

PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE  
AT GENEVA



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A GENEVE

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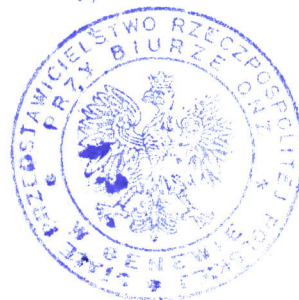
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The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honour to transmit herewith the reply of the Government of the Republic of Poland to *Questionnaire on Access to Cultural Heritage* sent by Ms. Farida Shaheed, the Independent Expert in the field of cultural rights.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 20 December 2010



Enclosure - 12 pages

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Geneva

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**RESPONSE  
TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE  
ON ACCESS TO CULTURAL HERITAGE  
BY THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND**

**I. THE RECOGNITION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**1. Classification of cultural heritage assets**

The legal basis for recognition of cultural heritage in Poland is enshrined in the Act of 23 July 2003 *on the protection of monuments and the guardianship of monuments*. The Act enacts classification of all the types of cultural heritage subjected to protection and guardianship:

- 1) monument – real estate or a movable, their parts or complexes, being the work of human being, or connected with their activity, and constituting a testimony of the past epoch or event, the preservation of which is in the social interest because of historical, artistic, or scientific value;
- 2) immovable monument – real estate, its part, or a complex of the real estate referred to in point 1);
- 3) movable monument – a movable, its part, or a complex of the movables referred to in point 1);
- 4) archaeological monument – an immovable monument situated on the ground, underground, or underwater remains of the existence and activity of human being consisting of cultural strata, and products, or their traces contained in them, or the movable monument being such product;
- 5) historical urban or rural layout – urban or rural spatial layout, including building complexes, individual buildings and forms of designed greenery, placed in the layout of historical ownership and functional divisions, including streets or chains of roads;
- 6) historical building complex – space-related group of buildings, distinguished due to architectural form, style, materials used, function, time of construction, or connection with historical events;
- 7) cultural landscape – historically-shaped space as a result of human being activity, containing products of civilization and elements of nature;
- 8) surroundings – area around, or at a monument, specified in the decision on entering it into the Inventory of Monuments in order to protect the viewing value of such monument, and to protect it against the harmful influence of external factors;

Article 6 of the Act specifies the following **categories** of monuments:

- 1) immovable monuments, in particular:
  - a) cultural landscapes,
  - b) urban and rural layouts as well as building complexes,
  - c) works of architecture and construction industry,
  - d) works of defense construction,
  - e) technology sites, in particular mines, ironworks, glass works etc., electric power stations, and other industry plants,



- f) cemeteries,
- g) parks, gardens and other forms of designed greenery,
- h) places commemorating historical events, or activity of the outstanding personalities, or institutions.

2) movable monuments, in particular:

- a) works of plastic arts, craftsmanship, and utilitarian art,
- b) collections of objects gathered and arranged according to the concept of their creators,
- c) numismatic pieces, historical mementos, including in particular military accessories, standards, stamps, badges, medals, and decorations,
- d) technology products, including in particular, machines, means of transport as well as machines and tools being a testimony of material culture, characteristic of old and new forms of economy, indicating the level of science and the development of civilization,
- e) library materials,
- f) musical instruments,
- g) works of folk art, handicrafts and other ethnographic objects,
- h) things commemorating historical events, or activity of the outstanding personalities, or institutions.

3) archaeological monuments, in particular:

- a) ground remains of primeval and historical settlements,
- b) graveyards,
- c) barrows,
- d) relics of the economic, religious, and artistic activity.

Geographical, historical, or traditional names of a building, square, street, or settlement can be protected as well.

## 2. Purpose of classification

General purpose of this classification is to provide care for all types of cultural monuments entered into Inventory of Monuments (established by the Act of 23 July 2003) that is one of the main tool of their protection on different levels. A proper management of valuable historical monuments is therefore possible via the register of historical monuments, which translates into providing them with legal protection and permanent conservator's supervision.

## 3. Procedure for identifying cultural heritage

The Inventory of Monuments designed for monuments on the territory of a voivodship (the highest level unit of local government, a region) is kept by the Voivodship Inspector of Monuments.

- 1) An immovable monument is entered into the Inventory following decision of the Voivodship Inspector of Monuments *ex officio*, or at the request of an immovable monument's owner, or a perpetual usufructer of the land on which the immovable monument is placed. The surroundings of monument as well as all intangible values thereof, including geographical, historical, or traditional name of the monument can also be entered into the Inventory. The entry of an urban or rural layout, or a historical building complex into the Inventory does not exclude the possibility of issuing a



decision on entering the immovable monuments included in these layouts or complexes into the Inventory.

The entry of an immovable monument into the Inventory is indicated in a land and mortgage book of the real estate at the request of the Voivodship Inspector of Monuments, based on the decision of entering this monument into the Inventory. The decision to enter an immovable monument into the Inventory at the request of the Voivodship Inspector of Monuments is the basis of entry in the Real Estate Cadastral Survey.

- 2) A movable monument is entered into the Inventory based on the decision issued by the Voivodship Inspector of Monuments at the request of the monument's owner. The Voivodship Inspector of Monuments may issue *ex officio* a decision on entering a movable monument into the Inventory if there is a justified concern that the monument might be destroyed, damaged, or illegally exported.

The Chief of Executive of the District (the second-highest level unit of local government in Poland) in consultation with the Voivodship Inspector of Monuments may place on the monument entered into the Inventory a sign informing that the monument is subject to protection.

