

Congress on Minorities
National and Ethnic Minorities in Poland and Europe
– Society, Politics, State
Opole, 23–24 September 2025 (Tuesday–Wednesday)

Honorary Patronage:
Tomasz Siemoniak
Minister of the Interior and Administration

Motto:

Democracy is not the law of the majority, but the protection of the minority.
Albert Camus

Venue: Opole: University of Opole, Opole Regional Assembly, Opole Voivodeship Office

Day I [Tuesday, 23 September 2025]

9:30 AM – Congress Opening

[White Eagle Hall, Opole Regional Assembly, Ostrówek, Opole]

Welcome addresses:

- Marcin Kulasek, Minister of Science and Higher Education, *tbc*
- Jacek Lipok, Rector of the University of Opole
- Szymon Ogłaza, Marshal of the Opole Voivodeship
- Rafał Bartek, Chair of the Opole Regional Assembly
- Monika Jurek, Voivode of the Opole Voivodeship

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM – Opening Panel

National and Ethnic Minorities in Europe – The Value of Multiculturalism

[White Eagle Hall, Opole Regional Assembly, Ostrówek, Opole]

Moderator: Grzegorz Janusz, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin

Panelists:

- Christophe Kamp, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, *tbc*
- Tomasz Siemoniak, Minister of the Interior and Administration
- Wanda Nowicka, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on National and Ethnic Minorities, Polish Sejm
- Davyth Hicks, Secretary General, European Language Equality Network
- Vello Pettai, Director, European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg
- Grzegorz Kuprianowicz, Ukrainian Association in Poland, Co-chair of the Joint Government-Minority Commission for National and Ethnic Minorities

Simultaneous interpretation: Polish–English–German

12:00–12:15 PM – Press Conference

[Rodło Hall, Opole Regional Assembly, Ostrówek, Opole]

12:00–12:30 PM – Lunch

[Opole Regional Assembly, Ostrówek, Opole]

12:30–2:00 PM – Off-site Meeting of the Joint Government–National and Ethnic Minorities Commission

[White Eagle Hall, Opole Regional Assembly, Ostrówek, Opole]

Chairs and Moderators:

- Tomasz Szymański, Secretary of State, Ministry of the Interior and Administration, Co-chair of the Joint Government–National and Ethnic Minorities Commission
- Grzegorz Kuprianowicz, Ukrainian Association in Poland, Co-chair of the Joint Government–National and Ethnic Minorities Commission

Congress participants are welcome to attend the meeting as audience members.

After the meeting of the Joint Commission, the Congress proceedings will continue at the Faculty of Political Science and Social Communication of the University of Opole – Collegium Civitas, Opole, 89 Katowicka Street.

Scientific Forum – Part 1

2:30 PM – 4:15 PM – Opening Panel

Minorities as Both Subject and Object of State Policy

Moderator: Sławomir Łodziński, University of Warsaw

Panelists:

- Aleksandra Oszmiańska-Pagett, Chair of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
- Ingeborg Birnie-Havenga, University of Strathclyde, Scotland
- Ljubica Djordjević, European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg
- Mariola Abkowicz, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Member of the Joint Government–Minorities Commission

Simultaneous interpretation: Polish–English

4:15 PM – 4:30 PM – Coffee Break

4:30 PM – 6:00 PM – Thematic Sections and Discussion Panels

Section 1 (session in Polish and English)

A Microcosm of European Integration? Minorities in European Borderlands

Section linked to the implementation of the B-SHAPES project: *Borders Shaping Perceptions of European Societies* under the Horizon Europe programme.

Moderator: Elżbieta Opiłowska, University of Wrocław

Participants:

- Hynek Böhm (University of Opole)
- Martin Klatt (European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg)
- Józef Szymeczek (Vice-President of the Congress of Poles in the Czech Republic, University of Ostrava)
- Marta Kmeť (Pedagogical Centre for Polish National Minority Education in Český Těšín)

Section 2

Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities: From Theory to Practice – Part 1

This section addresses the analysis of legal regulations concerning national and ethnic minorities and their actual implementation in various countries.

