

**SPEECH OF JACEK CZAPUTOWICZ,  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REPUBLIC OF POLAND:**

**“GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN PRIORITIES OF POLISH FOREIGN POLICY”**

***(SPOKEN WORD VERSION)***

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*Esteemed Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Let me, first of all, express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Martin Koopmann for inviting me to this important event. Indeed, this is my first trip to other countries after my new nomination as Foreign Minister. Tomorrow, I will have discussions with my colleague Heiko Maas and also with some leaders of political groups in Bundesrat, but it is a good opportunity to discuss important issues with a group of experts, here in Genshagen Foundation, specializing in relations between Germany and France, and also recently Poland, but also transatlantic relations.

I am happy to greet Professor Rita Süßmuth, President of the Bundestag in 1988-1998, a person who played such an important role in shaping the Polish-German dialog in the context of the European integration. I remember a recent conference, organized by Adalbert Foundation, on roundtables in Visegrád countries. It was 25 years ago, before I was nominated as a Minister, I appreciate very much discussions on that historical topic.

Let me also use this opportunity to greet Mr. Dietmar Woidke, President of the Bundesrat, Minister President of Brandenburg, Coordinator of Polish-German Cross-border cooperation. We appreciate your extraordinary involvement in development of Polish-German relations in various dimensions.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The Genshagen Foundation’s mission is to promote the Weimar Triangle cooperation in order to strengthen European integration and the transatlantic link.

Even though it is fair to say that the Triangle has not thus far lived up to its fullest potential, Poland sees a number of ways to unlock this potential.

Tonight I would like to share with you some views on global and European perspectives of the Polish foreign policy, as it is presented in the title of my presentation.

The recent elections renewed the strong mandate from the Polish society to the government of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki. This gives us the perfect opportunity to restate our policy priorities, but also align them with the increasingly rapid and unpredictable evolution of the international environment.

Let me begin by describing current state of Polish-German relations.

Next, I will present Polish vision of the future of the European Union and address the importance of the transatlantic relations from the angle of our regional cooperation, from the angle of Europe, and the world.

I will conclude by referring to Poland's responses to global challenges – as a member of the United Nations Security Council, and a soon-to-be member of the UN Human Rights Council, as well as a co-sponsor of the *Warsaw Process* on the Middle East.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Relations between Poland and Germany remain very special for our government.

In the joint statement by the Foreign Ministers of Poland and Germany adopted by Minister Maas and myself at the Polish-German intergovernmental consultations in November last year, we expressed the will to develop a strategic partnership as neighbors and partners within the European Union and NATO.

We declared our will to cooperate closely during our joint membership in the UN Security Council, and expressed our desire to increase the effectiveness of collaboration in the Weimar Triangle format – very relevant to the audience here.

Our governments clearly committed themselves to deepening a unique relationship in the heart of Europe through:

- tightening bilateral relations in all dimensions between Poland and Germany,
- fostering the European integration, and
- through intense cooperation in the field of security and external relations.

Also, in the same statement, we called on Russia to respect universal norms of international law, including the principle of territorial integrity, and the importance of good-neighbourly relations.

We expressed our concern at the continued failure of the Russian Federation to fulfill its obligations regarding the stabilization of the situation in the Donbas as contained in the Minsk agreements.

We also urged Russia to fulfill Resolution 2246 of Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe and to return the wreckage and the black boxes of the Tu154M aircraft, which crashed tragically on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2010 in Smoleńsk while carrying the Polish State delegation headed by President Lech Kaczyński.

I think this declaration creates a good framework for strengthening cooperation, as I said, in different dimensions, between our countries.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Over the last 30 years since 1989 Poland and Germany developed special relations.

Of course, we celebrate together with you the anniversary of the Fall of Berlin Wall. I participated in the event here, at the Brandenburger Tor, invited by Heiko Maas, a few days ago, and also in other countries of the region, including Poland. The change started with the election of the 4<sup>th</sup> June 1989 in Poland, and then Velvet Revolution, and also the unification, finally, of Germany quite soon, a year after these changes. I think – and thank you, Mr. President, for these kind words – that Poland and solidarity contributed to the changes, but also I am aware, also as an activist at that time, we expressed that ideas in our program, in discussions with opposition, members also in DDR, that also we were aware that without unification of Germany, Poland had no chance (and other countries) to take part in the European project, it is obvious for us. So we benefited both from these events, and we are aware of that.

Today, Germany remains Poland's biggest trading partner. Our countries work together towards a strong and cohesive European Union, based on a sound economic foundation and inclusivity. Germany is our key ally in NATO enhancing the security of the Eastern flank of the Alliance.

