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Meine Damen und Herren!

Dear friends!

I would like to start by thanking the organizers – the Schwarzkopf Foundation and the Foundation for Polish – German Cooperation for inviting me to Berlin for this debate on current stage of mutual relations between Poland and Germany. I am particularly honored that I can discuss today's issue with people who care for bilateral relations between Poland and Germany and who care for Europe.

Pauline Schwarzkopf decided to set up this Foundation 40 years ago. She believed the mission of the Foundation should be helping young people to become politically-aware and responsible citizens and doing it through Europe, through strengthening European Idea and Europe-wide understanding. This mission remains valid today, I would even say, more valid than ever. We have to protect this mission and care for it.

Two years ago, on the 1st of September 2009, in Gdansk Chancellor Angela Merkel said that a miracle occurred to Europe. She meant that our continent has been converted from a continent of terror and war into a continent of peace and security. It is, indeed, true but we also know that peace can never be taken for granted, we must care for it, protect it and invest in it.

Relations between Poles and Germans are both about memory and about the future. Today, these are also relations between citizens of the European

Union between people who live across the border that does not exist any more and sometimes in towns like Görlitz and Zgorzelec that grow together. To become part of integrated Europe - it has been our choice. Germany made this choice back in 1957, we, Poles had to wait 50 more years. The history kept us on the other bank of the river till the end of eighties. Our transition to democracy and market economy has eventually led to our accession to the European Union on the 1st of May 2004. Today we are together, members of the big family of 27 member states and 500 million people, with a new challenge to avoid, of which I will speak later, the challenge of, again divided, a two speed Europe.

Poland and Germany are natural partners due to both geography and history. The role of geography is obvious. It leads to many common challenges and interests in areas like infrastructure, environment, demography. We all know that more and more challenges do not respect political or administrative borders. So, more cooperation is needed and more efforts in search of shared solutions. Cross border cooperation has become for us, Poles and Germans, of utmost importance. There are many joint projects between Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Brandenburg, Sachsen, Zachodniopomorskie, Lubelskie, Opolskie or Wroclawskie. We are partners in the European regional policy.

Let me also underline that these relations, stemming from both geography and economic rationality generate common Polish-German interest in good functioning of the European internal market. European framework stimulates our economic cooperation. I would also say that, to a certain extent due to geography, both Poland and Germany, more than any other EU member state have shown interest in Eastern neighbourhood policy, as well as the Baltic Sea Strategy. And of course, I do not have to mention that Germany is the most important trade partner for Poland. Poland is of great interest to German investors.

So much on geography. Of course the role of history in shaping our relations in the 21st century has been much more complex and complicated and, I would say, is not yet free of challenges. It continues to be full of symbolism.

We, Poles, tend to care for symbols, for the good and the bad. You, most likely, would agree with me that it was not only Chancellor Willy Brandt's visit to Poland in 1970 when he famously fell to his knees in front of Warsaw's ghetto uprising monument, not only Poland's bishops' letter that started a new beginning in our post World War II relations. After 1990 many prominent politicians both of Germany and Poland have spared no effort to ensure that, in spite of all the tragic and sad experiences of our common history, we enter the path of truly good relations between Germany and democratic Poland.

Two days after the symbolic fall of the Berlin Wall, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the first democratically elected Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, made a symbolic gesture of reconciliation in Krzyżowa. Reunification of Germany in 1990 opened the way to begin to institutionalize relations between the two countries.

At this point it is impossible not to mention two more of the architects of the Polish - German reconciliation - Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski, who along with Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher signed the border agreement, recognizing the Oder-Neisse line. Also during his term, we signed the treaty on good neighbourliness and friendly cooperation, which this year's 20th anniversary will be widely celebrated in both countries. The Weimar Triangle was set up as well as many other forms of cooperation were developed - the Foundation of the Polish - German Reconciliation, the Polish - German Youth Cooperation (Deutsch-Polnisches Jugendwerk) to name a few.

