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“A NEW OPENING?” POLISH-GERMAN RELATIONS DURING THE RULE OF THE PO-PSL COALITION (2007-2009)

RESTORATION OF TRUST

Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004 was supposed to give rise to further cooperation between Poland and Germany in many areas and on a qualitatively higher level. Soon however, one could talk about disappointment as the mutual interaction was hugely affected by the consequences of the parliamentary election in the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as by the parliamentary and presidential election in Poland in the autumn of 2005. After the change of governments in both countries there soon appeared misunderstandings, controversies and distrust. Words about a crisis, regression and “kitsch” of Polish-German reconciliation were uttered by politicians and journalists. The Law and Justice party (PiS) came to power by fanning the flame of anti-German resentment still present in a substantial part of the Polish society. Advocates of a dialogue and mutual understanding with Germany were called traitors or naïve persons. Conservative ideologists denied that there is any Polish-German community of interests, not even in the EU or in NATO, and instead they gave priority to the “community of conflict”. It was not difficult to notice that this aggressive propaganda weighed down the opposition including the Civic Platform (PO) and also the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), and rarely any matter-of-fact polemics was raised.

The shared achievements of the neighbourship earned with substantial difficulties since 1989 were more and more frequently questioned. The right-wing of the Polish political scene was accusing Germans of relativizing the historical process and the crimes of National Socialism, and the major calling slogans used included “expulsion”, Erika Steinbach and the Prussian Trust. Germans, on the other hand, welcomed the new Polish government run by Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz and later by Jarosław Kaczyński with clear reluctance and disapproval and blamed it for extreme nationalism, narrow-mindedness, quarrelsome disposition, and egoistic treatment towards not only their German neighbour but towards the entire European Union.

The minority government, initially under PiS and later on in coalition with the League of Polish Families (LPR) and “Samoobrona”, as a matter of fact did not work out any coherent conception for constructive cooperation with Germany. It contami-

nated the atmosphere in bilateral relations and, what was worse it tried to disavow the achievements of its predecessors towards Polish-German mutual understanding and reconciliation. Yet, their attempts to convince western partners about German dominance in the European Union using the language of the cold war fell on deaf ears. The anti-German phobias demonstrated on the outside by PiS and LPR politicians were first of all serving the needs of their internal propaganda and incessant mobilization of the electorate around the new alleged threats to Polish sovereignty and independence coming from Brussels and Berlin¹.

The results of the parliamentary elections in October showed that the vision of the foreign policy and relations with Germany offered by the so-called government of the 4th Republic of Poland despite all the tremendous efforts ended up in failure. It is worth mentioning that during the election campaign in 2007 relations with Germany played an important role in the propaganda rhetoric used by PiS. PO was accused of being “dependant on Germany”, of cooperation with the German Christian Democrats in the European Parliament, and Donald Tusk, a Gdańsk resident was criticized for the “intellectual fascination with Germanhood typical of the Gdańsk community”. Prime Minister J. Kaczyński talked about his fears that the victory of Tusk’s party will mean a departure from “our hard foreign policy, especially concerning building partnership relations with Berlin”².

After the parliamentary elections in October 2007 which brought a new governmental coalition PO-PSL Poland adopted as a starting point for mutual relations the objective to rebuild reciprocal trust and to expand bilateral cooperation. This was considered to be a long-term process. It was announced that the former Foreign Minister, Władysław Bartoszewski would be appointed a special representative of the government whose task was to help in repairing relations with Germany³.

According to expectations on 23 November 2007 there was a new tone in the *exposé* delivered by Prime Minister D. Tusk:

¹ Cf. A. Holesch, *Verpasster Neuanfang. Deutschland, Polen und die EU*, Bonn 2007; also, *Von Kaczyński zu Tusk: eine deutsch-polnische Tragödie*, Bonn 2008; B. Koszel, *Polska i Niemcy w Unii Europejskiej. Pola konfliktów i płaszczyzny współpracy [Poland and Germany in the European Union. Conflict areas and platforms for cooperation]*, Poznań 2008.

² Cf. Z. Krasnodębski, *Niemcy poprzę każdego przeciw Kaczyńskim [Germans will support anyone against the Kaczyńskis]*, “Rzeczpospolita” from 21.08.07; *Premier Kaczyński: PO jest uzależniona od Niemców [Prime Minister Kaczyński: PO is dependant on Germans]*, “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 19.08.2007. German reactions: Th. Urban, *Feindbild Deutschland*, “Süddeutsche Zeitung” from 20.08.2007; *Kaczyński auf Konfrontationskurs*, ibidem; *Das polnische Bild vom “deutschen Erbfeind”*, ibidem; *Kaczyński: Liberale zu deutschfreundlich*, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” from 20.08.2007. Cf. K. Schuller, *Der Furor der “Tugend”*: von revolutionären Elan zu jakobinischem Säuberungswahn; *Polen unter der Regierung der Gebrüder Kaczyński*, “Internationale Politik” No 62/2007, p. 22-25.

³ P. Wroński, *Z Niemcami się dogadamy, z tarczą zobaczymy [We will reach agreement with the Germans, with the shield we will see]*, “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 6.11.2007; *Donald Tusk: Polnischer Wahlsieger lobt deutsche Kanzlerin*, “Die Welt” 5.11.2007.

“We want to develop strategic relations with Germany without avoiding difficult issues. We all in Poland know that Polish-German relations are crucial for the good position of both countries in the European Union but they at the same time require special care, lack of complexes, clear, tough when needed and friendly presentation of mutual problems and expectations. I can guarantee that these relations will bring satisfaction to the whole European Union and to both partners”⁴.

On 5 December 2008 the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, R. Sikorski returned to the idea of revitalizing the Polish-German “community of interests”. When participating in the 13th Polish-German Forum in Berlin he not only made reference to the term “community of interests and values” but he was also encouraging to “look for new and brave formulas to consolidate the Polish-German partnership, which constitutes one of the more important elements of the European landscape”⁵.

Undoubtedly, a good example and a symbol of successfully developing Polish-German cooperation, especially within the European Union was the election of Jerzy Buzek as the President of the European Parliament with a substantial majority vote on 14 July 2009. This was possible thanks to support from German Christian Democrats, who are the most influential group in the European People’s Party of European Democrats, as well as thanks to the kind attitude of SPD from the Party of European Socialists. The candidacy as well as the election caused many positive comments in the press and among the general public in Germany⁶.

IN THE SHADOW OF “VISIBLE SIGN”

In view of the fact that the government under J. Kaczyński strongly highlighted historical issues in Polish-German relations, Tusk’s government was first of all compelled to calm down the emotions and mood in this particular area. On 21 November 2007 W. Bartoszewski, who was very much respected as an authority in the Federal Republic of Germany, assumed his duties as the Secretary of State for International Dialogue in the Office of the Prime Minister.

⁴ Text of exposé of Prime Minister Donald Tusk see “Rzeczpospolita” from 23.11.2007.

⁵ 13th Polish-German Forum. Polish Embassy in Berlin: <http://www.berlin.polemb.net/index.php?document=1479>; A. Krzemiński, *Polska i Niemcy. Pomysł na przełom [Poland and Germany. Idea for a breakthrough]*, “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 10.-11.01.2009.

⁶ G. Gnauck, *Jerzy Buzek: Ein Pole wird Europas wichtigster Parlamentarier*, “Die Welt” from 9.09.2009; *EU-Parlament - Buzek ist neuer Präsident*, “Süddeutsche Zeitung” from 19.07.2009; N. Busse, *EU-Parlamentspräsident: Pole Buzek mit großer Mehrheit gewählt*, “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” from 14.07.2009; *Pole Buzek ist Präsident des EU-Parlaments*, “Der Tagesspiegel” from 15.07.2009; *Jerzy Buzek: Zeuge des Wandels*, “Frankfurter Rundschau” from 9.09.2009; *Erstmals Pole Präsident des EU-Parlaments*, ibidem. Cf. Lammert: *Buzek ma niemieckie głosy [Buzek has German votes]*, “Rzeczpospolita” from 17.06.2009.

Polish declarations of rebuilding friendly relations with Germany received a friendly response in Berlin. Quickly a discreet first visit of W. Bartoszewski to Berlin was organized and it prepared the ground for the visit of Prime Minister D. Tusk to the Federal Republic of Germany just before the European Council summit in Lisbon.

The head of the Polish government arrived in Berlin on 11 December 2007 and his meeting with A. Merkel was rather a symbol of a new chapter opening in the relations with Germany than it was meant to bring solutions to specific problems. However, it cannot be ruled out that the Polish side counted on some gestures from the German government concerning the building of “Visible Sign” – the centre commemorating expulsions after World War II⁷. Poland suggested including the issue of expulsions in the exhibition proposed by Tusk and the Foreign Minister R. Sikorski. Also a different approach was expected concerning the construction of the northern gas pipe-line, and closing the issue of claims for compensation of the “expellees” by the German government assuming financial liability if courts found such claims legitimate. Although these matters were not discussed the climate of the meeting was important as well as joint agreements about the continuation of talks on the line between Moscow-Warsaw-Berlin concerning the gas pipe-line, reanimating the Weimar Triangle, more funding for the Polish-German youth exchange programmes and the establishment of the Polish-German Science Foundation. The Chancellor warmly welcomed the Polish initiative of building a museum of World War II in Gdańsk and promised her help in creating the museum. She again rejected any claims for compensation from Poland for lost property filed by the Federation of Expellees⁸.

Before the meeting in Berlin on 10 December 2007 the German government announced that, irrespective of Polish intentions, the Centre commemorating expulsions would be created in Berlin because this had been decided upon in the coalition agreement with the Social Democrats in 2005. According to the plans the centre would have the form of a foundation subordinate to the prestigious German Historical Museum in Berlin, and it would be financed from the central budget. For 2008 1.2 million Euros were reserved for that purpose. The exposition would take as its basis the exhibition which was prepared two years earlier in Bonn entitled, “Flight, expulsion, integration”. Foreign historians would have the task of giving the exposi-

⁷ For a wider account see Z. Mazur, *Centrum przeciwko Wypędzeniom (1999-2005) [Centre against expulsions (1999-2005)]*, Poznań 2006.

