



EPP-ED
Group of the European People's Party
(Christian Democrats) and European Democrats
in the European Parliament

MEETING OF THE EPP-ED GROUP BUREAU

1-2 September 2005

Gdansk, Poland



**MEETING OF THE EPP-ED GROUP BUREAU
1-2 SEPTEMBER
GDANSK**

Programme

Thursday, 1 September 2005

09.00 - 09.30
Opening

Hans-Gert **POETTERING** MEP, Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament

Lech **WALESA**, former President of Poland and former Leader of Solidarity

Welcome:

Donald **TUSK**, Chairman, Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform)

Jacek **SARYUSZ-WOLSKI** MEP, Leader of the Polish Delegation in the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament and Vice-President of the European Parliament

Pawel **ADAMOWICZ**, Mayor of the City of Gdansk

09.30-12.00
Theme I: "The EU and its New Neighbours"

Chairman of the session:

Hans-Gert **POETTERING** MEP, Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament

Speakers:

Viktor **YUSCHENKO**, President of the Ukraine

Mikhail **SAKASHVILI**, President of Georgia

Ivo **SANADER**, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia

Ivan **MIKLOS**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the Slovak Republic

Iurie **ROSCA** MP, Chairman PPCD (People's Party - Christian Democrats), Moldova

Mirek **TOPOLÁNEK**, Chairman of the ODS (Civic Democratic Party), Czech Republic

Borys **NIEMTSOV**, SDS Party of Russia, former Deputy Prime Minister of Russia responsible for economic reform

Vincuk **VIACORKA**, Chairman of the Belarus Popular Front Party

Stanislas **SHUSHKIEWICH**, Social Democratic Party, former Chairman of the National Council of Belarus

Debate

15.00-15.10
Chairman to lay a wreath at the Westerplatte Memorial

16.30
Chairman to lay a wreath at the Three Crosses Memorial

Speech by Lech **WALESA**

Friday, 2 September 2005

09.00 - 11.15
Theme II: "Solidarity, the Gdansk Accords and European Reunification"

Chairman of the session:

Hans-Gert **POETTERING** MEP, Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament

Co-Chairman of the session:

Ville **ITÄLÄ** MEP, Vice-Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament

Special guest:

Tadeusz **GOCLOWSKI**, Archbishop of Gdansk

Speakers:

Jacek **SARYUSZ-WOLSKI** MEP, Leader of the Polish Delegation in the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament and Vice-President of the European Parliament

Elmar **BROK** MEP, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament

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Jerzy **BUZEK** MEP, former Prime Minister of Poland

Mario **MAURO** MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament

Viktor **ORBAN**, President of FIDESZ - Hungarian Civic Union, Vice-President of the European People's Party

Debate

11.15
Presentation of the proposed European Solidarity Centre

11.15 - 12.00
General Conclusions

Hans-Gert **POETTERING** MEP, Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament

12.00
Press conference

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OPENING OF THE MEETING



Hans-Gert Poettering MEP, Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament

The Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament, **Hans-Gert Poettering**, welcomed participants to the meeting.

He pointed out the special nature of the city of Gdansk: it was here that the Polish opposition movement had gained its great victory.

He said that Gdansk was a historic location, but the history of this city was as changeable as the history of Europe. It had experienced highs and lows, war and peace, oppression and liberty, Communism and democracy. The roots of this city went back to a far-off era: in 1997, Gdansk had celebrated its thousand-

year anniversary. Having belonged to the Hanseatic League from the 14th century onwards, the city had become a major cultural and economic centre in Europe – Poles had called Gdansk the ‘old lion’ of the mighty Hanseatic League. The coexistence at that time of a variety of different nationalities, cultures, religions and languages had given rise to a very strong international tradition. Behind the ramparts of this rich and powerful city had grown a society founded on unity in diversity. Gdansk should therefore be an example for all Europeans.

However, Gdansk was also linked to a dark episode in European history. It had been here that on 1 September 1939 the first shots heralding the beginning of the Second World War had been fired. It was also here where the infamy of the Nazi movement had begun. The city had suffered during the Second World War and by 1945, Gdansk was in ruins; but its inhabitants had a reputation for toughness and they had rebuilt the city even as they suffered under Communist totalitarianism.

Nowadays, Poles remembered the Gdansk August, since historians considered the events which took place then had been the beginning of the end of Communism. Who would have thought on 14 August 1980, when the strike had begun in the naval shipyard in Gdansk, that this movement would lead to freedom and the end of the Communist dictatorship in oppressed parts of Europe? Under the leadership of Lech Walesa, the workers had revolted against the power of the Communist states.

The members of *SOLIDARNOSC* had been supported by the citizens of Gdansk, but the greatest support had come from the Vatican, where the Polish Pope John Paul II had assured the Polish people of his explicit

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support and had given them strength in their struggle against oppression and the Communist regime. By taking the side of *Solidarnosc* and the demonstrators, Pope John Paul had contributed to the fall of Communism in Europe.

On 30 November 2004, a few months before this great Pope's death, Hans-Gert Poettering had met him in the Pope's private library in the Vatican. The Pope could barely speak but his mind had been completely alert. The two men had talked about Europe and Hans-Gert Poettering had awarded him the EPP-ED Group's Robert Schuman Medal.

President Walesa and Pope John Paul II were not only great Polish figures but also European and international ones. Hans-Gert Poettering thanked them and all their supporters for all they had done and for their Christian commitment.

Supported by the Pope, the strikes had spread from Gdansk to all the other cities in Poland. The strikers had forced the Polish regime to accept the Gdansk Agreement authorising the first independent trade union. Shortly after, *Solidarnosc* had been officially founded. These times had been important not only for Poland but also for the whole of Europe. *Solidarnosc* had begun a process which had culminated in the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989. Without *Solidarnosc*, the unification of Germany on 3 October 1990 might not ever have happened.

Poland's citizens had been capable of saying 'no'. No-one had known how the Communist regime would react. It was therefore with good cause that today we celebrated the 25th anniversary of *Solidarnosc*. Poland could be proud of these men and women, and all Europeans could thank them for their courage. *Solidarnosc* had shown Poland the

path to freedom. Ten years later, the Communist system had broken down in every Central and Eastern European country. People everywhere had gone out into the streets and demonstrated peacefully for freedom and democracy. The events in Gdansk that August had set the example for others to follow.

The EPP-ED Group at the European Parliament had shared, and continued to share, the values and ideals of those demonstrators. Freedom, democracy and the rule of law were the fundamental values of the European Union.

Nowadays, the memory of this solidarity between the men who had led the resistance showed us the path towards European solidarity in order to unite the whole continent even more and strengthen the bridges which had already been built between the nations of Europe. The EPP-ED Group was in favour of this solidarity both within and without the borders of the Union.

It was in this spirit that Hans-Gert Poettering was asking the Polish people to vote in favour of the European Constitution, since this Constitution embodied Christian values and a 'yes' to this Constitution would be a 'yes' which Pope John Paul II would have agreed with.