Generally, the monument inventory system on state- and local level in Poland looks as follows:

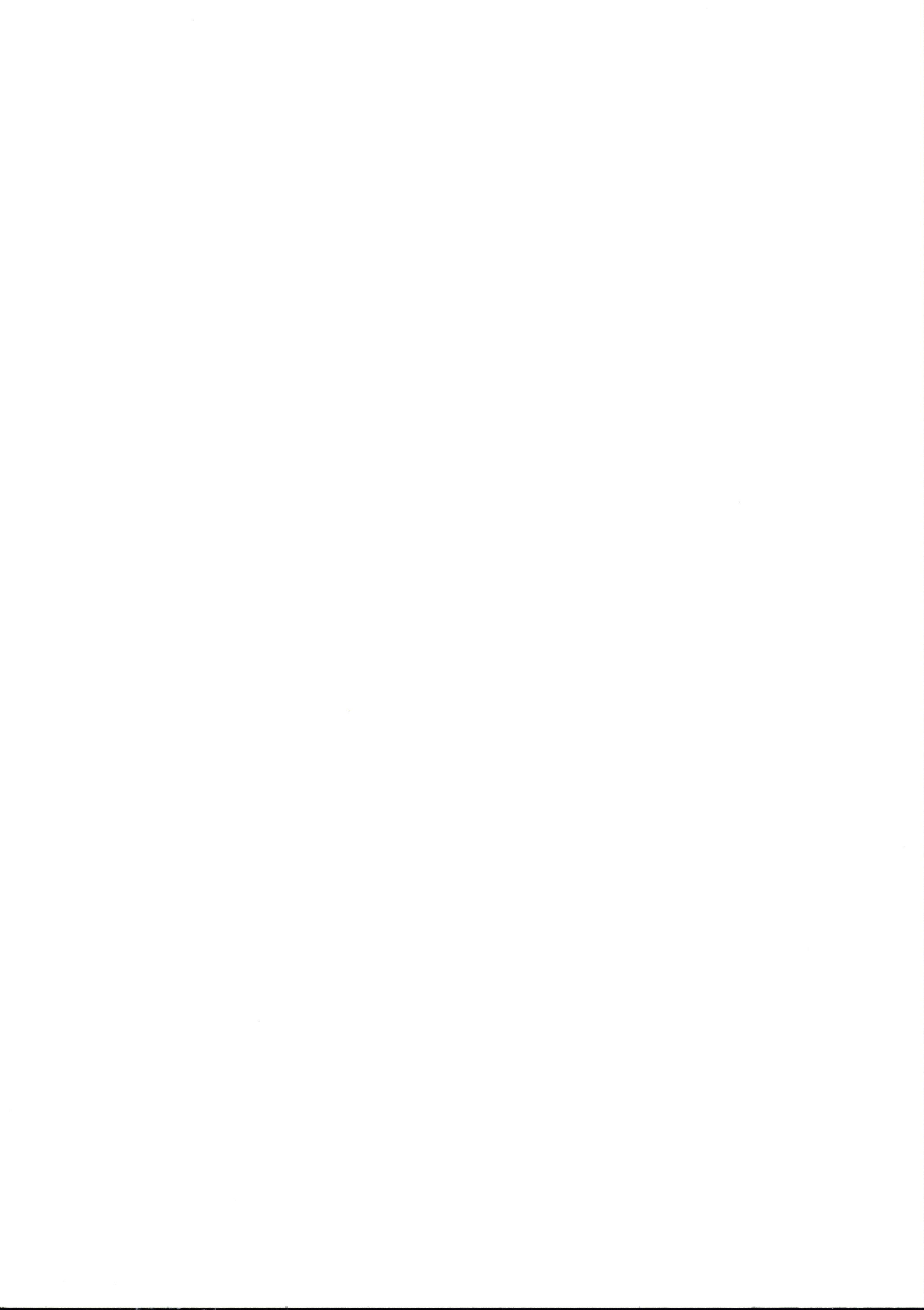
- 1) the General Inspector of Monuments keeps the National Monuments Inventory in the form of the collection of the monument survey files found in the Voivodships Monuments Inventories;
- 2) the Voivodship Inspector of Monuments keeps the Voivodship Monuments Inventory in the form of survey files of the monuments placed on the territory of a voivodship;
- 3) the inclusion to the Voivodship Monuments Inventory of a survey file of a movable monument that is not entered into the Inventory follows the consent of monument's owner;
- 4) the Chief Administrator of a Commune (the lowest level unit of local government in Poland) keeps the Commune Monuments Inventory in the form of the file of address cards of the commune immovable monuments that are included into the Voivodship Monuments Inventory.

## **II. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Poland recognizes that human rights which relate to cultural diversity and integrity encompass a wide range of protections, including: the right to cultural participation; the right to enjoy the arts; conservation, development and diffusion of culture; protection of cultural heritage; freedom for creative activity; protection of persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities; freedom of assembly and association; the right to education; freedom of thought, conscience or religion; freedom of opinion and expression; and the principle of non-discrimination.

### **1. International law**

Poland attaches great importance to the promotion of human rights, including cultural rights. Therefore we are a party to the *International Bill of Human Rights (The International*





*Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).*

Apart from that Poland is a party to the following international agreements:

1. Concluded under the auspices of UNESCO:

- 1) Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the Hague, 14 May, 1954 (ratified in 1956);
- 2) Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, Paris, 17 November, 1970 (ratified in 1974);
- 3) Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Paris, 16 November, 1972, ratified in 1976. (As part of the convention, a List of World Cultural and Natural Heritage is operated);
- 4) UNESCO Convention on Protection and Promotion of Cultural Diversity, Paris, 20 October, 2005 (ratified in 2007);
- 5) Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, Paris, 2 November, 2001 (the ratification procedure has been launched)
- 6) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Paris, 17 October, 2003 (the ratification procedure has been launched).

2. Concluded under the auspices of the Council of Europe

- 1) the European Convention on the Archaeological Heritage from La Valetta (ratified on 30 January 1992);
- 2) the European Landscape Convention, Florence (ratified on 24 June, 2004).
- 3) Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe from Granada, 1985 (the ratification procedure has already been launched).

As far as the protection of vulnerable groups (cultural, ethnic and linguistic minorities, children or persons with disabilities etc.) is concerned Poland is a party to the following acts:

- 1) *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* of 7 March 1966 and
- 2) *Convention on the Rights of the Child* of 20 November 1989.

The most important international documents on the rights of national minorities Poland is a party to are:

- 1) the Council of Europe *Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities*, ratified on 10 November 2000 and
- 2) the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* signed in 2003

As a party to the above-mentioned acts Poland is obliged to report regularly on their implementation if such obligation is stated in the provisions established by these acts.

## **2. Domestic law**

Under Polish law every human being has the right to culture, including the right to enjoy and develop cultural life and identity. In this connection claiming cultural relativism as an excuse to violate or deny human rights is an abuse of the right to culture.

