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The Oder–Neisse Border in Polish-Belgian Relations between 1956–1975

DOI: 10.25951/11134

SUMMARY

This paper analyses the role of the Oder–Neisse border issue in Polish-Belgian relations between 1956 and 1975, based primarily on archival materials produced in the foreign ministries of both countries. They show that the efforts of Polish diplomacy to have this border recognised failed due to the broader context of international relations of the period, especially the differences in positions on West Berlin and German reunification. A change in the stance of Brussels (and other Western countries) on this issue came after the Treaty between the Polish People's Republic (PRL) and the Federal Republic of Germany was signed in December 1970, which brought about the regularization of this issue, confirmed at the Helsinki Conference.

KEYWORDS: Polish-Belgian relations, the Oder–Neisse border, German question, Adam Rapacki, Paul-Henri Spaak.

STRESZCZENIE

Granica na Odrze i Nysie Łużyckiej w stosunkach polsko-belgijskich w latach 1956–1975

W artykule dokonano analizy roli kwestii granicy na Odrze i Nysie Łużyckiej w stosunkach polsko-belgijskich w latach 1956–1975 przede wszystkim na podstawie materiałów archiwalnych powstałych w ministerstwach spraw zagranicznych obu państw. Wynika z nich, że zabiegi polskiej dyplomacji o uznanie tej granicy okazywały się mało skuteczne z powodu szerszego kontekstu stosunków międzynarodowych tego okresu, a zwłaszcza różnic stanowisk w kwestii Berlina Zachodniego i zjednoczenia Niemiec. Zmiana stanowiska Brukseli (jak i innych państw Zachodu) w tej sprawie nastąpiła po podpisaniu układu między PRL a RFN w grudniu 1970 r., który przyniósł uregulowanie tej kwestii, przypieczętowane na konferencji w Helsinkach.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: relacje polsko-belgijskie, granica na Odrze i Nysie Łużyckiej, kwestia niemiecka, Adam Rapacki, Paul-Henri Spaak.

The problem of the Oder–Neisse border was one of the most significant issues of the Polish foreign policy after 1945, especially within the relations with the countries of the West. Warsaw was attempting to exert pressure on the latter in various ways as well as to persuade them to accept it as a state border of *de iure* status, and in the minimum variant – at least to make some gestures which could be interpreted as favourable to such a solution.

Such measures were also taken towards Brussels. However, here Warsaw faced a hard line of Belgian governmental circles, which, in accord with the letter of Potsdam Agreement, asserted that the final establishment of the Western Polish border should be postponed until the peace conference. Any attempts to change such a conviction during the first post-war decade, in the context of festering cold-war confrontation, came to naught¹.

Nevertheless, it is worth considering whether with the beginning of destalinisation period and the thaw in international relations, the attitudes towards this issue have got closer. What also seems interesting is the search for an answer, how the talks were conducted also in the following period, during 1960s, and the first half of 1970s, turbulent for the international relations between East and West.

My research is predominantly based on the proceedings stored in the Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw. What constitutes supplemental sources are the materials found in the Archive of the Belgium Ministère des Affaires Etrangères as well as multilingual source literature, which is rather sparse.

The initiation of a dialogue between the USSR and the USA after Stalin's death as well as post-October political thaw in Poland caused that the relations along Warsaw-Brussels line began to develop in a slightly better political atmosphere. The expression of the latter was, i.a., promoting diplomatic representations of Polish People's Republic and the Kingdom of Belgium to the status of embassies (9th March 1957)².

The issue of international acceptance of the Polish Western border, so important for Warsaw, did not correspond with any special interest on the part of the government in Brussels, who attached primary significance to the rela-

¹ The issue of the Oder–Neisse border in Polish-Belgian relations in 1945–1955 is the subject matter of another study of my authorship: *Problem granicy na Odrze i Nysy Łużyckiej w polsko-belgijskich relacjach politycznych (1945–1955)*, "Przegląd Zachodniopomorski" 2022, t. 37 (66), p. 179–198.

² The expression of improvement of the relations between both countries was, i.a., promoting diplomatic representations of Polish People's Republic and the Kingdom of Belgium to the status of embassies (9th March 1957); J. Tebinka, *Kraje Beneluksu*, in: *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, t. 6: 1944/1945–1989, red. W. Materski, W. Michowicz, Warszawa 2010, p. 554.

tions with Bonn. Thus, it is not surprising that in April 1957, Paul-Henri Spaak, the architect of the Belgian foreign policy, assured Józef Cywiak, Polish *chargé d'affaires* in Brussels, about NATO peace policy and the benefits of FRG's attachment to the latter for Poland. Spaak referred to Gomułka's process of "democratisation in Poland" as "marked by reason and maturity contrary to the events in Hungary"³.

It did not mean though adopting a more decisive attitude towards the issue of accepting Polish border. What concerned the Polish People's Republic's diplomacy was ratifying Rome treaties by Benelux countries, Italy, France, and FRG on 25th March 1957, by virtue of which (on 1st January 1958) European Economic Community and European Atomic Energy Community were established⁴. Tightening tights of industrial nature within EEC as well as a new strategy adopted within NATO⁵ translated to a lack of interest on the part of governmental factors of Western countries in broader contacts with states from outside the iron curtain. Thus, Brussels' reaction to Rapacki's plan presented at the forum of United Nations General Assembly was quite reserved⁶, in spite of the initially kind attitude of the head of Belgian diplomacy, Victor Larock⁷. Eventually, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' stance, initially loyal towards NATO's decision, combined with its disappointment with a lack of initiative concerning demilitarisation

³ Archives of the New Proceedings (referred to as: AAN), Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (referred to as: KC PZPR), XI/498, Note of J. Cywiak, 12th April 1957, qtd. in: J. Tebinka, *Kraje Beneluksu*, p. 554. On 16th May 1957 Spaak assumed an Office of Secretary General of NATO.

⁴ J. Tebinka, *Kraje Beneluksu* p. 554.

⁵ NATO's Cabinet Council in Paris (16th–19th December 1957) made a decision to install the American medium-range missiles in Great Britain, Italy and Turkey, and decided to provide Bundeswehr with tactic nuclear weapon delivery systems (controlled by the USA). Qtd. in: J. Tebinka, *Uzależnienie czy suwerenność? Odwilż październikowa w dyplomacji Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej 1956–1961*, Warszawa 2010, p. 47.

