


## Polish Organizations in Ireland. A Stimulus for Research on the National Security of the Republic of Poland

Polskie organizacje w Irlandii. Asumpt do badań nad bezpieczeństwem narodowym Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej


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**Abstract:** The activities for Poland's national security, including its independence and sovereignty, observed over the last centuries, justify reflection on the relevance of the undertakings of the Polish diaspora communities. Polish organizations operating in many countries, thanks to the cultivation of national identity, were able to contribute to Poland regaining its independence in 1918, support the fight against the Germans and Russians during World War II, and then act for liberation from communism. Therefore, the interest of the state assumes care for the Polish community abroad, both its connection with the country and strengthening its sense of responsibility for the homeland. The article presents the characteristics of Polish organizations in Ireland, where Polish emigration has rapidly increased in recent decades. It is stated that the Polish diaspora communities need systemic support from the Polish state through actions to ensure the integrity of the national identity of the Polish diaspora. In the Polish organisations, it is necessary to recognise the strength to promote Polishness, the concern for Poland's national interest, but also the diverse potential for dealing with threats to Poland.

**Keywords:** Polish organisations in Ireland, emigration, national identity, national security

**Streszczenie:** Obserwowane na przestrzeni ostatnich stuleci działania na rzecz bezpieczeństwa narodowego Polski – w tym jej niepodległości i suwerenności – upoważniają do refleksji o relewantności przedsięwzięć środowisk polonijnych. Działające w wielu krajach organizacje polonijne, dzięki kultywowaniu tożsamości narodowej, były w stanie przyczynić się do odzyskania przez Polskę niepodległości w 1918 r., wspierać walkę z Niemcami i Rosjanami podczas II wojny światowej, a następnie działać na rzecz wyzwolenia

z komunizmu. Interes państwa zakłada zatem troskę o Polonię, zarówno jej łączność z krajem, jak i wzmacnianie poczucia jej odpowiedzialności za ojczyznę. W artykule przedstawiono charakterystykę polskich organizacji w Irlandii, w której w ostatnich dziesięcioleciach gwałtownie wzrosła w liczbę polska emigracja. Stwierdza się, że środowiska polonijne potrzebują systemowego wsparcia ze strony państwa polskiego poprzez działania na rzecz zapewnienia integralności tożsamości narodowej Polonii. W organizacjach polonijnych należy rozpoznawać siłę do promowania polskości, troski o interes narodowy Polski, ale także różnorodnego potencjału na wypadek zagrożenia Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Organizacje polskie w Irlandii, emigracja, tożsamość narodowa, bezpieczeństwo narodowe

It is actually an axiom that thinking about the national identity of the Poles implies the need for a reflection on the Polish experience of being an emigrant (Smuniewski 2021a: 315–330; Smuniewski 2021b: 120–121). The research concerning Polish national identity is usually focused on the “awareness” of being a member of the Polish national community. It is noted that this type of identity has been shaped around the language, customs, the Catholic religion, patriotism and the emerged national culture. The last centuries have unequivocally shown that the notion of Poland covers *inter alia* millions of Poles living outside the borders of the motherland. Following the experience of bondage,<sup>1</sup> the totalitarianisms of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and World War II, penal and forced exiles of Poles to the East, first by the Tsarist and later communist authorities, for the Poles, national security is in a large measure dependent on national identity and sovereignty of acting for preserving own identity. An important part of activities connected with preserving the national identity of the Poles is a concern for Polonia organisations (see more Nowosielski, Dzięglewski 2021). However, it is impossible to provide effective support to those organisations without first getting to know them.

The aim of the conducted research, the effect of which is this article, was to identify Polish organizations operating in Ireland so that on this basis it was possible to formulate conclusions regarding the creation of Poland’s national security. For the purposes of the research, it was assumed that

National security is the most important value, national need and priority goal of the state, individuals and social groups, and at the same time a process

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<sup>1</sup> Poland regained independence after 123 years in 1918.

encompassing various means guaranteeing a sustainable, undisturbed existence and national development (of the state), including protection and defence of the state as a political institution, and protection of individuals and the whole of society, their goods and the natural environment against threats that significantly limit its functioning or damage the goods that are subject to special protection (Kitler 2011: 31; Kitler 2018: 38).

The research used the method of analysis and synthesis of existing sources, studies on the Polish community and interviews conducted in the Polish community in Ireland. Leaders of selected Polish diaspora organizations were invited to talks (consultations).