GROUP 1 (session in Polish)

Moderator: Sławomir Łodziński, University of Warsaw

Participants:

- 1) Ewa Pogorzała (University of Rzeszów), *The Polish state's education policy towards national and ethnic minorities – institutional and legal aspects*
- 2) Ewa Michna (Jagiellonian University), *State policy towards minorities from the perspective of representatives of legally protected groups*
- 3) Wojciech Wereszko (University of Wrocław), *Advisory bodies and institutions representing national minorities in state governance and the opinions of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*
- 4) Oskar Zgonina, Aneta Paleczna (University of Silesia / Youth Association of the German Minority in Poland), *Private law in the face of minority rights violations – between the individual and the state*

GROUP 2 (session in English)

Moderator: Craig Willis (Europejskie Centrum Badań nad Mniejszościami we Flensburgu, PLURILINGMEDIA COST Action), tbc

Participants:

- 1) Olgun Akbulut (Visiting Researcher at the European Centre for Minority Issues in Germany and Professor of Human Rights Law at the Faculty of Law, Kadir Has University, Turkey), *The Conundrum Between Minority Rights and Human Rights*
- 2) Daniel Rhianwen (Cardiff University), *Liberal Nationalism and the Decentralisation of National Identity*
- 3) Mattia Zeba (Eurac Research), *Interpreting Linguistic Diversity: The Judiciary and the Legal Boundaries of Minority Language Protection in Italy*
- 4) Aistė Žemaityte (Vytautas Magnus University), *Political Participation and Securitization of Ethnic Minorities in the Public Sphere in Lithuania: Current Trends and Barriers*

Section 3

The Role of Regional and Minority Languages in Preserving Cultural Identity

This section discusses the importance of minority and regional languages for the preservation of cultural identity and their protection in multilingual societies.

GROUP 1 (session in Polish)

Moderator: Cezary Obracht-Prondzyński (University of Gdańsk)

Participants:

- 1) Maciej Mętrak (Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences), *Collateral Languages – Contested Languages. Issues of Varieties Closely Related to the Dominant Language*
- 2) Beata Orłowska (Jakub of Paradyż Academy in Gorzów Wielkopolski), *The Lemko Language as an “Anchor” of Cultural Identity Across Generations*
- 3) Karolina Keler (Pomeranian Voivodeship Office), *The Role of the Kashubian Regional Language in Preserving the Cultural Identity of Pomerania*
- 4) Marzena Muszyńska, Agata Haas (Silesian Institute), *The “Dictionary of Silesian Dialects” as a Tool for Protecting Cultural Heritage and Regional Identity*

GROUP 2 (session in German)

Moderator: Alina Dittmann (State University of Applied Sciences in Nysa)

Participants:

- 1) Nelu Bradean-Ebinger (Corvinus University of Budapest), *Deutsch als Minderheitensprache in Ungarn heute*
- 2) Heiko F. Marten (Leibniz Institute for the German Language), *Typen von Minderheitensprachen im heutigen Europa: Missverständnisse und Widersprüche in gesellschaftlichen und wissenschaftlichen Diskursen*
- 3) Thomas Konhäuser (Cultural Foundation of the German Expellees for Science and Research), *Kulturstiftung der deutschen Vertriebenen für Wissenschaft und Forschung: Tätigkeitsfelder und Einsatz zum Erhalt des kulturellen Erbes*

Section 4

Minority Education: Challenges and Perspectives (session in English)

This section offers an academic reflection on the difficulties and future of minority education, including challenges related to teaching in minority languages and integrating students from minority backgrounds.

