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FMA VISIT TO POLAND

26-28 MARCH 2025

Profile of speakers

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The image shows the Polish flag (white top, red bottom) and the European Union flag (blue with yellow stars) waving on flagpoles against a clear blue sky. The text 'LIST OF SPEAKERS' is overlaid in white.

LIST OF SPEAKERS

WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH

Dr. Max BRÄNDLE
Dr. Małgorzata BONIKOWSKA

THURSDAY 27 MARCH

Mr. Tomasz GRODZKI
Mr. Grzegorz SCHETYNA
Mr. Andrzej GRZYB
Ms. Agnieszka POMASKA (TBC)
Mr. Pawel KOWAL (TBC)

Mr. Witold NATURSKI
Dr. Jolanta SZYMAŃSKA
Mr. Adam MICHNIK

Ms. Danuta HÜBNER
Mr. Marek SIWIEC

FRIDAY 28 MARCH

H.E. Adam SZŁAPKA
Ms. Aija KALNAJA

WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH

Dr. Max BRÄNDLE

Director of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Poland



Dr Max Brändle, born in 1976, is an academic and professional involved in the field of social and political sciences. He studied philosophy and literature in Tübingen, New York and Berlin, obtaining a doctorate in philosophy.

Professionally, Dr Brändle has held several positions within the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), a German political foundation affiliated with the Social Democratic Party of Germany. He headed the FES office in Zagreb, Croatia, then in Belgrade, Serbia. He subsequently became head of the FES office in Warsaw, Poland.

Dr. Małgorzata BONIKOWSKA

President of the Centre for International Relation

Małgorzata Bonikowska has a Ph.D. in humanities and she specializes in international relations (with particular emphasis on the European Union) and communication in public institutions. EU expert, government consultant and academic fellow, graduated from the Warsaw University (Italian studies), University of Paris-Sorbonne (history and political sciences) and the PWST (State College of Theatre) in culture history. Alumnus of two Ph.D. programs: in Poland (Polish Academy of Sciences) and abroad (SSSS, Italy), dr Bonikowska completed a specialization program at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at the Columbia University in New York (Fulbright Scholarship). She is the author of more than 150 publications and tutor of over 100 BA, MA and post-graduated thesis.



THURSDAY 27 MARCH

Mr. Tomasz GRODZKI

Chair of the Committee on European Affairs of the Polish Senate



Tomasz Grodzki is a prominent Polish thoracic surgeon and politician. Born on May 13, 1958, in Szczecin, he graduated from the Pomeranian Medical Academy (now Pomeranian Medical University) in 1983. He began his medical career at the Regional Centre for Occupational Medicine in Szczecin and, since 1984, has been associated with the Professor Alfred Sokołowski Specialist Hospital in Szczecin-Zdunowo. In 1995, he became the head of the Thoracic Surgery Department, which was later transformed into the Department of Thoracic Surgery and Transplantation at the Pomeranian Medical University. Under his leadership, the first successful lung transplantation in Szczecin was performed in 2011.

Grodzki's political career began at the local level, where he served as a member of the Szczecin City Council from 2006 to 2015. During his tenure, he initiated Poland's first lung cancer screening program based on low-dose chest CT scans for high-risk patients. In 2015, he was elected to the Polish Senate representing Constituency No. 97 and was re-elected in 2019. He is affiliated with the Civic Platform party and is a member of the Civic Coalition Parliamentary Club.

On November 12, 2019, Grodzki was elected Marshal of the Senate for its 10th term, becoming the Speaker of the Senate. In this role, he presided over the Senate's proceedings and represented the Senate in external affairs. His election was notable as it marked a significant position of influence for the opposition in the Polish parliamentary system.

As Marshal, Grodzki was involved in legislative processes and played a role in shaping foreign and European Union affairs policies. His tenure contributed to the checks and balances within the Polish political system, particularly in the context of interactions between the Senate and the Sejm (the lower house of Parliament).

Throughout his career, Tomasz Grodzki has been recognized for his contributions to both medicine and public service in Poland.

THURSDAY 27 MARCH

Mr. Grzegorz SCHETYNA

Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Polish Senate

Grzegorz Schetyna is a Polish politician who has held several key positions in government and parliament. His political career began in the early 1990s when he joined the Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD), serving as its secretary-general from 1992 to 1994. After the KLD merged into the Freedom Union (UW), he continued his political engagement before co-founding the Civic Platform (PO) in 2001, where he served as secretary-general and later became one of its most influential figures.