The domestic legal framework of cultural heritage preservation in Poland, which contains provisions of the international treaties already mentioned, is primarily set forth in the *Constitution of the Republic of Poland*, the *Act of the 23 July, 2003 on the protection of*



*monuments and the guardianship of monuments* and other legal acts indirectly related to the cultural heritage preservation, including:

- 1) Act of 7 July, 1994 – *Construction Law*,
- 2) Act of 27 March, 2003 *on Land Planning and Development*,
- 3) Act of 3 October, 2008 *on Provision of Access to the Information Related to Environment and Environmental Protection, Societal Involvement in Environmental Protection and Assessment of the Environmental Impact*,
- 4) Act of 6 June, 1997 – *Criminal Code*,
- 5) Act of 16 April, 2004 *on Environmental Protection*

and relevant executory acts.

As per the provisions of the Constitution, the Republic of Poland guards the national heritage and ensures environmental protection, adhering to the principle of sustainable development and sets conditions for popularization and equal availability of the cultural resources which make up the identity of the Polish nation, its continued existence and development.

According to the above-mentioned acts the principal **objective of the State** in the area of heritage preservation is to manage heritage resources in line with the binding law and principle of sustainable development. The bodies of public administration undertake the activities aiming to:

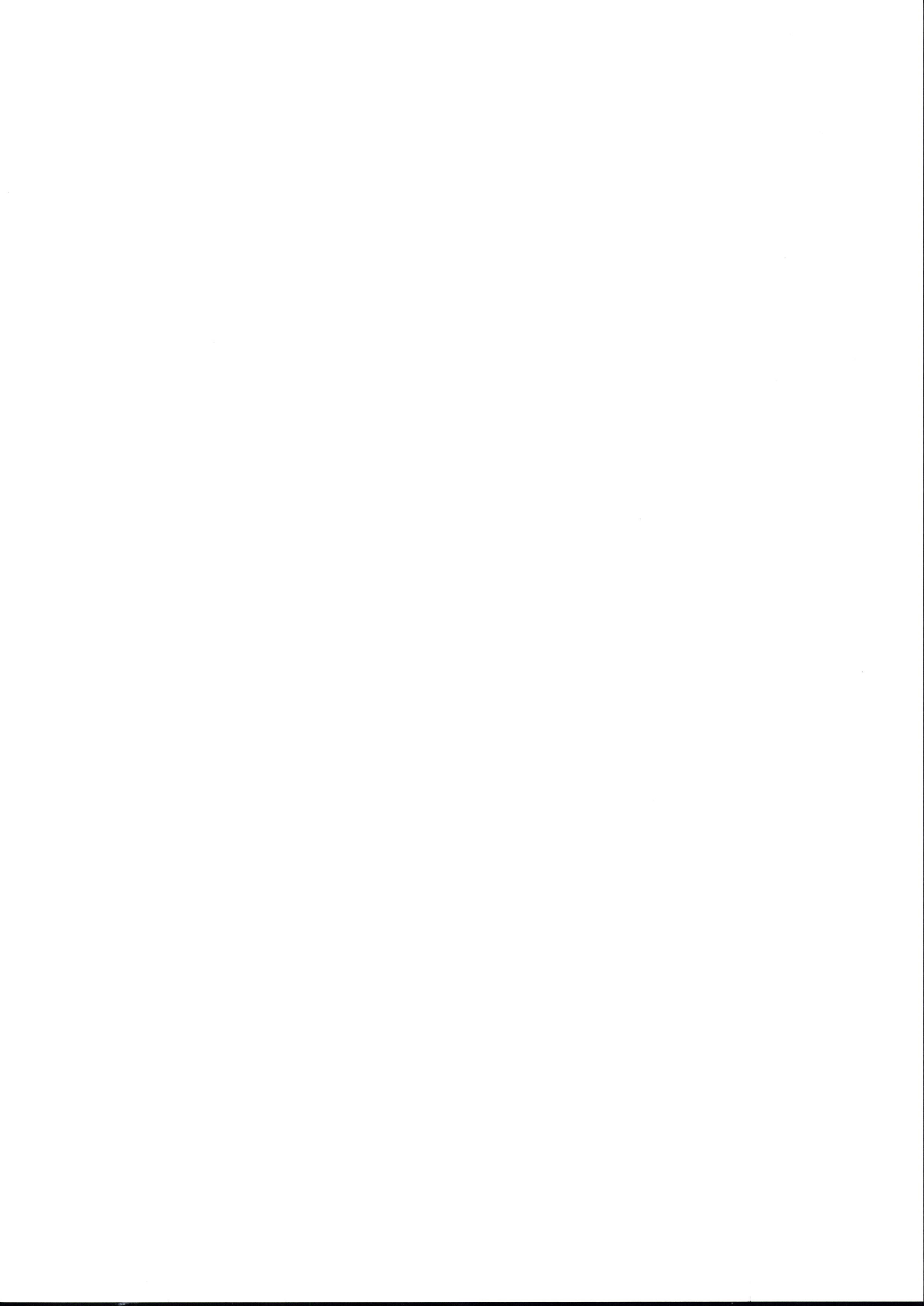
- 1) ensure legal, organizational and financial conditions facilitating permanent preservation, management and maintenance of historical monuments,
- 2) prevent hazards that could damage the value of historical monuments,
- 3) prevent devastation and inappropriate use of historical monuments,
- 4) counteract theft, loss or illegal export of historical monuments,
- 5) inspect the preservation condition and intended use of historical monuments,
- 6) incorporate the preservation objectives into development and environmental planning and management,
- 7) protect Polish cultural heritage abroad.

**The central administration** (the Minister of Culture and National Heritage represented by the General Monument Inspector and Voivods, who, in turn, are represented by the Regional Monument Inspectors) is responsible for:

- 1) legislative work aimed at effective preservation of cultural heritage,
- 2) drawing up “National Programme for Heritage Preservation and Care” (*Krajowy Program Ochrony Zabytków i Opieki nad Zabytkami*),
- 3) proper management of valuable historical monuments by entering them into the inventory of historical monuments (which translates into providing them with legal protection and permanent conservator’s supervision),
- 4) incorporation of the heritage preservation objectives into strategic planning documents concerning development planning.

Furthermore, all archaeological posts are under legal protection of central administration and conservator’s supervision. Special legal and conservation protection is provided to the places entered in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The General Monument Inspector, the Regional Monument Inspector and the Centre for Protection of Public Collections participate in and inspect the procedure for export of historical monuments. The central administration is also responsible for



The preservation and care of historic monuments is partly-financed by the public administration, mainly by operating a subsidy programme of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and Voivods' funds.

