



**Committee for the promotion of French-German-Polish Cooperation
(« Weimar Triangle »)**

**Komitet Wspierania Współpracy Francusko-Niemiecko-Polskiej
(« Trójkąt Weimarski »)**



**Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań
(AMU)**

**FIRST ANNUAL ADAM MICKIEWICZ LECTURE
ON FRENCH-GERMAN-POLISH COOPERATION
(‘WEIMAR TRIANGLE’)**

**THURSDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2012
AUDITORIUM MAXIMUM ‘COLLEGIUM MINUS’
ul. Wieniawskiego 1, Poznań**

11.00 Address of Welcome:

Prof. Dr. hab. Bronisław Marciniak, Ph.D.

Rector of the Adam Mickiewicz University
Chairman, Standing Committee of Rectors of Polish Universities,
Poznań

11.05 Introductory Remarks:

Prof. h.c. Dr. Drs.h.c. Klaus-Heinrich Standke

Doctor honoris causa, Economics University Poznań
Former Director for Science and Technology, United Nations, New York
President, Committee for the French-German-Polish Cooperation, Berlin/Cabourg

**11.15 First Annual Adam Mickiewicz Lecture
on French-German-Polish Cooperation:**

Dr. Gunter Pleuger

Former Secretary of State, German Foreign Office
Rector of the Europa University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder
“Academic impulses for the Weimar Triangle cooperation”

12.00 Discussion

Moderator: prof. dr. hab. Jacka Witkosia

Prorektora ds. nauki i współpracy międzynarodowej

12.30 Reception



„Academic Impulses for the Weimar Triangle Cooperation“

Gunter Pleuger

Dear Rector Marciniak,

Dear Professor Standke,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I begin developing my thoughts on „Academic Impulses for the Weimar Triangle Cooperation“, let me first thank the organizers and hosts for inviting me to this lecture today. The Adam Mickiewicz University is inextricably linked to the Weimar Triangle through the naming of the Adam Mickiewicz Award. Adam Mickiewicz is the rightful patron of both the Award as well as this lecture. Mickiewicz in the 19th century took the political role as a restless advocate in both Germany and France for an independent Polish state. The full sovereignty of a free Poland in stable borders was a “condition sine qua non” for any international political initiative. And so the Weimar Triangle could only be established after the Solidarnosc-led Polish

opposition began negotiating a peaceful handover of government in 1988 and 1989 leading to opposition movements across Middle and Eastern Europe and the downfall of the Socialist regimes in those countries. It can be called a miracle of history, that Polish freedom and transformation was achieved during the same years that Germany, strongly encouraged by the Polish Democratic Revolution, undertook a process of re-unification. This required the acknowledgment of the borders established after 1945 while simultaneously embracing a deepening and enlargement of what is now the European Union.

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While the Weimar Triangle has been active in politics and civil society debate for many years, one main area of co-operation specified in its founding document of the “Common Declaration” in 1991 has been remarkably undervalued: Cooperation in Research and teaching. This is why – while outlining some of the basics of the development of the Triangle – I want to focus my attention on the field of Academics. With this I understand both Teaching and Research as the distinguished occupations of scientific institutions such as universities. Let me stress, that both areas – academic research and teaching as well as learning constitute a close bond. As President of the European University Viadrina I uphold these principles of the Humboldt brother’s reform of higher education which has been a successful model for universities across Europe and the World.

I.

The Weimar Triangle testifies to the successful process of reconciliation between Germany and its closest large neighbours after the catastrophe of the Second World War.

The French-German friendship was founded on the “Elysee-Treaty” signed in 1963. The Polish-German friendship was modeled after this close partnership, which resulted in a stable support for Poland to enter the Transatlantic and European institutions after 1989.

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The completion of the special triangular relationship by the inclusion of Poland became possible only after the end of the east-west conflict and the elimination of the East-West-divide in Europe in 1989.

In the first instance the underlying political idea was to help negotiating the integration of Poland and the new democracies of central Europe into the European Union. When it became obvious that the access of Poland to the EU appeared to be on a good and successful track the Weimar Triangle got more and more out of the focus of day to day politics.

