

ifa ECP Monitor Country Report

# Poland

ifa ECP Monitor Country Report



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## 1. External cultural policy objectives in geopolitical context

Poland is a regional power in Central Europe with a rich cultural and scientific tradition. With a population of around 38 million, it is the sixth largest and one of the most populous members of the European Union. It has been a member of the EU since 2004 and member of the NATO alliance since 1999. In terms of both its hard and soft power resources, Poland ranks in the top twenty-five countries (see Table 1). It draws its strength from a global diplomatic presence, currently ranking 19<sup>th</sup> worldwide, which outperforms its economic size.

Since 2015, Poland has recorded a steady decline in the strength of its democratic institutions as evidenced in the *Democracy Index*. It currently places 50<sup>th</sup>, just behind Brazil (EIU, 2020). The watchdog Freedom House also identified an internal polarisation between the liberal, pro-EU side and ‘traditional,’ conservative Poland. According to the *Nations in Transit* report, the quality of democracy in Poland continued to deteriorate for the fourth consecutive year under the ruling *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, or PiS party. The most affected were the media, judiciary, local democratic governance, and the pluralism of civil society (Freedom House, 2020). A number of repressive policies undermining the autonomy of institutions have been met with both domestic and international criticism. Although there have been some improvements, Poland has elsewhere been identified as a flawed and ‘illiberal democracy’ (Piotrowski, 2020). Its relations with the EU have become an “issue of concern” and on the international scene its role and image have weakened (Babovnikova, 2018).

Notwithstanding its weakened democracy, Poland reached the 23<sup>rd</sup> place on the Soft Power 30, ranking particularly well with its Education, Culture, and Digital scores (Portland, 2019). The index shows a relative stability in Poland’s international positioning, but also suggests that ongoing political challenges have a potential to become more costly and damaging to the country’s perception abroad.

**Table 1: Country’s geopolitical and geoeconomic position**

	2019	% change since 2015
Population (millions) / ranking	37.97 / 38 <sup>th</sup>	38 / 0%
GDP ranking	21 <sup>st</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>
GDP per capita	13,870 / 54 <sup>th</sup>	24
Cultural economy (%GDP)	0.80 <sup>(2018)</sup>	0.2
Education economy (%GDP)	5 <sup>(2018)</sup>	- 0.3
R&D economy (%GDP)	1.21 <sup>(2018)</sup>	0.21
Media economy (%GDP)	0 <sup>(2018)</sup>	- 0.1

Sources: Eurostat, World Bank

		2019	Change over 2015	
Geopolitical position	Hard power rank	24 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	↓
	World trade rank (US\$ million)	22 <sup>nd</sup> / 565,960	24 <sup>th</sup> / 457,667	↑
	Soft power rank	23 <sup>rd</sup> / 55.16	24 <sup>th</sup> / 46.50	↑
	Diplomacy rank	19 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup> (2016)	↑

Looking at the past four years, the government has made greater commitments to its cultural economy, but less so in the R&D sector (Table 2). Its expenditure in the field of education is far higher. With regard to its central spending dedicated to education, Poland is on par with countries like the UK, Belgium, and the Netherlands, all investing around 12%. However, it compares less favourably with its EU peers in public funding for R&D. Further investment will be needed in order for Poland to reach the average European standard of 1.36% of government spending on research and science.

**Table 2: Government spending on ECP fields as a % of total outlays**

	2019	% change since 2015
Culture	1.90 <sup>(2018)</sup>	0.40
Education	12 <sup>(2018)</sup>	- 0.70
R & D	0.89	- 0.09
Media	0.10 <sup>(2018)</sup>	0

Source: Eurostat

## 2. External cultural policy: an overview

An explicit program for Polish external cultural policy is a relatively new development. Before and during the 1990s, the country focused almost exclusively on political and economic reforms. It was not until 1999 that the Ministry of Culture finally initiated a program to promote Polish culture abroad. An agreement followed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the main authority for Poland's external cultural action. The government then formulated a first multiannual National Strategy for Cultural Development (2004-2020). The achievements of the Strategy are many, especially in the context of Poland's EU membership. For example, the cities of Kraków and Wrocław were awarded the title of the European Capital of Culture in 2000 and 2016, respectively. According to the Department of European Funds and Affairs at the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, around 2,000 projects will have been implemented in the 5-year period, with over 15 billion złoty (€3.5 billion) provided by the European structural funds (National Centre for Culture, 2020). The total expenditure incurred on the promotion of culture domestically and abroad between 2013 and 2018 was €648 million<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Refers to the funds for the promotion of Polish culture domestically and abroad (based on a 2019 audit of these institutions: MFA, Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Polish Film Institute, International Cultural Centre, Book Institute, six (out of 25) Polish Institutes in London, Tel Aviv, Beijing, New York, Berlin, Kiev). The 2018 data refers to

(Supreme Audit Office, 2019a). At the same time, Poland expanded its external cultural policy (ECP) network – around 120 different institutions are active in promoting the country’s image, culture, science, and education.