The protection of cultural heritage **abroad** is one of the most important tasks of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage (the Department of Cultural Heritage). It concerns both heritage left in the East – in the area belonging now to Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia and Ukraine – as well as left by many generations of Polish emigrants to Western Europe and the states of both Americas.

Personnel training on heritage preservation and management is conducted by a number of state institutions (e.g. the National Heritage Board of Poland, the Centre for Protection of Public Collections, the National Culture Centre).

The most important **position in the heritage preservation system** is that of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, who is represented by the General Monument Inspector – the Secretary of State or Deputy Secretary of State in the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

The General Monument Inspector exercises technical supervision (via Heritage Preservation Department) over 16 Regional Monument Inspectors and their offices.

Each Regional Monument Inspector is responsible for the condition and preservation of all the historical monuments situated in the area under his/her competence.

The General Monument Inspector also supervises two expert institutions:

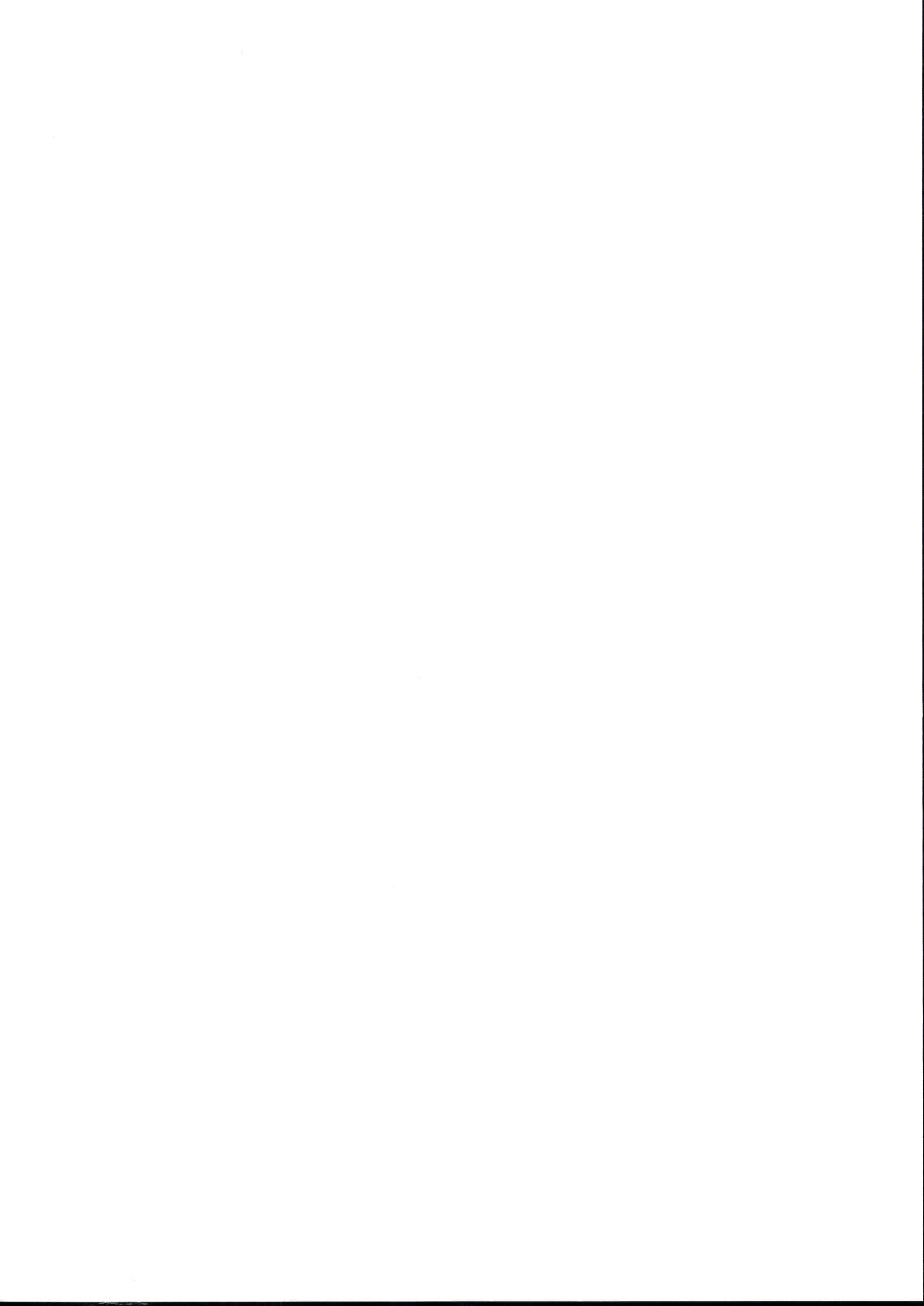
- 1) the National Heritage Board of Poland,
- 2) the Centre for Protection of Public Collections.

These two centres implement the state policy within the scope of cultural heritage preservation and care.

- 1) The National Heritage Board of Poland documents cultural heritage, monitors the condition of historical monuments and archives collections of all the documents related to heritage preservation. It also draws up the rules of heritage preservation. It deals with identifying risks, developing patterns of behavior and implementing standards of conservator's activities. The third crucial objective is to teach and promote heritage, i.e. popularize knowledge of historical monuments and set social conditions for effective preservation of historical monuments.
- 2) The mission of the Centre for Protection of Public Collections includes contribution to the constant improvement of the status of preservation and safeguarding public collections and historical venues, as well as supervising and inspecting implementation of the objectives related to security of public collections; researching and documentation in the area of heritage preservation and care, as well as popularization of historical, artistic and scientific values of the endangered or lost cultural heritage.

**Local government authorities** are also responsible for management of the heritage of regional importance by including conservator's preservation areas in the land development plans and establishment of cultural parks. Entities of the local government are also obliged to operate a commune register of historical monuments and to prepare heritage care programmes which are based on the collected data.

The Act of 5 June, 1998 *on Voivodship Local Government* (regional government) stipulates that the regional local government pursues the objectives of regional nature, including those concerning culture and protection of cultural objects.



Voivodship councils (*sejmik wojewódzki*) co-finance heritage preservation projects (mainly conservation works on registered historical monuments). The usual amount of granted funds is within the range of 50-75% of the value of the works and is transferred on their completion.

The private funds for heritage preservation are primarily provided at the level of investments in revitalization of fixed historical monuments. However, no statistic records on such activities are available.