Elected as a Member of Parliament in 1997, he has been re-elected multiple times, representing constituencies such as Wrocław and Legnica. From 2007 to 2009, he served as Minister of the Interior and Administration in Donald Tusk's government. In 2010, he was elected Speaker of the Sejm, succeeding Bronisław Komorowski. Between 2014 and 2015, he held the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs, further strengthening Poland's international presence. In 2016, he was elected leader of the Civic Platform, a role he held until 2020. In 2021, he returned to regional leadership, becoming the interim head of the Civic Platform structures in Lower Silesia. Throughout his career, Schetyna has played a significant role in shaping Polish politics, contributing to domestic policy debates and strengthening his party's position in the national political landscape.

THURSDAY 27 MARCH

Mr. Andrzej GRZYB

Chair of the Defence Committee and Member of the European Union Affairs Committee at Sejm



Andrzej Grzyb is a Polish politician who has held key positions in both national and European politics. He began his political career in 1989 as a member of the Polish Sejm, serving multiple terms until 2007. During this time, he held roles such as Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for European Affairs and Vice-Chairman of both the Assembly of Polish Counties and the Polish Inter-parliamentary Union. He also served as a local councillor in Ostrzeszów.

In 2009, he was elected as a Member of the European Parliament, where he played a significant role in human rights advocacy as Vice-Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Rights and Coordinator for the European People's Party. His work focused on organizing hearings, debates, and delegations addressing global human rights challenges. Throughout his career, Grzyb has been committed to European affairs, local governance, and human rights issues.

Ms. Agnieszka POMASKA (TBC)

Chair of the European Union Affairs Committee at Sejm

Agnieszka Pomaska is a Polish politician who has been active in both local and national politics. She began her career in 2002 as a city councillor in Gdańsk before being elected to the Polish Sejm in 2009, representing the Civic Platform (PO). Re-elected multiple times, she has focused on European affairs, foreign policy, environmental protection, and human rights.

She has served as Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and Vice-President of the EPP Women. She has also been involved in international initiatives, including the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Beyond politics, she has a background in competitive sailing, having won national and international championships.



THURSDAY 27 MARCH

Mr. Paweł KOWAL (TBC)

Chair of the International Affairs Committee at Sejm



Paweł Kowal is a Polish politician and academic with extensive experience in public service. He began his political career as chairman of the Warsaw-Ochota district council before being elected to the Polish Sejm in 2005. He later served as Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2009, he was elected to the European Parliament, where he chaired the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee.

After his term in the European Parliament, he continued his political engagement and was re-elected to the Sejm in 2023, becoming Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Alongside his political career, he is a professor at the Polish Academy of Sciences, specializing in Eastern European politics and contemporary history.

Mr. Witold NATURSKI

Head of European Parliament Liaison Office (EPLO) Warsaw

Witold Naturski is a Polish official with extensive experience in public administration and European affairs. He is currently the Head of the European Parliament Liaison Office in Poland, overseeing communication and cooperation between the European Parliament and Polish institutions.

Earlier in his career, he held various leadership roles, including Chairman of the Górnośląskie Towarzystwo Gospodarcze (Upper Silesian Economic Society) since 2007 and Vice-President of Śląsk XXI from 2008 to 2010, organizations focused on regional economic development. He also served on the Supervisory Board of Radio Katowice from 2006 to 2010, contributing to media oversight and governance.

With a strong background in European affairs, media, and regional development, Naturski plays a key role in strengthening Poland's engagement with the European Union.



THURSDAY 27 MARCH

Dr. Jolanta SZYMAŃSKA

Head of the European Programme at the Polish Institute of Foreign Affairs



Jolanta Szymańska is a Polish political scientist specializing in European affairs. She is currently the EU Programme Coordinator at the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), focusing on EU migration policy, internal affairs, and the Union's institutional system.

She holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Warsaw (2012) and a Master's degree in the same field (2008). She was also an Erasmus scholar at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. In addition to her research activities, she lectures at the University of Warsaw and the National School of Public Administration..

Szymańska has published extensively on the EU's political system and migration policy. She is fluent in English and German

Mr. Adam MICHNIK

Editor-in-chief of the Polish newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza

Adam Michnik is a Polish historian, journalist, and former politician known for his key role in opposing communist rule in Poland. Expelled from the University of Warsaw for his activism, he became a leading figure in the democratic opposition during the 1970s, co-founding the Society for Scientific Courses (TKN) and contributing to underground publications.