Next to the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (especially its sub-department of International Relations), the main actor involved in the design and implementation of external cultural policy is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and its sub-departments for European Policy, Cooperation with Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad and, in particular, the Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy (see Figure 1). The MFA realises ECP activities mainly through its network of Polish Institutes, Polish embassies, and the departments of the Polish Academy of Science (in Berlin, Paris, Rome, Vienna). The Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs have agreed on transversal cooperation in the promotion of Polish culture abroad at the beginning of 2019. In the first year of agreement, over 6 million złoty (€1.4 million) was made available for various national cultural institutions. The program will target key countries as defined in the Polish foreign policy (Ilczuk & Karpińska, 2020). The responsibility of ECP extends onto other ministries (Ministry of Education, etc), and institutions like the Book Institute, the Theatre Institute, the National Audio-visual Institute (FINA), the Frédéric Chopin Institute, the Polish Film Institute, the International Cultural Centre in Kraków (but with no branches abroad).

Other cultural promotion activities include events like ‘Polska Year,’ Seasons & Days of Polish Culture, or presentation of Polish creators (e.g. the Year of Joseph Conrad (2007), the Year of Frédéric Chopin (2010), etc), as well as participation in international exhibitions and fairs (e.g. 2010 EXPO World Exhibition in Shanghai). Within the framework of the Polish presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2011, Polish institutions provided a rich cultural program which highlighted the cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries (UNESCO, 2012). In 2019, a multi-campaign was launched to promote activities around the celebration of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland’s EU membership (National Centre for Culture, 2020).

Strategic communication continues well beyond its practical application in various ECP fields and into a field of soft power commonly known as nation branding. The MFA, the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, and the Ministry of Economy all played a part in the creation of a country brand. The Council for Poland’s Promotion, operating under the MFA and comprising representatives from different ministries, coordinated the branding efforts in the years 2004-2016. In 2016, the Council was replaced by the Interministerial Team for Promotion of Poland. The Ministry of Culture and Heritage is engaged via the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, the main actor responsible for cultural affairs. Additionally, other state actors linked to the Ministry of Economy—like the Polish Tourism Organisation, the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, and the Polish Investment and Trade Agency—are part of the setup (Surowiec, 2020).

Poland’s initial branding efforts came after the collapse of communism: the country was eager to emphasise its modernity: ‘normalcy’, ‘integration’, and ‘return to Europe’ (Aronczyk, 2013a). The first strategic document adopted for this purpose was the *Framework Programme of International Promotion for Poland’s Accession to the EU (2000, 2001, 2002)*, which empha-

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the first half of the year so 2017 is taken as the latest available. During the entire audit period (2013-2018) the total expenditure reached €647.8 million (Supreme Audit Office, 2019a).

sised the image of Poland as a stable and truly European nation (Jurkiewicz-Eckert, 2014). Then, a large-scale branding strategy, co-created with the British consultancy group Saffron, began in 2003. The four pillars for the development of brand were tourism, foreign direct investment (FDI), export, and public diplomacy. Poland was encouraged to capitalise on its 'Janus' position between the East and the West, "at ease with the cultures and societies of both" (qtd. in Aronczyk, 2013b). It is this polarity and contrariness that was further developed into the punchline of the Polish national identity and branding: "Creative Tension" (*Twórcza przekora*). The idea maintains that Poles, and by extension Poland, are capable of great surprises and achievements. Creative tension was the reason "why Poland produces so many entrepreneurs, artists, and sportspeople." It was the underlying reason "why Poland is constantly changing and evolving," and a promise that it can "contribut[e] its vitality and creativity to the world" (qtd. in Aronczyk, 2013b).

"Creative Tension" remained the archetype of the national brand. In 2013 the Council for the Promotion of Poland published the "Principles for Communicating the Polska Brand," matching the old blueprint. The same guidelines have been adopted in the MFA's "Polish Foreign Policy 2017-2021," and later, "Poland's Promotion 2017-27" and "Polska Brand – concept" in 2018 (Surowiec, 2020). The standards set in these documents are very similar to the original vision of Poland (*Creative Tension*), with heritage and cultural values as important anchor points. Recently, the national brand suffered a setback. With the arrival of the Law and Justice (PiS) party, the norms previously promoted in Poland's country branding was overshadowed by domestic controversies. For instance, the Polish National Foundation, founded in 2016, carries on with the program of presenting the country across the globe. However, the organisation also uses its platform to respond to mounting international criticism over PiS' policies. Financed to the tune of 400 million złoty (€93 million), the foundation has been accused of mispending public money, for example sponsoring a campaign to attack Polish judges and so support the government's controversial judicial reforms (Wilczek & Cienski, 2019). The Foundation has found itself in a position where its public promotion schemes backfired and gathered negative international attention. Developments like these have somewhat undermined the image of Poland as energetic, creative, and open country. The original nation-branding concept persists regardless of these pitfalls, but it remains to be seen how it will hold up in practice.