He recalled that a delegation of the CDU/CSU had come to Poland in the 1980s. Who would have thought at the time that on 1 September 2005, the EPP-ED Group would be meeting in Gdansk in a free Poland? It was really as if a miracle had taken place.

Hans-Gert Poettering was delighted to welcome to this meeting of the EPP-ED Group Bureau the Nobel Prize winner and former President of Poland, Lech Walesa, and handed him the platform.

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Lech Walesa former President of Poland and former leader of Solidarity (*Solidarnosc*) thanked the EPP-ED Group for their invitation.

He recalled that he had considered himself a revolutionary, that he had not wanted to be a politician but that in the end life had forced him to change his mind. He had always tried to understand why things were as they were and what could be done to make things better. He was trying to understand the present time and the challenges which it had brought.

Some places, like Gdansk and Poland, had been especially tested by history. Lech Walesa had often wondered why all these events had taken place in Poland. He thought the answer was relatively simple: Poland was situated between two large nations, Russia and Germany, which both loved to travel. The time had come when the Germans had wanted to visit their Russian cousins and the shortest route had gone through Poland. So, as they had been on their way through Poland they had realised that the country wasn't so bad and some of them had stayed. At a certain point in history these two cousins had stayed for so long that Poland disappeared off the map for 120 years! After the war, Polish soldiers had died on both fronts and Poland had had no strength left to defend herself. It was then that she had been handed over to the Soviet zone of influence.

This experience had taught Poland to be better at spotting danger but also to take her chances. This was how the fall of Communism had been foreshadowed. At the end of the Second World War, half the world had been given to Stalin. The great and the good had broken off relations with the Polish Government and had preferred to cosy up to a government imposed on Poland. Even Stalin had laughed about this, since he had

admitted that Communism was going to be like a 'saddle on a pig' to the Poles. It had taken 50 years of struggle to arrive at the present-day situation.



Lech Walesa, former President of Poland and former Leader of Solidarity (SOLIDARNOSC)

During the 1940s and 1950s, some groups had wanted to turn back the course of history by armed struggle but the big brother to the east had had enough armed force to snuff out these aspirations and close the path to freedom. Young people had tried again in 1968 through demonstrations but this had not worked. In 1970 and 1976, workers had demonstrated and gone on strike, but in vain. The repression had been bloody and dreadful but in the end this method of trial and error had led to an idea that Lech Walesa called building a monopoly. All the groups had had to get organised, the journalists had had to be in the know and everyone had had to know what was going on. It had had to be the whole nation saying to Communism: 'We don't want this system any more, we're not going to work for you

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any more – impose a state of war on us and close the factories.'

How could we have fought in any other way? 200 000 Soviet soldiers had been permanently billeted in Poland. In neighbouring countries there had been a million Soviet soldiers, not counting the nuclear warheads in their silos.

In the 1970s, the more enlightened among us had thought that there was no chance, that the Soviets would never leave and that we would never gain our freedom. But, in the end, the West had had enough of Communism too, even if no-one had really had any clear idea of how and when to put an end to the system. Everyone had been warning the Poles against any kind of action and there had been a threat of nuclear war.

However, no-one had expected a Pole to become Pope. One year after his election, John Paul II had come to Poland and the eyes of the whole world had turned towards this Communist state. The whole country had gone out into the streets to see the Pope, even people who didn't believe in God. The Pope had not come to start a revolution but his way of doing things spoke volumes ...

Lech Walesa recalled that at the time he had been working in the opposition ranks for 20 years and had been trying desperately to make people join together. During those years, he had managed to convince 10 people to join him, 10 people out of 40 million inhabitants, 10 heroes! There had been perhaps five to ten groups like his in Poland. In the other satellite countries, the situation was even worse. There had been the merest trace of revolt, of an opposition movement.

The Pope had reawoken Poland and also caused the reawakening of other satellite

countries. These embryonic organisations had been enough to start up the protest and strike movement and it had been then that negotiations had become possible.

The Soviets had panicked a little when they had seen what was happening. They had seen clearly that it was not so easy to defeat the Pope. They had tried, but in vain. Then the old men in the central committee of the Soviet party had remembered that someone had been suggesting reforming Communism. They had made him Party Secretary and *perestroika* and *glasnost* had been offered to the Soviets. Gorbachev had believed that Communism could be reformed. Lech Walesa and his colleagues who had been fighting against Communism for a long time knew this was not possible. Reform wouldn't be Communism any more. This is why they had let him propose it and encouraged him in all his changes, because they knew that once these changes had undermined the foundations of Communism, everything would collapse. The fact is that nothing that Gorbachev had tried to do worked. He had wanted to reform the Soviet Union, Communism and the Warsaw Pact, but his success had consisted in the fact that he hadn't succeeded in doing any of what he had wanted to.

At a certain moment Gorbachev's entourage had realised that everything was going wrong, so as soon as he went on holiday, the Prime Minister had called in the army. As luck would have it, Yeltsin had stepped in. He had climbed on a tank to harangue the crowd and the game had been up. Lech Walesa recalled how he and everyone who had struggled against Communism for all those years had made countless mistakes and constantly run the risk of failure, but somehow something had always happened to save the day.

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Now that victory had been gained, it was necessary, said Lech Walesa, to reflect on its origins. He emphasised that of course it wasn't just the Pope's words that had brought Communism down, but his words had become actions and negotiations. Only in 1989 had victory finally arrived and it would have been possible to lose heart. But providence had always been on our side to keep our hopes up. To be honest, Lech Walesa thought that 50% of this victory was down to the Pope, 30% to *Solidarnosc* and 20% to everything else.

As far as his own predictions had been concerned, Lech Walesa had thought that Poland would be 10 years ahead of the other satellite countries of the Soviet Union, that it would be the first to join the EU, dragging Hungary and the Czech Republic along in its wake, and that after that would come the great enterprise of reunifying Germany.

Obviously, he had not foreseen what would really happen. Things had turned out differently: a state of siege had been proclaimed, all development had been brutally suppressed and the satellite countries had started to gain freedom individually. It had become too difficult for Europe to manage and this was where all the present-day complications had stemmed from.

Lech Walesa recognised that, in the end [in the naval shipyard in Gdansk and with the Pope's help], just a few of the old Soviet bear's teeth had been broken. But once the bear had had all its teeth broken, it had become possible to knock down the walls and start revolutions. The Germans and Czechs had freed themselves because by that time the conditions were right. Each nation had fought for its own freedom and had won hands down because the opponent had been worn out.

As an incorrigible revolutionary, Lech Walesa wanted this struggle to continue and an end to be put to divisions, borders and fighting for wealth and territory. Because this was now the matter in hand. Previously people had wanted to move borders to gain more wealth and territory. The fall of Communism had put an end to that era and the era now beginning was to be one of intelligence, information and the Internet. Nothing was to be gained from fighting over territory, fighting for land. Intelligence was allowing us to earn more money than conquest and the force of arms. It was a huge opportunity.