## 1. The existing typology of Polish organisations in Ireland

Popular classification of Polish organisations in Ireland includes two dichotomous categories based on chronological appearance: “the old *Polonia*,” meaning well-ingrained Polish post-war migration 1939–1990, including the Poles living in Ireland before the European Union (EU) enlargement in May 2004, and “the new *Polonia*” signifying the mass influx of young economic migrants after Poland joined the EU (Dowling 2012: 20, 29). A more elaborate typology of Polish immigrant organisations in Ireland was proposed at the seminar: “The Polish Emigration in Ireland: Yesterday and Today” organised in June 2011 at Dublin City University by the Dublin Faculty of Economics of the Local Government College in Żyrardów.<sup>2</sup> The original author’s proposal included four main breakdown criteria, taking into consideration: the duration of activity of an organisation, the size of an organisation, the complexity of structure and the purpose of an association (Płachecki 2012: 38). The time criteria would mark the period of their activity – generally before the year 2004, hence the informal division into “old *Polonia*,” represented by the Irish Polish Society (IPS), Ognisko Polskie CLG and the Polish Social and Cultural Association (POSK) – all three based in the Polish House

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<sup>2</sup> The Dublin’s branch of the Local Government College was in existence since 2007. In 2014 the College with its Irish branch has been incorporated into the structure of the Old Polish University in Kielce and nowadays is the Dublin Campus of the Old Polish Academy of Applied Sciences (cf. Płachecki 2015: 147).

in Dublin, and “new *Polonia*,” including today at least 80 Polish groups, associations and Polish weekend schools. The size of an organization in the classical meaning is determined by the number of members who pay the annual fee and the structures formally registered with the Irish authorities. By definition, a distinction is made between the actual membership in an association and clubs of enthusiasts operating via social media, where only “clicks” or “likes” define the number of followers. The third model is based on the relationship between the service provider and the client, which is typical of Polish weekend schools. In this situation, a parent paying a fee for a child attending the school is not a member of the organisation but a customer. The vast majority of Polish organisations in Ireland follow the same solid, classical model, where a membership fee has to be paid. However, the current trends in mass communication and the growing role of social media may change this profile in the future. The average number of members in a typical Polish organisation in Ireland varies 5–40 regular members. In terms of complexity, the organisational structure of the Polish diaspora in Ireland has matured enough to have four umbrella organisations acting as clusters for similar type associations: Ognisko Polskie (owner of the Polish House in Dublin), Forum Polonia, the Polish Educational Society in Ireland and the Polish Federation for Education KID. It has not yet been possible to achieve a single unison voice of the Poles in Ireland, like that of the Poles in the United States and Canada. The statutory goals and declared purposes of the organisations offer more precise ways of classifying Polish groups in Ireland. The following distinction, made by Jarosław Płachecki, reflects the status of Polish organisations in the period 2004–2011:

- a) charitable and self-help organisations,
- b) business and PR groups,
- c) local organisations (focused mainly on acting in a single town or county),
- d) socio-political organisations (with a political agenda, but not political parties),
- e) educational organisations (including Polish weekend schools and tertiary institutions),
- f) youth and cultural organisations (including Polish scouting associations and Polish folk dance ensembles),
- g) women’s organisations (Płachecki 2012: 38).

The growing number of Polish organisations and forms of activity during the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century enhanced significantly this typology with Polish counselling, religious and patriotic organisations, sports

clubs, folk dance ensembles, poetry and music bands, groups of anonymous alcoholics, *ad hoc* “anti” or “pro” pressure groups and clubs associating individual enthusiasts mainly on social media.<sup>3</sup> A similar categorisation of organisations was issued in 2019 by the authors of *The Polish Migrants’ Organisations in Ireland – a summary report* (Dzięglewski 2019). The characteristics were based on a series of interviews and the institutional survey carried out in 2016 and 2017 with representatives of 21 Polish organisations in Ireland and the following types of Polish organisations were identified:

- a) cultural organisations (promotion of Polish culture in Ireland),
- b) aid and social organisations (legal, social and psychological support),
- c) educational organisations (promoting the Polish language and culture among children),
- d) labour and occupational organisations (integration with other Polish professionals),
- e) lobbying and civil (representing workers and encouraging political participation),
- f) integration organisations (mixing with Irish society and other ethnic groups in Ireland),
- g) organisations for the representation and promotion of Poland and a positive image of Poles abroad,
- h) public service organisations (supporting other Polish organisations and Polish events; Dzięglewski 2019: 17–18; Nowosielski, Dzięglewski 2021: 79–80).

The above typology does not take into account many of the organisations listed in the 2011 research (Płachecki 2012), dormant or terminated Polish organisations in Ireland and the most current trends in migrant activities.