⁸ *Tusks Antrittsbesuch: Merkel: Erinnerung an Vertreibungen bleibt in Berlin*, “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” from 12.12.2007; *Merkel und Tusk auf Schnupperkurs*, “Der Tagesspiegel”, from 11.12.2007; P. Flückiger, *Tusks Zusammenprall mit “Eisberg” Merkel*, “Die Welt” from 12.12.2007; C. Gmyz, P. Jendroszczyk, *Warszawa – Berlin: zbliżenie, ale bez przełomu [Warsaw - Berlin: coming close but without a breakthrough]*, “Rzeczpospolita” from 12.12.2007; B. T. Wieliński, *Ciepłej w Berlinie [Warmer in Berlin]*, “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 13.12.2007.

tion a more European character. This solution was accepted by SPD in the coalition government under the condition that establishing such a centre cannot be “provocation” towards Poland and that E. Steinbach would not participate in the project⁹.

When matters connected with building “Visible Sign” started to take a more real shape on 5 February 2008 talks were held in Warsaw and were kept in secrecy between Minister Bartoszewski and the German Secretary of State in the Chancellor’s Office, Berndt Neumann, the government representative for culture and the media. The official communiqué from the meeting talked about the importance of an open historical dialogue for Polish-German relations and “the need to find such forms for it which would favour historical truth and prevent misunderstanding”. It was decided that on both sides people from governmental positions and from foundations who oppose or sabotage Polish-German cooperation and reconciliation would be removed from their positions¹⁰. In the most important question of building “Visible Sign” Poland decided to maintain “well-wishing neutrality”. This was decided after reassurance from the German side about presenting a fair historical context of “expulsions”. Although Poland did not intend any formal participation in the project, the participation by Polish historians was not excluded. Bartoszewski and Neumann agreed to activate cooperation within the European Network “Memory and Solidarity”. An agreement was also reached concerning the preparation of a project to build the “Museum of War and Peace in the 20th century” in Gdańsk, and concerning German participation in the renovation of the commemorative site at Westerplatte¹¹.

A series of friendly gestures was continued during Angela Merkel’s short visit to Gdańsk on 16 June 2008. Prime Minister Tusk and Chancellor Merkel reached agreement with regard to German support for the Eastern Partnership and decided that a quick ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon was necessary. The Polish side came in with a proposal to build the so-called Polish-German meeting centre in Berlin. It could be built on the undeveloped site in Berlin where the Polish embassy was located before WW II and which belongs to Poland. The value of the land was estimated at 6 million Euros and this would constitute the Polish contribution to this undertaking. Also the decision about Poland not participating in the building project

⁹ A. Kazimierczuk, M. Mackiewicz, *SPD: Upamiętnienie wypędzonych nie może być prowokacją* [Commemorating expellees cannot be a provocation], “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 5.11.2007; *Gedenken an Vertreibungen. Scharfe Attacke*, “Süddeutsche Zeitung” from 21.8.2008.

¹⁰ See interview: W. Bartoszewski *Polacy i Niemcy. Starzy przyjaciele i młodzi awanturnicy* [Poles and Germans. Old friends and young rebels], “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 13.08.2009.

¹¹ Polish-German talks concerning historical problems chaired by the Secretary of State, Prof. W. Bartoszewski and the Secretary of State in the German Chancellor’s Office Mr. Neumann, Warsaw, 6.02.2008, Polish Embassy in Berlin, <http://www.berlin.polemb.net/index.php?document=1029>. Cf. Ł.S, AKU, *Wizyta Neumanna w Polsce. W tajemnicy o “widocznym znaku”* [Neumann’s visit to Poland. In secret about “Visible Sign”], “Nasz Dziennik” 6.02.2008; *Bartoszewski: Niemcy gotowi na ustępstwa* [Germans ready for concessions], “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 4.02.2008; P. Semka, *Utracona cześć Władysława B.* [Lost esteem of Władysław B.], “Rzeczpospolita”, from 27.03.2009; *Geschichte: Polen bleibt beim Nein zum Vertriebenenzentrum*, “Der Spiegel” from 5.02.2008.

of “Visible Sign” was upheld. With reference to that the head of the Polish government expressed his hope that Chancellor Merkel would find a “good solution” to stop E. Steinbach’s participation in the “Visible Sign” project and her determination to become a member of the executive board of the planned foundation¹².

On 3 September 2008 the German government adopted the project of a resolution which established the foundation called “Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation” which would govern the “Visible Sign” museum subordinate to the Historical Museum in Berlin¹³. On 24 September, before the project was passed on to the Bundestag Chancellor Merkel arrived in Wrocław where she received an honorary doctorate from Wrocław Polytechnic. On 9 October Prime Minister Tusk paid a short visit to Berlin concerning EU matters and at the beginning of December Minister Sikorski arrived for talks in the German capital¹⁴.

On 4 December 2008 before the Polish Minister’s arrival the Bundestag with a small number of MPs had adopted the resolution establishing the foundation. The project was passed mainly thanks to the votes of the CDU/CSU faction and some liberals. An official objection to the project was expressed by Lukrezia Jochimsen on behalf of the Die Linke Party and Katrin Göring-Eckhardt authorized by the Green Party¹⁵.

The Executive Council of the Foundation was planned to consist of 13 members. The members *ex officio* included the President of the German Historical Museum Foundation and the President of the Foundation House of the History of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bonn. Two members were the representatives of the Bundestag whereas the Foreign Office, the Ministry of the Interior and the government representative for culture and the media were to be represented by one member

¹² T. h. Urban, *Merkel in Danzig*, “Süddeutsche Zeitung” from 16.06.2008; B. T. Wieliński, *Merkel u Tuska, czyli przyjaźń w rozkwicie [Merkel visits Tusk, or friendship in full bloom]*, “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 14.06.2008; by the same author, *Pielęgnujmy normalność w stosunkach z Niemcami [Let’s cherish normality in relations with Germans]*, ibidem 17.06.2008.

¹³ Regierungspressekonferenz vom 3. September 2008. Die Bundesregierung, http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2008/09/2008-09-03-regpk_layoutVariant=Druckansicht.html; Bart, “Widoczny znak” do Bundestagu [“Visible Sign” goes to the Bundestag], “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 4.08.2008; *Beschluss für Erinnerungsstätte Sichtbares Zeichen gegen die Vertreibung*, “Süddeutsche Zeitung” from 21.08.2008; *Vertriebenenzentrum - Lob und freie Hand für Steinbach*, ibidem.

¹⁴ P. Wroński, B. T. Wieliński, *Stosunki z Niemcami do muzeum [Relations with Germans to museum]*, “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 6.12.2007.

¹⁵ Text of the resolution in: R. Formuszewicz, *Przyszły status prawny Widocznego Znak. Rządowy projekt ustawy o utworzeniu Fundacji Niemieckie Muzeum Historyczne [Future legal status of the “Visible Sign”]. The governmental project of the resolution about establishing the Foundation of the German Historical Museum*, “Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego”, nr 3/2008, http://www.iz.poznan.pl/news/56_Biuletyn%20IZ%20nr%203.%20Widoczny%20znak.1.pdf; Stiftung Deutsches Historisches Museum. 04.12.2008. Bündnis 90/Die Grünen. Bundestagfraktion http://docs.google.com/gview?a=v&q=cache:daf9oxf0cXQJ:www.gruene-bundestag.de/cms/bundestagsreden/dok/261/261137.stiftung_deutsches_historisches_museum.pdf+sichtbares+zeichen+in+Bundestag&hl=pl&gl=pl.

each. The Federation of Expellees and the religious denominations (the Evangelical church, the Catholic church and the Central Council of Jews in Germany) were to be represented by 3 members each. A Scientific Council was to be established consisting of 9 members and it would include invited historians from Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. The cost of building the museum was estimated at ca. 29 million Euros and its annual maintenance was estimated at 2.4 million Euros.

Beyond doubt the increased activity of Polish diplomacy demonstrated in the second half of 2008 aimed at creating a friendly climate before the debate in the Bundestag concerning the “Visible sign” project as well as at providing support for Chancellor Merkel in her efforts to prevent E. Steinbach from having influence on the shape of the project. Although two weeks after the resolution was passed in the Bundestag Steinbach herself applied to be a member of the executive management of the foundation, Germans using confidential channels asked Warsaw for restraint and implied that they will keep to the prior arrangements.

The question of the people who were to represent the Federation of Expellees in the Executive Council of the “Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation” Foundation caused a serious upheaval in 2009 on the Warsaw-Berlin line. As early as in April 2008 the Federation of Expellees (*BdV*) decided that it will be represented by E. Steinbach in the Executive Council of the future foundation, and in early 2009 the Presiding Board of *BdV* unanimously nominated three candidates to the future Council of the foundation. Apart from E. Steinbach the list included two deputy presidents of *BdV*: Christian Knauer, a politician from the Bavarian CSU and Albrecht Schlaeger, a politician from the Bavarian SPD. Their stand-in replacement representatives were also nominated. The prospect of E. Steinbach’s nomination and breaking the gentlemen’s agreement with B. Neumann was regarded by Minister W. Bartoszewski as “serious indecency” as it would be comparable to the Vatican nominating the Lefebvre’s bishop Richard Williamson, a Holocaust denier, to be its representative for maintaining relations with Israel. The Minister warned that the potential nomination for E. Steinbach to the Executive Council of the foundation devoted to expulsions would have a detrimental effect on Polish-German relations and would reduce the number of 20 joint projects planned for this year. Other Polish sources using diplomatic channels were supposed to inform Berlin that if the nomination did happen W. Bartoszewski could resign from his office as the Secretary of State in the Prime Minister’s Office responsible for relations with Germany, and this would have wide repercussions in the Federal Republic of Germany and in Europe¹⁶.

