polish Diaspora Forum in Austria and the Polish Consulate General in Vienna. In November, a conference was held at the Senate of the Republic of Poland, entitled “Polonia for Poland in 25 years of Democracy”. The conference was initiated by the EUWP President Helena Miziniak and organised by Tadeusz Pilat, who chaired the long sessions. It was attended by the representatives of the EUWP member organisations from 26 European countries, the representatives of the National Council, the National Board and the branches of the “Polish Community” Association, as well as numerous invited guests from Poland and abroad; in total, there were over 120 participants.

2015 In May, a large EUWP delegation took part in the 25th anniversary celebrations of the “Polish Community” Association in Warsaw. In October, the Monitor Conference on Economic Migration took place in Brussels under the auspices of the EUWP, entitled “European Civil Society – Socio-Political Activity of Polonia and Poles in the European Union”, co-organised by the

Council of the Polish Community in Belgium and the European Cultural Institute “Polonikus”.

Also in October, the 9th EUWP Convention was held at the Hosianum Palace in Rome. Tadeusz Adam Pilat was elected the President of the EUWP for the third time. The new Secretariat included Wiesław Lewicki, Teresa Sygnarek, Maria Przybyła-Daczewska, Halina Subotowicz-Romanowa and Andrzej Janeczko. In November 2015, the 2nd European Forum for Polonia Media was held in Stockholm, attended by nearly 50 representatives of Polonia media from 15 European countries. It was a joint initiative of the Union of Polish Communities in Europe and the Association of Polonia Organisations in Sweden. The forum was a continuation of the conference entitled “The Future of the Polonia Media in Europe”, which was held a year earlier in Malmö.

2016 In March, the President of the EUWP Tadeusz Pilat took part in a conference in the Sejm entitled “Berlin – Warsaw Yesterday and Today”, organised in cooperation with the Federation of Poles in Germany under the Rodło sign. He also took part in the ceremonial opening of the Ulm Family Museum of Poles Saving Jews in Markowa. In April, the 50th anniversary of the Millennial Jubilee of the Baptism of Poland was celebrated in Poznań. The Polish authorities gave the celebrations an exceptionally solemn character. At the invitation of the Speaker of the Polish Senate, Stanisław Karczewski, the celebrations were attended by representatives of 18 Polonia organisations. The EUWP was represented by its President Tadeusz Adam Pilat as well as Michał Mackiewicz, Jan Ryłko, Tadeusz Stenzel, Aleksander Zajac, Gerwazy Longher, Halina Csúcs Lászlóné, Andżelika Borys, Stanisław Aloszko, Emilia Chmielowa and Urszula Stefańska-Andreini. Polonia activists attended the meeting of the National Assembly and listened to the world premiere of “Oratorium 966.pl” by the Poznań Philharmonic. In July, Pope Francis was officially welcomed at the Wawel Castle. The President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, invited representatives of the Polonia communities to the ceremony: Tadeusz Adam Pilat, President of the EUWP, Jan Cytowski, President of the World Polonia Council, Jarosław Narkiewicz (Lithuania), Emilia Chmielowa (Ukraine), Halina Csúcs Lászlóné (Hungary), Gerwazy Longher (Romania), and Andżelika Borys and Mieczysław Jaskiewicz (Belarus). A special experience for all of us was the July visit of Pope Francis on the occasion of World Youth Day in Kraków. The “Polish Community” Association organised a pilgrimage for Polonia guests to Częstochowa to attend the Holy Mass and a meeting with Pope Francis at the Campus Mise-

ricordiae in Brzegi, near Kraków. In 2016, three more events with the participation of the EUWP President were of special importance for the Polish diaspora. The Speaker of the Polish Senate, Stanisław Karczewski, appointed the Polonia Consulting Council, funding for Polonia returned to the Senate and in Krynica, as part of the Economic Forum, the Polish Senate initiated the First Polonia Forum. In October, the Senate of the Republic of Poland hosted the 3rd European Forum for Polonia Media co-organised by the EUWP, the Association of Polonia Organisations in Sweden and the “Polish Community” Association. In November, a conference entitled “Brexit – Consequences and Other Threats for the Polish Community in Europe – Opinions and Forecasts” was held at the University of Warsaw, organised by the Union of Polish Communities in Europe, the “Polish Community” Association and the Institute of European Studies of the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Studies at the University of Warsaw. The conference was attended by 14 scholars, 21 presidents of the EUWP member organisations and other invited guests, researchers and students.