## 2. A reviewed typology of Polish organisations in Ireland in 2022

Two major socio-economic factors have exerted an impact on the contemporary development and *modus operandi* of Polish organisations in Ireland at the beginning of the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Both have the potential to change the operational scope of Polish organisations in the near

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<sup>3</sup> The ephemerid: “pro,” “anti” or “single enthusiasts” clubs will not be discussed in this article (cf. Płachecki 2021c: 30).

future and both are related to security matters in their Polish and broader European context. The first one was the COVID-19 pandemic, which in the case of Ireland was spreading from February 2020 and put the entire country into a standstill or imposed different forms of restrictions for the next two years until March 2022 (Dowling 2021: 203–206). As a consequence of uncertainty and high property prices many Poles returned to their homes in Poland and many businesses lost their cashflows. The pandemic had a significant influence on the survival of some smaller Polish organisations, particularly Polish weekend schools. From the point of view of national health and security the overloading of the national health service facilities of both countries, high mortality rates, especially in Poland, and the role of fake news resulting in very low vaccination rates in Poland and within the Polish communities in Ireland, should have a very alarming effect in terms of high susceptibility of the Poles to disinformation (see McGarry 2021). Another major factor is the war in Ukraine. All aspects of this conflict have an immediate effect on the societies with a high level of uncertainty as regards the economic situation and experience an unprecedented influx of refugees, such as Poland and other European countries, including Ireland. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Poland opened its borders and people made their homes available to Ukrainians. Polish organisations in Ireland began collecting goods and funds for aid to Ukraine or commenced ongoing support for the Ukrainian cause on top of their usual activities. This has had a significant impact on the way the Polish nation and the Poles are perceived by the whole civilised world, and at that not only the Western hemisphere. Apart from the obvious role of national security in a classical military sense, a new notion of cyber safety, upholding the high level of motivation, national identity and international position of the country seem to be of huge significance.<sup>4</sup> In Ireland, the promotion of Poland as well as Polish culture and values has been carried out by the Polish Embassy as well as Polish organisations. The long-term effects on the Polish diaspora and its activities will have to be the subject of future research.

These Polish organisations are discussed in chronological order. The declared goals and documented activities of the groups were taken into account:

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<sup>4</sup> In the project of the new Homeland Defence Act (*Ustawa o obronie Ojczyzny*) the notion of cyber safety as well as sovereignty and international position of Poland found its special place in art. 2 item 10 (cf. *Rządowy projekt ustawy 2022/2052*).

- a) Irish social and cultural organisations co-founded by the Poles in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The records show that there were only a very small number of Poles living in Ireland in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among the most notable was Count Casimir Markiewicz, who lived in Ireland between 1900–1913 and was married to the famous Irish patriot and suffragist Constance Markiewicz (Quigley 2012b). During that period the couple was involved in setting up several social and cultural organisations, including the United Arts Club (still existing at 3 Fitzwilliam Place in Dublin), the Independent Dramatic Company (a theatre group) and the Dublin Fencing Club (Petruszewicz 2000: 26; Quigley 2012a: 15). Another Polish person was Wanda Petronella Brown, who lived in Ireland since the end of the Great War with her Irish husband, Barry. Thanks to Mrs Brown's bequest in her will, in 1986 the National Gallery of Ireland established the John Barry and Petronella Brown Scholarship Fund for the promotion and encouragement of educational research (National Gallery of Ireland 2014: 67). Her name is also strongly associated with the Polish House in Dublin, purchased in 1986 thanks to her generous endowment.<sup>5</sup> Apart from the Polish House, those institutions have no Polish connections or traces whatsoever, except for their co-founders.

- b) Polish organisations of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the pre-war and post-Second World War period.

There was "no Polish colony" in pre-war Ireland of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps just a few scattered groups of Poles living apart from each other, and among them some descendants of Jewish migrants from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, who were not recognised as Poles by the Irish authorities (Dobrzyńska-Cantwell 1998: 54). Among them was the Briscoe family, who originated from the Polish borderland which is nowadays in Lithuania. Robert Briscoe and his son, Ben, played major roles in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Irish politics. Establishing the Polish – Irish diplomatic relations in 1929 and arriving in Ireland, Consul Waclaw Tadeusz Dobrzyński, with his wife Janina and daughter Krystyna, accelerated the development of diplomatic, cultural and social connections between the two countries. Little did they know that all three generations of the Dobrzyński family, including W.T. Dobrzyński's grandson Ian

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<sup>5</sup> In her will which was written in 1974 she left a considerable amount of money "for promoting and encouragement the Arts of Music, Painting and Literature in Ireland." Since she was Polish, the executors of the will decided to put aside a part of these funds for the purpose of promoting Polish arts and culture (cf. Płachecki 2019c: 50).