Moderator: Davyth Hicks (European Language Equality Network)

Participants:

- 1) Vesna Crnić-Grotić (University of Rijeka, Faculty of Law; Council of Europe, Comex), *Right to Education in Regional or Minority Languages – A View from the Council of Europe*
- 2) Ingeborg Birnie (University of Strathclyde), *Minority Language Teaching and Learning – Challenges, Opportunities and Lessons from Across Europe*
- 3) Cinzia Colaiuda (ESI – Budapest Metropolitan University), *Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education for All Ethnic Minorities in Europe*
- 4) Lara Sorgo (Institute of Ethnic Studies, Ljubljana, Slovenia), *Education, Language, and Identity: The Role of Bilingual Schooling in Minority Language Maintenance*

- 5) Petra Roter (Council of Europe and University of Ljubljana),
The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities: Managing Diversity in Education
- 6) Sergiusz Bober (European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg),
Newspapers in Minority/Minoritised Languages – An Outdated Format or Still a Useful Tool for Language Maintenance and Community Building?

Section 5

National and Ethnic Minorities in Political and Social Life – Part 1

This section provides an academic analysis of the participation of national and ethnic minorities in politics, civil society, and their representation in state institutions.

GROUP 1 (session in Polish)

Moderator: Ewa Ganowicz (University of Opole)

Participants:

- 1) Aleksandra Kuczyńska-Zonik (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Institute of Central Europe),
Participation Strategies and Social Change: The Case of the Polish Minority in Lithuania
- 2) Arkadiusz Tyda (University of Zielona Góra), *National and Ethnic Minorities in Poland in the Face of the War in Ukraine, 2022–2025*
- 3) Katarzyna Warمیńska (Department of Sociology, Cracow University of Economics), *Between Declaration and Representation: The Census as a Space for Negotiating Ethnic Identity*
- 4) Andrzej Bonusiak (University of Rzeszów), *The Polish Minority and the Polish Diaspora in Selected Post-Soviet States: Politics and Society – A Comparative Attempt*
- 5) Radosław Zenderowski (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw), *Political Behavior of Poles in Zaolzie after 1989*

GROUP 2 (session in Polish)

Moderator: Bartosz Czepil (University of Opole)

Participants:

- 1) Aleksandra Safin (University of Opole), *Women in Public Space as a Symbolic Minority: An Analysis of Memorials in County Towns of the Opole Voivodeship*
- 2) Dominika Zięba (University of Rzeszów), *Protection of Minority Rights in Local Government Practice: The Case of Opole in the Context of Research on Municipal Boundary Changes*
- 3) Jakub Grochowski (University of Opole), *The Census as a Political Tool – A Meta-Analysis of the National Census*
- 4) Khrystyna Shelvakh (University of Opole), *The Role of NGOs in the Identity Processes of National Minorities: The Polish Minority in Zaolzie*
- 5) Krzysztof Hliniak (Jagiellonian University), *Dance Heritage of Minorities Residing in Kraków and the Lesser Poland Voivodeship*

Section 6

Minority Representation in the Media: Images and Stereotypes

This section focuses on the analysis of how minorities are portrayed in the media, particularly in relation to stereotypes and their impact on public perception of these groups.

GROUP 1 (session in Polish)

Moderator: Rudolf Urban, Mayor of Tarnów Opolski, former Editor-in-Chief of *Wochenblatt*

Participants:

- 1) Robert Pawlita (University of Opole), *The German Minority in Polish Right-Wing Parliamentary Discourse – An Analysis of Sejm Debates from 2015 to 2025*
- 2) Michał Łyszczarz (University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn), *Publishing Activity as a Tool for Supporting and Promoting the Ethnic and Religious Heritage of Polish Tatars*
- 3) Irena Machura (University of Opole), *The Political Nature of Language: The Role of the German Language in Identity Narratives and Public Debate in Opole Silesia*

Discussion Panel No. 2 (panel in Polish)

Linguistic Diversity in Poland: Kashubians, Mazurians, Highlanders, Podlachians and Silesians in the Light of Sociolinguistic Research

The panel will present selected findings from studies conducted at the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences between 2021 and 2024 within the research project "*Linguistic Diversity in Poland: Collateral Languages, Language Support Activities, and the Conceptualization of Collective Identity.*"

Moderator: Tomasz Wicherkiewicz (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)

Participants:

- Maciej Mętrak (Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences)
- Agnieszka Wełpa-Siudek (Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences)
- Kamil Czański (Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences)

After the conclusion of the Congress sessions, participants will proceed to the Student Cultural Centre of the University of Opole, located at 95 Katowicka Street.