However, the big problem was that all the solutions and present-day institutions (the UN, the European Union, democracy and the economy) came from a bygone age. None of it was adapted to globalisation. All of it would have to be improved. Previously, two great powers had been watching each other closely. Now, there was only one and this power did not have the capacity to accomplish every task. On the other hand, the UN had the mandate to accomplish tasks but no means to do so. So, according to Lech Walesa, either the United States should be given a mandate to act as a global policeman or the UN should be given the means to do so or a world parliament and government should be set up alongside the UN.

As far as the economy was concerned, Lech Walesa thought it was intolerable that, in a globalised world, 10% of humanity controlled 90% of the world's wealth.

He also drew attention to the need for global control of environmental matters. If this did not happen, countries like North Korea or Belarus would end up wrecking the whole planet through acid rain and other pollution.

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Lech Walesa insisted on the importance of thinking in global terms. Although information itself had become globalised with the Internet, society needed to become globalised to live in safety and to be able to develop appropriately.

In his mind, as far as Europe was concerned, two major tasks should be priorities: on the one hand, overcoming the inequalities resulting from the divisions of the past and harmonising living standards, and, on the other, ensuring the economic development of the continent.

The divisions of the past should be put behind us. Now Communism was finished and we must work together in solidarity. The 21st century ought to be the century of work, good relations and solidarity.

Donald TUSK, Chairman of Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform), also emphasised the fact that it was in Gdansk that the great revolution in which ten million citizens took part had started. A revolution which had lasted from 1980 until 1989. It was in Gdansk that the miracle of *Solidarnosc* had occurred. During those nine years, in spite of the tanks, the policemen and soldiers armed to the teeth, not a single person had been killed by a member of *Solidarnosc*. It had been possible to overturn one of the most repressive systems ever through a non-violent revolution and the miracle of a beautiful harmony of faith, the Christian tradition and freedom.

It had been in Gdansk that the workers had proved that there was no longer any conflict between solidarity and individual freedom, no opposition between the desire for modernisation and an attachment to tradition, and that God was not the enemy of freedom.

It was also in Gdansk that the miracle had occurred of a rebirth of solidarity, which until 1989 had seemed to be merely a hollow concept, an illusion created by socialist or Communist regimes. It had been proven that solidarity was a value which could be defended by a whole society and which did not nullify individual freedoms, Christian tradition, national aspirations or patriotism. That is why 31 August and 1 September were so important for all Poles.



Donald Tusk, Chairman, Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform)

Donald Tusk went on to share the hope of President Lech Walesa that we would see a revival of genuine solidarity in the service of humankind in the whole of Europe. He hoped that over the decades this solidarity would provide a feeling of security and the perception of a sense of being together and working together.

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Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, MEP, Head of the Polish Delegation in the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament and Vice-President of the European Parliament expressed his great satisfaction at welcoming the EPP-ED Group to the historic city of Gdansk, the birthplace of the great *Solidarnosc* movement.

Those events 25 years ago had enabled the growth of the family which now was struggling for a better Europe.

As far as the fate of Poland was concerned nowadays, the centre-right was the political family which everyone who had changed things belonged to. This meant that the ideas came from people with the same philosophy as the EPP-ED Group concerning politics and economics.

Jacek Saryusz-Wolski hoped that the work of the EPP-ED Group Bureau would meet with success in this historic and important city.



Jacek Saryusz-Wolski MEP, Leader of the Polish Delegation in the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament and Vice-President of the European Parliament

The spirit of solidarity should not stop there. It should try to enlarge it towards the East, to go further, towards Belarus and Ukraine.

There was often reference made in Brussels and Strasbourg to a 'community' method. According to Jacek Saryusz-Wolski there was also a '*Solidarnosc*' method, that is, peaceful reform, in very vivid contrast with, for example, the French Revolution. This 'solidarity' method had every chance of succeeding if it was correctly applied in the EU and its Member States and if it was also promoted and applied to the East, outside the European Union.

Pawel Adamowicz, Mayor of the City of Gdansk, welcomed the EPP-ED Group Bureau.

He was extremely happy to see the largest political group in the European Parliament, the elite of Europe, meeting in Gdansk to feel and bathe for a moment in the tides of history running through the city.

Gdansk was a city that for the major part of its thousand-year history had been open-minded and tolerant of all religions, trends and ideas.

The building where the meeting was being held was halfway between the gates of the Gdansk naval shipyard, where the agreements between the strikers and the Communist regime were signed, and the local Communist Party headquarters, which had burnt down in 1970. The building was also a place which, at the time, was infested with agents of the regime's secret police, called up to help crush the strikers. Often more tanks than cars had been seen in this street.

In conclusion, Pawel Adamowicz awarded August 1980 commemorative medals to Hans-Gert Poettering, Chairman of the EPP-

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ED Group in the European Parliament, in recognition of the sympathy he had manifested with regard to the identity of this part of Europe; to the Party Chairman, Donald Tusk, who had recently published a very important work entitled 'Solidarity and Pride'; to Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, who was without doubt one of the keepers of the *Solidarnosc* legacy; to Janusz Lewandowski, who had organised the commemoration of August 1980 in Brussels, and to Jas Gawronski, one of Poland's strongest advocates in the European Parliament.



l-r: Pawel Adamowicz, Mayor of the City of Gdansk, Jacek Sarusz-Wolski MEP, Leader of the Polish Delegation in the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament and Vice-President of the European Parliament and Vice-President of the European Parliament, Donald Tusk, Chairman, Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform), and Lech Walesa, former President of Poland and former Leader of Solidarity

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SUBJECT I: THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS NEW NEIGHBOURS

Ivo Sanader, Prime Minister of Croatia, welcomed the opportunity he had been given to come to Poland on the 25th anniversary of the events in Gdansk.

The birth of 'Solidarity' had been an historic moment. It had created a pathway for the changes which had transformed the face of Europe. Until then, it had been difficult to imagine a Europe in which all the citizens would be neighbours, with no borders, with the advantages of economic security and social stability and sharing the same social and economic values. Nowadays this had become the only way of guaranteeing peace and lasting stability.

At the present time it was very important to retain the spirit of this project, especially after the two rejections of the Constitution in the referendums in France and the Netherlands and after the failure of the budget talks. There was no other alternative.

As a candidate for membership of the EU, Croatia was convinced that it was appropriate to keep steering the same course in terms of European integration. Croatia was waiting impatiently for the beginning of negotiations and talks with the EU with a view to its accession. Once this process was complete, it would be able to be a fully committed member of the European family.

The future of Europe was also the future of Croatia. Croatia's efforts in terms of economic and social reform had already put the country on the path to integration. Its historical links with Europe facilitated this process of reform. The Thessaloniki Agenda contained various points which would enable

the further strengthening of Croatia's efforts. In 2004, the enlargement of the EU by 10 new Member States had enabled the establishment of a healthy economic and social environment. The Croatian Government was developing major projects to improve democratic procedures in the country, to begin privatisation, encourage foreign investment and to respond to the challenges that Croatia would have to meet in order to participate in the process of globalisation.