¹⁶ J. Bielecki, *Bartoszewski: Albo ja, albo Steinbach [Bartoszewski: it's either me or Steinbach]*, “Dziennik” 16.02.2009; P. Jendroszczyk, *Bartoszewski ostrzega Berlin [Bartoszewski warns Berlin]*, “Rzeczpospolita” from 15.02.2009; *BdV: Polska szantażuje rząd federalny [BdV: Poland blackmails the Federal government]*, ibidem from 17.02.2009; P. Semka, *Nominacja Steinbach obrazi Polaków [Nomi-*

The reaction on the Polish side was decisive and sharp with W. Bartoszewski putting all his authority to tip the scales. Unfortunately, the climax of the affair involving E. Steinbach happened on 13 February 2009 when Minister R. Sikorski delivered in the Sejm (lower house of the Polish Parliament) his *exposé*, in which he devoted a lot of attention to “reinstated” good neighbourly relations with Germany. He stressed many times that Germany “is our key ally and partner in the EU and in NATO who appreciates the Polish contribution towards strengthening the spirit of integration and building a community of the western world”. The Minister did not hide the fact that there are still many disputable problems; “Nevertheless the joint Polish and German sense of responsibility for the future of the European Union is more important. The cooperation between Poland and Germany confirms that we should remember about the past but we should co-construct the future bearing in mind our national and community interests”¹⁷.

When on 16 February 2009 Minister W. Bartoszewski travelled to Berlin to convince Chancellor Merkel to reject E. Steinbach’s candidacy, the Presiding Board of *BdV* outraged by the Polish reaction published their nominations planning in this way to put pressure on the Chancellor, who was allegedly going to be blackmailed by the government in Warsaw¹⁸. Before W. Bartoszewski’s visit E. Steinbach met Chancellor A. Merkel and President H. Köhler within party consultations and she officially informed them about the decision made by the Federation of Expellees. Chancellor Merkel following talks with the Polish representative found herself in a very awkward situation and decided to postpone the decision concerning establishing the council of the foundation “Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation” until 2010 or even 2011, so that the issue would not become a topic of the campaign before the parliamentary election in September. W. Bartoszewski was appeased when he left after the meeting¹⁹.

In the face of the oncoming election to the Bundestag the question of nomination for E. Steinbach divided political communities and German public opinion. As it was to be expected support for her came from the community of the “Expellees”, CSU, part of the right-wing of CDU and the opinion-forming south-German newspaper “Süddeutsche Zeitung”. Opinions were voiced that the Chancellor should not succumb to the Polish attempts at blackmail. The *BdV* threatened with

nation for Steibach will offend Poles], “Rzeczpospolita” from 15.02.2009; Bart, *Steinbach w “widocznym znaku”?* [*Steinbach in “Visible Sign”?*], “Gazeta Wyborcza” 2.01.2009.

¹⁷ Information from the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Radosław Sikorski concerning tasks for Polish foreign policy in 2009, http://www.msz.gov.pl/Informacja_Ministra_Spraw_Zagranicznych_25358.html

¹⁸ *Umstrittene Entscheidung. Vertriebene nominieren Steinbach für Stiftungsrat*, “Die Welt” from 17.02.2009; G. Gnauck und A. Grain, *Vertriebenen-Stiftung: Deutsch-polnische Spannungen wegen Steinbach*, ibidem

¹⁹ *Kanclerz Niemiec ustąpiła Bartoszewskiemu?* [*German Chancellor gave way to Bartoszewski?*], “Dziennik” from 16.02.2009; P. Jendroszczyk, *Steinbach będzie musiała poczekać na nominację* [*Steinbach will have to wait for nomination*], “Rzeczpospolita” from 17.02.2009.

boycotting the entire project and the target of its sharp attacks focused on the SPD and F.-W. Steinmeier²⁰. The President of the Bundestag, Norbert Lambert spoke of “demonizing” E. Steinbach by Polish public opinion. Jörg Schönbohm, the Minister of the Interior of Brandenburg expected that the Chancellor would defend Ms Steinbach, Ronald Pofalla, the Secretary General of the CDU assured “full solidarity of the CDU” with the head of the *BdV* and considered that “great harm” was being done to her. On the other hand, Christian Wulff, Prime Minister of Lower Saxony was afraid that the lack of nomination for E. Steinbach will only strengthen the radical Right in Germany. Many authorities became engaged in defending her including a well known German writer of Jewish origin, Ralph Giordano and the President of the German Bishops’ Conference, Archbishop Robert Zollitsch, whose liking for the radicals from *BdV* was difficult to conceive of²¹. Berthold Kohler wrote in his editorial commentary of the daily “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” criticizing the Polish exaggerated reactions,

“Poland, our highly appreciated partner made the case of E. Steinbach, an insignificant symbolic character to be a litmus paper for the state of reconciliation and a touchstone for future multi-faceted relations. Warsaw presented Berlin with an alternative which must have sounded ridiculous, but which was treated by Poland with extreme seriousness. It was: Erika Steinbach or us (...) the old Polish phobia again saw the daylight. The Germans with their project are trying to change from the role of culprits into the role of victims, and to make Poles unaware of the guilt the only criminals. What is being said about Ms Steinbach in Poland and about what has never been questioned in Berlin is pure nonsense”.

Nevertheless, another journalist, Ansgar Graw from “Die Welt”, rightly observed that the dispute about the Centre is “not only about personal details. It is about the validity of the conception and about the question whether it is possible to fish out from the entire humanitarian catastrophe only its one part”²².

On 27 February 2009, that is two days before the planned EU summit in Brussels the leaders of both countries met in Hamburg. The main topics included economic issues and combating the crisis. Contrary to the expectations the irritable question

²⁰ *Steinbach attackiert Außenminister Steinmeier*, “Die Welt” from 24.02.2009; *SPD fände Steinbach im Stiftungsrat “inakzeptabel”*, ibidem; *Rozżalona Steinbach krytykuje Steinmeiera [Embittered Steinbach criticizes Steinmeier]*, “Rzeczpospolita” from 24.02.2009; P. Jendroszczyk, *Steinbach atakuje szefa niemieckiej dyplomacji [Steinbach attacks the head of German diplomacy]*, ibidem from 25.02.2009; M. Kamann, *Drohung der Sudetendeutschen. Entweder mit Steinbach – oder gar nicht*, “Die Welt” from 23.02.2009; *Steinbach – “SPD hat Polen gegen mich aufgehetzt”*, ibidem from 25.02.2009.

²¹ M. Lau, *CDU stellt sich hinter Erika Steinbach*, “Die Welt” from 3.03.2009; K. Schuler, *Streit mit Polen: CDU verteidigt Steinbach*, “Die Zeit” from 3.03.2009; *Vertriebene: Lammert kritisiert “Dämonisierung Erika Steinbachs”*, “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” from 1.03.2009.

²² B. Kohler, *Causa Steinbach. Die alte polnische Phobie*, “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” from 2.03.2009; A. Grain, *Streit um Vertriebenenzentrum: Für Polen geht es um mehr als nur um Steinbach*, “Die Welt” from 26.02.2009;

of E. Steinbach's nomination to the Council of the future foundation was not raised. A day before the meeting Chancellor Merkel during a meeting with foreign correspondents in Berlin informed that she intended to wait before she makes the decision concerning the establishment of the foundation until the "right moment" and that she wanted to "find an amicable solution to the problem". During a formal banquet in Hamburg city hall A. Merkel added that the Polish-German relations "are close to her heart" and the "critical issues which we have to solve" will not have any impact on her attitude. The Polish Prime Minister made a statement in a similar tone before his departure, and he said that he was not going to raise the German "internal matter" and assured that on his part there would be "no expectations concerning the issue". However, in an interview given to the daily "Financial Times Deutschland" he openly admitted that he could not imagine a solution according to the BdV's conception, which would burden the good bilateral relations in which he had invested his entire authority²³.

On 3 March 2009 talks were held between Chancellor A. Merkel and the vice-chancellor and the minister of Foreign Affairs, F.-W. Steinmeier concerning the issue of the appointments of personnel for the foundation. The SPD politician insisted on making a quick decision and that was what happened. On the same day the Chancellor's Office released information about the resignation of E. Steinbach from the position of the foundation's Executive Council member. Two days later a statement by the Federation of Expellees was released informing about the "temporary" resignation of E. Steinbach which was made to exclude the possibility of the entire project being blocked, and in consequence not to give the opponents of the project a reason for needless satisfaction. One of the places in the Council of the foundation meant for the *BdV* was to remain vacant²⁴.

The formal conclusion of the Polish-German dispute with E. Steinbach in the main part caused a lot of controversy in Germany, and in Poland it was received with moderate satisfaction. The spokesperson for Chancellor Merkel announced that she accepted the decision of the Federation with "respect and recognition", though certainly the sharp divisions in the CDU before the election campaign to the Bundestag did not suit her in the least. Also the head of the German Foreign Office F.-W. Steinmeier assumed a similar position stating that the commemoration of expulsions must be realized "in the spirit of reconciliation and understanding with Po-

²³ F. Kellermann, N. Fichtner, *Tusk fordert Rückzug Steinbachs*, "Financial Times Deutschland" from 27.02.2009; *Treffen Merkel/Tusk – "Eine wirkliche Herzensangelegenheit"*, "Süddeutsche Zeitung" from 27.02.2009; *Treffen in Hamburg. Merkel und Tusk schweigen zu Streit um Steinbach*, "Die Welt" from 27.02.2009; *Streit um Vertriebenenzentrum: Polens Premier fordert indirekt Rückzug Steinbachs*, "Der Spiegel" from 1.3.2009; P. Jendroszczyk, *O Steinbach krótko [About Steinbach in brief]*, "Rzeczpospolita" from 28.02.2009; B. T. Wieliński, *Tusk z Merkel na wieczerzy św. Macieja [Tusk with Merkel at the supper of St. Mathew]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 28.02.2009. Cf. S. Dietrich, *Erika Steinbach: Polnisches Feindbild*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" from 1.03.2009; *Vertriebenenzentrum: Merkel vertröstet Polen in Steinbach-Konflikt*, "Der Spiegel" 27.02.2009.