6:00 PM – Cultural Programme

Hosted and Moderated by: Norbert Rasch, Plenipotentiary of the Opole Voivodeship Board for Multiculturalism

7:00 PM – Dinner

Day II [Wednesday, 24 September 2025]

On the second day of the conference, the Congress sessions will take place concurrently at the Opole Voivodeship Office and the Faculty of Political Science and Social Communication of the University of Opole.

Public Administration Forum

[parallel session]

[Herbowa Hall and/or E. J. Osmańczyk Hall, Opole Voivodeship Office, 14 Piastowska Street]

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM – Forum of Voivodes' Plenipotentiaries for National and Ethnic Minorities and Other Authorities, Including Local Government Units

Hosted and Moderated by: Department of Religious Denominations and National and Ethnic Minorities, Ministry of the Interior and Administration (MSWiA)

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM – Lunch

Scientific Forum – Part 2

[parallel session]

Venue: Room 20, Collegium Civitas, Opole, 89 Katowicka Street]

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM – Opening Panel: National and Ethnic Minorities in Europe – History, Culture, Heritage

Moderator: Aleksandra Oszmiańska-Pagett (Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages – COMEX)

Participants:

- Helena Duć-Fajfer (Jagiellonian University)
- Davyth Hicks (European Language Equality Network)
- Artur Konopacki (University of Białystok)
- Bernard Gaida (Working Group of German Minorities – *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Deutschen Minderheit*, AGDM), *tbc*

Simultaneous interpretation: Polish–English

12:00 PM – Lunch

12:45 PM – 2:15 PM – Thematic Panel Sessions

Section 7

Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities: From Theory to Practice – Part 2

This section continues the analysis of legal regulations regarding national and ethnic minorities and their actual implementation in different countries.

GROUP 3 (session in Polish)

Moderator: Tomasz Browarek (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin)

Participants:

- 1) Anna Muś (University of Silesia in Katowice), *Problems with the Implementation of International Obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Poland*
- 2) Józef Szymeczek (University of Ostrava), *Act No. 273/2001 on the Rights of National Minorities in the Czech Republic and Its Application in Practice – The Case of the Polish Minority in Zaolzie*
- 3) Jakub Bijak (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin), *Discrimination Against Greenlanders in Denmark from the Perspective of the Ethnic Equality Act of 2003 and Its 2013 Amendment – A SWOT Analysis*
- 4) Tomasz Browarek (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin), *Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by the Republic of Poland in Terms of Access to Mass Media*

GROUP 4 (session in English)

Moderator: Wojciech Opióła (University of Opole)

Participants:

- 1) Marina Andeva (University American College Skopje), *Political Participation of Smaller-in-size Minorities in North Macedonia*
- 2) Bengt-Arne Wickström (Andrássy University Budapest), *Optimal Rules for the Protection of Minorities: Benefits, Costs, and Size of Jurisdictions*
- 3) Manjola Zaçellari (Aleksandër Moisiu University of Durrës, Albania), *Between Borders and Belonging: The Role of Minority Languages in Shaping European Identity in the Western Balkans*
- 4) Danijela Vuković-Ćalasan (University of Montenegro, Faculty of Political Science), *Multicultural Policy Towards Roma People in Montenegro – Between Integration and Structural Discrimination*

Section 8

National and Ethnic Minorities in Political and Social Life – Part 2

This section focuses on the political and civic participation of minorities and their representation in the public sphere.