Later, Germany has become an advocate of Polish accession into NATO and the European Union, which effectively became the fact in 1999 and 2004 respectively.

Today, we can say to the world and to ourselves that nations that have behind them the most painful experience of history can find and, indeed, find mutual understanding and friendship within a conducive framework of European integration. Without any doubt, Poland and Germany are symbols of

reconciliation and friendship. And fortunately, it is not only about governments.

Today we can say that we have achieved a lot. In my opinion, relations between Poland and Germany have never been in a better shape.

Within a month, on the 1st of May, Germany will fully open the labour market to Polish workers. Well-known proverb says "Liebe deinen Nachbar, Reiss aber nicht ein den Zaun" - Love your neighbour, but do not pull down the fence. But we must get rid of this last symbolic fence between our countries. We will be able finally to bring up our partnership to the highest level. I believe that this will allow to generate higher growth which Poland, Germany and Europe as a whole need more than ever.

As you know, in Poland there are many opinion surveys checking the temperature of our relations. In these opinion surveys, most Poles express their positive attitude towards the relations with Germany. One could, however, ask why this majority reached its highest level right after accession to the EU. I guess we in Poland appreciated and valued highly the role of Germany, and in particular of Chancellor Kohl, in supporting the enlargement of 2004. As former minister for European affairs responsible for preparing Poland to join the Union, I still feel that the role of Bonn and then Berlin in ensuring that the big enlargement of 2004 takes place was pivotal.

We often complain that Polish-German relations still too often are associated by people with their history. For many years, in any public opinion survey Poles pointed to issues related to the painful bilateral history as those of utmost importance for them. This is not the case any more. Now, clearly Poles favour focusing on issues related to the future. Actually, $\frac{3}{4}$ of those participating in survey this year have been in favour of the current and future issues as those to focus our relations on. And this is true for both the young and the old. What I see important is that Poles are in favour of not only cooperation in areas of purely bilateral nature but they also see the need to cooperate in supporting democracy in Ukraine or Belarus. We understand and

support the idea of Germans and Poles acting together in the European or global context.

In our relations, cooperation among people, people to people relations matter strongly. A number of Polish and German foundations, of which the Schwarzkopf Foundation and the Foundation for Polish – German Cooperation are excellent examples - support numerous projects directed to the societies of both countries. We have a dynamic youth organization Deutsch-Polnisches Jugendwerk, which during the past 20 years has organized or co-organized more than 50 thousand projects, which were attended by over 2 million participants. It is also worth mentioning a very important educational activities at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt Oder and Collegium Polonicum in Slubice. These two institutions train specialists with knowledge of two languages, two countries and two political systems. Moreover, Polish philology departments operate at the universities in Frankfurt am Main and Greifswald. I need to mention that these departments are supported by the Permanent Polish - German Scientific Working Group of Polish Language and Polish Studies in Germany, established by the Polish Embassy in Berlin.

We have had for decades Karl Dedecius in Darmstadt who played an extremely important role in bringing us together. Without a doubt I can say, that new generations of Poles and Germans have perfect conditions to grow together as Polish, Germans and Europeans and develop a deep awareness of common Europe. You are our greatest asset for the future.

It is also true that public opinion tends to be very sensitive to the general political mood and conflicting situation that emerge from time to time at the highest political level. That is why it is of utmost importance that so much is happening within the framework of Polish-German relations in areas that help understand better the neighbour at the level of people. I think here of numerous activities and programmes in the field of culture. What helps is that a growing number of those activities are undertaken at local and regional level. We have embarked as well on an unprecedented in the history of our

relations undertaking which is the preparation of a joint history book. Of course, it still remains to be seen whether it is possible to learn and teach history from jointly written textbooks. I hope we will pass this test. But what I find as a major task for the future is the need for both countries to invest in Europe, its unity, its dynamism, its future.