### **3. Participation of civil society**

In 2009 around 75,000 NGOs were registered in Poland 13% of which were active in the domain of culture. In 2004, this number amounted to approximately 11.5%. A research conducted at that time showed that almost a half of them (42%) operated in the field of preservation of historical monuments and the sites of national remembrance and preservation of national or regional traditions.

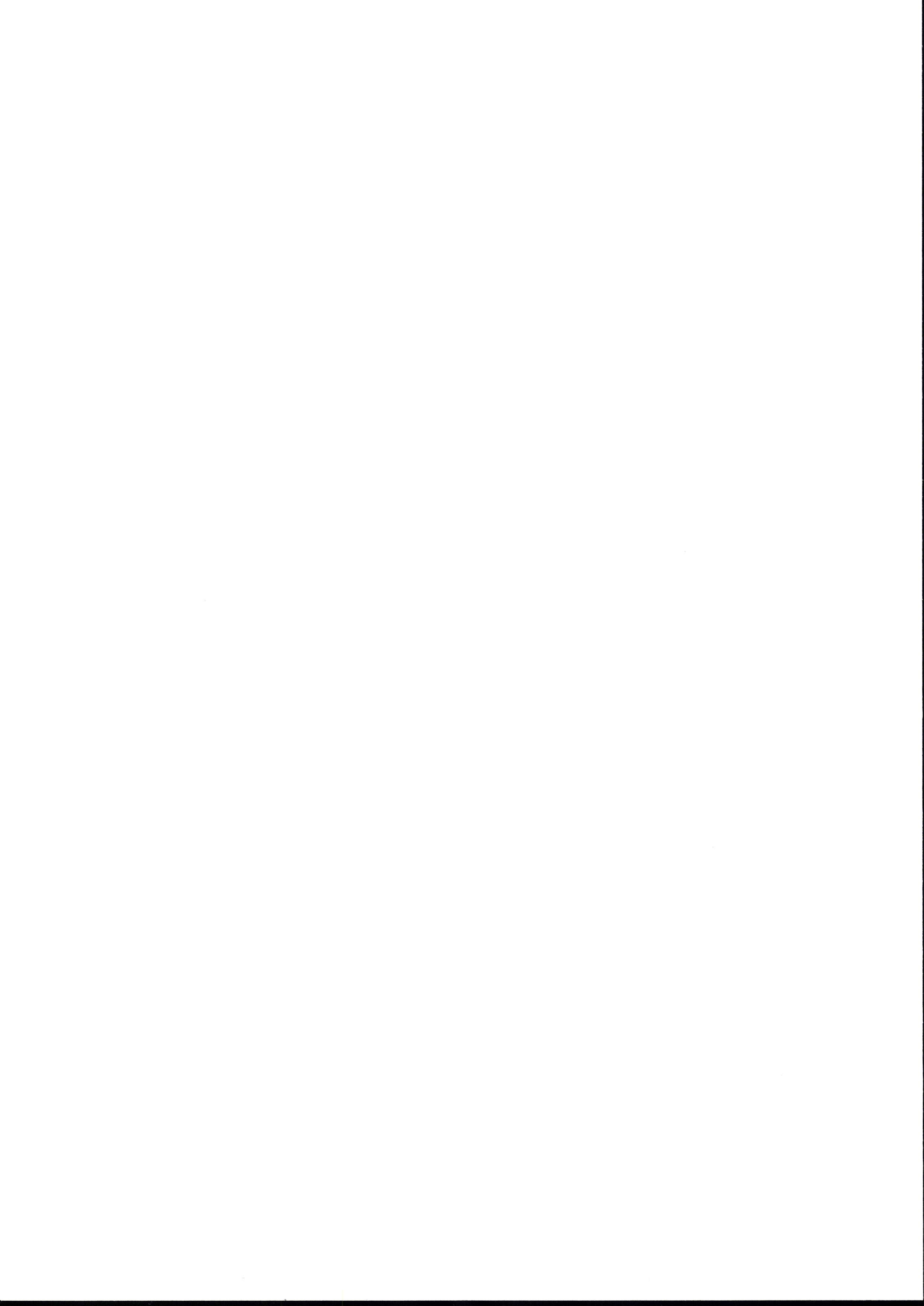
The most important NGOs dealing with the heritage issues include:

- 1) Scientific Association of Polish Archaeologists (*Stowarzyszenie Naukowe Archeologów Polskich*) – associating specialists on archaeology and prehistoric studies and the fields related to them; it operates within the area of archaeological scientific research, preservation and conservation of archaeological monuments and museology;
- 2) Association of Monument Conservators (*Stowarzyszenie Konserwatorów Zabytków*) – associating monument conservators, specialists on various fields related to preservation and conservation and those acting for cultural heritage;
- 3) Association of Art Historians (*Stowarzyszenie Historyków Sztuki*) – associating representatives of art historians' community and people professionally or socially involved in researching art and historical monuments;
- 4) Association of Polish Artists (*Związek Polskich Artystów Plastyków*) – associating artists, including those committed to conservation and restoration of historical monuments and artworks;
- 5) Society for Preservation of Historical Monuments (*Towarzystwo Opieki nad Zabytkami*) – its objectives include: increasing society's awareness of the significance of cultural heritage as an important measure of national identity, promotion of the need for care of historical monuments and cultural landscape, as well as furthering the knowledge on historical monuments and provision of direct care to the historical venues and historical complexes;
- 6) Centre for Citizenship Education (*Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej*) – a foundation operating throughout Poland, particularly amongst pupils and teachers. The programmes offered by the Centre for Citizenship Education are implemented by the pupils' teams and approach the care of heritage as a tool to shape the civil society;
- 7) Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society (*Polskie Towarzystwo Turystyczno-Krajoznawcze*) – popularising adventure tourism and sightseeing in Poland;

### **4. Access to cultural heritage of national minorities**

The most important legal ensuring, protecting and promoting access of national minorities to cultural heritage include:

- 1) *The Constitution of the Republic of Poland,*
- 2) *The Elections Statute,*
- 3) *Act on Associations*
- 4) *Act on the Polish language,*





- 5) *Act on Education,*
- 6) *Act on Radio Broadcasting and Television,*
- 7) *The Penal Code,*
- 8) *Act on the protection of personal data,*

as well as the following executory Regulations by the Minister of National Education:

- 1) *on education sustaining national, ethnic and linguistic identity of pupils, members of national minorities,*
- 2) *Regulation increasing educational subsidies to national minority schools by 20% and 50 % compared to other schools.*

Apart from international treaties aimed at protection of vulnerable groups mentioned above, provisions on the rights of individual national minorities are included in bilateral treaties between Poland and its neighbors.

