

# DECLARATION

**by the Polish-German Business Summit to mark the 25th anniversary  
of the “Polish-German Treaty of Good Neighbourship and Friendly Cooperation”  
signed on 17 June 1991**

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Today we celebrate 25 years of German-Polish friendship. Our bilateral relations have developed over this period better than at any other time during our chequered history. Poles and Germans have benefited enormously from the social and economic ties that have evolved in recent decades. But today we are more than good neighbours and important trading partners – we are a community of responsibility in and for Europe. Our fate is inseparable from the fate of Europe and tied to the future of our shared European institutions.

We have a good common future in the world only with Europe. In an ever more closely intermeshed world, we are increasingly confronted with problems on a global scale, problems which can also only be tackled on a global basis. The war in Syria, Russian actions in Ukraine, international terrorism, the danger of destabilisation in the Mediterranean basin, millions of people fleeing to Europe as well as a series of economic and social dislocations: those who believe that they can disregard such crises and withdraw into a national shell delude themselves. If we turn our backs on worldwide crises, problems in faraway regions of the earth will sooner or later become our own problems.

In light of these challenges, we can no longer represent our justified national interests effectively through unilateral action but only in a European grouping of free and democratic states.

We Europeans must adopt a united stance in external relations, security policy, combating terror, energy supply, climate policy and many other areas. The EU must speak with one voice in all these areas and also be given the competences it needs to do so. This includes the possibility of majority decisions in the European Council. Only if the EU is capable of political action on major issues can we help to shape a future that is free of war, bitter poverty, brutal terror and unspeakable suffering on an equal footing with other world regions.

As a further priority, we must further develop the EU internally, deepen the Eurozone and achieve true economic convergence between the Member States. In addition, we must strengthen the principles of subsidiarity and competition, develop the single market and promote the participation of all citizens in growth and prosperity. At the same time, the single market for energy, capital and the digital economy must be further developed, the institutions of Economic and Monetary Union must be strengthened while sustainable structural reforms in the Member States must be pushed forward.

A Europe that is strong, speaks with one voice and develops further internally does not deprive us of our national identities. It was always diversity that made Europe strong and we want to keep it that way. All the more it is important, not to put acceptance of the EU as a whole at risk by excessively detailed interference in people's social and cultural everyday lives. The EU must therefore show restraint on small matters. "Big on big things and small on small things" – that is the right motto! It means that EU proposals should be tested much more rigorously against the criteria of proportionality and subsidiarity. Things that can be done better at national level should be left in decentralised hands. Here lies the key to building trust and support for an EU which respects national identities.

Given the many challenges, it is high time to mobilise European capacities and to convince all those who have turned away from the EU in disappointment. Europe must resolutely come together, regain confidence and go on to the offensive.

Business associations and in particular Member States of the Union bear a special responsibility in this regard. Our shared history obliges us to work with heart and reason to address the outstanding tasks in Europe together. We are convinced that the EU will emerge stronger from the present difficulties – to the benefit of our companies, but above all to the benefit of the people who expect freedom and democracy, solidarity and stability from the European community of states.

Warsaw, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016

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