⁶ Rapacki's plan was presented by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 2nd October 1957 at the session of United Nations General Assembly. It concerned the formation of a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe, encompassing the territory of PRL, Czechoslovakia, FRG, GDR, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg and Canada. Lately, Wojciech Prażuch has written about Rapacki's plan in: *Les enjeux de la diplomatie belge face aux initiatives polonaises visant à créer une zone dénucléarisée en Europe centrale. Les coulisses de la visite de Paul-Henri Spaak à Varsovie en décembre 1963*, in: *La Pologne des Belges. Evolution d'un Regard (XXe-XXI siècles)*, sous la dir. de Przemysław Szczur, Kraków 2021, pp. 203–235.

⁷ Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw (referred to as: AMSZ), z. 8, t. 993, w. 72, Political report of PRL's embassy in Brussels for the year of 1958, Brussels 27th January 1959, b. 26–34.

of the Eastern bloc, contributed to Brussels' negative attitude towards the Polish project⁸. The breakthrough in this issue was brought by the change of the Belgian governmental staff (the downfall of the Christian Democratic government of Gaston Eyskens)⁹.

What also influenced a lack of progress in mutual relations was so-called second Berlin crisis (1958–1961), which made impossible the agreement of powers in the issue of Germany and the status of West Berlin¹⁰.

The issue of Oder–Neisse border, which was a part of the German problem, in this period became an element of a diplomatic game for the West, and its aim was to decide on a compromise in the German issue¹¹. Negative attitude of USSR towards the agreement with the West as well as the Polish policymaker's assumption that the acceptance of the border is the prerequisite of the normalization of relations with FRG contributed to the intensification of tension between the blocs. Polish diplomacy, striving for the breaking of Western cohesiveness in the German issue did not stop in attempts to weaken FRG's status in Belgium through using anti-German resentments rooted in some political and social circles of this country. What was supposed to contribute to the latter was adopting a clear and decisive stance on the Oder–Neisse border by the Belgian government. Therefore, Polish People's Republic's embassy initiated the actions leading to activate a group of Belgian politicians, who "actively engaged to support Rapacki's plan already in 1958". In the embassy's assessment, what was also necessary was the intensification of official and personal contacts with the political, industrial, and journalistic circles of Belgium, which were able to exert pressure on the government in Brussels in the direction desired by Polish People's Republic¹². Some Polish diplomats' hopes were raised by the positive change of Belgian Socialist Party's (Parti Socialiste Belge – PSB) stance on the Polish proposals of demilitarization, especially its left wing embodied by, i.a., Henri Rolin, Maurice Lambilliotte, which

⁸ AMSZ, z. 8, t. 993, w. 72, Political report of PRL's embassy in Brussels for the year of 1958, b. 33.

⁹ *Ibidem*, b. 33–34.

¹⁰ On 10th November 1958, Nikita Khrushchev demanded the revision of West Berlin's status, which was specified in the note from 27th November 1958, addressed to the Western powers. On 31st December 1958, three powers declined USSR's demands.

¹¹ W. Jarząbek, *Problem niemiecki w polskiej polityce wobec mocarstw zachodnich i państw niezaangażowanych w czasie drugiego kryzysu berlińskiego 1958–1961 (wybrane zagadnienia)*, in: *Polska–Niemcy–Europa. Księga jubileuszowa z okazji siedemdziesiątej rocznicy urodzin Profesora Jerzego Holzera*, red. K. Karaskiewicz, Warszawa 2000, pp. 217–218.

¹² AMSZ, z. 8, t. 993, w. 72, Political report of PRL's embassy in Brussels for the year of 1958, b. 26–33.

in 1959–1966 supported the lessening of tension, controlled demilitarization, and initiation of contacts with the communist parties from outside the iron curtain¹³.

Polish diplomatic post in Brussels did not resign from the contacts with favourable parliamentarians, providing them with documentation concerning Western Territories and the German issue. That was the case of, i.a., an influential politician of the Catholic party and the president of the senate, who was at the same time “a resolute defender of the Oder–Neisse border”, Paul Struye¹⁴. It was even more significant since Polish authorities could not count on the support of the Communist Belgian Party because it was “in considerable trouble”, as aforementioned Józef Cywiak reported in 1958. Furthermore, it was “weak and getting smaller. It had no position in labour unions ... [Its] contemporary core, as the Polish diplomat assessed, was established by old comrades marked by sectarianism in their hatred towards social democracy”¹⁵.

In autumn 1959, facing “a growing revisionist campaign in FRG and an indecisive attitude of chancellor Adenauer”, Warsaw attempted a remonstrative action directed “against German armaments”. Those efforts seemed even more justified since, as it was reported by Polish People’s Republic’s ambassador in Belgium, Aleksander Wolski, leadership factors of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs apparently showed more understanding for the Polish concerns regarding Eastern politics of Adenauer and the issue of Polish border¹⁶. These actions inscribed into the campaign of Polish authorities drifting toward the achievement of the border’s acceptance. Its manifestation was the Polish Parliament’s resolution, preceded by minister Adam Rapacki’s *exposé* (16th February 1960), demanding the acceptance of the Oder-Neisse border by Western powers¹⁷. At the beginning of March (1960), the parliament’s resolution was conveyed both to the president of the Senate, P. Struye and the president of the House of Representatives, Paul-

¹³ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 65, w. 8, Correspondence excerpt no. 14672 from Brussels, 4th December 1959; *ibidem*, Note concerning the Belgian Socialist Party’s Congress (12th–13th December 1959), Brussels 4th March 1960, p.l.

¹⁴ AMSZ, z. 8, t. 993, w. 72, Code no. 12345, A. Wolski to ambassador H. Birecki, the head of the Second Department in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brussels 10th Dec 1959, p.l.

¹⁵ AMSZ, z. 26, t. 458, w. 54, Protocol from the conference of the governing body of the PRL’s diplomatic posts, held in the headquarters of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 7th April 1958, p. 23.

¹⁶ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 73, w. 9, A. Wolski to M. Naszkowski, correspondence excerpt no. 14220 from Brussels, 24th Nov. 1959, p.l.

¹⁷ A. Rapacki, *Przemówienia, artykuły, wywiady 1957–1968*, Warszawa 1982, pp. 491–492; See: *Rezolucja sejmku polskiego*, „Trybuna Ludu” 1960, 17.02, nr 48 (3999).

Georges Kronacker, who assured ambassador Wolski that it would be discussed at the forum of parliament and senate¹⁸.

