



SENAT RP

## NOTES ON THE SENATE

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## The Sejm Library

The Sejm Library is a scientific library. Its main purpose is to serve the needs of the Sejm and the Senate; parliamentary party groups, deputies and senators; the Parliament's research services as well as the needs of other employees of the Sejm and Senate Chancelleries. The Sejm Library is also open to scientists and to all those who are interested in the Parliament. The Sejm Library is the central legislative library in the Polish library system. The Sejm Library is an organisational unit of the Sejm Chancellery. The Chancellery of the Sejm also includes the Sejm Archives and the Museum Division.

The origins of the Sejm Library go back to when Poland regained its independence in 1918 and the 1919 parliamentary elections. The Sejm Library was established at the end of 1919. After numerous organisational changes, the Sejm Library played the role of both a library and an archive to the Sejm and the Senate.

The collection of books, enriched with the Sejm's and the Senate's material and official documents as well as legal, social science, economic and historical publications, included 78 thousand volumes in 1939. During the fire of the Sejm building in September 1939, part of the collection was destroyed, and the remaining 62 thousand of volumes were taken to Berlin by the Germans where they disappeared in circumstances which remain unexplained. Only a small part of the collection deposited at a Czech castle Houska at the end of the war returned to Poland.

After World War II, the Library had to start the gathering of its volumes practically from the very beginning. It served a single-chamber Parliament and was named "The Sejm Library".

The Library's collection (there are over 500 thousand volumes) consists of two separate parts; they differ in terms of their origin, nature and location. The first part is the main collection of the Sejm Library. It con-



*The Sejm Library catalogues*

(Fot. J. Zawadzki)



*The reading – room of the Sejm Library*  
(Fot. J. Zawadzki)

sists of material related to the primary role of the Sejm Library. This material has been gathered since the very beginnings of the Library. The essential part of the other collection are the volumes of the Polish Left Archive incorporated into the Sejm Library in 1991. The volumes were previously stored in the Central Archive of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party "PZPR". There are 145 thousand volumes in this collection, which are stored and made available to the public in the Social History Collection Division of the Sejm Library.

The Sejm Archives was established as a separate state archive in 1991. It was incorporated into the Sejm Library as one of its Departments as a result of the reorganisation of the Sejm Chancellery in 1993.

The Sejm Archives houses archival documents generated during the course of the work of the Sejm and its organs, i.e. minutes of the Sejm sessions, the Sejm Presidium's sessions, Sejm Committees' and Sub-Committees' sessions, records of the Council of Seniors' discussion results, documents related to the laws and resolutions of the Sejm, questions of deputies, shorthand records of the Sejm's sessions, etc. as well as audio and video recordings of the Sejm and Sejm Committees' sessions. Archival documents produced by parliamentary party groups, deputies' circles, deputies' offices and teams as well as by the Polish Inter-parliamentary Group of Poland (Polska Grupa Unii Międzyparlamentarnej) are treated as deposits.

The Archives is also an institutional archive of the Sejm Chancellery. The Sejm Archives is responsible for the collection and preparation of archival source publications for the needs of the history of the Polish parliamentary system.

Museum pieces related to the history of the Polish parliamentary system have systematically been collected since 1985 based on the resolution of the Sejm Presidium to establish the Polish Sejm Museum.

The Museum houses pieces of art (paintings, engravings, drawings, posters), documents (old printed material, manuscripts, election leaflets etc.), and coinage related to the history of the Polish parliamentary system from the 15th century as well as a rich collection of photographs taken between the two Wars and in the post-war period. Based on these exhibitions, virtual exhibitions are being created on various themes.

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