Cantwell, would stay in Ireland or elsewhere in the wake of World War II, never to return to their native Poland. Consul General W.T. Dobrzyński, apart from his diplomatic duties, undertook a series of cultural and social activities and in May 1934 established the Irish-Polish Society, known also as the Irish-Polish Circle (Dobrzyńska-Cantwell 1998: 84). The founding members of the Society were: Lord Longford – as the President, Consul W.T. Dobrzyński, Dr Denis J. Coffey – President of the University College in Dublin, Col. Jeremiah J. O’Connell, Capt. D.A. McManus, Rev. J.J. Coyne, Dr Tierney, Sir Joseph Glynn, F.M. Summerfield, Mr Justice Reddin and Mr Barry Brown (Petronella’s husband). The aim of the Society was “the cultural and economic development through organising lectures, exhibitions, sporting events and sharing knowledge about both countries” (Płachecki 2021b: 36). The outbreak of World War II in September 1939 found the society active in organising “Irish funds for Poles” and in 1940 a collection for Polish refugee soldiers in England; they presented a cheque personally to Gen. Władysław Sikorski in London (Płachecki 2021b: 40). After the war, the society had to be reorganised with new members joining: Lord Mayor of Dublin Peadar Doyle, Gen. Sean MacEoin, Desmond Fitzgerald, member of the Irish Parliament, Sean Brady and the editor of the Catholic newspaper “Standard” Peadar O’Curry. The new goal of the renewed society was to collect funds and organise the relocation of Polish students, veterans of the war, from England to Irish universities. The first twelve Polish students arrived in Ireland in 1946, and in the years 1950–1965, thanks to the Polish *Veritas* in England, hundreds of them studied at Irish colleges (Doherty 2021: 40–44). Consul W.T. Dobrzyński’s retirement in the mid-1950s’ terminated the Irish-Polish Society, though the arrival of young and ambitious Poles helped establish new Polish organisations in Ireland. The first post-war Polish organisation was the Irish Branch of the Association of Polish Combatants in Great Britain with almost a hundred members, mostly students, organised in three circles. The first General Meeting took place in Dublin on December 3–4, 1949. The purpose of the Association was to establish cultural, educational and self-help activities among the members. The elected President of the Association was Zbigniew Grabianowski (Kałuski 2007). From 1955 the Polish Student’s Association at Trinity College, led by its Chairman Jarosław Piekarkiewicz and Vice-Chairman Jan Kamiński, played a very active role in maintaining Polish identity. Another Polish organisation was the Polish Folk Dance Circle, active since 1955, with Maria Hinnan and Andrzej Kielanowski among many other Polish students.



Both organisations took part in the annual Carnival of Nations organised at Trinity College (Quigley 2021: 48–50). None of these organisations has survived until the present, though some of their members became leaders of the growing Polish community in Ireland. A new era in diplomatic relations between Ireland and Poland began with the opening of the Polish Trade Mission Bureau in September 1964 (Skolimowski, Lusiński 2001: 28). This, however, was the Polish People’s Republic government institution with clearly both economic as well as political goals. From the late 1970s, there are records of the Irish-Polish Cultural Society with the socialist activist and academic teacher Dr John de Courcy-Ireland as Chairman, Mary Flynn as Secretary, and patrons: Sean O’Faolain, Prof. Roger McHugh, Eileen Craig, Prof. Anne Crookshank, Dr Michael Scott, Maureen Charlton and one Polish woman – Lunia Ryan. The Society did not survive and was dissolved in the 1980s. The goal of the Society, with an address at 6, Herman Street in Dublin, was “to promote Polish culture through interaction with the Irish Community” maintaining some connections with the Polish Trade Mission Bureau in Dublin. Dr de Courcy’s group refused to cooperate with the newly established IPS (see *Appendix I, The Archival Documents* 2020: 174).

c) “Old *Polonia*” – the post-war Polish organisations.