In the context of an approaching debate about the foreign policy in the Belgian House of Representatives, in the atmosphere of a visible political invigoration caused by the approaching meeting of four powers' leaders in Paris (16th–17th May 1960)¹⁹, the members of the organization *Amitiés Belgo-Polonaises* (controlled by Warsaw authorities), with some encouragement from PRL's Embassy in Brussels, decided to intensify propagandist actions in favour of the Polish Western border. What was judged as the most effective tool was traditionally the organization of a cycle of lectures and conferences devoted the aforementioned subject matter. The most significant one took place on 7th May in the House Press in Brussels. The gathering was initiated by the association's president, Ernest Demuyter, who emphasized the significance of defending the borders on Oder and Neisse for the "vital issues of security in Europe and Belgium's self-interest". The members of the Association also listened to the lecture of an ex-minister of justice, and a senator Henri Rolin entitled "The importance of strengthening the Oder-Neisse border in the interest of peace"²⁰. In conclusion, a proposal was submitted and supported by Rolin, in which the members of the conference were going to demand the Belgian government to adopt "a stance unconditionally supportive of the eventual acceptance" of this border. After the gathering was over, its participants signed an appeal on this issue, addressed to the four powers' leaders, who were supposed to meet at the May summit in Paris²¹.

Eventually, the debate on the issue of Polish border in the Belgian parliament was never held. It seems that what interrupted were the occurrences connected with the Belgian politics in Kongo and the involvement of PRL's authorities in Kremlin's African politics, which led to the most serious diplomatic conflict be-

¹⁸ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 73, w. 9, A. Wolski to Druto, correspondence excerpt no. 30140 from Brussels, 8th March 1960, p.l.; *ibidem*, A. Wolski to J. Druto, correspondence excerpt no. 3105 from Brussels, 9th March 1960, p.l.

¹⁹ The Conference of four powers' leaders (Macmillan, Eisenhower, de Gaulle and Khrushchev) in Paris (16th–17th May 1960) ended up in failure due to, i.a., downing of the American spy plane U-2 by USSR.

²⁰ AMSZ, ZD 6/77, t. 988, w. 66, Code. A. Wolski to J. Druto, no. 6067, Brussels 7th May 1960, p.l.; H. Rolin, the member of Parti Socialiste Belge (PSB) was the professor of law and a judge of European Communities Tribunal as well as the proponent of the final consolidation of the Polish border in the future peace treaty.

²¹ *ibidem*.

tween Warsaw and Brussels²². What also contributed to the worsening of atmosphere in the relations between both countries was the PRL's government's refusal (from 16th July 1960) to accept the Belgian government's note explaining its motive of armed intervention in Kongo²³.

What is worse, Polish–Belgian quarrel concerning the issue of Kongo resulted in crisis in *Amitiés Belgo-Polonoises*. Its consequence was the resignation of taking part in the actions of Association by a few prominent members of the Belgian–Polish parliamentary group. It contributed to the destruction of “Polish lobby” in the House of Representatives and in the Senate as well as the withdrawal of the activity of the most involved proponents of the Polish proprietorship on Oder and Neisse, such as deputy E. Demuyter, general Edouard Lavry and the president of the Senate P. Struye²⁴. The aforementioned decisions caused that Warsaw could not count on the interest in the border's problem not only on the part of Christian Democratic-liberal government of Gaston Eyskens, but also of the majority of Belgian deputies and public opinion²⁵. What also caused trouble was not entirely loyal (at least in the eyes of Polish embassy) attitudes such members of the Belgian–Polish parliamentary group as Roger Motz and lord Pierre Nothomb²⁶.

In this situation, Polish concerns caused by chancellor Adenauer's politics, including his speech at the convention “Hometown Association of Eastern Prussia”²⁷ could not have met with the understanding of the government in Brussels. The consequence of this fact was the reaction to the verbal note issued (on 20th July 1960) by the Polish government to NATO members (including Belgium)

²² AMSZ, z. 8, t. 1209, w. 87, The Department of International Political and Industrial Organizations to ambassador A. Wolski, 19th July 1960, b. 157.

²³ AMSZ, z. 8, t. 1209, w. 87, correspondence excerpt no. 9581, A. Wolski to J. Druto, Brussels 16th July 1960, p. 1. A broader depiction of the PRL–Belgium conflict – see M. Pasztor, *Polsko-belgijska “wojna” o Kongo (1960–1963)*, “Polska 1944/45–1989. Studia i materiały” 2019, nr 17, pp. 135–160.

²⁴ AMSZ z. 8, t. 1209, w. 87, correspondence excerpt no. 9812, A. Wolski to J. Druto, Brussels 21st July 1960, p. 1.

²⁵ AMSZ ZD 6/77, t. 988, w. 66, code A. Wolski to J. Druto, no. 10112, Brussels 26th July 1960, p. 1.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, code A. Wolski to J. Druto, no. 15032, Brussels 10th November 1960, p. 1. Ambassador Wolski wrote about pro-German statements of Motz “within a few recent years”. What was judged controversial was P. Nothomb's publication *La ligne equivoque d'Elbe*, „Occident” 1960, no. 3, pp. 35–39.

²⁷ *Zbiór Dokumentów PISM* 1960, nr 7, item no. 104, p. 1063. Adenauer gave a speech at the convention of the exiles in Düsseldorf, promising them a return to their “little homeland as soon as FRG gets stronger.” See K. Adenauer, *Teegespräche 1959–1961*, Hrsg. H. Küsters, Berlin 1988, p. 293.

concerning “recently growing manifestation of danger on the part of German revisionists on the Oder–Neisse border”²⁸. The demanding of NATO’s adopting a stance on the “revisionist politics of chancellor Adenauer and accepting the line of the Western Polish border” resulted in tightening the stance of Belgian government²⁹.

What did not succeed in changing the Belgian politics’ direction towards the border issue was the recommendation for the government approved at the request of senator Struye (with the support of Rolin, Nothomb, Gobert D’Aspremont Lynden and Robert Gillon) at the November (1960) convention of the senate committee of foreign affairs, for Belgium to, at the next session of foreign affairs ministers of the “six”, “demand the acceptance of the Oder–Neisse border and warn FRG that in case its further questioning, Federal Germany will get lonely since the other countries of the Union will refuse their support”. Arguments that were presented during the discussion, including the fact that accepting the status quo (i.e., the border) would enable Poland to become more independent from the USSR, a positive evolution of Polish people’s spirits as well as would increase their trust in the West, did not persuade the government.