It was revived, however, when Europe faced the West-Balkan-Crisis and the Kosovo war.

The then Foreign Ministers Fischer, Vèdrine and Geremek used, the Weimar Triangle as a Forum to consult and to coordinate their European and Foreign Policy.

This led not only to a much closer cooperation among the three but added to the strengthening of mutual trust, even friendship between the political actors. The relationship between Fischer and Geremek, in particular, became so close and friendly that sometimes Vèdrine told Fischer – jealously but smilingly – “Joschka, the Weimar Triangle is not an exclusively Polish-German business!”

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After the enlargement of the EU in 2004 the Weimar Triangle got new dynamics. The focus was now to create at the Centre of the Union a forum of likeminded partners to give new and strong impulses to the further development of the Union and to the political decision making process.

The so called “French-German Engine” had worked reliably and often powerful in the EU of 15 members. In order to function as a motor in the EU of 27 the “French-German Engine” needed an additional cylinder to generate the necessary power to drive the EU forward. And that could be only Poland as the most important of the new EU-member status.

In the following years the political conditions in the Triangle were often difficult and not conducive to efforts to find joint positions to further European political action.

But in the last few years the situation has fundamentally changed.

When the present German Foreign Minister, Westerwelle, paid his first courtesy call to his colleague Sikorski in Warsaw both agreed to revive and strengthen the Weimar Triangle.

Given the actual political, economic and financial problems inside and outside the European Union this was an important initiative to strengthen the European Union's ability to act and to make a constructive contribution to meet the present challenges for Europe and the world.

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The three countries could give important impulses to overcome the present economic and financial crisis in the EU: To save the Euro, to reintroduce fiscal stability and to ensure economic growth France, Poland and Germany will have to be key actors.

The three will have to use their influence to ensure that the integration of the Union will continue and that key achievements such as the common market, freedom of movement, Schengen and the Copenhagen principles are not put into question by trends of renationalization of policies in the EU-member states.

With a view to developing common EU positions the Weimar Triangle should address issues like a European energy policy, the further development of relations to the new eastern European neighbor states of the EU, a common foreign and security policy in particular with regard to peace keeping and peace-building operations and last but not least help to build a strategic relationship between the European Union and its neighbor in the East, the Russian Federation.

This is why we have to continue to strive for an ever closer trilateral cooperation because the Weimar Triangle is an essential building bloc of European integration and the development of common European policies.

II.

Let me now turn to the area of Academics: Research and higher education were already outlined in the founding document of the Triangle: In the “Common Declaration” of 29th August 1991, that led to the foundation of the “Weimar Triangle”, the three Foreign Ministers Genscher, Skubiszewski and Dumas outlined the importance of a comprehensive cooperation in the fields of culture, science, media and exchange programs. The issue of cooperation in education and science was raised again at the first summit meeting of the Weimar Triangle in Poznan in 1998.

The presidents of Poland and France, Kwasniewski and Chirac, and the German Chancellor Kohl considered this to be of high priority for the trilateral cooperation.

In Poznan they even discussed the project of a tri-national European University. However, in his press conference in Wroclaw in 2003 President Chirac made it clear that he did not think of a tri national University but of “a partnership between the French-German University and the German-Polish University, the Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder)”.

At the summit meeting in Wroclaw in 2003 the three governments decided to consider “possibilities of trilateral cooperation of Universities, in particular with a view to the Europe University Viadrina”.

Where do we stand now, fourteen years later?

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Despite these and other declarations of intent a strategy for an institutional system of trilateral cooperation in the academic world has not been developed and realized in the years since the foundation of the Weimar Triangle.

III.

While some declarations were certainly encouraging for the European University Viadrina, which was founded in 1991 and took on its first students almost exactly 20 years ago in 1992, the ambitions of these years were difficult to be put into practice.

I will later touch on the practical aspects of establishing such cooperation. But let me first introduce some thoughts on the general aspects of bilateral and trilateral academic cooperation.