2017 In June, the President of the EUWP was a guest at the 7th World Congress of Polonia Teachers in Ostróda. Also in June, a ceremony was held at the Polish Social and Cultural Centre in London to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Federation of Poles in Great Britain, which in 1993 founded the EUWP. President Tadeusz Pilat presented the EUWP Medals of Honour to the former presidents of the Federation of Poles for their service to European Polonia: Helena Miziniak and Janek Mokrzycki. In July, the 18th Summer World Polonia Games were held in Toruń. The organisers of the Games were the “Polish Community” Association and the City of Toruń. The Union of Polish Communities in Europe was represented by President Tadeusz Adam Pilat. In September, the inaugural meeting of the Committee for National Celebrations of the Hundredth Anniversary of Poland’s Regaining Independence was held at the Presidential Palace. The President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, appointed Tadeusz Pilat to the Committee and presented him with his nomination at the ceremony. Also in September, the Polonia Committee for the Celebration of the Hundredth Anniversary of Poland’s Regaining Independence was constituted in Gdańsk, consisting of representatives of the most important Polish diaspora organisations. The EUWP President Tadeusz Pilat became the Secretary of the Committee, the Committee also included Teresa Sygnarek, Waldemar Tomaszewski, Anđżelika Borys, as well as representatives of the “Polish Community” Association and the Polonia Bureau at the Senate Office of the Republic of Poland.

2018 The 13th Winter World Polonia Games took place in Krynica-Zdrój in February, bringing together 546 athletes from 22 countries. The guest of the Games was the EUWP President Tadeusz Pilat, who traditionally presented the winners with medals. In March, a ceremonial session inaugurating the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of Poland's Regaining Independence was held in the Senatorial Hall of the Wawel Royal Castle, with the participation of the most important Polonia organisations from all over the world. The participants signed a commemorative appeal to Poles living outside Poland, which was preceded by a speech delivered by the EUWP President Tadeusz Adam Pilat, in which he spoke about Poles abroad and their unchanging love for their homeland for centuries. In September, the 5th World Congress of the Polish Diaspora and Poles Living Abroad was held in Warsaw under the motto "United by the Independent Homeland" to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the regaining of the independence of the Republic of Poland in 1918. The Congress was organised by the "Polish Community" Association, on the initiative of the World Polonia Council. The Congress was attended by over 600 participants from 44 countries representing some 200 Polish diaspora organisations. On the eve of the Congress, a press conference was held at the MPs' House, with the participation of the President of the EUWP. The Congress participants attended the Inaugural Mass at St. John's Archcathedral, concelebrated by Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz, Archbishop of Warsaw. The opening ceremony of the Congress and the concluding plenary session took place in the Plenary Hall of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland. The Congress participants deliberated in seven thematic sessions. The EUWP President Tadeusz Pilat participated in the preparation of the programme of the Forum for the Polish Science Abroad and the World Forum for Polonia Education, while the EUWP Secretary General Teresa Sygnarek led the work of the 1st World Forum for Polonia Media. The Speaker of the Senate Stanisław Karczewski closed the proceedings of the Polonia Sejm with the words: "It is good to be Polish in Poland and abroad".

In November 2018, the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the Union of Polish Communities in Europe took place in the "Polonia Centre" at the Pułtusk Castle. The celebration started with a colourful procession in the rhythm of the polonaise and the mazurka in Uhlan's costumes from the time of the Duchy of Warsaw, performed by the Song and Dance Ensemble "Wisła" from Płock. In his address, the EUWP President talked about the history and achievements of the organisation, which has played an important role in the integration of the Polish diaspora movement in Europe and

worldwide. The President mentioned the most distinguished people for the EUWP: Zygmunt Szkopiak, Helena Miziniak, Wiktor Moszczyński, Janek Mokrzycki, Roman Śmigielski, Michał Mackiewicz, Andżelika Borys, Halina Romanowa and Teresa Sygnarek. He also mentioned great friends of the EUWP, the successive presidents of the “Polish Community” Association, Prof. Andrzej Stelmachowski, Maciej Płażyński, Longin Komołowski and Dariusz Piotr Bonisławski. The culmination of the jubilee celebration was the presentation for the first time by the president of the EUWP of the special highest distinction of the EUWP, the “Eagle of the 100th Anniversary of Poland’s Regaining Independence” statuette, established in the jubilee year. The statuettes were awarded to: the “Polish Community” Association, the World Polonia Folklore Festivals, the Federation of Poles in Great Britain, the Association of Polonia Organisations in Sweden and the Polish Cultural and Educational Association in the Czech Republic. Soloists and the “Wisła” ensemble, wearing the uniforms of Józef Piłsudski’s legions, performed recitations and patriotic songs, and later in the costumes of the Polish nobility – the mazurka from Stanisław Moniuszko’s opera “The Haunted Manor”. The following day, the 10th Jubilee Convention of the EUWP was held, attended by 46 delegates from 36 member organisations. The Convention unanimously elected Tadeusz Adam Pilat as President of the EUWP for the fourth time. The members of the new Secretariat are: Teresa Sygnarek (Sweden), Edward Trusewicz (Lithuania), Korinna Wesołowski (Hungary), Andrzej Janeczko (Spain), Józef Ptaszyński (Belgium) and Wojtek Białek (Ireland). On Sunday, the delegates took part in a solemn Mass in the Pułtusk Basilica convened in the intention of the Union of Polish Communities in Europe and all Poles in Europe. The Mass was celebrated by Rev. Prelate Wiesław Kosek and Rev. Adam Prorok from Germany.

