

## Committee Members

## Committee Chair



Zdzisław Pupa (PiS)

## Committee Deputy Chair



Michał Wojtczak (PO)



Przemysław Błaszczyk (PiS)



Jan Dobrzyński (PiS)



Stanisław Gorczyca (PO)



Ryszard Knosala (PO)



Marek Konopka (PO)



Andrzej Misiołek (PO)



Jan Olech (PO)



Leszek Piechota (PO)



Jadwiga Rotnicka (PO)



Czesław Ryszka (PiS)



Wojciech Skurkiewicz (PiS)



Jacek Swakoń (PjN)



Alicja Zając (PiS)

The Committee is concerned with the protection and shaping of the environment, the protection of natural resources, water management, geology, forestry and forest management, hunting, and ecological education. It also deals with issues of nuclear energy, radiological protection, international ecological cooperation, and the financial management of environmental protection by the State.

Like other Senate committees, the Environment Committee within its remit, examines the Budget Act and conveys its opinion to the Budget and Public Finance Committee, which is the only committee to present a budget report at a Senate plenary session.

The Environment Committee is one of 16 permanent committees in the 7th Senate (2007-2011).

The Environment Committee is a successor of bodies which functioned in the Senate of the Second Polish Republic (1922-1939). At the time, matters related to environmental protection, agriculture, and public hygiene were handled by the Social Economy Committee, the Agriculture Committee and the Administrative and Local Government Committee. After the Second World War, the Senate did not resume its activity, as it was abolished by the Communist government following the rigged national referendum in 1946.

In 1989, the restored Senate established the Environmental Protection Committee and appointed Professor August Chełkowski, future Marshal of the Senate, as Committee Chair. The Environmental Protection Committee functioned continuously as a permanent and independent body until 2005, when the Senate decided to merge it with the Agriculture Committee. In 2008, the Senate returned to the previous committee system. The activities undertaken by the Committee correspond to the scope of activity of the Ministry of the Environment and, to a lesser extent, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The Committee's meetings are often attended by government officials and representatives of non-governmental organisations. The Committee cooperates with independent experts.

### The Committee in the First Six Terms

#### of the Restored Senate

(1989-2007)

Poland's political transformation of the 1990s had a major impact on the Committee's legislative activities. In 1990, the Sejm and the Senate adopted a historic document titled "Poland's Ecological Policy" setting out the main directions for legislative action in the area of environmental protection and management. In the years preceding Poland's accession to the EU, i.e. between 2001 and 2004, the Committee concentrated its efforts on the alignment of national legislation with the EU standards. It also promoted ecological education and supported the enactment of several important pieces of legislation, such as the Act on Organic Farming and the Animal Protection Act. The Committee initiated the nationwide competition Let Us Afforest Poland and organised international conferences on climate change, global water shortages, and ecological threats to the Baltic Sea. Other important environmental issues, including the condition of hydrotechnical facilities, designing motorways, management of state-owned forests, and ecological education are also at the heart of the Committee's interest.

### The Committee in the 7<sup>th</sup> Senate

(2007-2011)

Since 2007 the Environment Committee has scrutinised a number of legislative proposals with regard to environmental protection law, water law, greenhouse gas emission management system, the Inspection for Environmental Protection, and organic farming. Apart from legislative function, the Committee has been tracking changes to environment-related legislation. In the current term, the Committee has been actively engaged in amending the Geological and Mining Law Act, the Waste Act, and the Genetically Modified Organisms Act. Furthermore, the Committee Members have

addressed issues related to the National Programme for Municipal Waste Water Treatment, the emissions trading system, the environmental Policy of the State, the development of Natura 2000 areas, as well as the enlargement of Białowieża National Park - Europe's last primeval forest.

### Non-legislative Activities

Since its establishment, the Committee has convened away sittings and carried out field inspections to monitor the performance of local governments in the area of environmental protection. The Committee's inspections focused mainly on national parks, construction of sewage treatment plants, waste management programmes, soil quality and recultivation, and protection of the Baltic Sea. The Committee also offers a wide range of seminars and conferences. Topics explored in the 7th Senate include: climate change, use of renewable energy in communes, genetically modified organisms, asbestos removal, and water and waste management systems. The Committee Members participated in the 14th International United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Poznań in 2008, and the 15th Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen in 2009. In addition, they take part in meetings organised by national parliaments and by the European Parliament.