These two partnerships – the EU and NATO – are of fundamental significance to the two primary functions of each state, that is ensuring security and welfare. While we may differ on specific solutions in particular areas, we remain united by a community of values, which serves as the basis for cooperation in Europe.

This perpetual bond rooted in shared values and lessons learned from history should be regarded as the greatest capital of our bilateral relations.

Present Polish-German political contacts are very intense. In 2018 presidents Andrzej Duda and Frank-Walter Steinmeier got together, first in Warsaw, then in Berlin, to celebrate the centenary of Poland's regaining of independence.

Our presidents met again this year to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the World War II. Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and Chancellor Angela Merkel hold close and very frequent consultations.

Polish-German relations also thrive in the area of people-to-people contacts, in particular as regards cross-border cooperation and youth exchange. Over the last 28 years nearly 3

million young Poles and Germans took part in mutual exchanges thanks to the Foundation for Polish-German Youth Cooperation.

The joint Polish-German history textbook is gradually becoming a part of core curriculums in Poland and Germany.

Together with Minister Maas, we maintain dialogue on the future of the European Union, also through joint debates, both in Warsaw and in Berlin.

Our goal is a strong, democratic, and efficient Union. A Union that is genuinely united and inclusive, which grows economically and inspires others.

A strong European Union enjoys the support of its Member States and peoples, it contributes to the economic growth and prosperity. It constitutes a truly common market based on four freedoms, including the freedom of services.

A strong Union resists the temptation of protectionism. Its ambitious budget supports new challenges, but also traditional policies, such as Cohesion and Common Agricultural Policies.

Indeed, Poland sees the European Union as a platform that facilitates modernization of state and economy.

For us a democratic Union is a Union that makes best use of the resources created by the citizens of its Member States to implement democratically identified goals. This is how we understand democracy in the European Union.

This is a Union that derives its democratic legitimacy from its Member States and their national parliaments. A Union that ensures genuine participation in the decision-making process, irrespectively of the size of the country.

Poland, in a natural way, due to its relative size and inclusive foreign policy, expresses, I think, the voice of the region, of Central and Eastern Europe. We did not claim any formal title to do that. We do not have any mandate given by these countries, but it is because our goals and the goals of the Central and Eastern European states coincide.

Let me remind you, *Ladies and Gentlemen*, that in May, on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of our EU membership, Prime Minister Morawiecki invited to Poland the leaders of those 13 countries that have joined the Union since 2004. The adopted Warsaw Declaration – just before the Sibiu Summit – set out our joint vision for the future of the European Union. This Declaration presents a vision of a strong and competitive Union that is open to those who share our values.

So, what I expressed, what I explained, the idea or the vision of the European Union, it refers to the countries of the region. You can just look to the documents adopted, it is because, we have, I think, common interests, in the European Union — Visegrád countries, Baltic states, Romania, Bulgaria, others who joined 2004 and later.

But now, let me also draw your attention to this openness of the European Union. I think that Poland and Germany cooperate closely within the Berlin Process, an initiative which aims to bring the Western Balkan countries closer to the European Union.

Last Poznań summit of July, attended by Chancellor Angela Merkel, gave a new momentum in this process. I should add here, that October negative decision on North Macedonia and Albania should be revisited as soon as possible, in our opinion. We hope for a positive decision beginning of next year, in March. And I'm sure that it is also a German position, because Germany was not in the group of countries led by France who opposed to that idea.

Similarly, we act together in the Eastern Partnership, the framework of the EU cooperation with six Eastern neighbors. This year's Tenth Anniversary is not only an occasion to celebrate the Eastern Partnership achievements, but also an opportunity for renewing its impetus. The discussion is going on, we put forward some ideas like institutionalization of that process, also based on experience of our relations with the Western Balkans and Berlin process, we see how it will develop, the discussion, but definitely we are responsible in our opinion, the European Union and the Member States, particularly Poland and Germany, for what is going on at our Eastern border, and we are obliged to support democracy in these six countries, particularly Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, but also Azerbaijan, Armenia, to name all of them.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Transatlantic relations and NATO are the key building blocks of our security.

For Poland the first priority is to ensure that NATO continues its adaptation to new threats – a transformation that started with the Wales and Warsaw summits. This year in London, NATO leaders will take an important step in achieving this goal.

This upcoming meeting should also send out a strong and clear message: we are united and determined to continue strengthening and modernizing NATO in the spirit of the 360-degree principles.

