

# Legal Bulletin

## Provincial governors to confirm citizenship of March 1968 émigrés

Provincial governors will confirm the Polish citizenship of people who left Poland after March 1968, deputy PM and Interior and Administration Minister Grzegorz Schetyna has said. „The effort to right wrongs of the past gladdens us,” believes President of the Union of Jewish Communities in Poland Piotr Kadlczik.

Schetyna promised that all cases related to the confirmation of the citizenship would go „fast and smooth.” He added that related information had been sent to governors of provinces. „We have simplified procedure and imposed interpretation,” he minister stressed.

„Applications of people who left for Israel between 1968 and 1972 and were forced to waive the Polish citizenship examined by provincial officials and governors will be certified,” Schetyna explained.

So far provincial governors used to confirm citizenship of people who left Poland and did not acquire Israeli citizenship but usually refused to confirm Polish citizenship to those who receive the citizenship of the State of Israel.

„This issue is all the more important that there will not be many people applying for citizenship confirmation,” Piotr Kadlczik told PAP. He added he was also glad that the ministry dealt with the case so quickly without “hair splitting” and unnecessary discussion.”

March émigrés left Poland with the so called travel document stating they were not Polish citizens. After March 1968 between 10,000 and 20,000 Polish Jews left Poland as a result of anti-Semitic campaign and purges in the army, people’s militia, the Polish United Worker Party (PUWP), universities and mass media.

## Klich: laws on professional army next year

Laws enabling the formation of a professional army in Poland will be ready in the second half of next year. As of January 1, 2010 only voluntaries will serve in the army, defence minister Bogdan Klich said Thursday in Cracow.

Klich said the government was working on a package of 70 military acts which will turn Poland’s army into a professional force. Among others the army is to be downsized from the current 131,000 troops to 120,000 and a reserve force of 30,000. Klich stressed that under the new laws military service will be voluntary, conscripts will sign 12-year contracts after which they will be able to become professional soldiers. Klich also announced wage hikes in the army. Klich said that the reformation of the Polish army into a professional force would be accompanied by technical modernization. He added that Poland’s new army would continue to take part in peace missions worldwide, but will send out less troops. Also, the current Polish operation in Afghanistan will be restricted to one region to ensure maximum safety, Klich said.

## Sejm amends penal code

The Sejm has presented to the Senate an amendment to the penal

## Charter of Poles; powers to issue certificates

The Charter of Poles, a document introducing privileges for Poles living in the East will look like ID's. It will be a plastic identity card with personal data, decided the government in a directive to the law that will take effect on March 29.

„At present it is impossible to define how many people will finally be granted and will receive the Charter of Poles. The 2008 budget law envisages a reserve of 4.5 mn zloty for the purpose,” the government information centre (CIR) reported.

According to 2007 estimates scores of thousands of people may apply for the charter in the 1st year after the related law takes effect. The target figure was set at more than one million.

The charter of Poles introduces privileges for Poles living in the East where double citizenship is not recognized. It entitles holders to reimbursement of the Schengen visa and Polish transport means' tickets, facilitates access to Polish schools, scholarships, jobs in Poland and business running. Each charter will be issued by a consul for 10 years and may be prolonged at a motion of the interested party. The credit card-sized plastic document, secured against forgery will comprise personal data, a holder's photo and signature, validity date and a six-digit number. People applying for the charter have to show their Bond with Poland including acceptable knowledge of the Polish language, Polish ancestors including great grandparents or a certificate of a Polonian organization of activities for the Polish culture and language.

A government draft list of organizations entitled to issue certificates for people applying for the charter includes 33 organisations. The draft list of Polish or Polonian organisations entitled to issue certificates confirming active participation of applicants in actions for the Polish culture and language or the Polish diaspora has been prepared by the foreign ministry and is now being consulted with other ministries. The draft list includes such organisations as the Union of Poles in Belarus, the Union of Poles in Estonia „Polonia,” the Union of Poles

code under which public officials can deem themselves insulted only if insults are hurled at them when they are on duty. The work on the amendment has been prompted by a verdict of the Constitutional Tribunal that in October 2006 questioned the regulation of the penal code in line with which any offence against a public official can be termed as an insult irrespective of whether it is related to the said person office.

## Financing for rural areas

The Sejm has adopted an amendment to subsidies from EU funds whereby spending within the framework of rural areas development programme may be financed in advance from EU subsidies. The amendment aims to adjust said law regulations to regulations of the law on public finances and specify the flow of funds from the EU budget. Funds from EU programmes are calculated as budget income.

in Lithuania, the Union of Poles in Latvia, the Union of Poles in Ukraine, the Federation of the Polish Organizations in Ukraine, Lvov Land Polish Culture Association.

The biggest number, 15, organisations is located in the Russian Federation including “Polonia” Regional Social Organisation in Archangielsk, „Polonia” Regional Autonomous Polish National and Cultural Organisation in Kaliningrad, “Dom Polski” (Polish Home) National and Culture Autonomy in Krasnoyarsk, “Nadzieja” (Hope) Polish Culture Association in Ulan Ude, “Wisła” Vershynsk Polish Culture Association. Besides, the list also includes „Dom Polski” Social Organisation in Smoleńsk, „Dom Polski” National and Culture Poles Autonomy in Moscow, „Polonia” Culture and Education Association in Sanki Petersburg and the A. Malecki Poles’ Union in Sankt Petersburg. The list also includes two organizations from Georgia („Polonia” Culture and Education Union of Poles in Georgia and „Common Poland” Union of Poles in Abkhasia) as well as two in Uzbekistan (Social and Cultural organization “Polish Centre” and “Polonia” Association).