The maintenance and global strengthening of the "Brand Poland" via culture is the central topic of the Polish cultural diplomacy and will remain a priority in the years to come. A statement by the then-director of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Paweł Potoroczyn, is perhaps the best illustration for this: "A global race for capital, resources and technology is underway. Today we know for sure that this race cannot be won by infrastructure, labour costs, or products as such because these will soon be homogenous, the same, and will have the same cost. The winners in this race will be those who start taking care of their brand – national brand – as soon as possible. For the Polska brand, culture is an absolutely fundamental dimension" (qtd. in Jurkiewicz-Eckert, 2011).

Currently, the Inter-ministerial Team for the promotion of Poland<sup>2</sup> focuses on the country's international image. The government's findings suggested that, apart from its nearest neighborhood, the perception and knowledge of Poland abroad is rather low and fragmented. This

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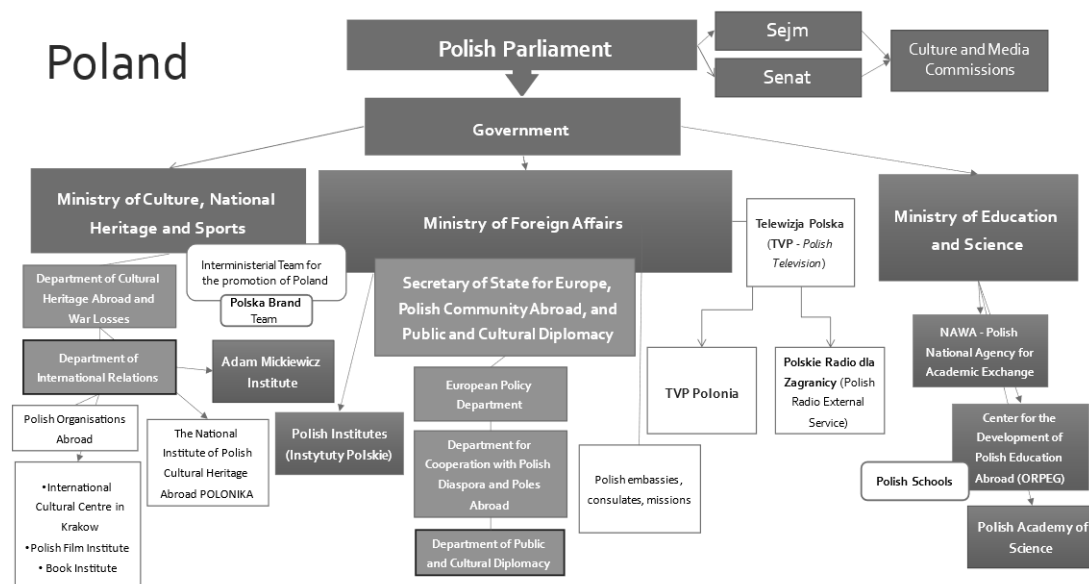
<sup>2</sup> The Interministerial Team operated in the period 2016-2018. In 2020, a new ordinance of the Prime Minister re-established the committee (Sejm, 2020).

is especially true in Asia, but also in countries like the US, Spain, Italy, and France (Sejm, 2018). According to the Anholt-GfK Nation Brands<sup>3</sup> global ranking, Poland assumed the 27<sup>th</sup> position in 2017, same as in 2009. The Elcano Global Presence Index (IEPG) which maps out the global presence of countries based on their economy, hard power, and soft presence, placed Poland 31<sup>st</sup> out of 130 countries in 2019. Although quite an achievement, the Polish brand failed to initiate a continual progress - in 2010, it occupied 29<sup>th</sup> place (Real Instituto Elcano, 2019).

**Table 3: Key ECP Statistics for Country**

	2019
Number of countries with ECP activities	at least 23
Total number of institutions	~ 120
Total number of FTE staff engaged in ECP activities	~ 1,158
Government financial support (€ million)	at least 132.4 <sup>(2017)</sup> 4
Total expenditure of all ECP operators (€ million)	-
Comparative ECP ranking	middle

**Figure 1: Institutional map of country's ECP**



<sup>3</sup> The index takes into consideration the following indicators: tourism, export, foreign policy and security policy, investment and immigration, culture and heritage, people.

<sup>4</sup> Refers to the funds for the promotion of Polish culture domestically and abroad (based on a 2019 audit of these institutions: MFA, Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Polish Film Institute, International Cultural Centre, Book Institute, six (out of 25) Polish Institutes in London, Tel Aviv, Beijing, New York, Berlin, Kiev). The 2018 data refers to the first half of the year so 2017 is taken as the latest available. During the entire audit period (2013–2018) the total expenditure reached €647.8 million.