GROUP 3 (session in English)

Moderator: Olgun Akbulut (European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg)

Participants:

- 1) Martin Klatt, Erik Kühl (European Centre for Minority Issues), *Suffering from Success: Contemporary Challenges for the Best-Practice Example of the Schleswig Minorities*
- 2) Juliana Cyfeku, Edlira Xega (Fan S. Noli University), *Cultural Resilience and Minority Identity in Albania's Evolving Frameworks*
- 3) Hynek Böhm (University of Opole, Poland, and Technical University of Liberec, Czechia), *European Borderlands, Minorities and Euroscepticism: Lessons from the B-SHAPES Project*
- 4) Ondřej Elbel (University of Ostrava), *National Minorities in Memoryscapes of Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa and Spisz*

Section 9

Multiculturalism, Integration vs. Distinctiveness: Balancing Identity Protection and Full Participation in Society

This section explores the integration of national and ethnic minorities, their distinctiveness, and ways to reconcile identity protection with full social participation. It also covers practical aspects of integration and multicultural policies, with particular focus on local and national initiatives.

GROUP 1 (session in Polish)

Moderator: Marzanna Pogorzelska (University of Opole)

Participants:

- 1) Magdalena Biernacka (University of Rzeszów), *The Impact of Stereotypes on the Integration Processes of the Roma Minority in Poland*
- 2) Renata Król-Mazur (Jagiellonian University), *The Need for Dual Integration – The Case of the Armenian Minority in Poland*
- 3) Daria Kantorska (University of Warsaw), *The Activity of the Polish Minority in Ukraine on Social Media*
- 4) Helena Duć-Fajfer (Jagiellonian University, Lemko Association), *Otherness on Demand – Reflections on State Support for Minority Cultures and Languages*
- 5) Zofia Sawicka (University of Rzeszów), *The Trap of Minimizing Cultural Differences – Challenges in Integrating Migrants and Refugees from Ukraine in Poland*

GROUP 2 (session in English)

Moderator: Ljubica Djordjević (European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg)

Participants:

- 1) Craig Willis (European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg; PLURILINGMEDIA COST Action), *Media in Regional and Minority Languages: A Pan-European Perspective*
- 2) Hanna Vasilevich (EURAC Research, Institute for Minority Rights), *Rushed Reforms: Evaluating Ukraine's National Minority Legislation Amidst EU Integration Aspirations*
- 3) Adrian Borka (Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities – National Communities, Autonomous Province of Vojvodina), *Official Use of Minority Languages and Scripts in the Republic of Serbia*
- 4) Tamar Gelashvili (Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University), *Minority Language Representation in Media (The Georgian Case)*

Section 10

Contemporary Challenges of Minorities: Demographic Changes, Migration, and Globalisation

This section focuses on the current challenges faced by minorities, such as demographic shifts, migration processes, and the impact of globalisation on their situation.

GROUP 1 (session in Polish)

Moderator: Katarzyna Łukaniszyn-Domaszewska (Opole University of Technology)

Participants:

- 1) Weronika Koston (University of Opole),
Activities of Youth Organisations of National Minorities: A Comparative Analysis and Best Practices
- 2) Tadeusz Siwek (Ostrava University),
Specific Causes of the Decline in the Size of National Minorities in the Czech Republic
- 3) Kamil Matuszczyk (Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw),
Ukrainian Migrants Meet the Ukrainian Minority: What Impact Does Labour Migration to Poland Have on the Minority's Situation?
- 4) Łukasz Kwadrans (University of Silesia),
The Roma in Visegrad Countries – Minority Situation, National Policies, and EU Actions

GROUP 2 (session in Polish)

Moderator: Teresa Słodra-Gwizdź (University of Opole)

Participants:

1. Anita Adamczyk (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań),
The Impact of Migration on the Situation of National and Ethnic Minorities in Poland
2. Dorota Kowalewska (University of Szczecin), *Transformations of National and Ethnic Minority Organisations in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship (2005–2025)*
3. Norbert Honka (Institute of Political and Administrative Sciences, University of Opole), *German Cultural Heritage in Silesia and Its Importance for the Organisation of the German Minority*
4. Alina Dittmann (State University of Applied Sciences in Nysa), *Education for National Minorities in the Face of Current and Future Challenges*

Section 11

Between History and the Future: The Heritage of Minorities

This section explores the legacy of minorities, examining its impact on current challenges and the future of these communities.

GROUP 1 (session in Polish)

Moderator: Michał Matheja (German Minority Research Centre)

Participants:

1. Kamil Minkner (University of Opole), *Multiculturalism and Collective Memory. A Critical Narrative and Visual Analysis of Memory Sites in the Public Space of Opole and Opole County*
2. Andrzej Szczepański (Witelon Collegium State University), *Elements of Social Security in the Activities of the German Social and Cultural Association in Legnica (1958–1986)*
3. Krzysztof Gładkowski (retired professor, University of Warmia and Mazury), *The German Minority from a Regional Perspective (Warmia and Masuria)*
4. Matthias Lempart (Cultural Foundation of the German Expellees for Science and Research), *JUWOST and ZUKUNFT – Two Networks Supporting Young People from German Minorities in Europe and Descendants of Expellees and Resettlers in Germany*

GROUP 2 (session in Polish)

Moderator: Ewa Stolz (German Minority Research Centre)

Participants:

- 1) Stefan Dudra (University of Zielona Góra), *“Operation Vistula” as a Historical and Contemporary Symbol of Lemko Identity*
- 2) Piotr Krzyżanowski (Jakub of Paradyż Academy in Gorzów Wielkopolski), *The Experience of the Genocide of Sinti and Roma – 80 Years After the End of World War II*
- 3) Paweł Hut (University of Warsaw), *The Polish Minority in Zaolzie – Conditions of Existence in the Past, Present Situation, and Future Prospects*
- 4) Andrzej Rykała, *“Fear Took Over Jewish Residents in Small Towns.” The Łódź Voivodeship After the Kielce Pogrom – A Geographical Perspective*

Discussion Panel No. 3 (panel in Polish)

Silesians as a Community of Identity and Language. Perspectives and Directions for the Development of the Debate on Silesian Distinctiveness in the Context of Socio-Political Changes in Poland

Moderator: Sergiusz Bober (European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg)

Participants:

- Wojciech Glensk (Association of People of Silesian Nationality)
- Maria Szmeja (AGH University of Science and Technology)
- Krakow)
- Jerzy Gorzelik (University of Silesia)
- Grzegorz Kulik (Silesian Language Council)
- Artur Jabłoński (Kashubian-Pomeranian Association), *tbc*

2:30 PM – Break

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM – Closing Panel:

"A European Perspective for Minorities"

Moderator: Lucjan Dzumla, House for Polish-German Cooperation

Participants:

- Ryszard Galla, Advisor to the Marshal of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland on National and Ethnic Minorities, former Member of Parliament
- Zuzanna Donath-Kasiura, Deputy Marshal of the Opole Voivodeship
- Marek Mazurkiewicz, University of Opole
- vacant

Simultaneous interpretation: Polish–English

5:00 PM – Closing of the Congress

Organisers:

- University of Opole
- Opole Voivodeship Government
- Opole Voivode
- House for Polish-German Cooperation
- German Minority Research Centre
- Silesian Institute
- Polish Political Science Association – Opole Branch
- Centre for Borderland and Regional Studies, University of Opole

Funding:

- Ministry of Science and Higher Education
- Opole Voivodeship Government
- House for Polish-German Cooperation
- *B-SHAPES: Borders Shaping Perceptions of European Societies* (Horizon Europe programme)
- Silesian Institute