So much remains to be done in Europe to overcome crisis related weaknesses, to construct new economic governance, to put European economy on the path of knowledge based growth, growth that can generate sustainable jobs and improve global competitiveness of European economy and ensure better quality of life for European citizens, also Poles and also Germans.

Europe is our common responsibility. We live difficult times. This crisis that has begun as a remote financial one has affected Europe, its financial sector and then the real economy very strongly, though with different intensity. Some economies suffer more than others. It has clearly demonstrated that eurozone cannot successfully function with one monetary policy and 17 fiscal regimes. Major reform of economic governance is under discussion, mechanisms to support member states with unsustainable sovereign debts have been put in place. There is still a lot of uncertainty. There are many risks. One of them is clearly the two speed Europe. Can Europe afford that? What will be the consequences of undermining European cohesion? We, Poles are worrying. We understand the need to deepen integration within eurozone and we understand that the best solution for Poland is to join the euro area. But in the meantime "17+10" Europe is emerging and we are worried.

The risk that we have to deal with wisely, is called "two-speed Europe". It would be a very bad solution for the future of the Union if political two-speed Europe, characterized by various circles of initiation, with limited access to decision making process for some members becomes a reality. If that happened, then we would have a reason to talk about the defeat of the European project, which neither Poland nor Germany certainly wish to happen. Hence, the Polish government carried on intensive activities to

extend the “Euro-Pact Plus” for the countries outside the Euro zone. As we know 22 out of 27 countries participate in the Pact. But what opt-in or "plus" means nobody knows.

Apart from the economic governance reforms, we will soon have to face a decision on the multi-annual budget for the period after 2013. In order to prepare for the debate we should be aware that the European budget is not about money transfers from one member state to another. It serves an implementation of common European goals, which are clearly defined as a common interest. Funding from the EU budget should therefore be focused on policies that, in measurable way, lead to achieving objectives and interests of the Union, strengthening integration and cooperation in Europe, ensuring application of the European law. These policies should be related to important aspects of EU citizens' life, engage the potential of civil society, strengthen European institutional capacity, improve the Union's territorial cohesion, promote mobility, promote mutual learning, prevent development disparities, work towards economic, social and territorial cohesion.

By any standards, the EU's budget is a very small budget, especially if one takes into consideration the extent of policies that are financed. Approximately 95% of this budget goes back to the member states, either directly or indirectly. European budget also serves the “leverage function”. It attracts private capital, not crowding it out from an investment area. But practitioners are well aware that investments must reach certain critical mass in order to bear fruit.

Given the nature of the vast majority of investment expenditure from the EU budget, insisting on the application to the European budget the same rule of post-crisis cuts in national budgets is dangerous for the growth and competitiveness of the European economy.

Certainly we should strive to enhance European added value of the EU budget. This can be done in many ways. By creating new and strengthening existing financial instruments built on contribution of funding from the

European budget. By issuing project bonds, indispensable in the context of the huge financial needs in the area of transport and energy infrastructure development and tapping private capital. Introducing more budget flexibility, enabling shifts of funds from poorly implemented projects can also improve its efficiency.

In 2011 a series of important decisions affecting the future of our continent and the Union will have to be made. Economic governance reform and beginning negotiations on multiannual financial framework after 2013 are among them. Also we shall finalize work on amendments of the Treaty, which will let us establish the European Stability Mechanism for euro zone.

2011 is also important and symbolic for Poland. Within less than 100 days, Poland will take over EU presidency for the first time in our history. I am sure we will be a great guardian of European interests and promoter of high speed in European integration.

The integration of our continent is a miracle of history, which we still do not fully appreciate. This is not something given once and for all times. Variable winds and storms of history may always return. Therefore, we must take care of Europe and of the community of values we share. As Horace wrote: *Nam tua res agitur, paries cum proximus ardet* - "It is your concern when your neighbor's wall is on fire." If we do not forget this maxim, a common Europe will ensure prosperity and security to many subsequent generations of Europeans.

Thank you for your attention!