What turned out to be equally ineffective was the recommendation of the committee (in the same act) for the government to prepare an application for the conference of foreign affairs ministries of the European Community, proposing “obtaining Soviet concessions in the Berlin issue at the cost of accepting a number of postulates, i.a., the Oder–Neisse border and Sudeten border”. The act met with a remarkable “resistance” of Foreign Affairs Ministry Pierre Wigny, who limited his actions to acknowledge this recommendation³⁰.

The sequence of events connected with the Polish-Belgian “war” about Kongo as well as Kremlin’s active participation in this conflict caused that in 1960, the

²⁸ *Zbiór Dokumentów PISM* 1960, nr 8–9, pp. 1065–1070; AMSZ, z. 8, t. 1200, w. 86, PRL government’s note from 19th July 1960 to NATO countries regarding the issue of Western borders, conveyed to the Belgian ministry on 20th July 1960, p. l.

²⁹ Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères Bruxelles (referred to as: AMAEB), 15. 720, Pologne, Note belge du no 3181 du 26 août, Bruxelles, le 1er septembre 1960; “Le gouvernement belge considère que la frontière définitive entre l’Allemagne et la Pologne ne peut être fixée que par un traité de paix signé avec le gouvernement représentée toute l’Allemagne [...]”. Belgian authorities with “surprise” approached the declaration of general Charles de Gaulle on the issue of the Polish Western border from 25th March 1959. See AMAEB, signature 17. 171. Bref aperçu des relations belgo-polonaise, no date; AMSZ, ZD, 6/77, t. 989, w. 66, Code J. Druto to A. Wolski, no. 17564, Warszawa 3rd September 1960, p. l.

³⁰ AMSZ, ZD, 6/77, t. 988, w. 66, Code A. Wolski to J. Druto, no. 15032, Brussels 10th November 1960, p. l.

relations between Belgium and Poland as well as the whole “socialist” bloc were exacerbated³¹. In this situation, it was hard to endear Brussels for the realization of Polish border postulates. What did not contribute to the tightening of the ties either was the international situation after an unsuccessful American-Soviet summit in Paris in May 1960, stiff agreements concerning German problem initiated during the conference of the Advisory Political Committee of the Warsaw Pact (28th–29th March 1961) as well as the landing in the Bay of Pigs (17th April 1961)³².

A certain improvement of mutual relations’ climate occurred as late as in mid-1961. Probably, as the Polish diplomats claimed, it may be connected with the ambitions of Paul-Henri Spaak, who on 21st April 1961 ceased to hold the position of the Secretary General of NATO, returning to the position of vice Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium in a new Christian democratic-socialist government (of Theo Lefèvre)³³.

Spaak’s activity within the international area and his plans concerning his role as a mediator in the process of lessening of tension and solving of West Berlin problem (according to Washington’s plans) resulted in Brussels becoming, at the end of 1961, a proponent of searching for *modus vivendi* with Eastern Europe, probably not without an incentive from the American administration of John Kennedy³⁴. Those assumptions seemed to be confirmed by PRL’s embassy

³¹ Broader discussion of this issue: M. Pasztor, *Polsko-belgijska “wojna”*, pp. 135–160.

³² Broader depiction of Polish politics towards Germany in this period: see P. Madajczyk, *Dyplomacja polska w latach sześćdziesiątych*, in: *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, p. 637.

³³ According to W. Prażuch, what might have played a certain role in motivation of Belgian diplomacy’s head to initiate the lessening of tension was the desire to improve the Belgian image within international community after its compromising intervention in Kongo. W. Prażuch, *Les enjeux*, p. 210.

³⁴ According to M. Dumoulin, Spaak’s plans were approved by Kennedy’s administration. Dumoulin called Spaak a “go-between” of Washington towards the Eastern bloc. See: M. Dumoulin, *Spaak*, Bruxelles 1999, p. 629. What supports this hypothesis is the conversation of ambassador Wolski with PSB’s member who was close to him, M. Lambilliotte. The latter is supposed to have claimed in this conversation that the Americans were going to use the person of Spaak in order to advance a proposal of the West on the Berlin issue. The Americans asserted (according to Spaak) that “the modification of status quo in Berlin is inevitable”. Polish people also pinned hopes on the figure of a new president J. Kennedy as the one who would assure a more favourable stance on the issues of their interest. See: W. Jarząbek, *Problem niemiecki*, pp. 225–226. In May 1962, the council of Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs formulated an evaluation that the USA government was interested in reaching the agreement with USSR. Qtd. in: P. Madajczyk, *Dyplomacja polska*, pp. 638–643. W. Prażuch presents Spaak’s initiative as independent and not connected with the Americans in *Les enjeux*, p. 221.

in Brussels. According to its president, the essential element of Spaak's proposal concerning the German issue was the acceptance of the Oder-Neisse border and the establishment of controlled demilitarised zones in Central Europe in exchange for regulating the status of West Berlin³⁵.

Hopes of Polish diplomacy concerning the Oder-Neisse border were also raised by the stance of some Belgian political elites, "bored", as it was referred to in PRL's embassy's reports, by the "revisionist speeches" in FRG before the autumn elections (17th September 1961) in this country. In Warsaw's assessment, new perspectives of cooperation that emerged seemed even more tempting due to the fact that some Belgian politicians (especially some activists of the socialist party) occupied more "realistic stance" on the issue of establishing nuclear-free zone in Central Europe, Oder-Neisse border and the issue of de facto recognition of GDR³⁶. What was indicative of it was, i.a., the course of debates on foreign policy in Belgian parliament, where the voices (of socialists) condemning German revisionism were supposed to emerge for the first time and were to come from the parties different than the Belgian Communist Party³⁷.

The factors mentioned above caused that at the end of 1961, Spaak "directly and indirectly" took the initiative to pay a polling visit in Poland, and the signing of Polish-Belgian cultural agreement was supposed to serve as a pretext³⁸. Preliminary talks with Spaak, conducted with the ambassador Jan Wasilewski, were not encouraging³⁹. The Polish party was not satisfied by Spaak's statement that for him, the issue of Western border is decided and what "lacks is only [its] docu-

³⁵ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 73, w. 9, correspondence excerpt no. 9847, A. Wolski to St. Regulski, Brussels 7th July 1961, p.l.; AMSZ, ZD 66/77, t. 1097, code no. 10530, A. Wolski to St. Regulski, Brussels 17th July 1961, p.l. Spaak obtain the socialist party's support for his plans.