As an advisor to the Solidarity movement, he was imprisoned multiple times, spending nearly six years behind bars. In 1989, he played a crucial role in the Round Table Talks, which led to Poland's first partially free elections. That same year, he founded Gazeta Wyborcza, Poland's first independent newspaper, and served as a member of the Sejm (1989–1991) before focusing entirely on journalism.

Michnik remains editor-in-chief of Gazeta Wyborcza and has received numerous international awards for his contributions to democracy and press freedom.



THURSDAY 27 MARCH

Ms. Danuta HÜBNER

Polish FMA Member (EPP, 2019-2024)



Danuta Hübner is a Polish economist and politician who played a significant role in Poland's integration into the European Union. She began her political career in the 1990s, serving as Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, where she developed Poland's first policy for small and medium-sized enterprises. She later became Chief Negotiator for Poland's accession to the OECD and held key positions within the UN Economic Commission for Europe. From 2003 to 2004, she served as Minister for European Affairs, overseeing Poland's accession to the EU. After the accession, she became Poland's first European Commissioner (2004–2009), responsible for trade and later regional policy.

Elected to the European Parliament in 2009, she served for three consecutive terms, chairing the Committee on Regional Development (2009–2014) and later the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (2014–2019). She was also active in the Committees on International Trade and Economic Affairs and worked on EU-US relations.

Beyond politics, she is a professor of economics, a board member of several European think tanks, and has received multiple honorary doctorates and state honors for her contributions to European integration and economic policy.

Mr. Marek SIWIEC

Polish FMA Member (PES, 2004-2014)

Marek Siwiec is a Polish politician who has held key roles in both national and European politics. He was a long-time member of the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and served as Head of the National Security Bureau (BBN) from 1997 to 2004 under President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, playing a crucial role in Poland's security and defense policies. In 2004, he was elected to the European Parliament, where he served for two consecutive terms until 2014. From 2007 to 2009, he was Vice-President of the European Parliament, overseeing institutional affairs and EU external relations. He was actively involved in foreign policy, serving on the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and the Delegation to the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee.

Later in his career, he joined Your Movement (Twój Ruch) and co-founded Poland Together, focusing on progressive European policies. Throughout his political career, Siwiec was an advocate for European integration, security policy, and EU foreign affairs.



H.E. Adam SZŁAPKA Minister of the European Union



Adam Szłapka is a Polish politician and political scientist, currently serving as Minister for European Union Affairs in Prime Minister Donald Tusk's government since December 2023. Born on December 6, 1984, in Kościan, Poland, he graduated in political science and Eastern studies from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Szłapka's political career began with his involvement in the youth organization Młode Centrum, where he served as Secretary General.

From 2006 to 2010, he was a councilor and vice-chairman of the Kościan city council. He also co-founded the Projekt: Polska Foundation, focusing on civic projects like "Razem 89" and "Pokolenie Solidarności". Between 2011 and 2015, he worked in the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland. In 2015, Szłapka was elected to the Sejm, Poland's lower house of parliament, representing the Modern (.Nowoczesna) party. He served on the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Committee for Secret Services. Re-elected in 2019, he became the party's leader that same year. Throughout his career, Szłapka has been an advocate for European integration and progressive policies.

Ms. Aija KALNAJA Deputy Executive Director for Capabilities of Frontex

Aija Kalnaja is a Latvian law enforcement professional with extensive experience in European security agencies. She began her career in the Latvian police in 1993, rising to the rank of Chief Inspector by 2003. She later served as Deputy Chief of the Latvian Police, overseeing international cooperation and administrative affairs, and was Latvia's Police Attaché to the United Kingdom from 2007 to 2011. In 2011, she joined the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL).



She worked there as a Training Coordinator and later as Head of the Training and Research Unit. She then transitioned to Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, where she held key roles, including Director of the Capacity Building Division and Deputy Executive Director for Capabilities. Following the resignation of her predecessor in April 2022, Kalnaja became the Interim Executive Director of Frontex, responsible for implementing reforms within the agency. In November 2022, it was reported that she was under investigation by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) regarding issues within Frontex, and she has stated her full cooperation with the inquiry.