SECURING EUROPE'S TOMORROW

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

marking the 35th anniversary of Poland's accession to the Council of Europe

PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY | NEW DEMOCRATIC PACT FOR EUROPE | SECURITY AND RESILIENCE

24 November 2026

Venue: The Column Hall of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland

Warsaw

Securing Europe's Tomorrow is an international parliamentary conference to be held in Warsaw on 24 November 2026, on the 35th anniversary of Poland's accession to the Council of Europe. It aims to bring the voice of parliamentarians and experts into the debate on the New Democratic Pact for Europe now under way within the organisation. Opening with a meeting of the Special Committee on the New Democratic Pact of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the conference makes Warsaw one of the venues of this work.

In a time of war, hybrid pressure and declining trust in institutions, parliamentary diplomacy is becoming more than a complement to government action. Parliaments give European commitments democratic legitimacy, carry them into national law and sustain dialogue where traditional diplomacy falls short. Poland's 35 years in the Council of Europe show how such cooperation builds a common legal space and raise the question of what it demands today.

Parliamentarians, Council of Europe representatives, scholars and practitioners will discuss how the Pact can become a set of real commitments, how to strengthen democratic security and societal resilience, and what role universities can play in this process. Representatives of the younger generation have also been invited, bringing into the work on the Pact those whose future it is meant to shape.

24 November 2026

08:30–09:00 *Registration and welcome coffee*

09:00–09:30 **Opening of the conference**

Welcome addresses by, among others:

Petra BAYR, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Szymon HOŁOWNIA, Deputy Speaker of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland

Agnieszka POMASKA, Chair of the Polish Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Chaired by: **Daniel MILEWSKI, PhD**, Scientific Director of the conference

09:30–10:30 **Between law-making and international cooperation.**
35 years of Poland in the Council of Europe – the role of parliamentary diplomacy in building a common legal space

Marking 35 years since Poland joined the Council of Europe, this panel asks how parliamentarians help to shape a common European legal space. Speakers will examine parliamentary diplomacy from four perspectives: the institutional experience of the Parliamentary Assembly, legal scholarship, state practice and the Polish constitutional order. The discussion will trace Poland's path from new member to co-author of European standards, the impact of the European Convention on Human Rights on the national legal system, and the role of parliaments in responding to war in Europe and declining trust in democracy. Is parliamentary diplomacy an independent source of influence on law, or merely a complement to government action? Its conclusions will open the debate on the New Democratic Pact for Europe.

Keynote speakers:

Despina CHATZIVASSILIOU, PhD, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Prof. Zbigniew RAU, Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland; Department of Political and Legal Doctrines, University of Łódź; Minister of Foreign Affairs (2020–2023); OSCE Chairman-in-Office (2022); former Chair of the Polish Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Prof. Jerzy JASKIERNIA, Head of the Department of Constitutional, European and Public International Law, Faculty of Law and Social Sciences, Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce; Minister of Justice (1995–1996); former Chair of the Polish Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Ryszard PIOTROWSKI, **Assoc. Prof.**, Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Warsaw

Moderated by: **Daniel MILEWSKI, PhD**, Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland; Vice-Chair of the Polish Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; Vice-Chair of the PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights; Vice-Rector of Warsaw University of Economics

10:30–10:45 *Coffee break*

10:45–11:45 **The New Democratic Pact for Europe: rebuilding trust, strengthening alliances, securing growth**

Democracy in Europe faces falling trust in institutions, the pressure of disinformation and the rising cost of instability. This panel asks what the New Democratic Pact for Europe can change in practice. Speakers will discuss the role of law and courts in rebuilding trust, the importance of local and regional authorities, the protection of public debate in the digital environment, and the link between institutional stability and economic growth. The debate will also address relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union, and whether new alliances of states, parliaments and local governments can strengthen democracy. Will the Pact become a real commitment or just another declaration?

