

# Collector Coins



face value	<b>20 zł</b>
metal	<b>925/1000 Ag and amber</b>
finish	<b>proof</b>
diameter	<b>38.61 mm</b>
weight	<b>28.28 g</b>
mintage	<b>67 000 pcs</b>

**Obverse:** Stylised view of the Senate debating chamber. Image of the Eagle, established as the state Emblem of the Republic of Poland, above. Inscription, 20 / ZŁ, on the right-hand side. Notation of the year of issue, 2004, centre below, with the circumscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA, below. The Mint's mark,  $\frac{m}{w}$ , under the Eagle's left claw.

**Reverse:** Image of the Speaker's mace with amber on the right-hand side. Centre in the background, stylised image of the Eagle from the bas-relief in the seat of the Senate of the Republic of Poland. Inscription, 15-LECIE SENATU III RP (15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Senate of the Third Republic of Poland), below and left.

*Coin Designer: Andrzej Nowakowski*



face value	<b>2 zł</b>
metal	<b>CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy</b>
finish	<b>standard</b>
diameter	<b>27.00 mm</b>
weight	<b>8.15 g</b>
mintage	<b>760 000 pcs</b>

**Obverse:** Image of the Eagle established as the state Emblem of the Republic of Poland; the notation of the year of issue, 20-04, on either side of the Eagle, the inscription, ZŁ 2 ZŁ, below, and the circumscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA, preceded and followed by six pearls. The Mint's mark,  $\frac{m}{w}$ , under the Eagle's left claw.

**Reverse:** Image of the Speaker's mace on the right-hand side. Centre in the background, stylised image of the Eagle from the bas-relief in the seat of the Senate of the Republic of Poland. Inscription, 15-LECIE SENATU III RP (15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Senate of the Third Republic of Poland), below and left.

**On the edge:** The inscription, NBP, repeated eight times, every second one inverted 180°, separated by stars.

*Obverse Designer: Ewa Tyc-Karpińska*

*Reverse Designer: Andrzej Nowakowski*



*Coins struck by the State Mint in Warsaw.*

*Printed by NBP Printing Office*

Design: DECORUM

**– the 15th Anniversary of the Senate  
of the Third Republic of Poland –**

On 24 May 2004, the National Bank of Poland puts into circulation collector coins to mark the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Senate of the Third Republic of Poland, of the following face values:

- 20 zł – struck in silver, in proof finish,
- 2 zł – struck in standard finish, in CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy, i.e. Nordic Gold.

From the very beginning of its five-century history, the Polish parliamentary system developed as a two-chamber structure, with the House of Deputies (izba poselska) and the Senate. The third "Parliamentary Estate" was the Monarch. For passing laws, the consent of all three agents was essential. The House of Deputies was an elected body; but Senators, the kingdom's dignitaries – voivodes (palatines), castellans, high-ranking state officials and the highest-ranking ecclesiasts – were appointed for life by the King. The Senate had the right to veto a bill and to initiate its own draft bills.

An integral part of the Polish constitutional tradition, the Senate was maintained in the Duchy of Warsaw and the Kingdom of Poland, 19th-century constitutional structures with only a limited degree of sovereignty.

When Poland regained her independence after the First World War, the March Constitution revived the Senate in the 1921. The Senate reviewed bills passed by the Sejm, the Lower House, and presented amendments to them, but could not present its own drafts. It consisted of 111 senators elected from provincial constituencies for 5-year terms. In 1935 the April Constitution amended their number to 96, including one-third appointed by the President, and two-thirds elected under the electors' colleges system from among elite citizens of particular education, merit, and social standing. Both the Senate and the Sejm made up the National Assembly, which elected the President.

The last session of the Senate took place on 2 September 1939, as Warsaw was already being bombed in the first days of the Second World War.

In 1946 a referendum known as the Three-Yeses Referendum was held. Its first question read, "Are you in favour of the abolition of the Senate?" The results were rigged by the authorities in power at the time, who used them to introduce a one-chamber parliament.

In 1989 the Senate was restored in the outcome of the Round Table talks between the communist regime and the opposition,

and its members were elected in the first free and democratic elections in post-war Poland. It consists of 100 senators, elected for a 4-year term. Andrzej Stelmachowski, August Chelkowski, Adam Struzik, Alicja Grzeskowiak, and currently (in its Fifth Term) Longin Pastusiak, have been the speakers co-ordinating its work.

The Senate of the Republic of Poland plays an important part in the country's system of power. Under the Polish Constitution, the Sejm and the Senate together make up the legislative power, one of the three components of that system. A representative body, the Senate represents the variety of opinion in Polish society whilst its members are elected by general election.

The Senate contributes to the legislative process, reviewing drafts passed by the Sejm, which it may reject, accept, or amend. It enjoys the legislative initiative, in other words it has the right to present its own draft bills to the Sejm. It is also vested with other important powers: it grants its consent to the appointment or removal of high-ranking officials, including the President of the Supreme Chamber of Control, or the Commissioner for Civil Rights Protection. The Sejm and the Senate together constitute the National Assembly, which convenes to take the oath from each newly elected President.

Much of the Senate's work is done in its committees, which review drafts submitted by the Sejm. The purpose of this second inquiring review of draft legal regulations, after the discussion in the Sejm, is to identify any shortcomings, which may be then remedied with senatorial amendments, effectively enhancing legislation. Senate committees also devise senatorial drafts for new legislation.

The members of the revived Senate faced the need to adjust legislation for profound systemic transformations, such as the departure from the central government model, and the devolution of power to the level of the local community, a natural social unit of citizens inhabiting a given area. The output of the First Term Senate includes the drafting and presentation to the Sejm of four local self-government bills, passed by the Sejm in March 1990, paving the way for local elections in a short time. In subsequent terms the local self-government bill was amended. The Senate presented compensation bills to morally redress wrongs done to individuals in the previous period, or to settle matters which had gone unresolved under the People's Republic of Poland for political reasons. Since the Fourth Term the Senate has more and more often presented bills on Polish people living abroad. In the

15 years over 100 Senate bills concerning various aspects of public life and economic affairs have been presented, and a considerable number of them passed by the Sejm.

The Senate acts as a patron of the Polish communities in the world, continuing the tradition dating back to the period before 1939 of its speakers presiding over the central organizations which maintained the Polish Diaspora's links with its motherland. The Senate of the Third Republic has been entrusted with a far greater range of powers relating to work for Polish communities abroad. Part of its funds has been assigned for these duties, and a special committee reviews matters involving expatriate Poles. The Senate devotes special attention to the problems of Polish people living east of the country's border. It assists and finances building and renovation projects for Polish schools, cultural centres, and the activities of educational and cultural organizations abroad, supporting the business and professional training projects conducted by expatriate communities.

The Senate is engaged in the maintenance of links between Polish communities abroad and their motherland, and in the teaching of the Polish language and culture to their young generation. It is also working for the documentation and preservation of the material and cultural legacy built up by Polish expatriate communities.

The legislative measures initiated by the Senate include the regulations on the repatriation, the right of Polish people abroad to vote in the second round of presidential elections, the proclamation of 2 May as the Polonia Day (Day of Polish Communities Abroad), and the establishment of the Advisory Council for Polish Communities Abroad.

*Dorota Mycielska, Ph. D.*

**All collector coins are legal tender in Poland.**