

**Speech by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
Radosław Sikorski during the Polish–German Forum at FRG’s Federal
Foreign Office in Berlin**

17.06.2026

Dear Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Guests,

I am pleased to be able to open the Polish–German Forum on this special day together with Minister Johann Wadepuhl.

Thank you, Johann, for your speech, especially for addressing the transport issue. We agreed, a long time ago, that a journey from my home town of Bydgoszcz to Berlin should not take longer than before the First World War.

Thirty-five years ago we signed the Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations and Friendly Cooperation. It was a groundbreaking moment in Polish–German relations.

After decades of confrontation and distrust, we entered an age of partnership and cooperation. The changes that have taken place since then have been fundamental and positive.

Today, bilateral relations are more balanced, complementary, and based on partnership. This would not be possible without Poland’s EU membership.

The Poland of today is the EU’s sixth and fastest growing economy.

The Polish–German economic cooperation gives us reasons to be satisfied. Trade volume is breaking new records. Last year’s turnover of one hundred and eighty billion euro made Poland one of Germany’s most important trade partners.

Germany exports more goods to Poland than to the UK or China. It imports more from Poland than from France or Italy.¹

It is no surprise, then, that two weeks ago as many as two hundred and fifty representatives of Polish and German businesses attended the opening of the Polish Business Club at our embassy here in Berlin.

More and more Polish companies invest on the German market. Let me give you but a few examples.

A Polish rolling stock manufacturer has recently acquired the facilities of the German company HeiterBlick. The Polish capital has helped maintain the factory as well as the brand and 250 jobs.

Another Polish company, operating in the smart cities industry, has been providing the municipal government in Berlin with analytical services required to optimise parking zones and lay out infrastructure. It not only makes life easier for Berliners, but also helps the city earn more income.

One of the leading companies on the Polish fuel market owns more than 600 filling stations in Germany and has invested in the development of 160 fast charging stations for electric vehicles.

A Polish IT company has rendered services for Germany's cloud-based platform used by the state administration and research institutions.

Polish businesses no longer come to Germany only as subcontractors. They bring along capital, technologies, and jobs. They turn into a partner in the modernization of the German economy.

But let's be honest: as all neighbours, we also have our touchy issues. What matters is our ability to discuss them openly.

As has already been said, there are concerns over certain evident deficiencies in transborder infrastructure and underdeveloped transport links in the direction of the German-Polish border. Our ambassador has just told me that Wrocław-bound trains are pulled by a Diesel engine on

¹ Based on data from Trading Economics and Destatis.de

the German side of the border until they can be reconnected to overhead wires once they reach Poland.

Only one new transborder bridge was built over the last 30 years. And it all takes place with 500 million euro worth of goods crossing our border every day. Every day.

Rail links between our major cities have yet to meet the modern standards.

For two years, we have been facing border controls, despite having built an effective barrier at our eastern border that not a single migrant has managed to illegally cross this year. Not a single one.

It cost us a billion euros but know that our citizens expect us to control the Schengen area's external borders.

Not only do border controls unduly hinder people-to-people and business contacts. They also seriously disrupt the strengthening of the European Union's cohesion and resilience. As Johann has already mentioned, we should also prioritise increased military mobility, as an investment in our security, to make sure that we reinforce the eastern flank where it is most needed.

Of course, I cannot fail to mention our history.

The last witnesses of World War II are passing away. They include those who have suffered especially severely from German crimes—prisoners of concentration camps and forced labourers.

We are deeply indebted to them, in both moral and material terms. This is why we think that the Federal Republic of Germany should face this challenge seriously and urgently.

The tragic outcomes of World War II, as already noted, also encompass Poland's immense cultural heritage losses.

The consequences of the destruction and theft of so many priceless works of art by the Nazi Germany can still be seen. This is the reason why we are so happy to see the few preserved artefacts being returned to Poland. I would like to thank you for the next round of restitution.

We hope that our German partners will show determination to return more Polish cultural property.

Difficult history creates divisions. But we are not doomed to them.

Healing them requires sensitivity and responsibility. I am sure that the Memorial to Polish WWII victims to be built in Berlin will be an important step in this direction.

A good and close partnership with Germany lies in Poland's long-term interest. Its relevance stretches beyond current challenges and bilateral context.

This is because of what unites us: shared values, joint efforts to strengthen the European Union and NATO, mutual willingness to maintain close transatlantic cooperation, common conviction that the defence spending needs to be increased, and the belief that Russia is at present the most serious threat to peace.

It speaks volumes that while we are gathered here in Berlin, in Warsaw Polish and German defence ministers are signing a cooperation agreement with a much broader scope than before.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine is a test of our responsibility and far-sightedness. We will continue to support Ukraine together and to boost the security not only of the eastern flank but of the entire Community.

Let's be ambitious. Poles and Germans expect us to take real action.

Finally, let me congratulate this year's laureates of the Polish-German Prize.

I am happy to see the work of the Słubice-Frankfurt Cooperation Centre recognised. Its mission revolves around strengthening civil society and bolstering its resilience to the disinformation that plagues us. It is an essential but difficult task, one that requires vast knowledge and commitment.

The Prize was also awarded to Ambassador Janusz Reiter, who surely needs no introduction here. He has a unique understanding of the key importance of Polish-German cooperation for Europe's security.

Once again, please accept my congratulations.

Let me thank the Foundation for Polish–German Cooperation for organising this event and thank you for your attention.