My first point is that while acknowledging the importance of multilateral policies such as the Bologna process for the development of teaching and learning or the creation of the now-called European Research Area, these initiatives have up to now stopped short of creating new and innovative ways of academic cooperation in important areas of research and academic thought.

In the area of teaching and learning the Bologna process led to a widespread reformulation of established areas of studies and degrees. The creation of the European Research Area was on the other hand largely focused on technology- and industry-driven Innovation and Research, leading to a narrowing of financing and approaches in some very basic social, economic and cultural sciences.

When looking at the current sovereign debt crises in the Eurozone, one can only observe that a few euros more for new approaches in economic thought would have

proved to be a better investment in times of economic turmoil than many millions poured into technology through the respective EU-Framework Programs.

In many systems of higher education, including in Germany and, to some extent, in Poland and France as well, the introduction of these governance-oriented reforms were and still are used as a stick (with very few carrots) for comprehensive reforms in universities and research funding. On the other hand, most funding of university education and research will continue to flow from member countries' national budgets.

Taking into account these developments the question arises, what value a or bi- or trilateral academic initiative within the Weimar Triangle can add to ongoing programs and existing institutions.

The experience of the Viadrina in the last 20 years of cooperation with the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan is encouraging. One major area of cooperation, the jointly-run Collegium Polonicum, has recently been researched by a joint research project of the Center for Public Policy Studies at the Adam Mickiewicz University and the Institute for Regional and Structural Planning Studies in Erkner in Brandenburg. The project's title "From German-Polish Border Space to a European Landscape of Knowledge:

Institutional Learning within transborder University Collaboration and its Contribution to European Integration” already allows an educated guess on the results of the project. The basic assumption of the study is, that (Quote) “the German-Polish border provides specific context conditions for learning processes between [...] different knowledge cultures. While different cultures meet in close contact learning processes may take place with the opportunity to develop knowledge about the process how one can cope with cultural based differences and how diversity of cultures could be made fruitful for European integration.” (Unquote)

Based on this and the past years of experience, let me put forward some basic ideas on the importance of multilateral academic institutions in a bi- and trilateral setting:

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- **Geography matters:** While it would be politically advantageous to place any bilateral or trilateral academic initiative in one or several respective capital or major university cities, the location most ideally suited for these institutions should be in the respective border region. Even a trilateral academic institution in a bilateral geographic setting allows for additional input by a “neutral” third partner and would certainly improve the learning processes within this institution.
- **Diversity matters:** In order to foster a culture of diversity and incorporate the best of the academic traditions and cultures of the respective countries, many

obstacles arise that have to be dealt with a maximum of academic and administrative freedom.

- **Money matters:** Both geographic setting and the need for diversity spell out a need for additional funding. Any academic institution that has been burdened with the additional responsibility of fostering cooperation with two or more partner countries needs financial security in order to fulfill its mission.

IV.

How could we further enhance the Weimar Triangle by new ways of cooperation at the University level?

My predecessor, Professor Gesine Schwan, intended to transform the Viadrina into a French-German-Polish institution under the auspices of the Weimar Triangle. The goal was the creation of a German-Polish-French Foundation University embarking on multilingual common master studies and research. For a variety of reasons this

concept could not be put into practice so far. The governance structure of the Viadrina as a more independent foundation university was only put in place four years ago. In particular funding from the early beginning was lagging behind the ambitions for creating a bilateral or trilateral university from the start.

The additional problem in any trilateral University cooperation is the difficulty to extend a bilateral cooperation to a trilateral or multilateral one beyond loose network cooperation. An integrated trilateral program of cooperation needs a new concept with a particular structure connecting the different systems of education and scientific research.

It is no coincidence that most multilateral academic and research institutions and initiatives have either a stick or a carrot or both to support cooperation: Initiatives like the French-German University or the European Institute of Innovation and

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Technology (EIT) provide funding for networking initiatives such as double degrees or “Knowledge and Innovation Communities” (KICs), respectively. They have the administrative ability to network, and also the deep pockets to build lasting strategic relationships. But as secretariats they lack the close personal contact to their respective “clients”.