## 3. Fields of ECP

### 3.1. Culture and the arts

In 2001, the Polish government explicitly identified culture as the third pillar of Polish external action.<sup>5</sup> The main goal was to “create a modern image of Polish culture,” to stimulate “interest and provide easier access to the Polish cultural heritage,” and indirectly strengthen Poland’s image abroad (qtd. in Jurkiewicz-Eckert, 2014). The main actors bearing the responsibility of cultural promotion are the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute (AMI), a network of Polish Institutes under the helm of the MFA, and various national cultural institutions with international programming.

As suggested in the guidelines for the Polska Brand, cultural heritage is the primary target of ECP. One of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage is the preservation of cultural heritage abroad. This entails two main elements: a) the historical legacy of the multicultural Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, today relevant for the countries bordering Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, and to some degree, Latvia and Moldova; b) cultural inheritance of Polish emigres in Western Europe, North America, and elsewhere (National Centre for Culture, 2016). The projects are carried out by the Department of Cultural Heritage and Wartime Losses. Together with its Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad Section, the department implements a “Preservation of cultural heritage abroad” program issued by the Minister of Culture. The program provides funding in form of grants to protect and promote the Polish cultural legacy abroad. It includes research, archiving, as well as restoration of Polish cultural artefacts, and support for the Polish expatriate organisations, such as museums, libraries, archives (e.g. Polish Library in Paris, Polish Museum of America in Chicago, Polish Institutes of Arts & Sciences in America and Canada, and many more). In 2018, grants approved through this framework were worth nearly 9 million złoty, or around €2 million (National Centre for Culture, 2019). In addition, almost 5.8 million (€1.35 million) were distributed under the “National Memorial Sites Abroad” program which focuses on “war cemeteries and burial sites, places and objects connected with notable people and historical events significant for national heritage” (ibid.).

In addition to these programs, a new institution founded in December 2017, the National Institute of Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad (POLONIKA), has for a purpose to raise awareness of Polish cultural legacy abroad, to build recognition for Polish achievements and creators, and promote heritage of Polish emigration. The Institute carries out activities of conservation, research, and educational projects.

Adam Mickiewicz, who is regarded as the National poet of Poland, is also the name of the promotional institution founded in 2000. Operating from its main and only office in Warsaw, the institute’s purpose is to present and popularize the Polish culture abroad and develop international cooperation and cultural exchange. The work of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute<sup>6</sup> (AMI) is overseen by the Department of International Relations at the Ministry of Culture

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<sup>5</sup> Poland’s Foreign Policy and its Priorities for 2001–2003 (Zagraniczna polityka kulturalna Polski i jej priorytety na lata 2001–2003).

<sup>6</sup> The initial name was Centre of International Cultural Cooperation of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute (Centrum Międzynarodowej Współpracy Kulturalnej Instytut Adama Mickiewicza).

and accordant with the guidelines of the Polish foreign policy. Traditionally, the geographic focus has been on Europe, the Eastern neighborhood, and countries such as the UK, USA, India, Brazil, Israel, China, Japan. Based on its scope, AMI is a middle-sized cultural institute, much like the Swedish Institute (SI), although on a much tighter budget (approx. a third of the SI), or around €13 million (57,787,133 złoty) in 2019.<sup>7</sup> Like its Nordic counterpart, the Institute curates an information and promotion website about Poland and Polish culture, [www.culture.pl](http://www.culture.pl) (in Polish, English, Russian). Annually, the portal reaches an audience of 8 million people (3.5 million users outside Poland in 2019) (AMI, 2020).

Polish Institutes (*Instytuty Polskie*), as affiliates of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are equally important, acting as “emissaries of Poland” with the goal to strengthen bilateral relations and enhance the image of the country abroad. In total, 25 Polish institutes are active in 23 countries<sup>8</sup> worldwide. A vast majority is located in Europe, but branches exist in countries like China, Georgia, India, Israel, Japan, the US, Israel. Similar to the AMI, Polish Institutes are medium-sized organizations (estimated 175 staff) (Smits, Daubeuf, & Kern, 2016), with a budget of €3.61 million in 2019. On the example of Polish Institute London (9 staff): the institute operated on a budget of £598,952 (about €687,000) in 2019 which translated into around 100 cultural projects and 25,000 participants in the supported projects.<sup>9</sup> Although more accurate information is not available for the entire network, 6 Polish institutes (London, Tel Aviv, Beijing, New York, Berlin, Kiev) had a joint capacity of 2,900 promotional activities and reported a total of 70,700,900 złoty (€16.5 million) (or 20% of institute budget) spent on activities in the field of promotion of culture abroad for the period 2013-2018. With the addition of funds provided by the MFA, a total 103.4 million złoty (around €24 million) were spent towards this goal (Supreme Audit Office, 2019a).