³⁶ AMSZ, ZD, t. 1097, w. 72, code no. 18306, J. Wasilewski to P. Ogrodziński, Brussels 8th Dec. 1961, p.l.; AMSZ, z. 17, t. 73, w. 9, correspondence excerpt no. 9168, A. Wolski to St. Regulski, Brussels 24th June 1961, p.l. As Maurice Lambilliotte, an influential PSB member and Spaak's associate, claimed, "no one in Belgium seriously considered thrusting the unification of Germany, not to mention revindication of Germany on the East".

³⁷ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 73, w. 9, Polish affairs, [informative notes], A. Wolski to St. Regulski, Brussels 24th May 1961, k. 1-2; *ibidem*, z. 17, t. 48, w. 5, A note concerning a conference, in which comrades A. Rapacki, P. Ogrodziński, Jan Balicki, A. Wolski, J. Druto took part. Warszawa 24th November 1961, b. 11-13.

³⁸ AMSZ, ZD, t. 1097, w. 72, code no. 19306, J. Wasilewski to P. Ogrodziński, Brussels 9th December 1961, p. l. According to M. Dumoulin, Spaak's visit in Warsaw was supposed to be a survey of intentions of the Eastern bloc. M. Dumoulin, *Spaak*, p. 630.

³⁹ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 51, w. 6, pp. 68-71, Dep. IV, Note [by the president M. Łobodycz] concerning Spaak's arrival to Poland, Warszawa 20th June 1962, p. l.

mentation in the treaty”. Spaak avoided declaration concerning making an official statement in this issue⁴⁰.

His visit in Poland took place in 6th–10th December 1963. Its effects from the point of view of the border issue were not unequivocal⁴¹. Although in his talk with Rapacki, Spaak repeated his stance that the “final” regulating of the German problem was impossible (including the unification of Germany) in the near future and connected the formal acceptance of the Oder–Neisse border with the peace treaty, in his conversation with Władysław Gomułka Spaak asserted that its acceptance will be conducted within subsequent steps of lessening the tension (i.e., a partial disarmament). In his conception, the “capstone”, or rather the final stage of the process of lessening the tension was supposed to be the acceptance of the final (based upon the treaty) character of German borders as well as forming a non-aggression pact between the countries of the Warsaw Pact and NATO countries⁴². As Rapacki properly assessed, the visit showed that for Spaak, the issue of the border was an element of a tender (at least in the issue of regulating West Berlin’s status). Its guarantee was supposed to be the last link of the process, which first and foremost led to the unification of Germany, which is confirmed by the report summarizing ambassador Conrad Seyfert’s visit⁴³.

Spaak’s attitude towards the Oder-Neisse border had been unchanged until the resignation from the post of the president of Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (in 1966). It is indicated by his answer to a question asked on 28th January 1964 by a socialist deputy Ernest Glinne and inspired by PRL’s embassy. It concerned the official stance of Belgian government on the issue of Western Polish

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 51, w. 6, Urgent note [by A. Rapacki] from the course of talks with Spaak, 17th Dec. 1963, b. 198. In his talk with Rapacki (7th December), Spaak said that “the Oder–Neisse border does not constitute a political problem. Despite its de facto recognition by the West (apart from France), no one questions the border now”.

⁴² *Ibidem*. Non-aggression pact was proposed at the ONZ Disarmament Commission by USSR (20th Feb. 1963). See: G.-H. Soutou, *La guerre de Cinquante Ans. Les relations Est-Ouest 1943–1990*, Paris 2001, pp. 425–427. After the implementation of partial steps, the solution of German problem was supposed to be approached. As partial steps, Spaak enumerated: a) the establishment of a system of observers in order to avoid a sudden aggression, b) the establishment of a system of control and, potentially, freezing on armaments in Central Europe, c) the solution of Berlin issue, especially communicational roads to Berlin (taking GDR’s interference into consideration, which was supposed to mean de facto recognition of GDR), d) recognition of the final character of German borders.

⁴³ AMAEB, 14.209, Pologne, C. Seyfert; M. P.-H. Spaak, Varsovie, le 29 I 1965. Por. W. Prazuch, *Les enjeux*, pp. 229–235.

border recognition by the Belgian government, after the minister's visit in Poland⁴⁴. In his response to Glinne's speech published in *Questions et Réponses de la Chambre des Représentants*, a Belgian parliamentary publishing house (on 24th March 1964), Spaak limited himself to the assertion that the Oder–Neisse border issue is just one of a number of problems that arose after World War II and are still “waiting to be regulated” and that “Polish-German border should be finally established by a peace treaty.”⁴⁵

Attempts failed to implicate the Belgian politician in the gambit with Western press unfavourable to PRL's government (especially in FRG), which reported the negative attitude of the Belgian government towards the issue of border recognition. Spaak rigidly rejected a conciliation formula of a public statement suggested by Warsaw, and limited to enunciating that “Belgium, by recognizing the irreversibility of our border, will adopt an appropriate stance in the future negotiations of the treaty”⁴⁶.

What did not bring any new elements either was Spaak's written response (from 8th September 1964) to an interpellation of the aforementioned Glinne (from 27th July 1964)⁴⁷. In an accurate assessment of ambassador Wasilewski, the above stance of Belgian Foreign Affairs Ministry's president and government re-

⁴⁴ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 73, w. 9, [Wł. Wink], The translation of an excerpt of a Belgian parliamentary publishing house “Questions et Réponses de la Chambre des Représentants” sent by PRL's embassy in Brussels, Warszawa 25th April 1964; See: Questions parlementaire à M. le Ministre des Affaires étrangères, in: “Questions et Réponses de la Chambre des Représentants” no. 26, le 28 janvier 1964. On the basis of the materials delivered by Departament IV of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Glinne argued that the necessity to recognise the border stems from both the Paris conference of three powers with FRG (from 3rd October 1954) as well as NATO countries' response to the Polish note from 19th July 1960.

⁴⁵ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 73, w. 9, Note of M. Łobodycz, Warszawa 10th September 1964; [exposé de M. le Ministre Spaak du 24 mars 1964, “Questions et Réponses de la Chambre des Représentants” no. 28, 1964.

⁴⁶ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 73, w. 9, code no. 13456 head of Dep. IV. M. Łobodycz to amb. J. Wasilewski concerning the conversation with Spaak, Warszawa 23rd May 1964, p.l.; It was about DPA agency, which reported that “the Belgian government does not consider recognizing the Oder-Neisse border” as well as German publishing houses in the USA, kept in the similar tone: *New York Zeitung* as well as *Herald Tribune*.

