



**Address
by Klaus-Heinrich Standke
President
Committee for the advancement of the French-German-Polish Cooperation
(,Weimar Triangle')
at the Gala Dinner
hosted on the occasion of the Conference „The Economic Weimar Triangle:
Industrial Policy of the European Union“**

6 February 2014, Stara Zajezdnia, Krakow

- Mr. Marek Sowa, Marshal of the Malopolskie Voivodeship and host of this gala dinner,
- Mr. Jerzy Miller, Governor of Malopolska
- Mr. Minister Rafal Trzaskowski
- Mr. Olgierd Dziekoński, Secretary of State, Chancellery of the President
- Dr. Henryka Bochniarz, Mr. Ulrich Grillo et Monsieur Yves-Thibault de Silguy
- Dear friends of the Weimar Triangle.

For two reasons we are witnessing here in Krakow within the framework of the Weimar Triangle a first time ever event:

1. In almost 23 years in its existence, industry and the private sector did not play any significant role in the French-German-Polish cooperation.
2. Ambassador Joachim Bitterlich has, therefore, hailed this Krakow Conference „as a break-up of the traditional monopoly of the Foreign Policy in the Weimar Triangle“.

I wish to pay tribute to President Bronisław Komorowski and to his Secretary of State Olgierd Dziejkoński for having taken the initiative for this both timely and ambitious meeting in Krakow, the City of the Polish kings.

The Weimar Triangle – in spite of the fact that it is more of two decades in existence – has remained widely unknown in the three partner countries, France, Germany and Poland.

It is for this reason that I was asked by our hosts to introduce to you tonight in a ‚nutshell‘ the origins and the potential of this rather unique trilateral cooperation scheme. This particular honour was bestowed upon me in my capacity as President of the Committee for the advancement of the French-German-Polish Cooperation (,Weimar Triangle'). The Committee was created 12 years ago as a non-governmental organisation under the auspices of the three founding fathers of the Weimar Triangle, i.e. the former Foreign Ministers Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Roland Dumas and Krzysztof Skubiszewski.

Why Weimar?

After the reunification of the two Germany's on 3 October 1990, the three Foreign Ministers of that time, Messrs. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Roland Dumas and Krzysztof Skubiszewski have felt the necessity of creating an informal mechanism enabling France, Germany and Poland to work as closely as possible together in the interest of the future of the Greater Europe. Hans-Dietrich Genscher offered hospitality for the first

meeting of the Foreign Ministers in Germany. On purpose he did not invite to Bonn, at that time still the seat of the Federal Government or to Berlin, but he chose the small town of Weimar in Thüringen. Weimar in his opinion combined like no other town the two faces of German history: On one side, being the place of Goethe, Schiller and other heroes of the German Classic – and on the other side, being the location of the Buchenwald Concentration camp where 250.000 people from all European countries were imprisoned, some 56.000 of which have died.

The three founding fathers of the Weimar Triangle have met on the 242nd birthday of Goethe in Weimar: As a side step: Adam Mickiewicz came 162 years earlier to Weimar to pay tribute to Goethe on his 80th anniversary. Our Committee has named our annual Weimar Triangle Award after Adam Mickiewicz. President Komorowski was generous enough to open the doors of the Presidential Palace in Warsaw for the Prize rewarding ceremony 2012. Recipients of the Adam Mickiewicz Prize on 7 September 2012 were the former French Minister of Culture Jack Lang, the former President of the Deutsche Bundestag Rita Süssmuth and the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences Michał Kleiber.

On 29th August 1991 Ministers Genscher, Dumas and Skubizewski have launched their famous „*Common declaration on the future of Europe*“. „The future of Europe“ was the focus of attention, and not „the future of France, Germany and Poland“ alone. The Weimar declaration contains 10 paragraphs, less than 2 pages of text. That is all. Without this trilateral declaration we would not be able to gather here tonight.

