On 15th October 2003 the National Bank of Poland is putting into circulation collector’s coins depicting King Stanisław Leszczyński, of the following face values:

- **100 zł** - struck in gold, in proof finish, depicting a bust of the King.
- **10 zł** - struck in silver, in proof finish, depicting a bust of the King.
- **10 zł** - struck in silver, in proof finish, depicting a half-figure of the King.
- **2 zł** - struck in standard finish, in Nordic Gold (CuAl5Zn5Sn1) alloy, depicting a bust of the King.

Coins are a continuation of the series “Galaxy of Polish Kings and Princes”, started by the National Bank of Poland in 1979.

Stanisław Leszczyński, the only son of Rafał and Anna née Jabłonowska, was born on 20th October 1677 in Lwów. Due to his scrupulous education and upbringing, along with his personal virtues, he could readily win friendship. He was cultured and sociable, and had broad but rather superficial knowledge on a wide range of matters, which was typical of his times.

Leszczyński’s political career began when he was returned as a deputy to the convocational sejm after King Jan III Sobieski death and later at the royal election ... to the Polish throne. Augustus negotiated with the neighbouring countries, promising them part of the Polish and

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**Collector’s Coins**

**Coins struck by the State Mint in Warsaw.**

Printed by NBP Printing Office

**Designer of the coins: Ewa Tyc-Karpinska**
Lithuanian territories in return for support for his dynastic plans. Saxon formed an alliance with Russia and Denmark, and Augustus II led Saxon forces in an attack launched from Polish soil against Swedish Livonia. King Charles XII of Sweden crushed the armies of Tsar Peter I and Augustus II. Next, notwithstanding the Polish senators’ declarations of neutrality, he entered Poland and took Warsaw, which put up no resistance.

Charles XII used the opposition to Poland’s taking part in the war and the Russian alliance to his advantage, gaining the support of those in the nobility who had formed Warsaw confederation. He decided to depose Augustus and he started looking around for a suitable candidate. Since Augustus had imprisoned Jan III Sobieski’s sons, who had the best reason to support him, he finally settled for Stanisław Leszczyński, who was duly elected on 12th July 1704 by the Warsaw confederates, who had abjured their allegiance to Augustus II, with Swedish forces securing the election.

Leszczyński was a monarch with no military or material resources and no public support, entirely at the mercy of his Swedish protector. At Charles’s XII request Leszczyński was crowned King of Poland in Warsaw on 4th October 1705, and entered into an alliance with Sweden whereby Poland became Sweden’s dependent and relinquished Courland. Stanisław’s position relied on his Swedish victories, which was confirmed in 1706 when Charles XII entered Saxony and forced Augustus II to renounce the crown of Poland.

However, Sweden’s defeat at the crucial battle of Poltava against Russia in 1709 turned the scales in favour of Russia. Augustus II annulled his abdication and returned to Poland. Stanislaw was forced to flee the country. He was still an ally of Sweden, and Charles XII installed him in his Rhineland residence, where Stanisław lived with his family. Still, Augustus II wanted to retrieve his independence and to get rid of his hated rival. He organised several assassination attempts against Leszczyński, which only forced the latter to move. In 1719 he settled in Wissenburg in Alsace. In 1725 Louis XV, the King of France, married Stanisław’s daughter Maria, in the hope that the marriage would strengthen France’s influence in Poland. He established his Polish father-in-law in his palace at Chambord and granted him a pension. The marriage improved Stanisław’s difficult situation in exile and strengthened his position in Poland.

On Augustus’s II death in 1733 France supported the candidacy of Stanisław Leszczyński for the Polish throne. Disguised as a merchant, Leszczyński crossed Germany secretly and arrived in Warsaw, where he found shelter in the French embassy. On 10th September 1733 the French ambassador, Monti disclosed his presence to the Polish nobility who gathered in a church for the election. Clad in the garments of a Polish nobleman, the exiled king won the hearts of his countrymen, who now saw him as the embodiment of independence. On 12 September after a landslide victory in the election, he was hailed as the new monarch. The newly elected king, representing the aspirations for independence of the Polish nation, constituted a threat to the interests of Russia, Austria and Prussia. These countries also feared that Leszczyński’s links with the French government and the French presence in this position of Europe. Russian forces entered Poland and on 5th October 1733 held another election at Praga, a suburb of Warsaw, when Augustus III of Saxony was “elected” the King of Poland. With Russian troops closing in on him, Leszczyński managed to retreat to Gdansk, which was loyal to him, to wait for the expected French assistance. When the city surrendered, while French diplomacy remained passive, Leszczyński took refuge in Prussia. In the Polish negotiations him to stay in Königsberg, counting on territorial gains from Poland as a result of the conflict.

A war known as the “War of the Polish Succession” broke out in the whole of Europe, and lasted until 1736. The French fought the Austrians, though not for the crown of Poland, but for the retrieval of Lorraine. When it did return to France, Louis agreed to end the war. The tussle among the great powers turned Leszczyński into a pawn on the diplomatic chess-board. He was one of the last to learn that under the peace treaty signed in Vienna on 5th October 1735 he was expected to abdicate. He was given a coronet, first in the Duchy of Bar-le-Duc, and later Lorraine, with the right to retain his royal title. This was to facilitate the subsequent incorporation of these dukies in France. In Poland Leszczyński’s supporters had military supremacy. His reign, dependent on Swedish victories, was confirmed in 1706 when Charles XII entered Saxony and forced Augustus II to renounce the crown of Poland.

Leszczyński spent the last thirty years of his long life at Lunéville, where he earned the reputation of a good master and patron of the arts and sciences. The French considered him as the embodiment of Polish nobility and the country’s finest architectural and municipal layouts was designed for Nancy. Scholars like Voltaire and Montesquieu were guests at his court at Lunéville, and the Academy Stanislae (academy of science) he founded in Nancy had a European reputation as a seat of learning. The military college he founded at Lunéville educated a large number of Polish officers and politicians. A group of Polish émigrés, adherents to the country’s reform, clustered around Leszczyński. In 1743 one of the most interesting political treatise of the age, ‘Glos wolny wolność ubezpieczajac’ [Free Voice to Make Freedom Safe], postulating a programme of thorough reform in Poland, was published anonymously in his circle. Traditionally its authorship is ascribed to Leszczyński; however, the latest research indicates that he merely acted as its publisher.

Compiled by the NBP on the basis of the following books:
1. Poczet królów i książąt polskich [The Kings and Princes of Poland], Czytelnik 1978
2. Kuczyński, Stefan K. (ed.): Księga królów i książąt polskich (A Book of the Kings and Princes of Poland), Świat Książki 1999
3. Dębikowska, Alicja, Jan Zarzyński, & Małgorzata Zarzyńska: Polscie dzieje od czasów najdawniejszych do współczesności (Polish History from the Most Ancient to Contemporary Times), PWN 1994; and encyclopaedia reference works.

All collector’s coins are legal tender in Poland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>face value</th>
<th>metal</th>
<th>finish</th>
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Obverse: Image of the Eagle, established as the State Emblem of the Republic of Poland; on both sides of the Eagle the notation of the year of issue: 20-03; under the Eagle the inscription: Zü 100 Zü, circumscription in the rim: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA. The Mint mark: , under the Eagle’s left talon.

Reverse: Bust of King Stanisław Leszczyński. On the right, an eagle with the banner from the title page of the treatise ‘Glos wolny wolność ubezpieczajac’ [Free Voice to Make Freedom Safe]. Dates of reign: 1704-1709 / 1733-1736, below the eagle.