⁴⁷ *Questions parlementaire écrite à M. le Ministre des Affaires étrangères*, “Questions et Réponses de la Chambre des Représentants” no. 36, le 27 juillet 1964; *Le réponse écrite de M. le Ministre [P.H. Spaak] à M. le député, E. Glinne*. “Questions et Réponses de la Chambre des Représentants” no. 39, le 8 septembre 1964. Referring back to his previous statement, Spaak alluded to the attitude towards the border of uninvolved countries (Ghana, Indonesia), asserting that the announcements included in the Polish-Indonesian note and the note of Nkrumah himself should not be identified with the formal border recognition. In

sulted from “twin-track approach of Belgian politics”, based upon the reliance on Washington and “distrust and anxiety about the revival of German power and nationalism” manifested in conversations and private contacts.

According to the head of the Polish diplomatic post in Brussels, it was the concern about FRG’s reaction that stopped Belgium, perceived as the major ally of USA, from the luxury of own and independent speeches on this matter⁴⁸. What did not have any influence on the attitude of the Belgian diplomacy’s head was the kindness shown to Polish people by the Belgian deputies, who in September 1964 went for an eight-day long visit to Poland and assured the PRL’s authorities that “the Oder–Neisse border cannot be changed”⁴⁹.

The increase of tension between the USA and the USSR as well as the intensification of war actions in Vietnam between 1964 and 1965 caused another deterioration of international climate and resulted in the decline of interest in searching for the solution to the German problem. On the other hand, in this period certain regulation occurred of some of the Polish-Belgian bilateral issues, which, according to Warsaw, was supposed to create a better atmosphere for Brussels’ understanding of the issue of Polish Western border⁵⁰. Despite the latter, A. Rapacki’s

his opinion, these statements only served as appeals to competent powers to regulate this unsolved problem.

⁴⁸ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 75, w. 9, Note [by ambassador J. Wasilewski] on the issue of current foreign policy of Belgium. Current aspects of Belgian politics, Brussels 19th December 1963, b. 137–140; AMAEB, 14.096, Pologne, Note pour M. le Ministre [P.-H. Spaak], Conversation avec M. Rapacki, le 25 novembre 1964, p.l. The Secretary General of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained to Rapacki that the project of instituting multilateral nuclear powers serves anchoring Germany on the West (amarrer l’Allemagne à l’Oest) as well as detracting it from de Gaulle’s projects.

⁴⁹ AMAEB, 14.372, Pologne, Activité de la délégation parlementaire belge en Pologne, C. Seyfert, Ambassadeur de Belgique à Varsovie à M. le Ministre P.-H. Spaak, Varsovie, le 1er octobre 1964, p.l. Delegation led by P. Struye – the president of the Senate and the head of the Senate’s commission of foreign affairs visited Warsaw, Wrocław, Opole, Cracow, Gdańsk, Lublin, Turoszów as well the the museum in Auschwitz. It was welcomed by the president of State Council Edward Ochab and the Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz. P. Struye made the above statement on the border issue. See: b.a, *Wypowiedź przewodniczącego delegacji parlamentarzystów belgijskich o nienaruszalności granicy na Odrze i Nysie*, „Trybuna Ludu” 1964, 26.09, nr 267.

⁵⁰ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 75, w. 9, Political report of PRL’s embassy in Brussels for 1965, Brussels 10th February 1966, b. 228–229. Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed concerns that a government in Warsaw might manoeuvre Brussels into direct or indirect recognition of the Oder-Neisse border, on the occasion of signing the indemnification pact. AMAEB, 15720/I, Pologne, Note [du Directeur général] pour l’Administration du Commerce Extérieur, Bruxelles, le 21 mai 1962; *ibidem*, Note [du conseiller-chef de service R. Dooreman] pour la Direction Générale de la politique, Bruxelles, le 16 mai 1962, p.l.

talks during Spaak's visit (12th–17th February 1965), predominantly devoted to the issue of lessening the tension, did not bring the change of Spaak's opinion⁵¹.

Polish party was attentively following not only the statements of political and parliamentary circles in Belgium concerning the Western Polish border, but also traced any manifestations of Belgian and international institutions' activity, which suggested the transiency of the Western border. It occurred, i.a., in case of tourist brochures, advertising summer holidays in FRG (with the map of 1937 Germany attached), which were enclosed by Sabena airline to its folder⁵².

PRL's embassy in Brussels also intervened because of distributing so-called revisionist materials by the personnel of the official FRG's stand at the 37th International Brussels Fair (MTB) in May 1965, together with the maps with Polish-German borders marked according to the state of affairs in 1937. Furthermore, a tourist brochure was attached that portrayed "German roads" with analogous labels and the inscriptions "unter polnischen Verwaltung" (under Polish administration)⁵³. It was the reason for PRL's ambassador in Brussel, Jan Wasilewski, to apply a protest addressed to Spaak. In consequence, as a result of such actions and initiating the intervention at the fair board by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the materials were removed from FRG's pavilion⁵⁴.

The manifestation of the Polish diplomatic post's favour was the intervention in the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, parliament and PSB connected with the socialist Georges Bohy's speech at the forum of the Assembly of Western European Union in November 1965. He asserted, i.a., that the Oder-Neisse border recognition should be the element of negotiating influence in the talks about German unification (that is why he was against the border recognition before the treaty ratification), and the issue of Western Polish border should have been

⁵¹ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 52, w. 6, Urgent note by A. Rapacki [concerning the visit in Belgium 12th–17th Feb. 1965], Warszawa 20 II 1965, p.l. Rapacki talked with Spaak, Prime Minister Théo Lefèvre, the president of the Senate P. Struye and the president of the House of Representatives Achille Van Acker. He was welcomed by Queen Elizabeth and King Baudouin. Spaak's assertion in this issue, coming down to stating that for him, "this problem is of more academic than real nature" did not meet with Rapacki's riposte. See: P.-H. Spaak, *Combats inachevés*, vol. 2: *De l'espoir aux déceptions*, Paris 1969, s. 355.

⁵² AMSZ, z. 17, t. 73, w. 9, J. Dudziński, chargé d'affaires a.i. to Dep. IV MSZ in Warsaw, Brussels 30th August 1961, b. 17; *ibidem*, J. Wiśniewski to J. Dudziński, code 14219. Warszawa 1961. The central office recommended protest in the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁵³ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 73, w. 9, Note by First Secretary of the PRL's embassy in Brussels [W. Klimas] on the issue of revisionist materials distributed at the official FRG's stand at the 37th International Brussels Fair, Brussels 12th May 1965, b. 60–61.