**Table 4: Key statistics on culture and the arts**

	2019	2015
Number of countries present	Polish Institutes (PI): 23 Adam Mickiewicz Institute (AMI): no branches abroad	Polish Institutes (PI): 23 Adam Mickiewicz Institute: no branches abroad
Number of institutes	Adam Mickiewicz Institute :1 Polish Institutes: 25	Adam Mickiewicz Institute:1 Polish Institutes: 25
Number of FTE staff	AMI: 93 PI: ~ 175	AMI: 69 PI: ~ 175
Number of artists in exchange programs	104 Polish artists abroad / 52 foreign artists in Poland	183 Polish artists abroad / 54 foreign artists in Poland
Budget (€)	AMI: 13,000,000 Polish Institutes: 3,616,924	AMI: 9,000,000 Polish Institutes: 3,665,201

<sup>7</sup> Information obtained from correspondence with a representative from the Adam Mickiewicz Institute. May 8, 2021, Email correspondence.

<sup>8</sup> Polish Institutes are located in London, Paris, Brussels, Rome, Berlin, Düsseldorf, Stockholm, Bratislava, Vilnius, Minsk, Kiev, St Petersburg, Moscow, New York, Madrid, Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Bucharest, Sofia, Tel Aviv, Tbilisi, New Delhi, Beijing.

<sup>9</sup> Information obtained from correspondence with a representative from the Polish Institute London. April 26, 2021, Email correspondence.



	2019	2015
Government financial support (€ million)	AMI Earmarked subsidy: 9	AMI Subsidy: 8
Government financial support (€ million)	Cultural promotion institutions: 129.6 <sup>(2017)</sup> Ministry of Culture and National Heritage: 2.8 <sup>(2017)</sup> <u>Total: 132.4</u> <sup>10</sup>	Cultural promotion institutions: 120 Ministry of Culture and National Heritage: 1.4 <u>Total: 121.4</u>

## 3.2. Language & Education Abroad

**Table 5: Key figures on language promotion**

	2019	2015
Number of countries where courses are offered	23 <sup>(Polish schools abroad)</sup>	23
Number of students enrolled <small>(NAWA - Polish language and culture courses for foreigners)</small>	730	n/a
Number of scholarships <small>(NAWA - Polish and Polish Studies scholarship)</small>	48	n/a
Number of candidates for Polish language qualifications	-	1,970 11,034 <sup>(2004-2016)</sup>
Number of language teachers (NAWA program)	81 Polish teachers seconded to 79 institutions in 31 countries	n/a
Budget (€ million)	NAWA Polish language courses for foreigners: 0.62 NAWA Polish and Polish Studies scholarships: 0.11	n/a
Government financial support (€ million)	Subsidy Ministry of Science and Higher Education to course centers: 0.51	n/a

Poland is often associated with historically high emigration. According to the UN, it is one of the top twenty countries with the largest diaspora<sup>11</sup> population (around 20 million) (UN, 2019). By far the largest community lives in the US, with roughly 10 million people. Larger emigration waves were triggered upon entering the EU in 2004, when over 1 million Poles decided to leave the homeland. The main destination countries for Poles were Germany, the

<sup>10</sup> Please see Footnote 1 for the complete list of audited institutions.

<sup>11</sup> The Day of the Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad was established by the Sejm, lower house, in 2002, and is celebrated on May 2.

US, Canada, and the UK. Temporary emigration is also very common with most departures bound for EU countries. Despite the positive change in migration balance since 2015, the number of Poles residing outside of the national borders is significant (Statistics Poland, 2020a). Emigres often decide to stay longer for work, studies, and a significant number of children to Polish citizens are born abroad.<sup>12</sup>

Largely as a result of the high number of émigrés, Polish language promotion often targets Polish expatriates and communities abroad. A special focus is on developing bilingualism among younger generations. Achieving fluency in Polish would help them maintain their Polish identity and facilitate potential repatriation. There is no sufficient data on how many Polish children abroad are learning the native language. In 2013, an estimated 150,000 students learned Polish in 1,644 schools, most of them run by Polish diaspora organisations (Miodunka et al., 2018).

The preservation of the Polish language in the diaspora is primarily the task of the Centre for the Development of Polish Education Abroad (ORPEG). In 1973, the Association of Schools of Polish Citizens Abroad was founded to provide education in Polish to children of Polish diplomats. In 1991, the Polish Teacher's Centre in Lublin was established. With the merger of these two establishments in 2011 was created ORPEG. The Centre supports Polish language education and promotion of Polish culture among young Poles staying abroad.

Schools overseas have traditionally been linked with the growing Polish diaspora. A good example is the Polish University Abroad (or Polish University in Exile) established in London in 1949. The first Polish school abroad opened as early as 1842. Today, more than 17,000 students are enrolled in 69 schools<sup>13</sup> at Polish diplomatic missions in 36 countries (26 in Europe). Next, there are 4 Polish sections in French schools with 476 students. 754 Polish students studied in so-called European Schools (ORPEG, 2021). Lastly, there are approximately 1,000 registered schools<sup>14</sup> organised by Polish diaspora organisations, parents' associations, Polish parishes etc. The ORPEG supports these classrooms with teaching staff and learning materials. It also organises distance learning for children of Polish citizens residing abroad (see Table 6).