²⁴ Text: *Die Erklärung des BdV*, "Die Welt" from 5.03.2009;

land as an important partner, and the step taken by the *BdV* opens the way towards it". The decision was not accepted by the CSU whose leader, Horst Seehofer awarded E. Steinbach with the Bavarian Cross of Merit for her "brave" attitude. The Sudeten Germans Landsmannschaft gave the Chancellor time until the end of the year to fill the vacancy in the foundation Council with Ms Steinbach, or otherwise it threatened with resigning from the cooperation in the execution of the project commemorating "expulsions". The head of the Federation of Expellees herself was making it clear that her resignation was temporary²⁵.

In Poland Prime Minister D. Tusk concluded that "good and composed work done by Władysław Bartoszewski has brought effects". The decision was accepted in a positive way by the opposition PiS. The PiS leader, J. Kaczyński was happy with the news that E. Steinbach would not sit in the Council of "Visible Sign" but he was concerned that the museum would be at all created. From the Polish point of view it was supposed to be unacceptable as it would question the moral right of Poles to the western and northern areas²⁶.

Without going into detail it is possible to say that from a wider perspective the issue of the dispute, very much publicized in the media of both countries, concerning the nomination of E. Steinbach was only a tactical success but a strategic failure for Poland. Warsaw *de facto* resorted to blackmail (either us or Steinbach) and the heaviest cannons were wheeled out together with a threat of freezing the bilateral cooperation, and all this happened in the year of commemorating 70 years since the outbreak of World War II, and 20 years since the collapse of communism in Europe. The image of W. Bartoszewski in Germany was compromised and now he started to be perceived as an uncompromising politician, easily giving in to emotions, who offended E. Steinbach with words such as "anti-Pole", or "blond beast", and who called her defenders "fools"²⁷. The crisis gave E. Steinbach top popularity in Germany. Journalists were competing for interviews with her, she was a frequent guest on television talk shows. The Christian Democrat politicians spoke of the great and respect-

²⁵ Seehofer will Steinbachs Rückzug nicht hinnehmen, "Die Welt" from 5.03.2009; *Streit um Steinbach. Sudetendeutsche drohen mit Konsequenzen*, "Süddeutsche Zeitung" from 1.03.2009; *Freude in Polen, Bedauern bei der CSU. Steinbach zieht zurück*, ibidem from 4.03.2009; *Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen. Sudetendeutsche drohen mit Ausstieg*, "Die Welt" from 5.03.2009; *Steinbach-Eklat: Sude-tendeutsche setzen Regierung Frist*, "Frankfurter Rundschau", from 5.03.2009; B. T. Wieliński, *Erika Steinbach kontratakuje [Erika Steinbach in counterattack]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 9.03.2009.

²⁶ K. Kolenda-Zaleska, *Wielki szacunek dla pani kanclerz [Huge respect for Lady Chancellor]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 11.03.2009; B. T. Wieliński, *Steinbach dziękujemy [No, thank you to Steinbach]*, ibidem from 5.03.2009. Cf. K. Krohn, *Warschau quittiert Steinbach-Rückzug mit Erleichterung*, "Frankfurter Rundschau" from 5.03.2009.

²⁷ K. Schuller, *Neue Töne zu Frau Steinbach: Nebenwirkungen einer Erpressung*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" from 6.03.2009; *Steinbach verzichtet: "Bedauerliche Folge eines Kesseltreibens"*, ibidem from 10.03.2009; *Vertriebenenstreit. Was zwischen Deutschen und Polen schief läuft*, "Die Welt" 6.03.2009; *Bartoszewski: Steinbach dla Polski jest jak antysemita dla Izraela [Bartoszewski: Steinbach for Poland is like anti-Semite for Israel]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 5.03.2009.

ful deed of Ms Steinbach, namely her temporary resignations from taking a position in the Executive Council of the foundation. After the resignation her position was improved in the *BdV* community and in her own party. In the estimation of German commentators she was in a class of her own by resigning from her “life’s work” in the name of reconciliation and good relations with the eastern neighbour²⁸.

There is no doubt that the dispute was to a large extent about prestige as well as a result of a tremendous pressure from the opposition PiS exerted on the government of D. Tusk. The opposition made the issues of Polish-German relations the leading theme of their propaganda campaign, and in the years 2005-2007 the anti-German mood was in full swing. In reality, the structure of the foundation “Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation”, its legal standing and the manner of appointing members of the Executive Council guaranteed that its functioning will not have a revisionist character. Besides, The Federation of Expellees had only 3 votes in the foundation’s Executive Council of 13 members, and thus it could be easily outvoted.

Contrary to the expectations the resignation of E. Steinbach did not calm down the mood. On 8 March an open letter from N. Lammert, the President of the Bundestag to W. Bartoszewski was published simultaneously in two papers, “Süddeutsche Zeitung” and “Gazeta Wyborcza”. The letter accused the Polish media of creating a false image of E. Steinbach. She is certainly not a “fair-haired beast”. The letter talked about the high regard for her sincere and credible engagement for the cause of remembrance and reconciliation, especially in the Polish-German relations. The language used by Minister W. Bartoszewski towards E. Steinbach and the people who support her was considered unacceptable in a democratic debate. The author asked a rhetorical question whether they all including the “President of the Bundestag, and the high-rank MPs from the Bundestag, Prime Ministers of the Lands, the CDU Secretary General, the President of the German Episcopate are “insane?”²⁹.

In the reply, which was also made public in the media, W. Bartoszewski expressed his astonishment caused by “both the content of the President’s letter and the form in which it was publicized”. The Minister expressed his regret that N. Lammert attached so much importance to his interviews and to words which were frequently taken out of context, although he did not deny that they were not always in line with “diplomatically balanced statements”. He quoted many examples as evidence for the anti-Polish attitude of E. Steinbach, who “understands reconciliation between our Nations in a very peculiar way”. He also mentioned his role in the process of Polish-German reconciliation. The letter finished with a strong note that only the truth “can lead to responsible, healthy and honest relations between our Nations. The truth must be the foundation of our relations. This is the condition for conducting a sincere dia-

²⁸ A. Graw, *Souveräner Rückzug*, “Die Welt” from 5.03.2009; M. Wolffsohn, *Erika Steinbach hat Respekt und Dank verdient*, ibidem; P. Carstens, *Steinbach Anerkennung durch Verzicht*, “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” from 6.03.2009.

²⁹ Przewodniczący Bundestagu Norbert Lammert: Cenię Erikę Steinbach [*President of the Bundestag Norbert Lammert: I value Erika Steinbach*], “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 8.03.2009.

logue. With much regret I have to say that the recent events showed a lack of relevant distance and humility towards our shared history on the part of some representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany”³⁰.

At the beginning of April the Council of the remembrance museum “Visible Sign” was appointed and on 13 May it was formally constituted and began its activity. The institution was to be governed for the period of five years by the council consisting of 12 members headed by Angelika Schwall-Düren, an SPD MP and the President of the Polish-German Society and, for the sake of balance, by Jochen-Konrad Fromme, a CDU MP critical towards Poland. The other members of the Council included, among others, B. Neumann (CDU), Minister for Culture and Günter Gloser (SPD), the deputy Foreign Minister. The Evangelical Church was to be represented by Dr. Petra Bahr, and the Catholic Church by Hans-Jochen Jaschke, the auxiliary bishop of Hamburg. The Jewish community was to be represented by Prof. Salomon Korn, Vice President of the Central Council of Jews, who is respected in Germany and whose parents lived in Poland before the war. According to the prior arrangements the Federation of Expellees was represented by Ch. Knauer and A. Schläger. In early July Prof. Manfred Kittel, a professional historian from the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich was elected Director. The Scientific Council consisted of seven German scholars, two historians from the Czech Republic and Hungary, and Prof. Tomasz Szarota from the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw³¹.

The controversy around “Visible Sign” had a strong impact on the widely publicized appeal issued by the CDU and CSU parties on 25 May before the elections to the European Parliament. German Christian Democrats postulated that expulsions should be “condemned on the international level” and that the right to freedom of settling binding in Europe should “grant the expellees the right to their homeland territories”. Although it was clearly visible that the document was an attempt to attract the most conservative electorate and a kind of gratification for the concessions on the part of *BdV* concerning the nomination of E. Steinbach to the Council of the Foundation “Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation”, it nevertheless caused heated debates in Poland. The head of PiS, J. Kaczyński during an election rally in Szczecin in harsh words stated that the “anti-Polish and anti-European manifesto by the CDU/CSU is an open appeal to review the borders and makes Poland into a “rubbish bin”. In a special letter to Prime Minister D. Tusk he suggested that PO should step out from

³⁰ Reply of Minister W. Bartoszewski to the letter by President of the Bundestag Prof. N. Lammert, Warsaw, 10 March 2009. Office of the Representative of the Prime Minister for International Dialogue. Prime Minister’s Office, <http://www.bpdm.kprm.gov.pl/aktualnosci.php?id=9&look=59>.

³¹ *Historiker führt Vertriebenen-Stiftung Die Stiftung “Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung”*, “Der Tagesspiegel” from 3.07.2009; P. Jendroszczyk, *Niemiecki historyk młodej generacji Manfred Kittel został dyrektorem tworzonego w Berlinie muzeum niemieckich wysiedlonych [German new generation historian, Manfred Kittel appointed director of the museum against expulsions created in Berlin]*, “Rzeczpospolita” from 8.07.2009; B. T. Wieliński, *Niemcy powołali radę Widocznego Znaku [Germans appointed the Council of “Visible Sign”]*, “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 9.04.2009.

the European People's Party (EPP) which gathers European Christian democratic parties. President L. Kaczyński's Office expected from the government "a calm but decisive reaction"³².

Undoubtedly, for D. Tusk and the ruling coalition the manifesto of the German Christian Democrats was an unpleasant surprise because it introduced a rift and a dissonance into the Polish-German dialogue which was being rebuilt with difficulty. With a lot of self-restraint the Prime Minister stated that the attitude of the Polish government concerning expulsions after WW II is well known: Polish people condemn expulsions but it is the German state which is to blame for them. He admitted that in his opinion "the expressions coming today (...) from some German communities can cause a feeling of distaste". The Civic Platform assumed that on the part of PiS the issue is used to raise opinion poll ratings showing support for the party at the price of "creating conflicts in international relations". It was pointed out that the whole affair has to be treated realistically as a part of a propaganda campaign before the election to the European Parliament³³.