Niels Pedersen, Secretary-General of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament, John Biesmans, Deputy Secretary-General of the EPP-ED Group, Ivo Sanader, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, and Othmar Karas MEP, Vice-Chairman of the EPP-ED Group (Austria)

In preparing for its accession to the EU, Croatia was going to assist in reducing the instability in the region and in preparing the future accession of its neighbours to the European family.

To conclude, Ivo Sanader hoped that the UK Presidency would find a way of opening accession negotiations and talks with

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Croatia. He reminded everyone that so far, Croatia had already met all the criteria with the exception of arresting General Ante Gotovina and bringing him before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at The Hague. Croatia had done everything in its power to meet this demand, but according to the most recent information, the fugitive general was no longer in the country. To punish Croatia for not being able to locate him would be unjust.

Ivo Sanader was convinced that the EPP-ED family would, as had always been the case in the past, give its support and remove this last proviso.

Croatia was fully committed to an effort of reconciliation with its neighbours to bring peace and stability to the region and deserved to see the negotiations start.

Lurie Rosca, MP, Chairman of the CDPP (Christian Democratic People's Party), Moldova, expressed his pleasure at being able to address the EPP-ED political family on the 25th anniversary of the birth of the Polish trade union *Solidarnosc*. The events which had taken place here 25 years ago had been the beginning of the end for the Communist regimes in Europe by causing a domino effect on the Warsaw Pact countries. However, the Republic of Moldova was still waiting for the end of Communism.

In 2001, after a period of transition towards democracy and the market economy – which had caused numerous social problems – parliamentary elections had brought the Communist Party to power. Because the Communist government was not democratic, violations of fundamental rights and fundamental freedoms had occurred. The Christian Democrat Opposition had reacted

strongly for four years. As an MP, Lurie Rosca had lost his immunity nine times in two years. Luckily, he had not been convicted or imprisoned, and the Communist authorities had promised to abide by this principle, which is why the dictatorship in Moldova was considered to be a moderate dictatorship.

Lurie Rosca thanked the EPP-ED family, the EPP-ED President Wilfried Martens, the Chairman of the EPP-ED Group, Hans-Gert Poettering and the EPP Group Chairman in the Council of Europe, René van der Linden, for their support and their defence of all Christian Democrats at European level. The continued political equilibrium in Moldova owed a lot to their help.

The most recent parliamentary elections, which took place in March 2005, had enabled the Communists to keep their hold on the parliament but they had lost a number of seats, going from 71 to 56 out of 101 seats. The Communist Party's platform had changed completely over the course of the elections.

On 4 April 2005, during the Parliament's election of the President, the Communists had needed five more votes for their candidate. So the Christian Democrats had decided to support the Communist candidate, Vladimir Voronine, in exchange for a conditional agreement. The eleven Christian Democrat deputies had voted for Vladimir Voronine, after recording his commitment to implement ten proposals for political reform. He had agreed to follow the model of the Baltic States, former federal states of the Soviet Union.

Since then, Parliament had in three months adopted six reforms out of ten.

First of all, the live transmission of the parliamentary sessions on television and

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radio and the publication on an Internet site of the minutes of parliamentary debates.

The government had refused to support the owner of two pro-government newspapers. Reform of the legal system had been adopted and it would be independent once more.

The legislation on the Secret Services had been reviewed. This institution would no longer be able to conduct criminal investigations or make preventive detentions as it had done during the Soviet era, and the Parliament would have the power to control the Secret Services' activities through a parliamentary sub-committee chaired by an Opposition representative.

Changes had been made to the electoral code so that five members out of nine on the central electoral commission would be nominated by the Opposition.

The Court of Auditors would be an efficient and independent institution. Four of the seven members would also be nominated by the Opposition.

Over the autumn, institutional reforms would continue. The reform of the public prosecutor for municipal government, the reform of television and radio and the reform of the Constitution were yet to occur.

According to Lurie Rosca, the speed and quality of these democratic changes depended on the support of Moldova's European partners. It was important that Moldova should receive signals which encouraged its pro-Western development. Moldova needed Brussels to say that the door was open for countries like itself and that its chances depended on its successes in this area.

Lurie Rosca drew attention to the conflict in Transdnistria. This situation was the

consequence of an illegal military presence by Russia which was encouraging resistance fighters, smuggling, arms trafficking, corruption, organised crime and instability. Lurie Rosca would be grateful if his partners supported the withdrawal of Russian troops and encouraged a peaceful solution, along with the re-establishment of Moldova's territorial integrity. A key role would have to be played by President Yushchenko, who had started up important initiatives regarding democratisation, stability and border controls in the Transdnistria region and on its borders with Ukraine. He congratulated the EU on its active and effective participation in this process and emphasised the importance of cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and NATO, and was delighted that an action plan had recently been signed between Moldova and NATO.

He concluded with the remark that Moldova, like Ukraine, Georgia and Belarus, deserved a European future.

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Mirek Topolánek, Chairman of the ODS (Civic Democratic Party), Czech Republic, emphasised the fact that the EU was at present going through one of the biggest crises in its history.

In his view, thought was required in order to go beyond some old visions of Europe. Some people had explained this crisis as a consequence of the latest enlargement and had cited as examples Polish plumbers, Czech bakers and so on taking others' work. However, the problem was not a result of the accession of the ten new Member States, he emphasised. It was the result of the nature of the EU and its structure and had been formed gradually over the years. It wasn't the result of cheap labour from the East, but due to economic crises, the devaluation of the euro and the emergence of the Chinese, Indian and other economies.

The European Union had to continue to develop and adapt to change. But according to Mirek Topolánek, the old European ideal was not providing enough solutions to present needs. The European Union was no longer providing more economic advantages in comparison with other countries. Its political paradigm had been replaced by competition and economic competitiveness. New economic models needed to be created to meet a long-term need. The eastern countries, which had to face up to these changes as well as to the end of the Cold War, had already started these reforms.

The myths of the welfare state and prosperous state, together with the basic principles of freedom and security, had infiltrated the European strategy: no regulation, no protectionism, no customs. Europe was now having to pay the price for this. It had lost its rhythm of development and its identity in this new globalised world and was now in a vicious circle, unbalanced

and unstable both socially and economically. The results of the elections in the various Member States showed this, as well as the big debate at present on the effectiveness of European social models.

With regard to this, Mirek Topolánek emphasised the experience of countries in Central Europe, which had begun their reform ten or fifteen years ago. These countries had actually followed the Anglo-Saxon model inspired by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, and it was these economies that were getting the best results compared to the major European countries. There was more to this than cheap labour. Mirek Topolánek preferred to emphasise a wider economic framework, a more flexible labour market, some protectionist measures and more advantageous fiscal policies. In the 1990s, Central European countries had not been afraid of making sacrifices or of instituting sometimes unpopular measures and then sometimes paying for this with temporary election losses.