The oldest, still-existing Polish organisation in Ireland is the IPS, established in January 1979, shortly after the historic election of the Polish Pope John Paul II in 1978. The IPS meet for the first time in Newpark Comprehensive School in Blackrock with the first official address of its initiator Fr. Claus Cieszyński at the Jesuit House of Studies in Milltown Park, Dublin 6. The founding members of the Society were: J. Kamiński, Chairman, Helena Johnston, Secretary and members: Sean Lyons, Paul Cusack, Artur Tyszkiewicz, Michał Scheunert and William Johnston (Dowling 2015: 30; Johnston 2020: 165). The purpose for which the Society was established was “to promote greater mutual interest and understanding between the Irish and Polish communities through social and cultural activities and to promote, sponsor, teach, study, advance and encourage interests in and knowledge of the culture, history, peoples, language and traditions generally of Poland and the Polish people” (*Rules of the Irish Polish Society* 2015: 225). Apart from the typical social and cultural activities, for a brief period 1981–1983, the Society was involved as a pressure group in the charitable Aid for Poland project and in the *quasi*-political campaign against imposing martial law in Poland. This included organising two protests outside the Soviet Embassy on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of January 1982, and the impressive Aid for

Poland campaign, which dispatched shipments of 20 containers of goods to Poland and donated over £250,000 to John Paul's office for distribution in Poland. Within 18 months, thanks to the involvement of the IPS and its two former Chairpersons, Prof. Maciej Smoleński and Dr Janina Lyons, a total amount of £300,000 in goods and money was sent to Poland during martial law. This would not have happened without close cooperation with the Charitable Commission of the Episcopate of Poland, Fr. Ireneusz Antkowiak, and the Irish Catholic Church led by Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Dermot Ryan.<sup>6</sup> During that time the Society supported the Irish-Polish Solidarity Committee formed for a brief period in January 1982 with 17 Polish and Irish trade unionists and students.<sup>7</sup> In 1986, an opportunity arose for acquiring a building for the IPS. In September of that year, a new charitable organisation was formed under the name of the POSK, with IPS members Henryk Lebioda, Prof. M. Smoleński and Dr Janina Krzyżanowska-Lyons as Secretary. Using the funds Petronella Brown had left in her will of 1974, a large Georgian house at 20 Fitzwilliam Place in Dublin was purchased in October 1986 for £140,000 (Płachecki 2019b: 17–20). The purpose of the new organisation as the owner of the House was to administer, manage and maintain the historic building as well as organise funds and means for its functioning as the only Polish social and cultural institution in Ireland. In November 1997, POSK changed its name to Ognisko Polskie and under this name has been operating to this day, managing the affairs of the Polish House in Dublin. An additional function of Ognisko as a publishing house is to research and publish books on the Polish Diaspora in Ireland. In January 1998, a new, revised POSK II was formed with the main goal of preserving Polish heritage, culture and language in Ireland. The board of the newly established POSK was made up of its founders: Barbara Szustkiewicz, Grzegorz Jarocki, H. Lebioda, Janina Lyons, Urszula Scheunert, M. Smoleński and Wanda Ni Laighin. In 2003, POSK elected a new Chairperson, Krystyna Pycińska-Taylor, who has been serving in this position until the present. Today, in a complementary way, the three "sisters," the oldest Polish organisations in Ireland are based in the Polish House in Dublin and serve as

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<sup>6</sup> More about the IPS's involvement in the Aid for Poland and anti-martial law campaign, cf. Lyons 2018: 159; Smoleński 31.12.1981: 11; Smoleński 21.01.1982: 9.

<sup>7</sup> Among the Polish representatives were Solidarity activists from Poland, who had visited the United Kingdom just before martial law in Poland was imposed: Jan Cywiński, Wojciech Kowalewski and Marek Gorzdecki. Well-known Irish members were: John Daly, John Mitchell and Alex White (cf. White 20.03.1982: 17).

keepers of Polish identity, language, culture, history, integration and traditional Polish values in 21<sup>st</sup> century Ireland. In October 2019, the IPS celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its activities with the attendance of HE Polish Ambassador to Ireland, Anna Sochańska, Rector of the Old Polish University Prof. Jolanta Góral-Pótroła, Dr Joanna Pyłat, Vice-Chairperson of the World Research Council of Poles Abroad, and many other distinguished guests (*40 Years of the IPS* 2020: 125). Today, the IPS is a vibrant social and cultural organisation addressing its activities to Polish-Irish families, Irish Polonophiles, the Irish of Polish descent, and Poles born outside of Poland who do not speak the Polish language. The IPS organises conferences, lectures, concerts, poetry readings as well as other social and cultural events, mainly in the Polish House in Dublin. Since 2014, the Society has been publishing *The Irish Polish Society Yearbook* and other serial publications, which are the main source of the history and knowledge of the Polish Diaspora in Ireland.

d) Polish educational organisations and weekend schools after 2004.