The issue of appointments for the council of the Foundation "Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation" revived again in the middle of 2009, and it was connected with the election campaign to the Bundestag. There were controversial and ambiguous provisions in the official document, which was the election platform of the Union parties as well as the project of the work for the future government in the years 2009-2013. Namely, contrary to the earlier Polish-German arrangements, it was clearly stated in the document that the objective of the Foundation "Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation" was documenting the fate of exclusively German "expellees" and at the same time "serving the truth, building bridges and promoting understanding among nations". The CDU and CSU pointed out that the associations of expellees should decide about the participation of their representatives in the Council of the Foundation. In the opinion of the weekly "Der Spiegel" this was encouraging for E. Steinbach and was leaving the issue of her appointment for the council of the Foundation still open³⁴.

³² *Niemieccy chadecy chcą potępienia wysiedleń [German Christian Democrats want condemnation of expulsions]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 25.05.2009; *Jak kampania, to PiS bije Niemca [When campaigning PiS hits Germans]*, ibidem from 28.05.2009; P. Wroński, Bart, *PiS Niemca się chwyta [PiS clutches at Germans]*, ibidem; *Europa-Wahlen: Polens Nationalkonservative wettern gegen CDU und CSU*, "Der Spiegel" from 26.05.2009; K. Schuller, *Angriff an der deutschen Flanke*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" from 28.05.2009.

³³ *PO: Obląkańcza polityka Jarosława Kaczyńskiego [PO: The insane politics of J. Kaczyński]*, "Rzeczpospolita" from 28.05.2009; *Borusewicz: Odezwa niemieckich partii chadeckich to część kampanii przedwyborczej [Manifesto by the German Christian Democrats as a part of their election campaign]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 28.05.2009; P. Wroński, *Co Kaczyńscy by robili bez wypędzonych [What would Kaczyńskis do without the expellees]*, ibidem from 27.05.2009.

³⁴ *Wir haben Kraft – gemeinsam für unser Land. Regierungsprogramm 2009-2013*, Berlin 28.Juni 2009, p. 59, <http://www.cdu.de/doc/pdfc/090628-beschluss-regierungsprogramm-cducus.pdf>; *CSU für Steinbach*, "Der Spiegel" from 25.05.2009

The election calendar included also the participation of Chancellor Merkel in the annual "Day of Homeland Territory" organized by the Federation of Expellees on 22 August 2009 in Berlin. The Chancellor in her short address to the participants promised to be sensitive to the "voices from the neighbouring countries". She thanked E. Steinbach and the German homeland associations for their commitment to cherish history and, at the same time, she added that Germans do not endeavour to distort history. She emphasized that "expulsions were a direct consequence of the crimes of National Socialism and World War II. We accept responsibility for that dark chapter of our past". She highlighted that the history of expulsions is a part of the "German national identity and collective memory". The leader of *BdV* thanked A. Merkel for her efforts towards creating in Berlin the museum and documentation centre, "Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation" but she left no doubt that the "horrors of National Socialist rule over Europe cannot be overused to justify mass expulsions". She also expressed her satisfaction from the fact that the CDU and CSU confirmed in their election manifesto that the Federation of Expellees has the right to take an independent decision concerning their representatives to the Council of the Foundation devoted to expulsions. She was applauded when she added that, "it is not about me but about the freedom in this country" and using one's democratic rights. "This is what we will not allow to be taken away from us either at home or abroad". E. Steinbach made it clear that she expects that after the September election and a change of the ruling coalition in Germany she would be able to take her seat in the Council of the Foundation³⁵.

Undoubtedly, Chancellor Merkel had to do political splits, as the German press wrote, so that, on the one hand the conservative electorate connected with *BdV* and estimated at 2-4% of the total number of voters would be satisfied, and on the other hand, not to deteriorate relations with Poland, which she was going to visit on 1 September for the commemoration events on 70 years since the outbreak of World War II. She underlined the contribution made by E. Steinbach for the homeland associations but she also did not make any promises of changing her position concerning the appointments for the Council of the Foundation "Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation"³⁶.

³⁵ R. Birnbaum, *Szenen einer Wiedervereinigung*, "Der Tagesspiegel" from 23.08.2009; "Tag der Heimat": *Vertriebenen-Präsidentin Steinbach: "Es geht nicht um mich"*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" from 23.08.2009;

³⁶ Ph. Wittrock, *Merkel drückt sich um klares Bekenntnis zu Steinbach*, "Der Spiegel" from 22.08.2009; *Merkel: nie chcemy rozdrapywać ran [Merkel: We do not want to scratch wounds]*, "Rzeczpospolita" from 22.08.2009; *Steinbach: Co czwarta niemiecka rodzina to wypędzeni. Merkel: Dziękuję związkowi za pracę [Steinbach: Every fourth German family are expellees. Merkel: I thank the Federation for their work]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 22.08.2009; B. T. Wieliński, *Wypędzeni bez klów [Expellees without fangs]*, *ibidem* from 24.08.2009.

IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The parliamentary election in Poland in October 2007 and the election of the new government of D. Tusk coincided with the period of final stages of work on the Treaty of Lisbon and closing the discussion about the Charter of Fundamental Rights. On 12 December the Charter was officially signed in Lisbon, and the day after the “Reform Treaty” came into effect which introduced huge changes in the functioning of the European Union and its institutions³⁷.

In Poland PiS declared that it would not accept the treaty in its present form and negotiations started with the Civic Platform (PO) concerning the conditions of ratification. The idea of having a referendum was ruled out and it was agreed with J. Kaczyński that D. Tusk’s government would accept the Reform Treaty with the British protocol (*opt-out*) which excluded the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in Poland. Additionally, PiS demanded a guarantee that some provisions of the treaty (mechanism from Joanina, *opt out* with reference to the Charter of Fundamental Rights) could only be lifted with the consent of the lower (Sejm) and upper house (Senate) of the Polish parliament. These reservations were written down in the text of the resolution adopted by the Sejm on 1 April 2008 before the ratification of the treaty. Bringing the Treaty of Lisbon into force was supported by 384 MPs with 56 against, mainly from the PiS club. On 8 April the Treaty of Lisbon was adopted by the Senate³⁸.

On 24 April 2008 the Treaty of Lisbon was ratified by the Bundestag with a decisive majority of votes, and on 23 May the same was done in the Bundesrat. However, directly after the voting, Peter Gauweiler, a politician from the Bavarian CSU challenged the new treaty and applied to the Constitutional Tribunal in Karlsruhe to have it ruled unconstitutional claiming that the document is undemocratic and undermines the role of national parliaments³⁹.

President H. Köhler approved the contents of the Treaty of Lisbon but, according to the earlier announcement, he abstained from signing the ratification document until the ruling of the Constitutional Tribunal. The matter was further complicated when in January 2009 the Tribunal received further complaints concerning the ratification

³⁷ *Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on the European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community signed in Lisbon on 13 December 2007*, “Official Journal of the European Union”, C 306, 17 December 2007 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:SOM:PL:HTML>.

³⁸ *Sejm za ratyfikacją traktatu lizbońskiego [Sejm for the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon]* “Rzeczpospolita” from 2.04.2008; *Sejm za ratyfikacją traktatu lizbońskiego [Sejm for the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon]*, “Dziennik” from 1.04.2008; See *Stenographic record from the 8th session of the Senate of the Republic of Poland, 7th term 2 April 2008*, <http://www.senat.gov.pl/k7/ue/index.htm>. Text of the Sejm’s resolution, “Rzeczpospolita” from 2.04.2008; *Polnisches Parlament ratifiziert EU-Reformvertrag*, “Die Welt” from 1.04.2008.

³⁹ J. Fahrn, *Bundesrat: Die rot-rote Koalition pokert um den EU-Vertrag*, “Die Welt” from 22.05.2009; *Bundesrat za ratyfikacją Traktatu Lizbońskieg [Bundesrat for ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon]*, “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 23.05.2008.

of the Treaty of Lisbon from Dieter Spethmann, the former head of the Thyssen AG concern, from Franz Ludwig graf Stauffenberg, former CSU Euro MP, from Joachim Starbatty, economic expert, and from Markus Kerber, Berlin professor of law. They accused the government that by ratifying the Treaty of Lisbon it will breach the constitution by creating a threat to fiscal stability. They claimed that in the EU the Stability and Growth Pact is constantly breached, the European commission transgresses its competencies and the division of powers is not transparent enough⁴⁰.

A serious crisis in the European Union was revealed on 12 June 2008 when following a referendum in Ireland the treaty was rejected (53.4% votes against and 46.7% for), and the Euro sceptic Czech president, Vaclav Klaus made a public statement that he would not sign the ratification documents. In the above circumstances the attitude of President L. Kaczyński became more reserved, although in the parliamentary debate over the ratification he had made positive comments about the treaty in the consecutive months he consistently maintained that the will of the Irish should be respected and he did not sign the ratification document. This attitude was received with moderate criticism in Germany as German politicians were aware of the awkwardness of the situation resulting from the controversies around the Treaty of Lisbon in their own country⁴¹.

On 30 June 2009 the Federal Constitutional Tribunal in Karlsruhe gave a ruling which stated that the Treaty of Lisbon is compatible with the German Constitution. It also added that it is indispensable to strengthen the role of the national parliament. According to the ruling the Bundestag will have to give consent for making the EU legislation effective each time on the territory of Germany, especially within the scope of penal law and foreign missions of the Bundeswehr. The judges also expressed their concern that the developing process of taking over competencies by EU bodies would limit the scope of German sovereignty.

Chancellor Angela Merkel said that during the next EU summit she would inform other member states that Germany is bound by the ruling of the Constitutional Tribunal concerning the new EU treaty⁴².

At the early stages of the government under D. Tusk preparations were completed for Poland to enter the Schengen zone. At night on 20-21 December 2007 the

⁴⁰ *Bundesverfassungsgericht: Karlsruhe verhandelt zwei Tage über Lissabon-Vertrag*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" from 17.01.2009; H. Wefing, *Lissabon-Vertrag: Verfassungsgericht lässt Skepsis erkennen*, "Die Zeit" from 10.02.2009.