What these institutions are also lacking at the moment is the experience of true innovations, such as the cooperation of Adam Mickiewicz University and the Viadrina

in the Collegium Polonicum and beyond which could and will be a corner stone of any Weimar Triangle academic initiative.

The past 20 years have provided us with an ideal setting for institutional learning and innovative ideas in order to solve problems that arise from any multilateral setting. We have overcome non-existing or differing regulations between the respective countries, we have come to trust and respect each other and we have come to realize, that cooperation in academia is never a zero-sum game, but an intellectual roller coaster ride that will always be refreshing and never boring.

But - sadly – we have also seen and experienced that the creation of a tri-national University is extremely difficult and unlikely to be achieved in the immediate future.

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However, we might be able to use the present structures in a creative way. We have on the one side the French-German University which is a virtual University with more than 130 French and German universities participating organized by a common secretariat in Saarbrücken.

On the other side we have the close partnership between the Adam Mickiewicz University and the Viadrina including the unique joint venture of the two: the

“Collegium Polonicum” in Slubice. The two Universities have just decided to strengthen the Collegium Polonicum by adding a joint institute for scientific research incorporated according to Polish regulatory specifics. Why not go one step further and create not a virtual but an actual Polish-German University on both banks of the Oder River?

If the French-German and the Polish-German Universities would work together, this bilateral cooperation would then create another Weimar Triangle based on research, teaching and learning.

V.

In conclusion let me say:

Universities and academic teaching and research can certainly not replace necessary political action. But by educating young people in a European spirit we can lay the foundations for a successful further development of the unique experience that is the European Union. Never before in the last conflict stricken centuries has Europe built a community of states and nations in which the differences of cultures, languages ethnicity, history and ways of life are not perceived as a threat to one's own identity

but as an enrichment of the Union as a whole. Nowhere else in the world does exist a similar political achievement.

In the present time of crisis and uncertainty about the future of the European Union and its achievement over the last 65 years we notice a series of moves pointing to a return of nationalistic views on economic and social affairs, to reintroduce border controls in the Schengen area, and to a lack of political cohesion and solidarity in the Union. The European Union seems more and more to be perceived as run by a faceless bureaucracy in Brussels without sufficient democratic legitimacy, responsible for all negative effects of the present crises and unable to conceive a vision of Europe's future that would generate the necessary excitement and political engagement of the peoples of the Union for making every possible effort to build an ever stronger and coherent European Union.

In this situation the role of education and research is key.

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We have to make sure that young people, students who will be leaders in politics and society in the future, understand the unique development that European integration has brought to this continent; to understand that, given the history of Europe, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, cooperation and solidarity, mutual respect, development and prosperity do not grow by itself, but have been achieved by the idealism, vision and hard work of generations of convinced Europeans; to understand that every new generation has to have the vision and the will to further expand and strengthen our European identity.

Here, the Universities have an important field of action: instill into the young generation, the future leaders, this vision and the will and capability of its implementation.

We should analyse the deficiencies of the Lisbon treaty, we should discuss how to improve the efficiency and democratic legitimacy of the European institutions and we should try to define the role of Europe in the development of international relations. We should create new excitement among young people to help create a European Union that inspires its peoples, its cultures and traditions.

The Weimar Triangle could be a leader in the endeavor to bring together a coalition of the willing for an “Academic Convent” preparing the ground for a new European Constitution.

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By accompanying the further integration and development of the European Union through teaching and research in conferences, workshops and publications and by closely cooperating with each other all universities can contribute and give important impulses into all spheres of politics, economics and society. Universities can help to create feeling of common responsibility to develop a new concept for a European political Union.

A Political European Union would facilitate the solution of many of the present problems including the economic and financial issues. If a new initiative is to be taken in favor of creation a Political Union of equal partners committed to serve peace, freedom and prosperity in Europe and the world, France, Poland and Germany have to join forces in a common effort in the Weimar Triangle.

Thank you very much for your attention!