To keep our NATO alliance relevant, we need to address the question of burden sharing. Poland already spends 2 percent of its GDP on defense and committed itself to spend 2.5 percent by 2030. It is a substantial amount, particularly taking into consideration the growing size of Polish economy, so 2 percent every year is more and more money, when we remember that the economic growth in Poland is close to 5% currently.

We are glad that the German defense minister has announced plans to meet the 2 percent threshold by 2031. We see this as a tangible commitment and investment in our common security.

In order to be prepared to face challenges to security, we need to exercise. The largest NATO exercise *Defender 2020* will take place next year. 10 countries will train for the benefit of the credibility of Alliance's strategic readiness and deterrence.

Let me also refer to recent discussions concerning NATO. We definitely cannot agree with the opinion that NATO is in crisis, but for our security, also bilateral relations with the US are relevant and important. The US military presence in our country will increase. The number of US troops in Poland should soon reach five and a half thousand. It is based on our bilateral declaration with the United States, we invest in our infrastructure and in headquarters.

This may seem rather little in comparison with Germany, where the number of stationing US soldiers reaches 35 thousand, so seven times less. Still, for Poland that means an important enhancement of our security.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Poland supports all the efforts aimed at making Europe an important player in the increasingly divided world. The EU has the necessary potential to become such a player and possesses the instruments to achieve this goal.

EU efforts in defense can effectively compliment the NATO transformation. It is in our common interest to strengthen the Europe's defence capabilities.

Poland joined PESCO and decided to engage in the future European Defence Fund.

These two frameworks offer our both countries a unique opportunity to cooperate even closer. The Polish-led PESCO project "Special operations forces medical training center" is open to partners such as Germany, and we are ready to join and discuss that, projects led by Germany and look for synergy, for cooperation, within the European initiatives.

Let me now, *Ladies and Gentlemen*, move to the third and last part of my presentation, which is global dimension of Polish foreign policy.

This year Poland and Germany have been working closely together in the UN Security Council.

Poland has pursued its membership in the Security Council with three main priorities — strengthening international law (I remember an important discussion on the situation in Ukraine, and a discussion on how it should be addressed from the point of view of the Security Council, but also a discussion led by President Andrzej Duda on the role of international law these days for middle-size countries like Poland: international law is crucial for a feeling of security); secondly, promoting the protection of civilians in armed conflicts; and advocating for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In April this year I participated in New York in the debates inaugurating the German Presidency of the Security Council. And in August, Minister Maas participated in the debate on humanitarian law organized by Poland's chairmanship of the Security Council, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. We had very good discussions on that subject.

Our activity in the Security Council resulted in such tangible initiatives as designation of August 22, the *International Day for Victims of Violence based on Religion or Belief*. It was our initiative, supported by other countries and accepted by the General Assembly.

We also returned to UN peacekeeping cooperation, after a break of ten years, we used to be a substantial contributor of the peacekeeping cooperation in the history, also during the communist time but also in the 1990s. Then, as a result of the decision of a previous government, we withdrew from that cooperation. Now we are back and already sent, indeed, 250 soldiers and civilian employees to Lebanon. Traditional operation, we were active there. It is a sign of our global involvement, to a certain extent, and also ambition, to shape, or to contribute to shaping, international order.

Poland's engagement in the UN will continue through our membership in the UN Human Rights Council, as of January 2020. We will focus on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, the strengthening of the freedom of religion and belief, and the protection of the rights of people belonging to religious minorities.

We initiated and are engaged in the *Warsaw Process* on the Middle East, together with the United States. We launched that *Process* in February.

Within the *Process* the representatives of 60 countries are working in 7 thematic groups on antiterrorism, non-proliferation of missiles, cybersecurity, maritime and aviation security, energy security as well as on humanitarian issues and human rights.

The results of their work are to be presented first or maybe second quarter of the year during a ministerial conference in Washington.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Let me conclude by saying that:

- Poland and Germany share the same values. Our visions of Europe in the world are similar. Many of our foreign policy goals coincide.
- I think that the new institutional cycle in the European Union is a fresh chapter. New Commission of Ms. Ursula von der Leyen, whose candidature was supported by Poland, gives us a new possibility of cooperation, to the benefit of our countries and of the European Union project.
- Poland's government with renewed legitimacy through election, is open to enhance the cooperation with Germany.

We should use this window of opportunity and look for synergies for the Polish-German leadership. For the benefit of both our countries, the Weimar Triangle and the European Union.

*Thank you very much for your attention.*