2019 At the end of June, celebrations to mark the 450th anniversary of the Union of Lublin were held in Lublin, attended by the presidents of Polonia organisations from 20 countries on 5 continents, and Polish youth from the East who were staying in the Lublin region. The Union of Polish Communities in Europe was represented by its President Tadeusz Adam Pilat and the presidents of the EUWP member organisations: Maria Przybyła-Daczewska (Bulgaria), Ewa Ronay-Słaba and Monika Molnar-Cieślewicz (Hungary), Emilia Chmielowa (Ukraine), Krystyna Olliffe (the UK), Helena Legowicz (Czechia), Ferdynand Domaradzki (Germany) and Sergiusz Fiel (Russia).

Polonia activists met with Polish youth from the East, and the following day, after a Mass at the Lublin Archcathedral, the Speaker of the Senate

Stanisław Karczewski and the head of the Polish Senate Office, Minister Jakub Kowalski, met with the representatives of Polonia from around the world. The main celebrations at the Lublin Centre for the Meeting of Cultures, commemorating the 450th Anniversary of the Union of Lublin, were inaugurated by a solemn Poland-Lithuania Assembly and a debate of the presidents of parliaments on the significance of the legacy of the Union of Lublin. The event took place with the participation of representatives of parliaments of countries historically linked to the Union of Lublin: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Belarus, Hungary, Moldova, as well as the embassies of Georgia and Ukraine. After a Mass at the Dominican Church, the representatives of Polonia and Poles living abroad took part in a ceremony at the historic Crown Tribunal building on the Lublin Market Square, organised by the Lublin branch of the “Polish Community” Association. The Mayor of Lublin, Krzysztof Żuk, presented those in attendance with commemorative “Medals of the 450th Anniversary of the Union of Lublin”. The City of Lublin honoured 30 Polonia organisations from 5 continents with this medal, with the EUWP President Tadeusz Pilat also receiving the medal individually.

July saw the 18th World Festival of the Polonia Folklore Ensembles in Rzeszów, which that year celebrated its 50th anniversary. 33 ensembles from 12 countries around the world, a total of more than 1100 people, came to Rzeszów. In September, the 2nd World Forum for Polonia Media was held at the Polonia Centre in Kraków, co-organised by the Association of Polonia Organisations in Sweden, the Union of Polish Communities in Europe and the “Polish Community” Association.

On the occasion of the Polish Independence Day, a ceremony was held in Warsaw at the Andrzej Stelmachowski House of the Polish Diaspora, during which a cooperation agreement between the “Polish Community Association” and the Union of Polish Communities in Europe was signed, confirming the long-time joint work of both organisations in the service of the Polish communities abroad. The signatories were the EUWP President Tadeusz Adam Pilat and the President of the Association Dariusz Piotr Bonisławski. In November, a conference was held at the University of Warsaw entitled “The Situation of Polish Minorities and Organisations in Neighbouring Countries – Three Perspectives”. The conference was organised by the EUWP, the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Warsaw and the “Polish Community” Association. The conference presented the demographic, legal and economic situation of Polish mi-

norities, the issue of Polish education and the future of Polish minorities in neighbouring countries.

UNION OF POLISH COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE.
THE CALENDAR OF MAJOR EVENTS 1993-2019

Summary

This article presents the calendar of the most important events related to the Union of Polish Communities in Europe (EUWP), a federation of Polish diaspora organisations from all over Europe. The EUWP was established in 1993 in London with the aim of promoting Polonia-related and Polish affairs in the process of Poland's integration with the democratic West, cooperating with Polish communities around the world and providing assistance to Polish organisations in post-communist countries. For 28 years, the Union of Polish Communities in Europe has been involved in promoting Polish culture and integrating Polish communities, organising and taking part in various scientific and cultural events, conferences and competitions.

Keywords: Union of Polish Communities in Europe; federation of Polish diaspora organisations; Polonia in Europe; integration.

EUROPEJSKA UNIA WSPÓLNOT POLONIJNYCH.
KALENDARIUM NAJWAŻNIEJSZYCH WYDARZEŃ W LATACH 1993-2019

Streszczenie

Artykuł przedstawia kalendarium najważniejszych wydarzeń dotyczących Europejskiej Unii Wspólnot Polonijnych, federacji zrzeszającej organizacje polonijne z całej Europy. EUWP powołana została w 1993 roku w Londynie w celu promowania spraw polonijnych i polskich w integrowaniu się z demokratycznym Zachodem, współpracowania ze wspólnotami polskimi na całym świecie oraz niesienia pomocy dla organizacji polskich w państwach postkomunistycznych. Od 28 lat Europejska Unia Wspólnot Polonijnych angażuje się w promowanie kultury polskiej i integrowanie polonijnych środowisk, organizując i biorąc udział w różnego rodzaju wydarzeniach naukowych, kulturalnych, konferencjach i konkursach.

Słowa kluczowe: Europejska Unia Wspólnot Polonijnych; federacja organizacji polonijnych; Polonia w Europie; integracja.