

## COMMUNIQUEŚ

### **International Conference “From Solidarity to Freedom” Warszawa–Gdańsk, August 29–31, 2005**

During the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Polish August 1980, an international conference in Warsaw on August 29–30 and a Special Session in Gdańsk on August 31, 2005 took place.

The aims of the “From Solidarity to Freedom” conference were:

- Analysis of the international consequences of birth and activity of the “Solidarity” movement, first of all its role in regaining independence by Poland and other countries of the Soviet block, the fall of the USSR and the peaceful unification of Europe;
- Strengthening among the opinion-makers the knowledge about the fact that the changes in Europe and in the World resulted from the freedom movements of Poles and that the fall of the Berlin Wall was possible thanks to the years-long, paid with numerous victims, struggle of Poles under the flag of “Solidarity;”
- Gaining international support for proclaiming August 31 the annual Day of Freedom and Solidarity by the UN.

Bronisław Geremek, MEP, former minister of foreign affairs and one of the head political leaders of “Solidarity” in 1980–1989, pointed by Lech Wałęsa, became the Chairman of the Conference.

An honorary patronage was accepted by Terry Davis, the Secretary General of the European Council and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

The conference was inaugurated by the historical leader of NSZZ “Solidarność” [Independent Self-Governing Trade Union “Solidarity”] and the first president of Poland elected in common elections—Lech Wałęsa and followed by a speech by president Aleksander Kwaśniewski.

The final speech, “Solidarity as a Foundation of European Integration” was delivered by José M. D. Barroso, President of the European Commission.

The conference and the anniversary celebrations were attended by many important persons from Poland and other countries: politics, labor unions activists, human and citizens’ rights advocates and famous intellectuals who expressed international solidarity and for years had been helping “Solidarity” and the Polish democratic opposition in their struggle.

During the forum, following issues were discussed:

1. Peaceful struggle of “Solidarity”—from the Cold War to the unification of Europe (Lech Wałęsa and Bronisław Geremek).
2. Treating human and citizens’ rights as a tool in the fight with the USSR by the main actors of the international political scene (Zbigniew Brzeziński, Timothy Garton Ash, Siergiej Kowaliow). On the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act from 1 August 1975.
3. The issue of mutual influence of the “Solidarity” experience and the Christian thought and the social teachings by the Pope, John Paul II, including the influence of the Polish Pope on the emergence of “Solidarity” (presented by cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger and archbishop Józef Życiński).
4. The answer given to the post-Helsinki situation that was found by the Polish opposition and opposition in other countries of the Soviet block as well as how the activities of the Polish opposition and “Solidarity” influences their thinking and action (Jiří Dienstbier, Gabor Demszky, Markus Meckel and Zhelyu Zhelev).
5. How the existence and actions of “Solidarity” undermined the post-Yalta political situation of Europe and how the particular Western capitals reacted to that and what was the real influence of the Polish struggle on the fall of the Berlin Wall and the unification of Europe? (Jean-Bernard Raimond, Denis MacShane).
6. How did “Solidarity’s” struggle influence the concept of development of modern societies and social solidarity? (i.e. Paul Thibaud).
7. About the heritage of “Solidarity” and the faith of the “Solidarity” revolution in Poland—discussion by Aleksander Smolar and Paweł Śpiewak.
8. What was the image of “Solidarity” in the world and what hopes and fears accompanied the labor union’s activists in the West?—discussed by the leading European and American publicists—Neal Ascherson, Bernard Geutta, Jim Hoagland, Leopold Unger and Jürgen Wahl.
9. The separate session was dedicated to present dilemmas related to an active defense of human rights and propagating democratic values in the world and to dangers related to terrorism and war with it (Madeleine Albright, Lord Ralf Dahrendorf, Antoni M. Nowicki and Adam D. Rotfeld).

On the morning of August 31 in Gdańsk the Special Session of the conference took place, during which, after the speeches by presidents Lech Wałęsa and Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Chairman of “Solidarność” Trade Union Janusz Śniadek, the invited guests were speaking: i.e. Vaclav Havel, José M. D. Barroso—President of the European Commission, Presidents Horst Koehler, Wiktor Juszczenko and other countries’ leaders.

The Kingdom of Belgium was represented by the prime minister Guy Verhofstadt, the Republic of Bulgaria—by the prime minister Sergei Stanishev, the Republic of Croatia—by the prime minister Ivo Sanader, the Czech Republic—by the prime minister Jiri Parobek, the Republic of Estonia—by the prime minister Andrus Ansip, The Republic of Finland—by the prime minister Matti Vanhanen, Georgia—by the president Mikheil Saakashvili, Canada—by the Head of the Senate—Daniel Hays, the Republic of Lithuania—by the prime minister Algirdas Brazauskas, the

Republic of Latvia—by the prime minister Aigars Kalvītis, ex-Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia—by the prime minister Vlado Buckovski, the Republic of Malta—by the vice-prime minister Tonio Borg, the Federal Republic of Germany—by the president Horst Koehler, Romania—by the vice-prime minister Bèla Markó, Serbia—by the president Boris Tadić, the Slovak Republic—by the prime minister Mikuláš Dzurinda, the Republic of Slovenia—by the prime minister Janez Janša, USA—the ex-Secretary of the State James A. Baker III, Ukraine—by the president Wiktor Juszczenko, the Republic of Hungary—by the president Laszlo Solyom, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland—by the vice-prime minister—John Prescott, Vatican—by Metropolita Krakowski Archbishop Stanisław Dziwisz, the European Commission—President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso, the European Parliament—by Jacek Saryusz-Wolski. Also the minister of foreign affairs of Serbia and Montenegro Vuk Drasković was present.

The conference was organized by the Solidarity Center Foundation in collaboration with the Lech Wałęsa Institute. It was financed by donations and by sponsorship of Polish companies as well as donations from the Polish Government, European Commission and ODIHR.

Chairman of the Conference: Profesor Bronisław Geremek, MEP

Programme Director of the Conference: Eugeniusz Smolar

Executive Director of the Conference: Henryk Sikora