According to the Polish Embassy sources, currently, there are 53 Polish schools in Ireland, including five Polish Schools at the Polish Embassy based in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Cavan and Waterford, with a total number of 6.5 thousand students (Płachecki 2021a). Among them are three types of organisational structures: semi-state Polish Schools at the Embassy, a small number of private schools and preschool nurseries, and a vast majority of weekend Polish community schools (Płachecki 2019a: 127–147).<sup>8</sup> Generally, all 53 known schools are run or sponsored by some sort of association of parents, teachers or shareholders and all of them potentially may get support from the Polish Embassy or other Polish state funds, even the private ones. The oldest educational society is the Polish Educational Association at the Polish School at the Embassy in Dublin (SPK) founded in July 2009. Similar organisations were soon organised in all five SPK Embassy Schools and in 2014 the Federation of Polish Educational Associations was set up as an umbrella organisation for all five.<sup>9</sup> Following this standard, in February 2010 the other Polish weekend schools formed similar organisations: the Polish Weekend School SEN established by the Polish Teachers Association, and in 2017 an umbrella organisation – the Polish Federation for Education KID for 12 more schools.

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<sup>8</sup> About the Polish education in Ireland also see Augustyniak 2013: 32–38; Nestor 2014: 29–55; Pędrak 2017: 13–22.

<sup>9</sup> The Federation of Polish Educational Associations was resolved (cf. Wawrzyńska 2017: 101).

In 2012, the Polish Educational Society in Ireland was formed as an umbrella organisation, which today affiliates 22 weekend schools, including the Dublin Branch of the Old Polish University in Kielce.<sup>10</sup> By law, parallel parents' associations had to be formed, which doubled the number of organisations in all 53 Polish weekend schools in Ireland. This phenomenon is specific only to the Polish community in Ireland. No other ethnic or national minority in Ireland has a similar network of schools or educational organisations run by parents or teachers. The dynamics of the emergence of the entire Polish Sunday school system deserve to be discussed separately, especially in the wider context – those of the traditional (USA) and those after Poland's accession to the EU in 2004.

e) Polish local organisations.

These are among the earliest Polish organisations founded after the huge influx of Poles after 2004, based mainly in towns or counties. This geographical range is often communicated in the name of the organisation: My Cork Association (2005), Galway Irish-Polish Association (2007), MultiCity Polish Association in Kilkenny (2010), Gorey.pl – Polish Cultural Association (2015), Polish Community in Waterford (2017), Midlands Polish Community in Athlone (2018) and others (*Organizacje polonijne w Irlandii* [n.d.]; Płachecki 2012: 40). The nature of their activities is mostly cultural and integrational.

f) Charitable and self-help organisations.

These organisations are involved in charitable support for the Poles in Ireland who find themselves in difficult personal, professional, health or family circumstances. They often provide support and consultations to alcohol or drug addicts, as well as to victims of domestic abuse or lonely seniors, offering them lectures and group sessions. They obtain some form of financial assistance from Irish or Polish sources, hence their charitable legal status, or are co-operating with local churches or Polish chaplaincies when no such assistance is required, as in the case of Polish AA groups. The oldest ones are: Support and Integration Centre "Together-Razem" in Cork (2006), Centre for Psychological Support "Parasol" at the Dominican Church in Dublin and AA groups or family AL ANON groups: "Górnik" in Athlone, "Damy Radę" in Kingscourt, "Emigranci" in Cork, "Horyzont" in Dublin and many others (*Polskojęzyczne grupy wsparcia w Irlandii* [n.d.]). This type of groups should also include Polish sections of Irish charitable

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<sup>10</sup> A current list of Polish weekend schools (cf. *Szkoły polskie* [b.d.]).

organisations such as Centrum My Mind, Crosscare Migrant Project, and support groups for Polish women in Ireland, such as: Centre for Counseling and Therapy (CKU) or AA group "Gaja" (Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych 2013: 104–105). A separate type of self-help organisation was Help for Jobseekers Forum founded in 2012. This initiative, involving a series of interactive workshops and lectures, offered professional and legal assistance in seeking a job, writing a CV and psychological support because of the difficult economic situation during the recession in Ireland (2008–2013). In early 2022, another humanitarian disaster caused by the Russian invasion brought Poles and Ukrainians together. A series of new initiatives have been put forward by Polish groups and organisations, which refocused their activities on sending goods and money to support Ukrainian refugees in Poland or directly to Ukrainian cities. The organisations involved in such assistance include: "Together-Razem," Polish Educational Association with the cooperation of an Irish company, the Pallet Network, My Cork, the Irish branch of the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity (WOŚP Dublin), Polish Scouting Team "Bieszczady" and many others. This phenomenon, no doubt, will be the subject of separate studies and analyses in the near future.

g) Polish youth organisations, folk dance and music groups.