⁴¹ Rare exception see *Polen: Kaczyński will sich auf Kosten Europas profilieren*, "Welt" from 19.07.2008.

⁴² *Lissabon-Vertrag: Bundestag billigt EU-Begleitgesetze*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" from 9.09.2009; *Ja zu Begleitgesetzen: Bundestag macht Weg für EU-Vertrag frei*, "Der Spiegel" from 8.09.2009; W. Lorenz, *Niemcy boją się konsekwencji traktatu lizbońskiego [Germans are afraid of the consequences of the Treaty of Lisbon]*, "Rzeczpospolita" from 9.09.2009; *Niemcy. Bundestag przyjął ustawy kompetencyjne [Bundestag adopted the resolution about competence]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 8.09.2009; bart. *Niemcy zrobily krok bliżej Lizbony [Germany made a step towards Lisbon]*, ibidem from 9.09.2009.

border crossing barriers were lifted on Poland's western and southern borders, as well as on the border with Lithuania. Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Chancellor A. Merkel in the presence of the Czech Prime Minister, Mirek Topolánek, the Prime Minister of Portugal, José Sócrates, the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, as well as the Ministers of the Interior of Poland, Czech Republic and Germany symbolically opened the border on the Porajów-Zittau-Hradek crossing. L. Kaczyński did the same with the Lithuanian President, Valdas Adamkus on the Budzisko-Kalvarija crossing. The politicians stressed that it was a historic breakthrough date. Prime Minister D. Tusk spoke of a "triumph of freedom", and Lech Kaczyński evaluated the entry of Poland to the Schengen zone as a "great success"⁴³.

Poland was aware of the fact that together with joining the Schengen zone the borderland cooperation and human interaction with the Ukraine, which it nevertheless supported in the European Union, would be limited. Small progress was made on 27 March 2008 by signing an agreement about local border traffic between Poland and the Ukraine which came in force on 19 May 2009⁴⁴.

The fact that Poland joined the Schengen zone was initially accepted in Germany with mixed feelings, but the political community treated it as another stage leading to overcoming the still existing divisions in Europe⁴⁵. As Wolfgang Schäuble, the head of the German Ministry of the Interior stated in Brussels, "The expansion of the Schengen area is a symbol for the new member states which are no longer behind the iron curtain". The statement was published in the majority of German newspapers⁴⁶. However, ordinary German citizens were afraid of an influx of illegal workers from Poland, immigrants from Asia and the former USSR, prostitution, car theft, shoplifting, as well as the spread of organized crime. Fairly soon it turned out that these fears were unjustified. According to the reports by the Ministry of the Interior in Brandenburg during 8 months since opening the border the crime rate in the borderland areas dropped by 6%. The same tendency was observed concerning car theft⁴⁷.

43 *Tusk: Dzisiejszy dzień jest triumfem wolności [Today is a triumph of freedom]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 21.12.2007; *Dziś dwie uroczystości z okazji wejścia do Schengen [Today two celebrations of joining Schengen]*, *ibidem*; P. Jendroszczyk, *Otwarta granica do Europy [Open frontiers to Europe]*, "Rzeczpospolita" from 21.12.2007.

44 *Umowa o małym ruchu przygranicznym podpisana [Agreement on local border traffic signed]*, "Rzeczpospolita" from 28.03.2008; *Ruszył mały ruch przygraniczny pomiędzy Polską a Ukrainą [Local borderland traffic started]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 22.07.2009.

45 *EU öffnet interne Grenzen*, "Frankfurter Rundschau" from 8.11.2007; *Schengen-Raum Der Segen der Säge*, "Süddeutsche Zeitung" from 22.12.2009; *Neue EU-Außengrenzen Grenz-Erfahrungen*, *ibidem*. Por. *Bericht von einer Grenze, die verschwindet*, "Die Welt" from 18.11.2007.

46 *Ohne Passkontrollen nach Polen und Tschechien*, "Die Welt" from 8.11. 2007; *Bez kontroli na granicy wewnętrznej, więcej kontroli na granicy zewnętrznej [No control on the inner borders, more control on the outer borders]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 8.11.2007.

47 *Grenzenlos nach Polen: Kontrollen zu neuen EU-Staaten entfallen*, "Die Tageszeitung" from 8.11.2007.

The customs services and border guards were authorized to inspect vehicles on the borderland territory. Germans started to appreciate the fact that they did not have to apply for Polish visas. Kilometres-long queues of lorries waiting before the border crossing and polluting the environment disappeared. The beauty of Polish beaches and holiday resorts on the Baltic coast started to be appreciated. Polish investors appeared on the other side of the Oder river, as well as people willing to settle in abandoned villages and estates⁴⁸.

Joining the Schengen zone by Poland did not result in facilitating the flow of a Polish workforce to Germany. According to the accession treaty from 16 April 2003 the opening of the job markets in the European Union was to take place after a 7-year transition period. In contrast to other EU countries, which lifted the existing barriers much faster, Germany and Austria decided to keep to the final date of 2011.

In contrast with the government under J. Kaczyński, who used the issue of limitations on the German job market for Poles in his propaganda campaign, D. Tusk's government did not attach much importance to this issue. Although in early 2008 there was a chance that in line with the 2+3+2 procedure the ban on employment of citizens from the new EU member states could be lifted in 2009, Warsaw did not show much initiative in this matter. The emigration impetus of Poles first directed itself to the British Isles, Scandinavian countries and some countries in Western Europe. Furthermore, Poland started to be short of a workforce in such sectors as the construction industry, agriculture and services, and those who had emigrated were being talked into returning to Poland. On the other hand, however, it was understood that freeing the German job market for Poles in 2009 would in a way automatically ensue facilitation in the freedom for Germans to buy land in Poland, and this was treated by PiS as a national threat⁴⁹.

The assumption of power by Angela Merkel cleaned the atmosphere around the trans-Atlantic partnership and around the European defence identity built within the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Merkel visited the United States in 2001 and 2003 then as the leader of the opposition and she won respect as an experienced and responsible politician who understands the need to maintain close trans-Atlantic relations. The return of Germany to the role of a traditional mediator between Paris and Washington and functioning as an element of balance between the EU and NATO made things easier for Poland, which consistently granted priority to the "hard guarantees" of security from NATO over the "soft ones" from the European Union. The German Chancellor was aware of the strength of Polish arguments which were in favour of maintaining the position of NATO in Europe and the alliance with the USA. However, a lot of confusion was brought into Polish-German relations within the ESDP

⁴⁸ S. Dietrich, *Europa: Nach Polen hinüberschlendern*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" from 3.01.2009.

⁴⁹ K. Bachmann, *Ziemia dla Niemców, praca dla Polaków [Land for Germans, work for Poles]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 12.02.2009.

by the American offer of building an anti-missile shield. Germany abstained from taking a position until the conception was still in the early stages of Polish-American consultations. In March 2007, before the visit to Poland A. Merkel for the first time made a statement concerning the building of the anti-missile shield in an interview for the German TV channel ZDF. She suggested that she would persuade the Polish leaders to build such a protective shield under the auspices of NATO. The head of the German diplomacy, F.-W. Steinmeier called the USA to launch talks concerning the building of the shield with all partners, and primarily with Moscow. Sharp words against building the shield were spoken by Kurt Beck, the leader of the ruling coalition party SPD and Guido Westerwelle, the head of the opposition liberal party. The latter politician demanded that the Russian reservations concerning the undertaking should be taken seriously⁵⁰.

D. Tusk's government announced that there was no "rigid doctrine" concerning the issue of building the anti-missile shield, and that he would remain open to arguments for and against. Yet, on 20 August 2008 in the face of the Georgian crisis an agreement with the USA was signed in Warsaw concerning the building of some elements of the anti-missile shield in Poland. This news was acknowledged in Germany but at the same time the objection of the Russian government was eagerly highlighted and various negative consequences of this move for European security were analyzed⁵¹. Nevertheless, in January 2009 the assumption of power in the United States by Barack Obama, who represented a different philosophy of thinking about security than G. W. Bush, and who was interested in "resetting" relations with Russia postponed the implementation of the project until an unspecified future⁵².

The war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008 was a test for EU's security and defence policy because it, among others, introduced a kind of dissonance between Poland and France and Germany. When Chancellor Merkel was appealing for restraint and the president of France was on behalf of the EU entrusted with the difficult mission of restoring peace, President L. Kaczyński flew to Tbilisi. Irrespec-

⁵⁰ Steinmeier warnt vor neuem Wettrüsten, "Die Welt" from 18.03.2007; O. Thränert, *Benötigt Europa eine Raketenabwehr?*, ibidem from 21.03.2007; J. L. eithäuser, *Streit über Raketen Schild. Merkel kritisiert amerikanische Raketenabwehr*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" from 19.03.2007; *Merkel za otwartą dyskusją z Rosją w sprawie Tarczy [Merkel for open discussion with Russia about the shield]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 12.03.2007; B. T. Wielński, *Angela Merkel: budujmy tarczę w NATO [Let's build the shield in NATO]*, ibidem from 13.03.2007.

⁵¹ *Polen und Amerika besiegeln den Raketen Schild*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" from 21.08.2008; *Russland droht Polen wegen Einigung über Raketen Schild*, ibidem from 16.08.2008 G. Lesser, *USA bauen Raketenabwehr in Polen auf*, "Die Tageszeitung" from 20.08.2008; *Anti-Raketen Schild: Zündende Abwehr*, "Frankfurter Rundschau" from 21.08.2008; *Tarcza obroni Polskę [Shield will defend Poland]*, "Rzeczpospolita" from 21.08.2008. Cf. P. Wroński, *Z Niemcami się dogadamy, z tarczą zobaczymy [We will reach agreement with the Germans, with the shield we will see]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 7.11.2007.

⁵² Cf. J. Kiwerska, *Podróż Baracka Obamy po Europie [Barack Obama's trip to Europe]*, "Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego" nr 14/2009, http://www.iz.poznan.pl/news/76_nr%2013.%20Obama%20w%20Europie.pdf

tive of the critical opinion of Prime Minister D. Tusk and Minister R. Sikorski, and together with the leaders of the Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia he expressed strong support for the President of Georgia, Micheil Saakaszwili, regardless of the possibility of breaking the fragile truce. He condemned Russia using strong words and threatened with “taking up fighting”⁵³.