Equally important is the promotion of Polish as a foreign language. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Culture, and Education all share this responsibility. Within the Ministry of Culture, the Polish Language Department organises activities that raise the status of Polish language abroad and micro-funds grassroot initiatives to popularise Polish language and culture. NAWA, the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange, has taken over many of language promotion tasks since its inception in 2017. For example, it is engaged through student and staff exchanges and its POLONISTA program, which is addressed to students of Polish studies. In addition, the NAWA Language division provides administrative and financial support for the Polish language certification system.<sup>15</sup> NAWA further coordinates Polish language and culture courses for foreigners and sends Polish language assistants abroad. With so many different areas of action, a major issue is the lack of a holistic strategy of supporting

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<sup>12</sup> In 2015, the number of children born abroad and reported to the Polish registry office increased significantly (43,000 of them were registered - 13% more than the previous year and the highest number since 2009) (Statistics Poland, 2020a).

<sup>13</sup> 1 School Complex in Athens and 68 Polish schools.

<sup>14</sup> ORPEG maintains a database of these schools, available at [www.polska-szkola.pl](http://www.polska-szkola.pl).

<sup>15</sup> There are over 20 Polish language certification centers in Poland and abroad.

Polish as a foreign language. Most importantly, there is no one central language institution which would coordinate these efforts.

The official certification of language proficiency in Polish began in 2004, when Poland joined the EU. The number of candidates since then has been growing from 224 in 2005 to 1,111 in 2016, with a total of 11,304 certificate exams taken (2004-2016). The interest in these exams increased in particular from 2012 onwards, when the Act on Polish Citizenship came into force. Among other criteria, it requires applicants to confirm their knowledge of the Polish language with a certificate issued by the State Language Certification Commission (*Państwowa Komisja Poświadczania Znajomości Języka Polskiego jako Obcego*). Regarding the countries of origins of the candidates, these are mostly across Poland's eastern border and countries with a large diaspora. In the 2004-2015 period, the most represented countries were Ukraine (3596), USA (1119), Russia (870), Belarus (614), Germany (589), Poland (512), France (208), Armenia (201) (Miodunka et al., 2018).

**Table 6: Key figures on primary and secondary education**

<i>Polish schools</i>	2019	2015
Number of countries	36	-
Number of schools	69	-
Number of students	17,515 <sup>(2020/21)</sup>	~ 17,000
	1,055 <sup>(distance learning)</sup>	568 <sup>(distance learning)</sup>
Number of staff / teachers	578 teachers in Polish schools 149 seconded teachers abroad <sup>16</sup>	~ 600 teachers in Polish schools 125 seconded teachers abroad
Government financial support (€ million)	1.14 <sup>17</sup>	-

<sup>16</sup> Teachers sent to work abroad (including European schools).

<sup>17</sup> Subsidies to the Centre for the Development of Polish Education Abroad.

### 3.3. Tertiary education and science

**Table 7: Key figures on tertiary education**

	2019	2015
Number of countries	21 (NAWA cooperation)	-
Number of domestic universities/colleges	373	-
Number of students		
Number of foreign students <sup>18</sup>	54,354 <sup>(2018)</sup>	43,988
Number of government scholarships awarded		
- NAWA total scholarships awarded	2,433	n/a
- Polish Diaspora gen. Władysław Anders	47	-
- Stefan Banach Scholarship	260 <sup>(2018)</sup>	230
- Ignacy Łukasiewicz - Scholarship	200 <sup>(2018)</sup>	38
- Young Scientists scholarship	181 <sup>(2018)</sup>	-
Number of staff / teachers	NAWA: 82	n/a
Budget (€ million)	NAWA: 42.7	n/a
Government financial support (€ million)	-	Scholarships for developing countries: 28.5 <sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Data based on Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students | UNESCO UIS. (2020). Retrieved 2 September 2020, from <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>.

<sup>19</sup> The costs incurred by the Polish side, including the support granted via scholarship programs co-financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs amounted to almost PLN 119 million or €28.45 million.

**Table 8: Science and research**

	2019	2015
Number of countries	-	-
Number of institutes abroad	PAN: 6 <sup>20</sup>	-
Government financial support (€ million)	Scholarships for outstanding young scientists: 8.2 <sup>(2018)</sup>	
	Funds for scientific cooperation with foreign countries: 9.5 <sup>(2017)</sup>	Funds for scientific cooperation with foreign countries: 16.5 <sup>(2014)</sup>

The higher education market is becoming attractive for a growing number of foreigners – in 2018 54,354 international students pursued their degrees in Poland (UIS, 2020). It is a preferred study destination primarily for young people from the East (especially Ukrainians and Belarusians) and for those with Polish roots. Students from Europe make the largest group, with 75.3% (Statistics Poland, 2020b). The ERASMUS+ program played a vital role in opening doors of Polish universities, as well as the first program for internationalization of higher education and science signed in 2015. Despite these positive developments it is still too early to declare ‘mission accomplished’ – the ratio of foreign students at Polish academic institutions is still relatively low, at 4.07%, while in OECD countries it exceeds 8% (Miodunka et al., 2018).