The *Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and on regional languages* regulates the issues of the maintenance and development of the respective cultural identity of national and ethnic minorities, the preservation and development of the regional language, and the observance of the principle of equal treatment of individuals irrespective of their ethnic descent.

It also defines the duties and powers of state and local administration in this regard.

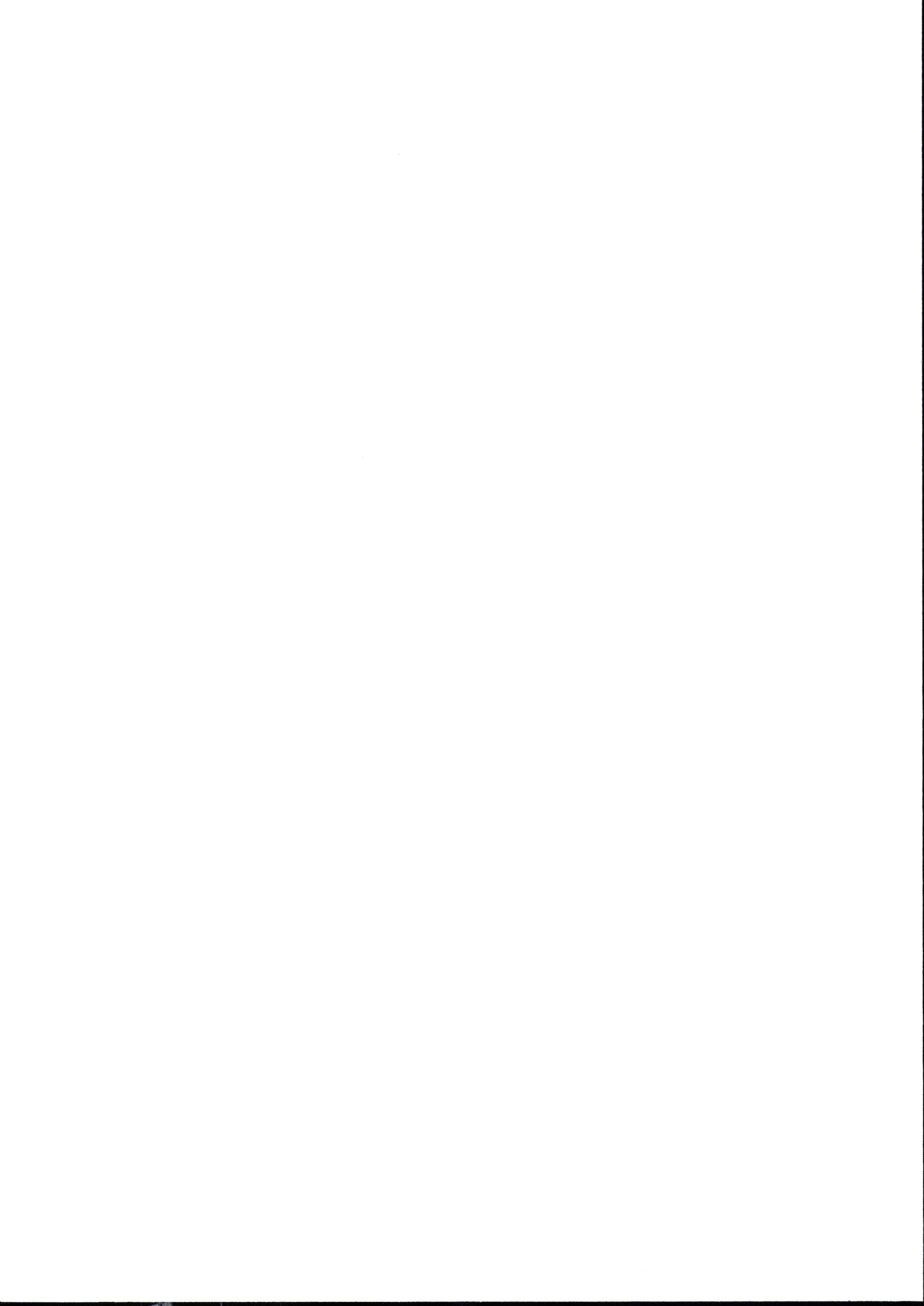
By the virtue of the Act the use of a minority language is enhanced. Persons belonging to a minority have the right to use and spell their first and last names (in particular in the official register and identity documents) according to the spelling rules of their respective minority language. They may use freely their minority language in public and private life, spread and exchange information in their minority language, run information of a private nature in their minority language, learn their minority language or to be instructed in this language. Minority language can be used as a supportive in the community.

Polish law vests national minorities with other fundamental rights which refer to the freedom to cherish their customs and traditions and to develop their own culture (e.g. the right to unrestricted religious practice). The minorities are encouraged to establish their own educational and cultural organizations.

Under Polish law public authorities are obliged to take appropriate measures in order to support the activity aimed at protection, maintenance and development of cultural identity of the minority. These measures referred may, in particular, include targeted grants and core grants to finance:

- 1) the activities of cultural institutions, artistic movement and folk art of minorities, artistic events of significance for the minority culture,
- 2) investments contributing to the preservation of minority cultural identity,
- 3) publication of books, journals, periodicals and leaflets in minority or Polish language in the printed form or by the use of other video and sound recording techniques,
- 4) support for TV and radio programmes made by the minorities,
- 5) protection of places associated with minority,
- 6) activities of local cultural centers,
- 7) maintenance of libraries and documentation of minority cultural and artistic life,
- 8) education of children and youth, effected in various forms,
- 9) promotion of knowledge on minorities,
- 10) other programmes promoting civic integration of minorities.

The minister in charge of religious denominations and national and ethnic minorities is in charge of issues covered by the above-mentioned Act. He/she operates through the local governors who are responsible for coordination of the activities of the government



administration agencies within the territory of his/her administration. They carry out tasks for the benefit of a minority in cooperation with minority organizations.

Consequently, numerous artistic and educational initiatives aimed at promotion and protection of cultural heritage of national and ethnic minorities are supported on the governmental level. Public sponsoring is given to minorities' cultural events e.g. festivals, and concerts. The state finances choirs, orchestras, cultural centers, libraries as well as publication of periodicals in minority languages.