⁵⁴ *ibidem*.

the matter of talks between German and Poland, under the guarantee of great powers⁵⁵. In spite of considering this stance as unfavourable to Poland, Warsaw, not intending to irritate the relations with the new Christian democratic-socialist government of Pierre Harmel (established after the elections in 1965) opposed to assign the status of a serious political event to Bohy's speech⁵⁶.

It appeared an even more reasonable course of action given that the assumption of the office of the minister of foreign affairs by Pierre Harmel in Christian-democratic government of Paul Van den Boeynants (established in March 1966) seemed not only to open new perspectives in Polish–Belgian relations, but also inscribe into a new chapter in the contacts between East and West. Polish diplomacy was pinning their hopes on Harmel's conception of lessening the tension between the blocs as well as changing his approach towards the politics of "opening to the East" of general de Gaulle⁵⁷.

The interest of PRL's diplomacy in the development of contacts with Belgium went together with the Polish proposals in the issue of European security (preventing FRG from accessing the nuclear weapon) as well as the solution of the German problem. Those endeavours were strengthened after the declaration of the Advisory Political Committee of the Warsaw Pact in Bucharest (4th–6th July 1966), foreshadowing the release of tension in Europe towards the development of political, industrial, cultural, and scientific contacts. What was especially significant for Warsaw was the inclusion in this document of the appeal to the final recognition of borders in Europe, not allowing FRG to access the nuclear power as well as the organization of a conference on the issue of security and cooperation, and in the further perspective, the dismantling of NATO and the Warsaw Pact⁵⁸. Endeavours

⁵⁵ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 73, w. 9, Note of First Secretary of PRL's embassy in Brussels [W. Klimas] on the stance of G. Bohy, a Belgian deputy, towards the Oder-Neisse border, Brussels, 1st December 1965, b. 59–60; *ibidem*, Note of M. Łobodycz, Warszawa 5th May 1966, b. 52. Due to the talks with Polish diplomats, Bohy obliged himself to implement an amendment to his report in Western European Union "in the sense positive for us", as Łobodycz claimed. However, Bohy repeated his stance during the debate on the budget in Belgian parliament on 26th April 1966.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, Note of the head of Dep. IV, M. Łobodycz, Warszawa 9th December 1965. Łobodycz commanded to "mention this to Spaak", b. 72.

⁵⁷ M. Pasztor, *Między Paryżem, Warszawą i Moskwą. Stosunki polsko-francuskie w latach 1954–1969*, Toruń 2003, pp. 80–122.

⁵⁸ *Zbiór Dokumentów PISM* 1966, nr 7, pp. 651–681. It was also connected with the failure of a note (from 25th March 1966) by FRG's government on the issue of disarmament and peace guarantee. It included, i.a., the specification of Polish–German border from 1937. The Political Department of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs judged this evolution positively. A lack

to lessen the military tension, shared by Warsaw and Brussels, together with the attitude, represented by the great majority of the Belgian country's political establishment, that (against the official government's stance) leaned towards the recognition of the integrity of the Polish Western border seemed to form a platform for the rapprochement of both countries⁵⁹. Thus, what disappointed Polish authorities was Harmel's stance on this issue. In his response to deputy E. Glinne during a parliamentary debate on 21st June 1966, asked whether Belgium considered Munich Agreement as valid and what the government's stance was towards the Oder-Neisse border, the Belgian diplomacy's head asserted that "if there comes the time when Polish and German people negotiate the border in the spirit that enabled the German to reach the agreement with its neighbours on the West, the Polish and the German will reach the agreement, too"⁶⁰.

A diplomatic "let-out" was also Harmel's assertion (in his talk with ambassador Wasilewski on 20th July 1966) that he would consider his statement on the issue above, and that in the near future, he would find an occasion and a place to refute it. The central office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw took this statement at face value, probably taking into account Harmel's visit in Warsaw as well as finding Brussel's support for the Polish disarmament initiatives⁶¹. Nevertheless, Harmel's visit in PRL (on 3rd–8th September 1966), devoted predominantly to the issues of disarmament and lessening of the tension did not contribute any new elements to the matter of Polish border⁶². What was judged as a remarkable regress by the Polish party was minister Harmel's statement (on 8th May 1967) in

of "progress" on the issue of "ligne Oder-Neisse" was ascribed to PRL's policy that was dependent upon "German" policy of USSR (hostile towards the German), whose task was to sustain the Germany's division. AMAEB, 14.953, Pologne, Note du Departement Politique (P/4), Note sur le problème allemand – évolution récente, le 26 février 1966, p.l.

⁵⁹ J. Łaptos, *Historia Belgii*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1995, pp. 266–267.

⁶⁰ "Questions et Réponses de la Chambre des Représentants" no. 46 du 12 juillet 1966, p. 1385. A press organ of Belgian communists „Le Drapeau Rouge" (18 juillet 1966 no. 57) called Harmel's stance a "silly contrivance", enabling for not adopting any clear stance on this issue. "Le Peuple" emphasized that Harmel's stance is based upon the formulations of FRG's note from 25th March 1966. „Le Peuple" 17 juillet 1966, no. 124.

⁶¹ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 73, w. 9, Code no. 12345 J. Wasilewski to M. Łobodycz, Brussels 21st July 1966, p.l. as well as an explanatory note [by M. Łobodycz]; *ibidem*, July 1966. Department IV commissioned Wasilewski to issue an invitation to Harmel and assert that the Polish government was happy about the intention to "rectify" his statement and would be glad to familiarize with it. It did not allow to lodge a protest on this issue.

⁶² AMSZ, z. 17, t. 53, w. 6, Urgent note of A. Rapacki on the visit of Belgian foreign affairs minister, P. Harmel, in Poland (5th–6th September 1966), b. 143–153; Concluding announcement, b. 159–161.

reference to the interpellation of the Senate's president P. Struye on the issue of the Oder–Neisse border. Harmel claimed that in this regard, he shared Spaak's stance since "it is impossible to recognize this border before signing a peace treaty with Germany"⁶³.

No concrete results in this matter were either brought by the preceding visit of Polish parliament members in Belgium (8th–15th June 1966) at the House of Representatives' invitation. A discussion that was held in the Belgian parliament on 9th June with the participation of the representatives of the most significant political parties (socialists, Catholic-democrats, liberals, and communists) came down to the speeches of deputies, who concentrated mostly on the problem of disarmament and the lessening of tension (including the role of small states) as well as a new organization of Europe. References to Polish border (formulations that it is final and as such, it should be fixed in a peace treaty) were only included in the papers of senator Rolin (socialist) and Terfve (communist) as well as the speech of socialist deputy Bohy⁶⁴.