Similarly, Polish institutions have so far struggled to attract students at higher levels of education. In 2017, Poland recorded some of the lowest shares of students from abroad studying for a doctoral (2.2%) and master’s degree (4.9%) in the entire EU (Eurostat, 2019). In order to stay competitive in the global race for talent, the higher education sector will need to increase the attractiveness of studying in Poland and embrace internationalisation more fully. Some of these measures are already underway.<sup>21</sup> An important first step was the creation of the National Agency for Academic Exchange (*Narodowa Agencja Wymiany Akademickiej - NAWA*), in October 2017, supervised by the Minister of Science and Higher Education. The new entity was modelled on the French and German counterparts, Campus France and DAAD. Its budget was 183,636,000 złoty or around €43 million in 2019<sup>22</sup> (NAWA, 2020). The main aims are: a) reinforcing the scientific excellence, b) internationalising Polish universities and scientific institutions, c) promoting Poland as a country offering interesting educational and research opportunities, and d) promoting the Polish language and culture (NAWA, 2018). The agency also attempts to reverse brain drain and facilitate the return of Polish scientists (program *Polskie Powroty*).

Moreover, under the 2015 Internationalisation program, Polish universities were guaranteed support of €75 million as part of the initiative “Universities of the Future” (Polish Ministry of Education and Science, 2015). Increasing the level of internationalisation will not be an

<sup>20</sup> Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) has scientific centers in Paris, Rome, Vienna, a representative office in Kiev, the Historical Research Center in Berlin, and the Polish Science Contact Agency PolSCA in Brussels.

<sup>21</sup> Additionally, a multilingual portal [www.go-poland.pl](http://www.go-poland.pl) is a very good source of information about study opportunities in Poland. Moreover, there are promotional campaigns Ready, Study, Go! Poland (since 2012) and Research & Go! Poland.

<sup>22</sup> 78 % of the budget was covered by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

easy process, but Poland has a good starting position. Poland's location between Eastern and Western Europe and its EU membership—as well as a developing knowledge-based economy—are the main factors why many students choose to study there. Higher education (with around 400 universities) has a long tradition dating back nearly 800 years and many study programs are available in English. On top of all, living in Poland is relatively inexpensive and education is much more affordable than in other EU countries.

NAWA maintains several scholarship programs (Polish diaspora scholarships, Poland – My First Choice, etc) which supported 2,433 individuals in 2019 (NAWA, 2020). Scholarship policy also plays an important role in the Polish development assistance. In 2015, 119 million zloty (around €28.5 million) was granted via scholarship programs to 12,655 citizens from developing countries (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016). The Stefan Banach Scholarship (since 2013) is a joint initiative of the MFA and NAWA, for citizens of Eastern Partnership, Central Asian and Western Balkans countries undertaking second-cycle studies. The Ignacy Łukasiewicz Scholarship (since 2015) is aimed at students from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The reason for introducing these programs was that Polish higher education was not attracting a significant number of students from the developing world, such as East Asia or South America. As a result, strategic markets cover countries like China, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brazil. In recent years, new scholarship programs and promotional campaigns have been launched for students from these countries and the Polish language teaching network has been strengthened (Miodunka et al., 2018).

### *Science & Research*

International cooperation in science has a long tradition in Poland, but science diplomacy (SD) entered the national agenda only in 2015, when it was defined as a part of public diplomacy (Szkarałat, 2020). Even though there is no separate SD strategy, other government documents suggest that research and science cooperation is high on the list of priorities. The Foreign Policy Strategy (2017-2021) includes “measures to promote instruments supporting the development of modern technologies and innovation by Polish entities, including the Horizon 2020 program” (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). The program of cooperation with the Polish diaspora aims to balance out ‘brain drain’ and ‘brain gain’: “the Polish government will encourage scientists of Polish origin to transfer their scientific activity to Poland” (qtd. in Szkarałat, 2020). Other measures include building networks and channels of cooperation and presenting Poland as a reliable partner and a country of scientific excellence. The latter is closely related to the formation of the Polska Brand, with science among the five priority areas (ibid.).

Apart from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the departments of international cooperation and innovation and development at the Ministry of Education set out the direction of science diplomacy. Additionally, there are three implementing agencies: the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA), the National Science Centre, and the National Centre for Research and Development. Another category are the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Foundation for Polish Science. The Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) is particularly active internationally with scientific centres in Paris, Rome, Vienna, a representative office in Kyiv, the Historical Research Centre in Berlin, and the Polish Science Contact Agency PolSCA in Brussels. The 2017-established Polish Institute of Advanced Studies (PIASt) works to promote Poland as a leader in research in the field of humanities and social sciences (Szkarałat, 2020).