In terms of modernising the reform of fiscal systems, the emphasis must be put on transparency in order to reduce corruption and improve countries' economic performance. The labour market must be made more flexible and job creation must be made a priority.

Mirek Topolánek emphasised that his party had insisted on this fiscal reform for a long time. It was a vital prerequisite for greater prosperity and improved quality of life for the public. The reform programme of the centre-right parties was based on three elements which would guarantee well-being: jobs, jobs and more jobs.

Eastern Europe's historical experience of Communism would continue to be a major contribution. Even where the values -

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freedom and security – remained the same, a free person would be more effective than a controlled person.

As part of the common European programmes, there had to be coordination at all levels. But it was necessary to reduce centralisation of operations, share responsibilities and encourage much more effective, useful and less onerous common policies.

The project of European integration had been offered to the Czech Republic. Today, it could participate in the decision-making procedure and could influence the future structure of Europe; moreover, these were among its priorities. In most central European countries, elections would soon be bringing centre-right parties to power. This opportunity was not to be missed. The larger the family, the more easy it would be to defend its values. It would therefore be appropriate to show goodwill in terms of cooperation and common commitments and to take advantage of common opportunities and meetings to work together. Emphasis should be laid on the search for a new vision of European politics, its accessibility to the European public and bringing a breath of fresh air into European life today.

It was all about common responsibility. The ODS was ready to support these efforts in order to strengthen cooperation based on a philosophy of life. This was a very important element in its foreign policy. Central Europe could and ought to become a new engine driving the common future of the European Union. Mirek Topolánek therefore hoped for victory for his party in the coming elections together with improved living conditions and security for the public.

Vincuk Viacorka, Chairman of the Belarus Popular Front, emphasised that 25 years ago, those who had hated Bolshevik totalitarianism and injustice and had been hoping for the independence of Belarus had seen the emergence of *Solidarnosc* as a sign of hope. Unfortunately, 25 years later, in Belarus the struggle against dictatorship was still going on.

Vincuk Viacorka thanked the EPP-ED Group for its help. The resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 7 July 2005 had come just in time to encourage democratic forces. But the Belarus Government did not appreciate the fact that the European Parliament was now concerning itself with Belarus and proposing specific measures to support democratic forces and a regime change.

Vincuk Viacorka emphasised the fact that the situation in Belarus affected the European strategy vis-à-vis its eastern dimension. Although hope was being reborn in the Caspian Sea area, Belarus remained the missing link from the point of view of a total re-establishment of democracy in the area.

However, according to surveys carried out in June 2005, 63% of the people were in favour of change and 67% would like to have other sources of information, 88% of whom were people under 40 years of age.

The regime was surviving, in effect, thanks to the support of Russia, through imposing fear, isolating its citizens from information and restricting foreign travel.

Following the example of *Solidarnosc*, a grand coalition of democratic forces had been set up and was working for the return of democracy to Belarus. It was made up of ten political parties, civil forces, NGOs and independent trade unions.

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In October, if possible in Belarus or, if not, in a neighbouring country, a convention of democratic forces would be held. A common strategy and plan of action needed to be adopted and a single democratic candidate nominated for the presidential elections scheduled for the following year. This candidate would be elected in a secret ballot by 800 delegates, giving him/her unarguable legitimacy. This convention would send a powerful message to Belarussian society, which was waiting hopefully. There was no television, radio or press in Belarus. The only way of transmitting a positive message was to present a vision of the future through the distribution of pamphlets.

In Vincuk Viacorka's view, Belarus would not adopt the Serbian, Czech or Slovakian system but would implement its own method. There would have to be a two-pronged approach: firstly, to isolate the dictatorial pyramid, and secondly to open up Belarussian society as much as possible to the outside world through removing obstacles for young people, democratic groups and students to communicate with their European colleagues. In order to put an end to the Lukashenko regime's politics of isolation, information would also have to be supplied to European public opinion on what was going on in Belarus. With this in mind, Vincuk Viacorka was delighted that the European Commission would soon be appointing a *chargé d'affaires* in Minsk, since this would encourage speedy reaction to cases of arbitrary arrest and torture in the country.

Vincuk Viacorka insisted that information was the best possible assistance in encouraging the democratisation of Belarus. The press, radio, television and Internet should be supported and encouraged.

Stanislas Shushkievich, Social Democratic Party, former President of the Belarus National Assembly, subscribed entirely to Vincuk Viacorka's views.

He emphasised that Belarus was a country full of paradoxes. A country which had been the birthplace of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and where the Treaties of Brest-Litovsk had been signed. It was the country which had seen the birth and death of the Soviet Union since it had been there that the Treaty which had sealed its demise had been signed.

The Social Democratic Party had existed for more than a hundred years. It was the party of the Belarussian intellectuals. Its name was less right-wing than the party itself and Stanislas Shushkievich did not want any confusion about that. Christian values and Christian spirituality were important to the Belarus Social Democratic Party.

Regarding Belarussian mentality, the media painted the picture of a people with a simple mentality, who did not know what Europe was and did not know what life was like nowadays. It would not be difficult to change this mentality if one retained Christian values.

Stanislas Shushkievich emphasised that Europe must understand what had happened in Belarus. Belarus had been created in 1991. But it had been difficult for Belarussians to take on their own identity. Not a single school was teaching in the Belarussian language, since the dictatorship had closed all the schools which taught in Belarussian. The fact that Deutsche Welle was starting to broadcast in Russian was a disservice rendered to the country by Europe.

To conclude, Stanislas Shushkievich stated that everything would be done to ensure that

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this last European dictatorship would collapse as quickly as possible.



*Othmar **Karas** MEP (Austria), Vice-Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament, József **Szájer** MEP (Hungary), Vice-Chairman of the EPP-ED Group, Françoise **Grossetête** MEP (France), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP-ED Group, Hans-Gert **Poettering** MEP, Chairman of the EPP-ED Group, Marianne **Thyssen** MEP (Belgium), Vice-Chairwoman of the EPP-ED Group, and Struan **Stevenson** MEP (UK), Vice-Chairman of the EPP-ED Group, laying a wreath at the World War Memorial in Solidarity Square in front of the shipyard gates, Gdansk Port*

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Subject II: 'Solidarnosc, the Gdansk Agreements and European reunification'

Jerzy Buzek, MEP, former Prime Minister of Poland, considered that the events which had occurred 25 years ago in Gdansk contained important lessons for present-day Europe.

The Polish people and the other nations in Central and Eastern Europe had attempted several times to throw off the yoke of Communism. The first demonstrations had taken place in East Germany in 1953.

In Poland there had been many demonstrations by students, intellectuals and workers in the south and north of the country, but these demonstrations had been isolated, without consultation between groups.