It also co-finances the activity of important cultural centers of research and education dedicated to the issues of cultural heritage of minorities, such as Jewish Historic Institute or the Borderland Foundation in Sejny.

As regards the Roma minority a special governmental *Programme for the Roma community* for the years 2004 – 2013 has been established. It contains numerous elements of intervention in various areas: education, struggle against unemployment, health, living conditions, preserving and propagating the Roma culture, dissemination of knowledge of Roma people in the Polish society.

The implementation of the programme brings better preservation of Roma culture, as well as create conditions for better access for this minority to cultural heritage on national level.

## **5. Dissemination of knowledge on the protection of historical monuments**

The major burden of setting trends in teaching and raising the level of knowledge on the protection of historical monuments rests upon central and local state institutions, such as the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, the Regional Monument Inspector, the National Heritage Board of Poland, the Centre for Protection of Cultural Collections.

They are committed to organisation of country-wide campaigns and protection of historical monuments, cooperating, among others, with state services preventing crimes against cultural heritage.

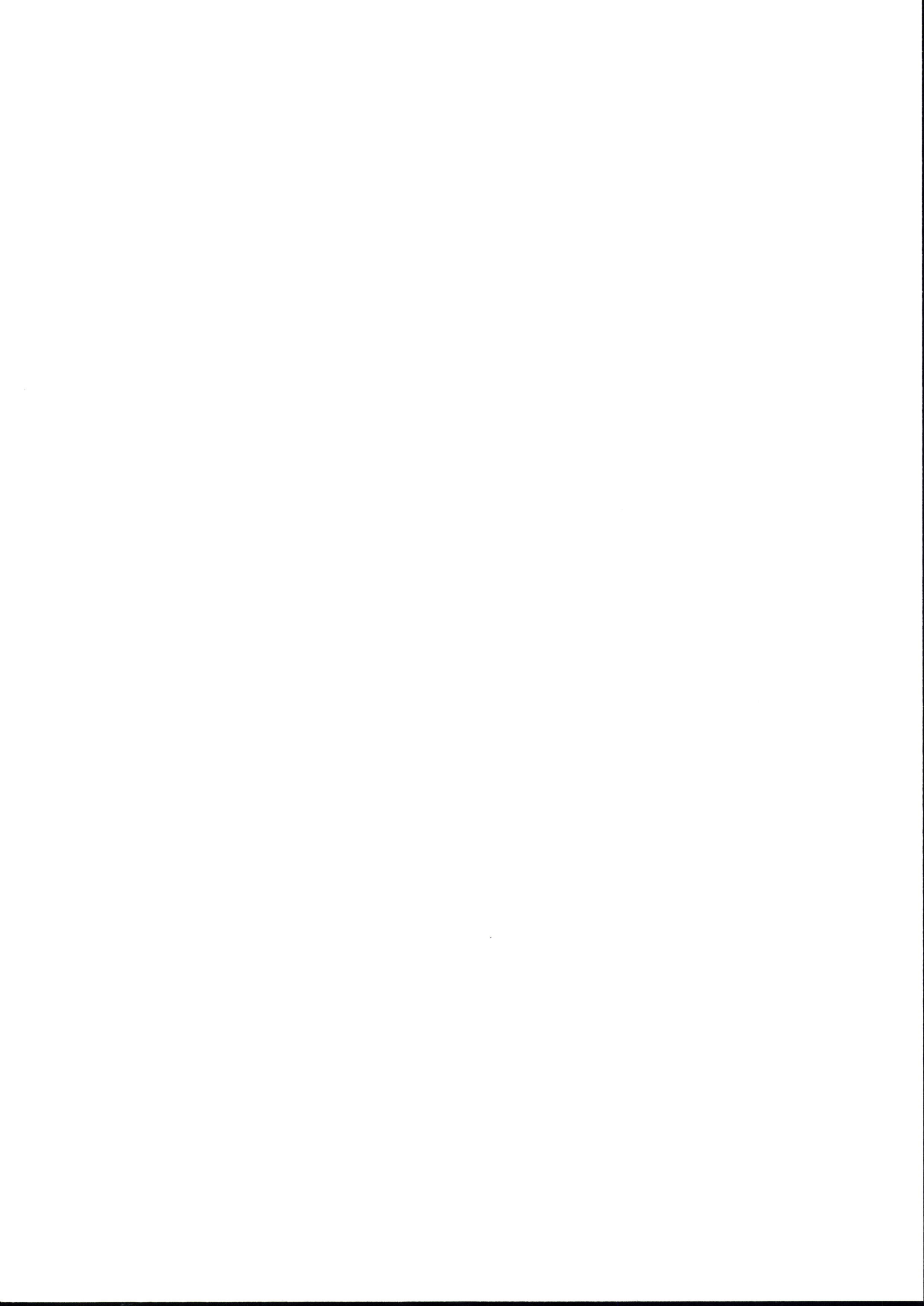
Apart from that the state institutions at the local level are responsible for management of subordinate cultural institutions, including museums and cultural centers. Educational activities are one of their most important tasks.

Education plays a significant role in the promotion of the idea of heritage protection. People wishing to build up their knowledge on heritage and historical monuments may pick from a wide range of the fields of studies at higher-education artistic and technological colleges and universities.

An opportunity of raising the skills in the field of cultural heritage preservation and management is also offered by post-graduate studies and courses run by the higher-education colleges.

The core of activities in the area of heritage is to prepare personnel able to cope with the challenges posed by the modern protection of the heritage. This requires from the conservators to know more about economy, theory of management, marketing, as well as law and public administration.

It is also important to shape modern attitudes towards cultural heritage. It is a superior objective of the *Academy of Heritage* established in Kraków in 2001 by among others the International Cultural Centre. The International Cultural Centre organized more than 50 summer sessions attended by over 1600 participants so far. A majority of students and young professionals come from the Central and Eastern Europe, but many of them come from the USA, the Republic of South Africa and from the Asian countries.



Young people may also use the opportunity of providing active care of the heritage by voluntary involvement in the activities of NGOs.

Thanks to the numerous cultural events held as part of the European Heritage Days, the social awareness (including the young people) of the benefits from investments in the care of heritage in the society is on the rise. Such events take many forms, e.g.: historical monument open days, fairs, scientific picnics and country-wide campaign such as the Museum Night or the European Heritage Days.