At present, Polish science is at a lower stage of internationalisation, relying primarily on cooperation with more experienced partners so it can learn from them and improve its own system. European research networks in particular have been instrumental in this knowledge transfer. Polish research has benefited from its participation in the EU framework program, Horizon 2020. With over €700 million awarded, Poland is in the middle range (15<sup>th</sup> out of 28) based on the amount of funding awarded. Spain, Germany, France, and Italy were most sought-after research partners (EC, 2020).

### 3.4. Foreign Media

#### *Television*

In line with its mission of public broadcasting, the Polish Television (*Telewizja Polska S.A.*) provides information for the Polish communities abroad via its channel, TVP Polonia (since 1993). With the motto “Everywhere Poles are”, the channel, broadcasting via satellite and cable networks, is mainly targeting the large Polish diaspora worldwide. The station’s main task is therefore preservation of Polish identity, language and culture, as well as dissemination of news from the homeland. The second aim is to enhance the image of Poland abroad, for example by highlighting the tourist potential of the country or various contributions of Poles to the world (National Centre for Culture, 2016). Still, the reach and profile of TVP Polonia channel remain low. Polish broadcasting (public television channels TVP1, TVP2, etc) is much more successful in the border regions of Poland inhabited by many ethnic Poles and people interested to learn Polish for practical reasons (Miodunka et al., 2018).

#### *Radio*

Polish compatriots abroad could access information about their native country as early as 1936 when *Polskie Radio dla Zagranicy* (Polish Radio External Service) officially launched on airwaves. Similar to TVP Polonia, the radio station’s mission is to promote a positive image of Poland abroad and strengthen the bond between Poland and Polish communities around the world. Also known as Channel 5 of the public service Polish Radio, the station broadcasts programs on current affairs in Poland and Poland’s perspective on global developments. *Polskie Radio dla Zagranicy* is available in 6 languages: Belarussian, English, German, Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian, with a dedicated website in each of the languages. All shortwave transmissions ceased in 2013, so the service is only present online.

#### *New Media*

The promotion of culture follows in the digital domain. Culture.pl, an online magazine and culture encyclopedia is a brand of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute (AMI) which presents Polish culture abroad as well as international cultural exchange. The website is published in Polish, English, and Russian, and sometimes hosts pages in languages of the countries that are currently of interest for the AMI. A continuing project, ([www.asia.culture.pl](http://www.asia.culture.pl)), promoting Polish culture in Asia is published in 5 languages: Polish, English, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese (National Centre for Culture, 2016).

## 4. Challenges and future outlook

The post-1989 Polish external cultural policy has a relatively short history and as such can hardly match the countries with a continuous diplomatic tradition, such as the United Kingdom, Germany or France. On the other hand, Poland has more than earned its position as a middle-tier player in ECP. The country draws its strength from a very large diaspora and an enduring cultural imprint. Polish icons such as Maria Skłodowska-Curie, Mikolaj Kopernik, or Fryderyk Chopin, are household names around the world.

Poland has worked tirelessly on its “Polska” vision. The Adam Mickiewicz Institute was founded to promote a positive image of modern and creative Poland. One aspect of active branding was to neutralise any negative stereotypes of Poland and Poles and build a positive perception of a nation which historically and culturally belongs to Europe. The underlying narrative was that Poland is a success story, a post-socialist society which succeeded in its political and economic transformation. However, recently the country’s standing looks under threat. Despite many laudable efforts, the current leadership has been withdrawing on its commitment to the Polska brand and so failed to reciprocate the hard work of its predecessors (Jurkiewicz-Eckert, 2014).

Building a strong national brand and positive image abroad can be a daunting task. Opinion studies suggest that foreigners predominantly associate Poland with historical events like the Second World War and communism, and more spontaneous associations include Polish cuisine, religion/Catholicism, and well-known cities like Warsaw and Kraków (Lemanowicz, 2017). Polish cultural institutions are leaders in heritage protection and their European counterparts can learn from their example. But for all that, the Polska brand should also be associated with more contemporary and positive aspects as a counterweight to “the martyrdom-filled visions of Poland which continue to linger on in the world” (Jurkiewicz-Eckert, 2014). In order to achieve a balance of sorts, Polish external cultural policy needs to both embrace its history and focus more on the present and contemporary culture. Only in such a way can the Polish heritage and remembrance policy and a modern external cultural policy be reconciled.

The main reason, however, why Polish cultural and educational diplomacy has been pushed to the outskirts is the limited budget and fragmented action. The findings by the Supreme Audit Office (NIK), the state watchdog, revealed a number of shortcomings in the Polish approach to ECP. The main reasons included the lack of consistent strategy and defined priorities, as well as inadequate financing of relevant institutions and projects. The analysis showed that ECP activities were not properly planned and monitored. Poland’s promotional events abroad have so far borne little fruit since they were randomly scattered with no distinctive direction (Supreme Audit Office, 2019b). Poland certainly has a lot to offer, both as a nation of culture and as a promising education market, but it cannot continue to make strides unless these issues are addressed.



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