Keynote speakers:

Prof. Krzysztof WOJTYCZEK, Department of Constitutional Law, Faculty of Law and Administration, Jagiellonian University; Judge of the European Court of Human Rights (2012–2024)

Prof. Katarzyna CHAŁUBIŃSKA-JENTKIEWICZ, Attorney-at-Law; Kozminski University; Director of the Internet Domain Registry, NASK – National Research Institute

Ireneusz DĄBROWSKI, **Assoc. Prof.**, SGH Warsaw School of Economics; Member of the Monetary Policy Council of Poland

Konstantinos KOUKAS, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe; Rapporteur on the New Democratic Pact for Europe; former Mayor of Mykonos, Greece (2014–2023)

Moderated by: **Danuta JAZŁOWIECKA**, Member of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland; Member of the Polish Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; Member of the European Parliament (2009–2019)

11:45–12:45 **European security: between geopolitical threats and societal resilience**

War in Ukraine, hybrid threats and pressure on democratic societies have changed how Europe understands security. The panel starts from the Council of Europe's concept of democratic security, which holds that lasting peace requires not only military strength but also democracy, human rights and the rule of law. As the Council's mandate excludes matters of defence, the panel asks how to combine defence readiness with societal resilience and what the Council can contribute to that balance. Speakers will discuss the current threat picture, lessons from military practice, the role of international law in enforcing accountability, and the Council of Europe's experience with Russia, including its exclusion from the organisation. Does democratic security remain a useful concept in a time of war?

Keynote speakers:

Prof. Cezary MIK, Head of the Department of International and European Law, Faculty of Law and Administration, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw

Agnieszka BIEŃCZYK-MISSALA, **Assoc. Prof.**, Head of the Department of Strategic Studies and International Security, Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warsaw

Lt Gen. Jarosław GROMADZIŃSKI, PhD, President of the Management Board, Defence Institute sp. z o.o.; Commander of Eurocorps (2023–2024)

Tomasz ZDZIKOT, Attorney-at-Law; Deputy Chair of the National Security and Defence Council to the President of the Republic of Poland; Chair of the Council of the SET Security-Energy-Technology Foundation; former Deputy Minister of National Defence and of Interior and Administration

Moderated by: **Jerzy BAURSKI**, Special Coordinator of the Council of Europe Information Point for Belarusians in Vilnius; Permanent Representative of Poland to the Council of Europe (2020–2024)

13:00–13:45 *Lunch*

14:00–14:20 **European Universities and Science: building intellectual capital, accelerating innovations and reinforcing democratic values**

Keynote Address: **Prof. Bronisław SITEK, Chair of the Council of Scientific Excellence, SWPS University (online)**

14:20–15:30 **Shaping the Europe of Tomorrow: universities, the younger generation and democracy in the digital age**

The future of Europe is being shaped today in lecture halls, in youth councils and on smartphone screens. This panel asks how universities, young people and public institutions can together build a Europe founded on knowledge, innovation and democratic values. Speakers will discuss the role of universities in the development of economies and regions, and the importance of academic freedom and university autonomy. The debate will also cover the tools of genuine youth participation in public life and the barriers that discourage young people from taking part. It will further address how social media and artificial intelligence shape the way the younger

generation understands reality: algorithms, disinformation and data protection. Should science and the younger generation take a more prominent place in the work of the Council of Europe? Are institutions ready to share power with young people? And who is responsible for what we see on our screens: platforms, states or ourselves?

Keynote speakers:

Prof. Dr. iur. Claudia SEITZ, **M.A.**, Professor of Public Law, European Law, Public International Law and Life Sciences Law; Head of the Institute for European and International Law, Private University in the Principality of Liechtenstein (UFL)

Prof. Maciej PERKOWSKI, Head of the Department of Public International Law, Faculty of Law, University of Białystok; specialist in public international law and European Union law; Head of Europe Direct Podlaskie; Editor-in-Chief of the Eastern European Journal of Transnational Relations

Dorota NIEDZIÓŁKA, **Assoc. Prof.**, Vice-Rector for Development, SGH Warsaw School of Economics; Head of the Department of Economic Geography

Małgorzata SUCH-PYRGIEL, **Assoc. Prof.**, Vice-Rector of the Alcide De Gasperi WSGE University of Applied Sciences in Józefów

Moderated by: **Maciej CHUDKIEWICZ, PhD**, Political scientist; Communication expert; Journalist; Academic lecturer at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw

15:30–16:30 Closing discussion and summary

Moderated by: **Adam BODNAR**, Assoc. Prof., SWPS University; Senator of the Republic of Poland; Minister of Justice of Poland (2023–2025); Polish Commissioner for Human Rights (2015–2021)