The media also contribute to this. The Internet is probably the biggest in terms of the size of reach and audience. A number of websites dedicated to the issue in question is substantial and most sites are created by science lovers.

The themes related to heritage are also presented on TV, the radio and in the press. In the context of the issues in question, the nature of the media may be distinguished as general or specialist.

The former deal with material heritage sporadically, mainly on the occasion of holidays, important anniversaries or by means of separate thematic sections on culture, art or science.

The specialist media on the other hand reach mainly niche audiences by means of thematic TV channels or magazines (e.g. „*Mówią Wieki*”, „*Zabytki*” – monthlies, „*Spotkania z Zabytkami*” – bimonthly, „*Renowacje i zabytki*”, „*Ochrona Zabytków*”, „*Archeologia Żywa*” – quarterlies and „*Muzealnictwo*” – a yearbook. Other magazines, such as „*Wiedza i Życie*” and “National Geographic” offer a section addressing the domain in question).

The heritage-related themes have been extensively researched. Specialist (e.g. archaeological) research may be undertaken by anybody who is interested in heritage and has appropriate skills. These issues are regulated by the free market mechanisms.

## **6. International cooperation**

In order to exchange opinions and gain expertise in the domain of protection and promotion of cultural heritage Polish experts co-operate with **international networks** such as:

- 1) European Heritage Legal Forum;
- 2) Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea States,
- 3) International Committee for Museum Security,
- 4) European Heritage Forum;
- 5) European Heritage Heads Forum,
- 6) Europae Archaeologiae Consilium,
- 7) International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS),
- 8) International Council of Museums (ICOM),
- 9) Europa Nostra,
- 10) RIHA (International Association of Research Institutes in the History of Art),
- 11) Comité international d'histoire d'art ASEM;
- 12) INTACH;
- 13) European Heritage Network HEREIN,

and others.

## **III. ACCESS TO CULTURAL HERITAGE**

### **1. Access to cultural objects**

Equal access for all citizens to the national heritage is stipulated in Article 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, stating that *the Republic of Poland ensures the*



*conditions for promotion and equal access to the cultural property which is a source of national identity of the Polish nation, its continued existence and development.*

Nevertheless, public access to the cultural objects depends on the kind of their ownership. The following types of ownership can be distinguished in Poland: private property, churches and religious associations, local government entities and the state.

It should be stressed that a private owner of a building is not obliged to provide access to their possession for the society, although they must provide access to such a building for any research purposes.

## **2. Heritage information system**

The access to cultural heritage is facilitated by a well-developed **heritage information system**. Maps and guides published in traditional and on-line versions are available. The Specialist Integrated Heritage Information System, a database on historical monuments as a basic working tool for historical monuments preservation services, is currently being developed. When completed, it will enable management of national and local historical monuments data collections, thus facilitating effective protection and efficient management of cultural heritage. As a further priority, anybody concerned will enjoy access to the information stored in the system.

## **3. Digitisation of data on historical monuments and museum items**

Having regard to the preservation of the data on cultural heritage as well as wide public access to them Poland has already launched the process of digitisation of data on historical monuments and museum items whose implementation is scheduled for the years 2009-2020 (*"Programme of digitisation of cultural achievements and the collection, storage and dissemination of digital objects in Poland, 2009-2020"*). The programme designed to popularise Polish historical output worldwide, defines the state policy on digitisation of cultural heritage in Poland, which aims at preserving Polish cultural heritage (including archives, museum exhibits, manuscripts, books, music, films and audiovisual materials) for the future generations.

An institution responsible for the carrying out of the programme is the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage working in co-operation with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

In the framework of the Programme The Minister of Culture and National Heritage has appointed 4 institutions of culture:

- 1) National Heritage Board of Poland - responsible for digitisation of monuments and museum exhibits,
- 2) National Library- digitisation of library collections,
- 3) National Digital Archive - digitisation of the state archives,
- 4) National Audiovisual Institute - digitisation of audiovisual materials.

They are designed to play the role of "centres of competence" in each field of heritage. They tasks include *inter alia*: setting standards for digitisation within the given field, implementing technology changes, preparing trainings and workshops for institutions of culture taking part in the programme of digitisation, co-ordinating the process of digitisation, disseminating digitised information etc.

The objective of this process is to protect original resources and provide Internet access to the registration decisions and register documentation. The digitisation encompasses decisions and entries into the register of historical monuments.





#### **4. Inventorying Programme for the especially endangered historical venues**

An Inventorying Programme for the especially endangered historical venues has been developed. It envisages collection of photometric data on 168 historical venues in Poland and development of an archive of measurement data based on the collected data, including a 3D screen, ground floor projections and sections and, in some cases also orthophotoplans. A basic criterion for a selection of historical monuments was the degree of devastation of the historical monument and a range of other factors, including a lack of basic documentation, the risk of imminent devastation and exceptionality of the form.

#### **5. EU project *Europeana***

On the international level Poland is participating in the European Union project *Europeana* which was launched in 2008, with the goal of making Europe's cultural and scientific heritage accessible to the public. Europeana's collection reaches 10 million items. Free access to Europeana, designed as an Internet portal, enables people to explore the digital resources of Europe's museums, libraries, archives and audio-visual collections. It promotes discovery and networking opportunities in a multilingual space where users can engage, share in and be inspired by the rich diversity of Europe's cultural and scientific heritage.

Europeana collection include:

- 1) images - paintings, drawings, maps, photos and pictures of museum objects
- 2) texts - books, newspapers, letters, diaries and archival papers
- 3) sounds - music and spoken word from cylinders, tapes, discs and radio broadcasts
- 4) videos - films, newsreels and TV broadcasts

Polish National Library is a partner in this project together with renowned institutions (e.g. British Library, Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam or Louvre in Paris).

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Through many years Poland has succeeded in developing a multilevel and multilateral system of preservation, protection and promotion of cultural heritage, taking into consideration rich history and traditions belonging to various cultural and ethnic groups. It is based on a complex legal basis which includes both international and national provisions. However, the implementation of the legislative acts constantly needs joint efforts of various stakeholders – public authorities, institutions, organizations, centers of research and civil society.

In the age of globalization the issue of building awareness of the importance of cultural heritage is one of primordial tasks addressed to the young generations. The education in this regard should be progressively introduced to the overall system of education, both formal and informal, with the use of ITC tools. The process of digitalization means better access for the society to the vast collections of different types of cultural heritage, enriching their knowledge on history and cultural diversity of the nation.