There are several Polish scouting organisations registered in Ireland, with the oldest 87<sup>th</sup> Polish Scouting Ireland founded in October 2007 by Anita Regucka-Kwaśnik and Mirosław Kaczmarczyk, as well as regional groups – Galway Polish Scouts and Polish Scouts Association in Galway "Na szlaku." In 2012, this led to the creation of the Polish Scouting Association (Hufiec Bieszczady) based in Dublin, consisting today of nine regional districts in Cork, Balbriggan, Limerick, Shannon, Waterford, Wexford and three in Dublin (*Historia Hufca* [n.d.]). Among the Polish sporting groups based in Ireland, the most known are Polish Eagles in Dublin and Football Club Polonia, based at the SPK Polish School in Dublin. martial arts amateurs train at the Bushido Club of Ju Jitsu Self-Defence, also based in the Polish School SPK in Dublin. The School also organises dance lessons in the Club of Sporting Dance (*Zajęcia pozalekcyjne* [n.d.]). Among other dance groups is the oldest Polish Folk Dance Group-Shamrock founded in 2009. Singing enthusiasts can perform in the poetic-music group ArkaJana, Magical White Song Circle or Plot of the Third Stanza, all specialising in Polish traditional songs. All three groups are based in the Polish House in Dublin (*Wydarzenia 2015* [n.d.]).

h) Polish libraries.

The first Polish library was the Wanda Petronella Brown Library opened in 1987 by POSK in the Polish House, in which the bulk of the collection was donated by London POSK and included some rare volumes published by Polish World War II veterans. A subsequent Polish library was established in 2005 in the Polish School SPK at the Polish Embassy in Dublin, and then consequently in many other Polish weekend schools. Following the establishment of the Polish Chaplaincy in Ireland in 2006 the Library at St. Audoen's Church Parochial House was opened at 14 High Street in Dublin. In 2008, one of the biggest Polish institutions of this kind in Ireland – the Polish Community Centre “Biblary” was established by Aneta Kubas. In 2011, the Polish branch of the Local Government College founded a Polish Study Section at the Public Library in Blanchardstown, and then Polish sections were established at public libraries in Arklow, Cork, Galway, etc.

i) Polish umbrella organisations in Ireland.

The Poles in Ireland have no central organisation that would unite all groups in a single organised voice. Even a strong educational network of schools, despite trying, did not manage to form one structure, and in fact, produced three rivalling umbrella organisations as mentioned above: the Polish Educational Society in Ireland (2012), the Federation of Polish Educational Associations (2014, now dormant) and the Polish Federation for Education KID (2017). The oldest umbrella organisation is Ognisko Polskie (1986), which as the owner and administrator of the Polish House supports financially “the old *Polonia*”: the IPS and the POSK. Even Forum Polonia, established in 2008 as “a network for information sharing, mutual support, social integration and defence of Polish minority interests in the Republic of Ireland,” failed to consolidate the majority of Polish organisations in Ireland (Płachecki 2012: 41).

j) Business, public relations and socio-political organisations.

The first business-related Polish group was established in 2007 in Dublin – Ireland Poland Business Association CLG and since 2017 its activities have been stopped. Following in its steps the Polish Business Club was established in 2009 by Wojciech Wrona, which today is also a dormant organisation. Another ephemeral organisation was the Polish Community in Ireland, a PR company established in 2010 which, having organised the Great Gala of the Irish Miss Polonia in Liberty Hall, Dublin, suspended its activities in 2011. Forum Polonia, already mentioned above, is an umbrella non-governmental organisation (NGO) for several Polish NGOs and, as an association derived from the Forum of Active Poles, included such activists as: Anna Paś, Emilia

Marchelewska, Barnaba Dorda and Anna Michalska (Płachecki 2012: 41). As its main objective Forum Polonia provides a platform for communication, representation and common policy stance on issues relevant to the Polish community in Ireland (*Forum Polonia Charter* [n.d.]). In 2009 and 2014, the Forum was involved in a PR campaign “You are at home, Vote!” addressed to Poles participating in Irish local elections, and since 2015 has been the main organiser of the Polska-Éire Festival (Fanning, O’Boyle, Di Bucchianico 2014). Today, Forum Polonia is the only Polish NGO in Ireland with a clear and sound message, calling for broader participation of Poles in Irish political life. It is focused mainly on the “new *Polonia*” using modern PR methods of communication. Perhaps one day this will produce a Polish representative in a local council or even to the Irish parliament as a means of integration with the Irish society as well as serving Polish interests, identity and image.