The attempts to introduce sanctions against Russia proposed by France and Poland were rejected by Germany as an undesirable attempt to isolate Russia in the international arena⁵⁴. On 1 September 2008 after the EU summit in Brussels another solution was adopted. After the armistice the EU sent to Georgia a mission of 300 observers who were to supervise the implementation of N. Sarkozy’s plan. The mission included 44 German police officers and experts, 10 Polish police officers (with personnel altogether 31 people) and the whole mission was governed by an experienced German diplomat, Hansjörg Haber⁵⁵.

It was not difficult to notice that the negative results for the relations between the USA-EU-Russia proved short-lasting. Although the pro-Russian attitude in Western Europe was somehow weakened, Russia in the context of the most important threats to international security remained the most significant partner for the North Atlantic Pact member states. In consequence boycotting cooperation with Moscow was in the long-run adverse for both sides. It is not surprising then that in December 2008 the unofficial dialogue between Brussels and Moscow was resumed while in the beginning of March the work of the NATO-Russia Council was officially resumed.

After the experiences connected with the Caucasian crisis it was decided during the European Council meeting in Brussels on 11-12 December 2008 that a new stimulus needed to be given to European security and defence policy. It was decided that new objectives for the ESDP should be mapped out “to strengthen and optimize European capabilities in the nearest future” and it was underlined that “the EU is ready to take actions towards international peace and security and provide factual security to its citizens”. D. Tusk’s government supported these solutions without reservations⁵⁶.

⁵³ *Lech Kaczyński w Tbilisi: Jesteśmy po to, żeby podjąć walkę [Lech Kaczyński in Tbilisi: We are here to take up fighting]*, “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 12.07. 2008; P. Kościński, *Lech Kaczyński w Tbilisi: Cała Europa musi być tutaj [Lech Kaczyński in Tbilisi: The whole of Europe should be here]*, ibidem from 13.08. 2008. Cf. K. Schuller and S. Thielbeer, *Fünf solidarische Präsidenten in Tiflis*, “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” from 13.08.2008.

⁵⁴ *Steinmeier: EU darf Russland nicht isolieren*, “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” from 1.09.2008.

⁵⁵ *Europäische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik*, Auswärtiges Amt. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Infoservice/Broschueren/ESVP.pdf>., *Do Gruzji przyjechali unijni obserwatorzy [EU observers arrive in Georgia]*, “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 30.09.2008.

⁵⁶ *Session of the European Council in Brussels 11 and 12 December 2008. Conclusions from the presidency*, “Rocznik Integracji Europejskiej” nr 2/2008, doc. 3, p. 374. Cf. M. Krakiewicz, P. Buras, *Die Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik Polens unter der Regierung Tusk*, “SWP-Aktuell” nr 40, Mai 2008.

2009: INTENSIFICATION OF CONTACTS AND COOPERATION

In line with the earlier declarations of the Polish and German politicians closer cooperation and scientific and cultural exchange took place in the year of celebrating anniversaries important for both countries. On 27-28 April 2009 the Speaker of the Senate, Bogdan Borusewicz came with a visit to Berlin where he opened one of many exhibitions planned for 2009 entitled "In the enemy's camera lens. German photo reporters in occupied Warsaw 1939-1945". The event was preceded by the openings of other exhibitions. On 19 March in Ephraim-Palais and the Märkisches Museum an exhibition entitled "Us, Berliners!"/"Wir, Berliner!" was inaugurated. It was the largest exhibition so far devoted to the three hundred years of history of the Polish-Berlin. It showed Polish people in the cultural, religious, social and economic public space of the city, and in this way it demonstrated their contribution to the development of Berlin in the past and at present. The exhibition demonstrated, on the one hand how Poles perceived the German capital, and on the other hand how the Berliners reacted to the Polish presence in the city. The exhibition was prepared by the Centre for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Berlin.

The celebrations of the anniversary of the June 1989 election in Poland were commemorated in Berlin's Paul-Löbe-Haus with an interesting exhibition ("Peaceful revolution – a road to freedom. 20th anniversary of political changes in Poland" which was opened by N. Lammert and B. Komorowski on 26 May. It showed in the form of a suggestive multimedia presentation the process in which Poland freed itself from communist dictatorship, and Solidarity's contribution to initiating democratic breakthrough in Central-Eastern Europe⁵⁷.

The climax of the joint Polish-German celebrations of 20 years since the victory of democratic forces in Poland was the visit of Chancellor A. Merkel to Kraków on 4 June, and the unveiling of the symbolic monument of "Solidarność" (Solidarity) near the Bundestag building in Berlin. During her short stay in Poland in a speech delivered in the Wawel Cathedral the head of the German government thanked the Polish people for the "peaceful breakthrough" of 1989. She stressed that the elections from 4 June 1989 brought a "decisive victory" for democracy in Poland, and eventually for the whole of Europe, and "we, Germans are obliged to deep gratitude towards our friends in Poland, in Hungary, and in the former Czechoslovakia". They helped to "achieve this priceless happiness which was the reunification of Germany"⁵⁸.

On 17 June in the presence of the German head of state, President H. Köhler, N. Lammert and B. Komorowski a fragment of the wall from the Gdańsk shipyard

⁵⁷ *Opening of an exhibition "Peaceful revolution – Road to freedom. 20th anniversary of the political transformations in Poland"*, <http://www.berlin.polemb.net/index.php?document=1682>.

⁵⁸ *Angela Merkel's visit to Kraków on the occasion of celebrations commemorating breakthrough events from 1989*. Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Kraków, http://www.krakau.diplo.de/Vertretung/krakau/pl/Teaser_20pl/BK_in_Krakau.html; *Polen: Wem gehört der Sieg über den Kommunismus?*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" from 5.09.2009.

was unveiled near the former Reichstag. It commemorated the contribution of Solidarity to the fall of communism. A plaque was placed with an inscription in Polish and German, "To commemorate the fight of Solidarity for freedom and democracy and Poland's contribution to the reunification of Germany and the political unity of Europe"⁵⁹.

Another positive event which can be added to the political and historical message inscribed in the celebrations of important anniversaries was the first foreign visit to Warsaw of President H. Köhler on 13 July during his second term of office. During talks with President L. Kaczyński and other Polish politicians a lot of attention was paid to the problem of "historical memory" and the urging need to ratify the Treaty of Lisbon about which President H. Köhler was trying to convince the Polish president⁶⁰.

A letter by German intellectuals published in the Polish press and in the German weekly "Die Zeit" the day before the celebrations of 70 years since the outbreak of World War II was of symbolic significance, as it emphasized the criminal nature of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The authors of the letter included, among others, the President of the Bundestag Rita Süßmuth, the first Commissioner for the Stasi Archives, Joachim Gauck and his successor Marianne Birthler, as well as well known professors Dieter Bingen and Arnulf Baring⁶¹.

A similar tone was maintained in the statement of the Presidents of the Polish and German Episcopates made on 25 August on the anniversary of the outbreak of World War II. The statement had been prepared by a Contact Group of both episcopates working since May and the idea of preparing the "Statement" was put forward by bishop Józef Skworec. The document signed by both Presidents of the Episcopates: archbishop Józef Michalik and Robert Zollitsch was read simultaneously at the Monastery of Jasna Góra and in Bonn. Both hierarchs of the Catholic Church persuaded that "today primary care should be put into making sure that the new generations can acquire and preserve the right understanding of World War II. It is not only honesty in reckoning with the atrocities of the past that is needed but also abandoning the stereotypes, which make it difficult to truly understand those times and which can compromise the trust between Poles and Germans that has been built with difficulty". In their opinion "also a lot of Germans suffered not only by the end

⁵⁹ *Unveiling of the monument commemorating the contribution of Solidarity to the restoration of freedom and unity in Europe*, Polish Embassy in Berlin, <http://www.berlin.polemb.net/index.php?document=142>; P. Jendroszczyk, *Bundestag dziękuje Polsce [The Bundestag thanks Poland]*, "Rzeczpospolita" from 16.06.2009.

⁶⁰ A. Rybińska, *Prezydent Niemiec: Polska leży mi na sercu [The President of Germany: Poland is close to my heart]*, "Rzeczpospolita" from 14.07.2009

⁶¹ *Statement on the occasion of 70 years since the Hitler-Stalin Pact*. Polish Embassy in Berlin, <http://www.berlin.polemb.net/index.php?document=1764>; *Niemieccy intelektualiści o 70. rocznicy wybuchu wojny [German intellectuals about the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of war]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 20.08.2009; bart, *Przepraszamy za 1939, dziękujemy za 1989 [We apologize for 1939 and thank for 1989]*, *ibidem* from 21.08.2009.

of the war but later when they experienced the fate of those who had to flee and who suffered expulsion". While condemning the war crimes they agreed in condemning expulsions "without forgetting about the internal dependencies and repercussions". In this context they appealed for the truth "which does not pass anything in silence and does not demand making up for the wrong done". By making reference to the letter from the Polish Episcopate from November 1965 they mentioned the difficult route to reconciliation and cooperation not without misunderstandings or burdens. In conclusion it was stressed and warned that in "some social and political tendencies there has been a temptation to use for the purpose of propaganda the hurt, which once was done in history, and to stimulate resentment resulting from biased historical interpretations. The church will continuously and firmly act against such a departure from historical truth. We strongly encourage an intensive dialogue which is always combined with the readiness to listen to the other side"⁶².