The greatest and richest experience created by *Solidarnosc* had simply been the experience of 'community'. The movement had gathered all Polish people together in August 1980. Universities, teachers, students, workers, tramps, etc. Everyone had acted *en masse*. Ten million people had joined *Solidarnosc* in a few weeks. At the time, the danger had been immense, and people who had joined the movement had had to be brave. But they had drawn this courage from the community, from the many.

This was a lesson for the Europe of today.

Over the 25 years which had passed since the birth of *Solidarnosc*, freedom had overtaken the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which had become members of NATO and of the EU. Poland had had three neighbours: East Germany to the west, Czechoslovakia to the south and the Soviet Union to the east. Today, these neighbours

had completely changed: a united Germany, the democratic countries of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Ukraine, which is in the process of democratisation, Belarus, where democratisation is expected, and a democratic Lithuania. All this had happened peacefully, without a single shot being fired and without a single international conflict.

These enormous changes had happened in Poland and in the other Eastern European countries thanks to this sense of 'community'.

It was now this sense of community which was lacking in the European Union today. Fifteen years ago, solidarity had been the key concept which had enabled the integration of countries such as Portugal, Spain, Greece and Ireland into the EU.

Today, a process of integration, reconciliation and solidarity was also necessary on a global scale.

Solidarity could also be a remedy, a solution to the major European and global problems. It was a word which had been in existence for a long time, which existed also in the message of the Bible and it would be appropriate to return to the deeper meaning of this message and, at the global level, find a new definition of this term and learn how to use it.

Jerzy Buzek concluded with the statement that the 25th anniversary of *Solidarnosc* was an appropriate moment to begin this movement.

His Grace Tadeusz Gocłowski, Archbishop of Gdansk, expressed his warmest thanks for this opportunity to meet eminent representatives of the EU Member States who, inspired by values very often drawn from the gospel, were working together on

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the future of a united Europe and on solidarity, in the sense of the agreements concluded in Gdansk.

Gdansk was an important city which for 1000 years had been part of European culture and part of the Christian culture of Europe.

The agreements which had been signed here on 31 August 1980 had been the beginning of a major process which had aimed to end the old order created at Yalta and to begin to lay, firstly in imagination, and then in political reality, the foundations of a new order which would, after 1989, allow Poland and the other Central European countries to gain freedom and the status of entirely democratic states.

Archbishop Gocłowski thanked providence for having guided human destiny in this way. He also thanked humankind for having drawn lessons from these difficult wartime and post-war experiences.

All this had enabled us to dream of freedom, but for such a long time it had just been an improbable dream, such had been the fear of a dramatic consequence, of a new armed conflict which would suppress all aspirations for freedom. Poland had escaped that kind of tragic consequence.

Unarguably the Church had played a striking role in this whole process. Since 1945-1946, the Church had been attempting to bring humankind closer, from a religious point of view, but also from a social point of view. Archbishop Gocłowski remembered the millions of people who had had to leave this area for Germany, the millions of people deported from eastern Poland to the Soviet Union, Ukraine and Lithuania. We sometimes wondered why it was the city of Gdansk that had been the theatre of this explosion of freedom. Archbishop Gocłowski believed that

it was because when people had left the city, those who had arrived had missed their own home towns and had been nostalgic for Vilnius and the other cities they had lost. While remembering the drama of the War, these people had searched for new solutions measuring up to their nostalgia and their aspirations.

In this process, the Church had played a role in assisting people spiritually, but also in forming bonds between them. In this dramatic post-war period the Church had helped them to feel at home in this place they had not chosen.

That was why there was nothing surprising in the fact that the Church, understanding this new situation had, 45 years ago in Poland, launched a major initiative involving Polish bishops reaching out to German bishops in a letter pardoning them and asking their pardon. It was an important date in the global perception of the efforts made by the Church, which was then trying to put some order back into the situation in post-war Europe.

The year immediately preceding 1980 had been a year marked by the visit of the Pope to Poland. He had succeeded in reawakening a nation which had been in a desperate state socially and politically with his cry: 'have no fear!' It had been this cry that had started the great social movement that had created such an impact.

The sum total of these experiences (the War, the disappointment of Yalta, spiritual and religious renewal, aspirations for a normal life) had culminated in the great movement that was *Solidarnosc*.

Following the announcement of a state of siege on 13 December 1981, the Church had remained the only area of freedom not under

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the control of the Communist regime – even if it had been obliged to function within the structures of the State – which enabled it to create an area of freedom for the oppressed between December 1981 and June 1989.

Archbishop Gocłowski emphasised this aspect, which was very important for understanding what had happened after 1989. The Church had not taken part in the negotiations between the Communist government and *Solidarnosc*, but the Church had been a witness to them.

Archbishop Gocłowski had personally participated for several months in the negotiations which had looked for ways of making the transition from a totalitarian regime to a democratic state, but the Church had just been a witness to these events.

Undoubtedly, the Church had played a very important role in this whole process of transformation. John Paul II had constantly reminded people, in the name of *Solidarnosc*, this minority reduced to silence, that good had been stifled by the Communist regime.

After 1989, when Poland had become at last a free, sovereign and independent state, it had been necessary to help society free itself from a '*homo-sovieticus*' mentality (this process was still far from completion).

As far as the new shape of Europe was concerned, Archbishop Gocłowski thought that, considering they were members of a Christian-orientated party, the members of the EPP-ED Group must remember that it was not necessary simply to help these countries economically but also to understand them. We must never forget that for decades Central European countries had been living in a completely abnormal climate. There had been no free press, it had not been possible

to undertake normal economic activities and it had not been possible to identify with one's own country.

Poles had always resisted, during the War against the Nazi occupation and during the post-war Soviet occupation, and had never submitted internally. That was why the explosion in 1980 had owed nothing to chance.

To conclude, Archbishop Gocłowski recalled the character of John Paul II. His funeral had been homage paid not just to a man who had shown such commitment to the causes he had served as Pope, but also homage paid by Presidents and Prime Ministers to a man who had helped Europe and the world to recover after so many failures. John Paul II's attitude towards *Solidarnosc* had been emblematic of his attitude towards everything which had been happening in the world.

Archbishop Gocłowski recalled that he had always been amazed by the detail of John Paul II's analyses, his deep understanding of all the problems on the ground during his private audiences at times of crisis. He had been a man of the Church, but also a man of his time, reacting with extraordinary sensitivity to everything that was happening in the world.

This was why his funeral had been the opportunity for all those who had wanted to thank him for everything he had done for Europe and for the world to display great solidarity.

Our new Pope, Benedict XVI, had addressed the VIPs meeting for the 25th anniversary of *Solidarnosc*. It had been very important to commemorate this act of international justice which had enabled Europe to reacquire, so to speak, both its lungs, eastern

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and western, and to demonstrate that the Vatican had always supported these processes and would continue to do so.

The Chairman of the EPP-ED Group, **Hans-Gert Poettering**, thanked Archbishop Tadeusz Gocłowski for what the Polish Church had done to improve relations between Germany and Poland. The words of the German and Polish bishops: 'we ask your pardon' were among the most beautiful sentiments uttered 25 years after the War.