## Conclusions

The diagnosis, made thanks to the characteristics of Polish organizations in Ireland presented above and thanks to the interviews conducted in Ireland (carried out for the purposes of this study), allows us to formulate general and specific conclusions regarding the national identity of Poles in the world, and thus the national security of the Republic of Poland.

History has left a deep impression on the Polish way of thinking about living outside one’s own country, the inability to return to the homeland. The experience of being an emigrant for political reasons is deeply ingrained in the Polish consciousness, which undoubtedly prompted the decision to emigrate for economic reasons. This consciousness seems to suggest: “After all one can be a Pole outside of Poland, speak Polish, nurture one’s own traditions, be a patriot when living out of Poland.” At the interface of integral thinking about the national identity of Poland and being an emigrant the following issues. First, the profound conviction of the Poles that peoples have the right to their own states, to independence and sovereignty, to their own culture and identity, to live in their own land, to religious freedom, building their own future should be sought in Polish history. Secondly, the migration policy of the state cannot ignore identity issues. Thirdly, the concern of the Republic of Poland about the Poles who for various reasons stay outside of Poland, the concern about their national identity is part of the concern about national security.

Expounding on the third issue, which is focused on the dependence between the national identity of the Poles living outside of the borders of their homeland and the national security of Poland, there is a need for formulating a clear postulate. All activities of the Republic of Poland addressed to the Polonia should be perceived in direct reference to current and future national security. The national security policy which disregards the defence potential of the Polonia is incomplete. That is why it is necessary to postulate coordination of the national security policy with the policy towards the Polonia.<sup>11</sup> Obviously, this has nothing to do with promoting desertion of the homeland but rather meeting the actual situation halfway: outside of Poland there are Poles who may prove to be a great force of defence should the national security of the country be endangered. The multifaceted policy towards the Polonia, coordinated with the national security policy, should be tightly bonded with the challenges of the economic and social policies, which cannot be done without linkages with foreign policy, cultural policy and educational policy. Hence the need to monitor and support the readiness of the Poles who live abroad (in particular the Polish elites – people holding high positions in the social structure of their host countries) to get involved in the potential defence of Poland, undertake tasks linked with the implementation of the policy towards the Polonia, promotion of Poland as well as carry out public diplomacy on her behalf. In the case of a war waged on the territory of the Republic of Poland, it is exactly the Polonia organizations which should be recognised as capable of creating various types of support for those who fight for the homeland. It is the Polonia organisations which should be perceived as capable of exerting international pressure for the defence of Poland by the allied powers. The Poles who live outside of Poland may prove to be: a safe haven for refugees from the area of warfare, an asylum for those who seek shelter, a social base.

It is even an axiom in security sciences that caring for the national identity of children and young people is building the future national security of Poland. Therefore, it is important to think about the education of young Poles living outside the country. Polish youth express interest in learning the Polish language. This interest is greater if learning Polish is combined with an organized summer holiday in Poland. Such organized events, organized in cooperation with secondary schools or universities from Poland, should be seen as a great opportunity to effectively improve the language

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<sup>11</sup> On changes in the Polonia policy of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic of Poland, cf. Nwosielski, Nowak 2017: 73–89.



skills of young Poles living abroad and to deepen their knowledge of Polish culture, history, national heritage, traditions and geography. Such a summer holiday will contribute to the integration and activation of children and youth of Polish descent. By promoting higher education, it will be an incentive to study at Polish universities.

The integration of the Polish diaspora community has been and is associated with the involvement of specific people, formal and informal groups. Representatives of the Polish community postulate that it is necessary to document and commemorate such activities and people. This means that systematic research and funding are needed: firstly, to secure documentation within individual Polish communities abroad (often private archives exposed to destruction), and secondly, to popularize the collected material. Without systematic funding, it is impossible to disseminate knowledge about places and people important for national memory abroad, their importance for history, heritage and national identity, and the promotion of Polish culture. The activities of individuals and groups are related to places that are often symbolic for the Polish diaspora. Representatives of Polish diaspora organisations postulate that further support is needed for the revitalization, renovation and restoration of Polish or Polish-related monuments located outside the country. Particularly interesting is the proposal to build an interactive website that is a database of knowledge about people, places and events of the Polish diaspora in the world. Such a service could fulfil various functions. Firstly, to be a collection of information about historical facts, and secondly, to provide information about current events. Such a service could help to explore and learn from many places in the world by following the traces of Poles there and of events connected with Poland.

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