The Weimar Triangle concept of 1991 was inspired by the French-German Friendship treaty of 1963, better known as the Elysée Treaty. It combines two main orientations:

1. The political diplomatic part, including the defence and security aspects
2. The part of the civil society, that is to say *creation of networks of cooperation among the three countries. The Ministers called for concrete cooperation projects on the fields of the Economy, Environment, Infrastructure, Communication, Energy, Culture, Regional cooperation, Youth exchange etc..*

In short, the very ambitious and idealistic Weimar concept covers the entire waterfront of European cooperation issues – similar to our debates this afternoon at the plenary session - with special focus on France, Germany and Poland.

What came out of all this?

Whereas part 1. gives some occasional public visibility to the Weimar Triangle, Part 2 seems to be almost completely forgotten:

Part 1, i.e. the diplomatic ministerial part, can be quantified as follows:

18 meetings of the Foreign Ministers, 14 meetings of the defence ministers, 8 so-called Weimar summits attended by the French and German heads of state and by the German Chancellor. Unlike the numerous trilateral meetings on ministerial levels, it were these Weimar summits, because of their large Press coverage, which gave most public attention to the trilateral cooperation. All French Presidents beginning with François Mitterand, Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy, all Polish Presidents including Lech Walesa, Aleksander Kwasiewski, Lech Kaczyński and Bronisław Komorowski as well as the German Chancellors Helmut Kohl, Gerhard Schröder and Angela Merkel gave political clout through their personal involvement to the Weimar Triangle. The last Weimar summit took place by invitation of President Komorowski exactly three years ago, i.e. on 7 February 2012 in Warsaw,

On part 2, i.e. the role of the civil society with all its aspects, no tangible concrete projects can be reported here. This is astonishing since the success of the bilateral

French-German Elysée Treaty relies not only on the frequent meetings of Heads of States and Ministers, but to an even much higher extent on the well established large number of bilateral across-the-border networks within the civil society in general and industry in particular.

Complementary to the series of bilateral French-Polish, French-German as well as French-German and Polish-German governmental initiatives, our Weimar Triangle NGO Committee has, therefore - - developed a trilateral *French-German-Polish Agenda for Action* on 16 concrete fields. The result, to put it mildly, was not encouraging. However, this trilateral conference in Krakow, it is hoped, could indeed bring about the needed important momentum into the trilateral cooperation and could serve as a stimulus for 28 EU as a whole.

The follow-up of this meeting could fill the gap which existed hitherto for 23 years.

If successful, the Economic Weimar Triangle could be supplemented and followed by similar trilateral initiatives on related fields such as Energy, Environmental, Research, Innovation and University Triangles to list only some of the salient issues at stake.

The four parallel working groups meeting tomorrow are covering practically all topics mentioned here as key elements for the proposed trilateral Weimar *public-private partnership* Agenda. The enhancement of the international competitiveness of the Weimar Triangle countries should be the overriding concern.

Having assembled in Krakow for the first time in the history of the Weimar Triangle such an impressive French-German-Polish audience is already an achievement in itself. What is called for now is a visible (or for that matter invisible...) hand to set this cooperation process in motion and to monitor the expected results. The present loose, rather ad-hoc, Weimar mechanism is in need of some pragmatic follow-up device. Perhaps the modalities of the Visegrad group could serve as a model?

Such a concerted cooperation among the Weimar Triangle countries representing with its some 200 million inhabitants 40% of the EU population and 45% of its industrial output could have an important spill-over effect for the EU as a whole. Indeed, as Deputy Prime Minister Elsbjeta Blankowska has today suggested, the cooperation within the Weimar Triangle could serve as a sort of blue-print for the EU as a whole. Arnold Kirchhoff, in the same line of thought, has proposed to this effect, a 3-tier mutually supporting approach:

- (1) The national scale, (2) the Weimar Triangle (3) the EU of 28.

Almost 23 years ago the cornerstone of the building labelled 'Weimar Triangle' has been laid by the three Weimar architects Genscher, Dumas and Skubiszewski. It is entirely up to the next generation of leaders in governments and in the private sector, so well represented here tonight, to ascertain that the vision of Weimar is at long last being transformed into tangible projects.