Hans-Gert Poettering thought that Polish identity had been expressed through the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church had been the symbol of the opening of Poland to Europe and to the world. It was an element which had not necessarily existed in other nations.

Hans-Gert Poettering was therefore making a request: some members of the Catholic Church were stating their opposition to the Constitution because it contained no references to God.

But Pope John Paul II, in a document dated 30 November 2004, had said that, although there was no reference to God in the Constitution, the EPP-ED Group's contribution had been very good. The impression which Hans-Gert Poettering had drawn from that was that the Pope had been content with the reference to Christian values.

It was necessary to defend the Constitution since this was also the position of the majority of Polish bishops.

Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, MEP, Head of the Polish Delegation in the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament and Vice-President of the European Parliament, recalled that some

of his colleagues in the EPP-ED Group had been very active at the time of the events in Gdansk 25 years ago, and had had to pay the price of imprisonment, persecution or been forced to leave the country. It was therefore with great emotion that he found himself today in the historic city of Gdansk.



*l-r: Former President of Poland and former Leader of Solidarity (SOLIDARNOSC), Lech **Walesa**, Hans-Gert **Poettering** MEP, Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament, and Jacek **Saryusz-Wolski** MEP, Leader of the Polish Delegation in the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament and Vice-President of the European Parliament*

The *Solidarnosc* movement in Poland in the years 1980-81 had meant three major things for Poland, for the inhabitants of the Eastern bloc and for Eastern Europe.

For Poles, the *Solidarnosc* movement had signified the rejection of the Soviet model and of a model of civilisation, politics and economy which had led in effect to a prohibition on development and the subjugation of democracy and freedom. Thanks to the movement, Poles had regained

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their independence and their status as a sovereign state, had ceased to be a satellite state and had returned to the bosom of the European community.

The second thing, not only for Poland but for the whole of Eastern Europe, had been the rejection of the two opposing blocs of Europe created by the Yalta agreements. Eastern Europe had returned to the heart of Europe, from which Communism had snatched it. From the victory at the naval shipyards to the fall of the Berlin Wall to the Orange Revolution in Kiev in 2004, the road had been built to total freedom for this part of Europe, which for too long had been dominated by the Soviet regime. But the road had not been completed; the rest was yet to come.

The third aspect of *Solidarnosc* had been, for the western part of Europe, the discovery of values such as solidarity, freedom, democracy and human dignity. Thanks to *Solidarnosc*, many citizens in France and Germany had understood how much of an illusion the promises held out by Communism had been. The European Left had understood that values such as solidarity had to find concrete expression in a Europe which had finally been reunited.

Solidarnosc was often considered merely as a movement of peaceful revolution which had enabled the Poles to regain their freedom. Jacek Saryusz-Wolski stressed that what had happened in Poland 25 years ago, in its impact and scope, had gone beyond the boundaries of a single country. It was a universal message.

Moreover, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski emphasised that the message of *Solidarnosc* was not merely a historical message, but that it remained completely contemporary. It was a message of European unity demanding that

the human aspect, solidarity and human dignity should be at the heart of the European project in the same way as the EU's founding fathers' messages of European integration, such as the Schuman Plan of May 1950.

In this spirit, 25 years after the message that all Europeans had a shared destiny, the preamble to the Constitutional Treaty was the expression of a shared destiny extending this time to the whole enlarged Union.

Regarding the challenges that the EU must face, it was important to remember the value of solidarity. Solidarity had to be at the heart of any system which, like the European Union, was based on trust and unity. Solidarity meant helping to bear one another's burdens, not walking side by side but really moving forward together. Solidarity also had a practical dimension as far as the European Union was concerned: it was economic solidarity, solidarity in security terms and solidarity as far as foreign affairs was concerned.

It was only by being prepared to make sacrifices for the good of others, by being prepared to partly renounce political ambition, economic advantages and a sense of one's own exclusive security that it would be possible to build real and mutual trust within the European community.

The idea of building unity through solidarity should also be taken into consideration during these times of enlargement of the European Union. The EU was very diverse and unity through solidarity should be the key concept.

Solidarity was one way for the European project to succeed. The opposite of solidarity was egoism. Twenty-five years ago, *Solidarnosc* had laid the foundations of

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a process of mental unification in Europe. Today, it was through returning to these principles that it would be possible to strengthen and preserve this unity. Europe would have to learn the lesson of solidarity.

Jacek Saryusz-Wolski stressed that it was necessary truly to grasp the content of the message of solidarity and to put it into practice in political action in the European Parliament: the common fight against terrorism, help for the victims of natural disasters, help to poor countries, enlargement, the promotion of human rights in the world, a common energy policy, combating unemployment and poverty within the European Union, etc. Many sectors required solidarity.

Elmar BROK, MEP, Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, looked at the parallel between the events of 1 September 1939 and those of 31 August 1980.

What had happened on 1 September 1939 had been made possible because some people had been preaching hate and because dictatorships had been able to cause this kind of event. What was not possible in a free society had been possible then because an ideology which despised humankind and which had started the Second World War had been in the ascendant.

We had to draw lessons from these methods which despised humanity and set human beings against each other.

On the contrary, 31 August 1980 had been made possible because courageous people had tried to get out of a hopeless situation. Thanks to them, freedom, peace, solidarity and subsidiarity had been rediscovered. So many values which were dependent on each

other: there could be no peace without freedom and it was not possible to enjoy freedom in a society without peace, social cohesion and solidarity.

Solidarity, emphasised Elmar Brok, was not something which, as socialists believed, was for the state or some higher authority to regulate, without leaving room for initiative. This was a distinction which needed to be upheld through permanent struggle on the part of Christian Democrats.

There were types of solidarity which would be better organised at a national, regional or municipal level. The expression of freedom was not established by virtue of the benefits but through responsible actions. Subsidiarity was the responsible exercise of a people's or an individual's freedom, and even their identity, that did not want to be destroyed.

Subsidiarity was also connected to effectiveness, since centralised administration often led to poor decisions: the closer one was to the beneficiaries, the more sure one could be that decisions would be effective.

The notions of freedom, peace, solidarity and subsidiarity should therefore be seen as a whole and be precisely defined.

For Elmar Brok, what distinguished Christian Democrats from parties on their left or right was just this desire to reconcile freedom and solidarity. But it should not be forgotten that in the European Union, these notions could be implemented only if all the Member States were treated the same, on a level playing field. Their size was not an issue in this matter. It should not be the case, as in the past, that the larger countries should impose their wishes on the smaller ones.

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Returning to the experience of the commemoration of the events in Gdansk, Elmar Brok wondered if the aspiration for freedom in a closed dictatorship was a bygone notion and whether the Second World War was already far in the past. Was it still necessary to argue for this cause in Europe?

The 'Monnet method' had led to the organisation of the ECSC: it had not been an economic step, it had been done to disarm Germany so that the latter would not be able to make war again. This had been the reason for the European Union: the prevention of conflict between states.