The last event in the commemoration of 70 years since the outbreak of World War II was a meeting of representatives of 20 countries including the heads of governments of Poland, Germany and Russia organized at Westerplatte on 1 September. The meeting was preceded by a joint special statement of the Foreign Ministers of Germany, F.-W. Steinmeier and of Poland, R. Sikorski. Yet again there were words about the tragic war past and efforts made in the 1960's and 1970's to establish a Polish-German dialogue, when "despite the painful past both nations started to strive for mutual understanding, reconciliation and establishing friendly relations". An appeal was made to maintain and strengthen the friendship between Poles and Germans, members of the European Union and allies in NATO, who are united by common interests and objectives and who are brought together by common threats and challenges"⁶³. The Polish Prime Minister in his speech delivered in Gdańsk stated that it should be remembered who was the executioner and who was the victim. Most critical comments, especially those from President L. Kaczyński were addressed to Prime Minister V. Putin who did not condemn in a straightforward way the USSR's attack on Poland in September 1939 and the crimes against humanity that took place in Katyń. He only promised, under the condition of mutuality, to open the Russian archives⁶⁴.

⁶² *Statement of the President of the Polish Episcopate Conference, Archbishop Dr. Józef Michalik and the President of the German Episcopate Conference, Archbishop Dr. Robert Zollitsch on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II on 1 September 1939*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 26.08.2009; *Episcopates of Poland and Germany on the anniversary of WW II*, *ibidem*; *Jest wspólna deklaracja [There is a joint declaration]*, "Rzeczpospolita" from 26.08.2009; *Biskupi o krzywdach Polaków i Niemców [Bishops about the wrongdoings of Poles and Germans]*, *ibidem*; *Episcopates of Poland and Germany: let our nations go the way of truth and love*, *ibidem* from 25.08.2009.

⁶³ *Aby nigdy więcej - wspólne oświadczenie Sikorskiego i Steinmeiera [Never again – joint statement by Sikorski and Steinmeier]*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 1.09.2009.

⁶⁴ W. Lorenz, *Rozmowy w cieniu przeszłości [Talks in the shadow of the past]*, "Rzeczpospolita" from 2.09.2009; K. Manys, *O prawdzie na Westerplatte [About the truth at Westerplatte]*, *ibidem*.

The German Chancellor did not go into the Polish-Russian dispute. In a well-balanced speech she once more drew attention to the responsibility of the National Socialist Germany for starting World War II, and for the hecatomb of Polish victims. However, it was the Prime Minister of Russia who drew the attention of German public opinion and his statements dominated the commentaries from Gdańsk⁶⁵.

Initiatives which supported the process of building Polish-German mutual understanding are also worth noticing in the year 2009 which was abundant with events. On 7 May a celebration was held in the Magdeburg cathedral during which W. Bartoszewski was presented with the Emperor Otto Award in recognition of his engagement in the policy of mutual understanding between nations and in the process of European integration, as well as for his personal and political commitment towards the improvement of Polish-German relations and Poland's integration. Several months later on 29 August in the Weimar city hall the Adam Mickiewicz Award was presented to people actively engaged in the trilateral Polish-French-German cooperation within the Weimar Triangle. The list of laureates included countess Freya von Moltke, the honorary President of the Foundation for European Understanding in Krzyżowa, Stéphane Hessel, a member of the Committee Council supporting French-German-Polish cooperation and Prof. Zdzisław Najder, former Director of the Polish section in the Radio Free Europe⁶⁶.

Good progress was achieved in editing a complete joint textbook for teaching history in Poland and in the Federal Republic of Germany, a project which was of prestigious significance in both countries. The initiator of the project was F.-W. Steinmeier, who mentioned it for the first time during the inauguration of the academic year at the Viadrina European University in October 2006, and in January 2008 he issued a formal proposal⁶⁷. The textbook followed the example of the joint French-German textbook which was well-received, and the project received support from Minister R. Sikorski and Education Minister Katarzyna Hall. The work on the project was officially inaugurated in Berlin in May 2008. The work on the project was entrusted to co-Presidents of the Polish-German Textbook Commission, Michael Müller from the Halle-Wittenberg University and Robert Traba from the

⁶⁵ *Gedenken an Zweiten Weltkrieg: Debatte am Heldengedenktag*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" from 1.09.2009; *Jahrestag des Kriegsbeginns: Geschichtsstreit überschattet Gedenkfeier in Polen*, "Der Spiegel" from 1.09.2009; *Gedenken an Zweiten Weltkrieg: Kaczynski wirft Sowjetunion "Messerstich in den Rücken" vor*, ibidem; *Gedenktag: Putin fordert "neuen Pragmatismus" mit Polen*, "Die Welt" from 1.09.2009; *Polen loben Merkel – und ein bisschen sogar Putin*, "Der Tagesspiegel" from 13.9.2009; K. K r o h n, *Monumentaler Konflikt*, ibidem from 2.09.2009. Text of the speech by A. Merkel in German see "Gazeta Wyborcza" from 1.09.2009.

⁶⁶ *The event of presenting W. Bartoszewski with the Emperor Otto Award in Magdeburg: The Adam Mickiewicz Award for the merits towards Reconciliation and European Cooperation 2009. Polish Embassy in Berlin*, <http://www.berlin.polemb.net/index.php?document=1720>.

⁶⁷ *Poland and Germany – shaping Europe together: Speech by the Federal Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier on the occasion of inaugurating a new academic year at Viadrina University in Frankfurt on the Oder on 26.10.2006*, (photocopied material).

Centre for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Berlin. The experts working on the project included, among others, historians from the Centre for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, from the George Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Brunswick and from the Polish Institute in Darmstadt⁶⁸.

Drawing up a balance sheet of Polish-German relations under the PO-PSL coalition government it is not difficult to observe that there are many more positive than negative assessment marks. It was possible to rebuild trust in the relations with Berlin which is indispensable to achieve any kind of success in foreign policy. Contacts between governments, economic cooperation and cooperation in the borderland areas have remained at a high level. Both governments show kind support for cooperation between the youth which was neglected during the government under J. Kaczyński and R. Giertych. On both sides there are more initiatives concerning culture and research which was symbolized by establishing in 2008 the Polish-German Foundation for Research. However, there is still deficit in the area of consciousness, historical memory and neighbourhood perception. In this domain the government of J. Kaczyński did make a negative “progress” as in the second half of 2008 the number of people in opinion polls who assessed Polish-German relations in a negative way rose in comparison with 2005⁶⁹.

Undoubtedly, the historical policy so strongly displayed in the years 2005-2007 will continue to have an effect on the entirety of Polish-German relations for many years. In both countries the relations are an important instrument of the current politics in the hands of the largest parties. In Germany a new generation has grown which decisively wants to cut itself off from the constant expiation for the sins of their predecessors and from the policy of self-constraint in the international arena. This situation is skilfully attempted to be used by Erika Steinbach and the Federation of Expellees to expand their ranks on the wave of “new patriotism”. It seems that we should be prepared and take into account the fact that more moral injunctions and issues which even yesterday were taboo subjects will be breached in historical policy and in referring to the past. The film “Der Untergang” does not fill one with horror but evokes sympathy for the fallen dictator, the film “Anonyma. Eine Frau in Berlin” by showing rape scenes on German women by Red Army soldiers brings feelings of

⁶⁸ *Prace nad polsko-niemieckim podręcznikiem do historii [Work on the Polish-German history textbook]*, “Gazeta Prawna” 27.05.2009.

⁶⁹ L. Kolarska-Bobińska, A. Łada, (ed.), *POLSKA-NIEMCY. Wzajemny wizerunek i wizja Europy [Poland-Germany. Mutual image and vision of Europe]*, Warsaw 2009, p. 16-17. Cf. *Die Destruktion des Dialogs : zur innenpolitischen Instrumentalisierung negativer Fremd- und Feindbilder : Polen, Tschechien, Deutschland und die Niederlande im Vergleich, 1900-2005*, hrsg. von D. Bingen [u.a.] Wiesbaden 2007 *bart*, *Mniej Polaków mówi dobrze o stosunkach z Niemcami [Fewer Poles speak well about relations with Germans]*, “Gazeta Wyborcza” from 31.08.2009.

shame and sympathy, a popular series “Die Flucht” is not only a dramatic description of people forced to evacuate but also a nostalgic journey back to the past times to East Prussia and Pomerania.

The European Union remains the major platform for the development of Polish-German relations. Even today one can observe the far-reaching process of the “Europeanization” of bilateral Polish-German relations. Germany, although weakened by the world crisis, still belong to EU leaders, they seriously consider their European commitments and they also want to be treated accordingly in the European Union. Poland, on the other hand, all the time is looking for the opportunity to shape its position in the EU and to strengthen it. The question of how the Federal Republic of Germany in the present difficult period of time will define its interests in Central-Eastern Europe, and how Poles and Germans will mutually harmonize their interests in the European Union is in a long-term perspective very important for European integration.

Germans gradually are getting used to the fact that Poles are bringing to the EU a completely different baggage of experiences, radically different from the countries which had joined the Community in previous years. They are aware that any attempt to force their own conceptions concerning, e.g. eastern policy without obtaining at least the neutral position of Poland will be doomed to failure, and thus they have to make efforts to win its favours. On the other hand, the idea of the Eastern Partnership promoted by Poland must assume a similar friendliness and collaboration on the part of Berlin.

Taking into account the multilayered challenges, those in the bilateral and European realm, the strengthening of the Polish-German “community of interests and values” is very much justified. It has to receive a new stimulus and be popularized in the broad social strata of Polish and German society. It is worth convincing politicians to finalize the idea and initiate meetings, following the pattern of regular, free from commitments and multifaceted French-German consultations in Blaesheim (*Blaesheim-Treffen*). Poznań would be an ideal place for this purpose⁷⁰.

After the bad experiences there is more and more awareness both in Berlin and more and more so in Warsaw that mutual relations require constant care. Both countries are neighbours but they do not have to be partners. Whether this neighbourship will have the character of “confrontational cooperation” or real partnership depends on the goodwill of the governments and the attitude of both societies. Poland should approach cooperation with Germany, especially in the European Union, in a rational manner without being driven by any immediate gain or resentments but with some assertiveness and consistency, with respect for its own interests and those of its partner.

⁷⁰ See J. Frasch, *Dynamisierung deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen. Vorschlag für eine Vertiefung der bilateralen Zusammenarbeit*, “SWP-Aktuell” nr 34, Juli 2009. Cf. A. Krzemiński, *Testfall für Europa: deutsch-polnische Nachbarschaft muss gelingen*, Hamburg 2008.

