

## The flag of the voivodeship



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## The past and the present

Mazovia- a white eagle without a crown, with a golden beak and talons, placed on the left side of a rectangular panel of red fabric (width to length ratio is 5:8). This is how the coat of arms flag of Mazovia Voivodeship looks like, that was finally approved in 2006 by the Heraldic Commission, operating by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration. The eagle, designed by a Warsaw graphic Andrzej Heidrich, derives from a historic coat of arms of Mazovian dukes of Piast dynasty. Its image has accompanied Poles already in the thirteenth century. It has been identified with the Mazovia Voivodeship up until the third partition of Poland. The dramatic history of the country, years of slavery and successive world wars limited the national symbols use on one hand, but on the other hand tightened local ties and motivated in the fight for patriotic values. Hence, regional solidarity should be promoted with more pride as it survived the times of toughest tests. The flag of Mazovia refers to the regional tradition from the period of the I Republic of Poland. By recalling the past history and common roots of the people, integrates internally and reflects the unique character of the region.

## The less-known history

Attempts to restore the symbols to the voivodeship, that would confirm its uniqueness, were associated with defeat, dictated by law formalities

**Act of 21 December 1978 on the badges and uniforms (Official Journal of 30 December 1978)<sup>1</sup>**

. In 2005, the tail of the eagle was spanned by a golden ring. The Heraldic Commission questioned this image. The experts concluded that it is based on a seal of Siemowit the Third and has little to do with regional tradition. It has been replaced with a historically legitimate artistic vision, inspired by the history of Mazovian dukes and the resolution of the Mazovia Voivodeship Council

## The flag of the voivodeship should be treated with reverence and respect.

Before introducing changes in the Resolution on the establishment of the flag of Mazovia Voivodeship, a complicated procedure of applying for permission to use the image of the symbol was binding. Entities interested in exposing the Mazovian flag were obliged to apply for the approval to the Board of the Region. Afterwards a Commission of Culture and National Heritage of the Council of Mazovia Voivodeship would issue an opinion. This extended process significantly limited the usage of the flag. Today, due to the abolition of a number formalities concerning the use of the symbols, not only individuals but also institutions can often identify themselves with their region. The flag underlines the important nature of ceremonies, holidays and national and regional anniversaries. It mobilizes for a dignified representation of the region during regional, national or international events. It also enables to express the bond with the place of origin. It is exposed in the premises of the regional self-government and regional self-government organizational agencies. It safeguards the meeting room of the Council and of the Board of Mazowieckie Voivodeship, as well as the office of the president of the Council and of the Marshal of the Mazovia Voivodeship.

The flag links, integrates, differentiates from other communities, motivates for action, inspires pride, but also poses obligations. The rich tradition created a sense of team solidarity, binding not only during difficult times, but also in everyday life. The symbol with which we identify ourselves, was linking generations and became a source of many good practices, that aim at creating a coherent image of the region. For centuries, such activities provide opportunities to define and meet the needs of regional community. Therefore, in spite of all the differences, Mazovians are brought together into one historic family by the fact that the imaginative and creative efforts for the benefit of the community are consciously undertaken responsibilities.

According to the resolution, it may be possible to use the image of the flag of the voivodeship to emphasize the momentous nature of celebrations, holidays and anniversaries. Then it should be treated with reverence and respect, making sure its colours are clear. It can not be dirty, wrinkled and a frayed flag should be destroyed by burning. Those who are interested in ordering a flag in a tailor shop and to use its image are obliged to obey the provisions of the Resolution of the Council of Mazovia Voivodeship.