How could a small European nation state exist in today's world without the kind of solidarity that did not depend on affinities between heads of states? We had had to closely overlap our legal systems.

It was necessary to respond to the challenges of social and economic survival, to side with the cause of peace by taking into account the values expressed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. This Charter had a reference to Christian values, and Elmar Brok would also have liked it to have a reference to God.

Bearing the memory of 1 September and 31 August in mind, it was important, in Elmar Brok's view, that politicians applied these values with humility, in the knowledge that there was a divine transcendence above them. 'We must accept that there is a judge above us, and so use our powers with humility,' he concluded.

Mario MAURO, MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament, thanked *Solidarnosc* for its message and for what *Solidarnosc* had done for his generation. Mario Mauro had been 19 years old when the events in Gdansk

had taken place and thus belonged to a generation that had been convinced of the positive achievements of Communism, who had believed that the European model had been a threat to freedom and that social injustice had been located in the West.

Solidarnosc had not just contributed to removing the Soviet barriers, it had also enabled the destruction of this myth and borne witness to what freedom really meant. From 1980 on, it had become clear that it was no longer possible to believe in a political system in which people meant nothing.

Solidarnosc had not just saved Poland, it had saved a whole generation in Western Europe.

However, *Solidarnosc's* work was not yet done and the content of its message had to be promoted. It was all about building a new vision which was for everyone. In this regard, individual effort was very important; it was the basis of respect and individual dignity. Achieving prosperity did not mean simply giving citizens some assistance, it meant helping people to work for their own prosperity through development and innovation, based on individual needs.

Mario Mauro did not agree with those who believed that the enlargement of Europe was risky. Enlargement was not the cause of the European crisis.

The development of peace in Europe was a priority which had been stated and which must be pursued.

Looking at the photos of the strikers in the naval shipyards, Mario Mauro had understood what they had gone through, their convictions and their faith in freedom. They had looked beyond themselves and had had a common objective. 'Like *Solidarnosc*,

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we can bring a positive vision to building Europe', he concluded.

Viktor Orbán, Chairman of FIDESZ – the Hungarian Civic Union – recalled that the events of the 1980s had been a traumatic experience for the Hungarian people, accustomed as they were to a regime in which they believed that resistance was pointless and accepted that they would remain under the Soviet Communist regime and under the sway of its alienation of humanity. But the Poles had educated them and had taught them what solidarity was: strength and the capacity to achieve the objective of peace.

Twenty-five years ago, these very important events had changed the history of Poland, but also of Eastern Europe and even the whole world.

However, the Communist heritage was still very much present. In Central Europe there was a mistrust of the people when it came to democracy and government. The citizens of Central Europe were convinced that democracy meant government for the people by the people, but they were seeing that in Central Europe government was by the richest for the richest.

The second message of Polish solidarity concerned the Russian question. Russia's economic influence was becoming greater and greater in the region, with all the implications that this entailed. Russian economic control was becoming increasingly present. There was no need to move outside that central region to do business with Russia.

The third message in this solidarity was a message about the languages used. Under the Communist regime, the language of the notorious '*homo-sovieticus*' had been

imposed. It had been forbidden to use one's mother tongue to express one's own values.

Now, a new approach was required, the concept of multiculturalism. In Viktor Orbán's view, although it was appropriate to defend the values of nationhood and the family, it was also appropriate to defend the right to speak one's own mother tongue in order to make a strong contribution to debates. This linguistic problem was very important.

The fourth message of the Polish movement was a reminder that although it was necessary to defend and safeguard traditional values, it had been clear at the beginning of the 1980s that *Solidarnosc* had in fact been a very modern phenomenon.

It was now appropriate not only to defend traditional values but also to innovate, to create and form new models, without ever forgetting or losing one's roots. Losing one's roots led to self-destruction.

This was why the Christian roots of Europe should never be forgotten and why they should be mentioned in the European Constitution.

The fifth message of *Solidarnosc* was that it bore witness to the fact that peoples could survive for long periods without freedom, could be deprived of political autonomy and even be deprived of nationhood, but that no-one could survive without being able to experience their own emotions.

The Polish nation could never have survived without this invisible link between Polish communities. It was a force which enabled emotional experience and which had enabled resistance to the Communist regime. We must not destroy this emotional experience. We must not ignore the various ways in which

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individuals became members of a supranational entity: family, culture and language were very important elements which were not in opposition to a global approach, but were part of it and a condition of this global approach.

The sixth lesson to be drawn from the Polish experience was that we ought to be optimistic, even in today's public life. It was always necessary to look for phenomena in public life which enabled one to build a vision for the future and to make it an optimistic one. There were good reasons for optimism, especially in economic terms. For example, in Central Europe: investment in public sectors and household consumption which would increase spectacularly in the years to come. Also investments outside Europe.

But we should not forget that there were opportunities for Europe within Europe itself. The new Member States were opportunities.

One year on, perhaps, the political leaders would come from the centre-right parties. These political parties had a much better understanding of market logic and would therefore introduce appropriate policies to promote both economic growth and security.

This was why Viktor Orbán thought that it would be a historic chance for Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and all the countries of Central Europe to form centre-right governments which could give new impetus to European integration and competitiveness.

The centre-right parties had grasped the paradoxes of the 21st century well, i.e. that in order to obtain positive economic results more non-economic factors like global trade, international investment, protection, culture, support for families, etc. were

necessary and all the above elements could lead to success. Major reforms would have to be undertaken while still protecting old values. This was the solution which would lead to economic growth in Europe.

A message from John Paul II might help in identifying the politician's task in public life. The message was: 'Being someone means **being** more, not **having** more!' Viktor Orbán hoped that all Christian Democrats in Europe understood this message and were putting it into practice in their public and political lives.

The Chairman of the EPP-ED Group in the European Parliament, **Hans-Gert Poettering**, concluded the discussions by thanking the participants.

It was absolutely clear that the basis of the EPP's political commitment was the Christian vision of humankind that could be found in the European Constitution. It was vital that the EPP remained aware of its historical roots.

The *Solidarnosc* experience was not solely for the history books. *Solidarnosc*'s ideals (solidarity, humane vision, a Christian vision of humankind) would also determine the future. The political task of the EPP was to transmit this Christian vision.

One specific form of solidarity consisted of helping the peoples in Europe who were still not experiencing democracy. The EPP-ED Group would do everything in its power to support the movements fighting for freedom. The EPP-ED Group would always be at their side, and this was the reason why it was here in Gdansk today. The EPP-ED Group had wanted thereby to show its desire to defend

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a European future of freedom and democracy.

This meeting in Gdansk had been a practical example of solidarity. But it was not just to demonstrate solidarity with the Polish people: this notion of solidarity was a European notion.

Hans-Gert Poettering thanked the Polish delegation for its friendship and hospitality and repeated the last line of that impressive film: 'Gdansk is the cradle of a united Europe!'

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