A break through in the Belgian attitude towards the border issue was not brought by the change of the course of foreign policy in FRG, led (since 1st December 1966) by Willy Brandt in a coalitional government of Kurt Georg Kiesinger⁶⁵. It is reflected by a constatation of minister Harmel in the talks with minister Rapacki during his official visit in Belgium and Luxembourg (2nd–4th November

⁶³ "Questions et Réponses de la Chambre des Représentants" P. Harmel, no. 31 du 8 mai 1967, p. 876.

⁶⁴ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 56, w. 6, Note of First Secretary of PRL's embassy, W. Klimas, on the stay of Polish Parliament's delegation in Belgium (between 8th–15th June 1966), b. 191–197. The delegation was led by C. Wycech. On the part of Chrisitan-democrats, the discussion was attended by: P. Struye, senator Jean Debucquoy, senator Carlos De Baeck, senator Jacques Hambye and senator Emile De Winter; on the part of socialists – senator H. Rolin, senator Georges Housiaux, deputies: Marc-Antoine Pierson, Georges Bohy, senator Jos Van Cleemput; communists: senator Jean Terfve, liberals: senator Norbert Hougardy and deputy Gillet. From the Polish party: Czesław Wycech, Jerzy Bukowski, Helena Dąbska, Jan Frankowski, Władysław Gawlik, Henryk Korotyński, Eugenia Krassowska-Jodłowska, Aleksander Rozmiarek, Michał Specjał and Franciszek Szczerbal. Ambassador Seyfert judged this visit as beneficial for the development of mutual relation. AMAEB, 14. 953, Pologne, M. Seyfert à M. le Ministre P. Harmel, Varsovie, le 30 mars 1967, b.p.

⁶⁵ AMAEB, 14.096, ambasadador C. Seyfert à M. le Ministre, P. Harmel, Varsovie, le 2 avril 1968. Seyfert reported about PRL authorities' distrust towards the policy of K.G. Kiesinger's government as well as an impasse on the Bonn-Warsaw line. A new FRG's government of K.G. Kiesinger, with Willy Brandt as the president of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and vice-chancellor announced departure from Hallstein's doctrine (13th December) and a new Eastern politics towards, i.a., PRL. See: P. Madajczyk, *Dyplomacja polska*, p. 652.

1967), coming down to the assertion that the absolute priority over the political solution of the German problem (i.e., the unification of Germany) should be given to devising and preparing regional disarmament in Europe⁶⁶.

The military intervention in Czechoslovakia (on 21st August 1968) by the countries of the Warsaw Pact resulted in Belgian freezing of political contacts and cultural relations with PRL, and a broad press campaign led to the isolation of Polish diplomatic posts, inhibiting its propagandist activity⁶⁷. The normalisation of relations and the re-establishment of political contacts did not take place until 1969 and coincided with the attempt to unblock the channels enabling the initiating of a dialogue between the East and the West. The manifestation of this process was i.a., the visits of minister Harmel in the USSR and Czechoslovakia as well as minister Józef Winiewicz in Brussels⁶⁸. Although Poland was trying to broaden its room for manoeuvre in the international area (the issues of disarmament conference) and in the relations with particular countries, its scope was limited by the belonging to the Warsaw Pact and The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, which was expressed by the Budapest Appeal of the Advisory Political Committee of the Warsaw Pact (on 17th March 1969) as well as containing PRL–FRG relations by Moscow⁶⁹.

What was the expression of understanding the Polish stance as well as a certain progress in the issue of Polish Western border recognition was the approval of emphasizing the “importance of the Oder-Neisse border for the peace in Europe” in the report from Polish-Belgian talks, which occurred in connection with

⁶⁶ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 54, w. 6, Urgent note [by M. Naszkowski] from the visit of PRL's minister of foreign affairs, A. Rapacki in Belgium and Luxembourg between 2nd and 4th November [1967], b. 142–149. Talks concerned mostly: the war in Vietnam, conflict in the Middle East, European security, disarmament and bilateral relations.

⁶⁷ AMSZ z. 17, t. 76, w. 9, Note on the situation in *Amitiés belgo-polonaises*, Brussels 13th September 1968, b. 94–97. In reference to the intervention in Czechoslovakia, the president of the organization Jean Debucquois, P. Struye, and H. Rollin resigned from their posts. The association suspended its activity. See: AMAEB, 1791, Ambassadeur C. Seyfert à M.P. Harmel, le Ministre des Affaires étrangères, Varsovie, le 27 mars 1968, p.l.

⁶⁸ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 75, w. 9, Polish-Belgian relations. Political report of PRL's embassy in Brussels [by ambassador Franciszek Modrzewski] for the period of July 1968–1st November 1969, Brussels 11th November 1969, b. 246–247. Winiewicz's visit was of survey-nature on the issues of European security.

⁶⁹ What was discussed in the Budapest Appeal (apart from the permission to organize a European disarmament conference) was the integrity of borders, which did not fully satisfy Polish diplomacy, who preferred the legal-international formulation of its Western border. Qtd. in: W. Jarzabek, *Dyplomacja polska w warunkach odprężenia (styczeń 1969–lipiec 1975)*, in: *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, pp. 670, 677, 688–693; AMSZ, ZD, t. 1129, w. 238, code no. 11191, F. Modrzewski to A. Willmann, Brussels 26th November 1970.

minister Harmel's visit in Poland (between 27th–29th July 1970). The statement above was accepted by the Polish party as partial but at the same time, it was the first public recognition of this border by Belgium, which, as it became clear after the further sequence of events, was an overinterpretation⁷⁰.

Belgium officially returned to this issue after the signature (on 7th December 1970) a Poland–FRG pact confirming the recognition of the Polish Western border. In May 1971, the spokesperson of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs limited himself only to the expression of contentment on the pact's signature, which was interpreted as sympathizing with its content⁷¹. This stance was not, however, a "step forward" towards the statement of the political president of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Etienne Davignon, which was announced in the talk of a Belgian diplomat with PRL's ambassador F. Modrzewski on 10th December 1970⁷².

It seems that a lack of a remarkable recognition of the Polish border stemmed not so much from the caution of the Belgian politics that, according to Polish diplomacy, was trying "not to forestall Brandt's Eastern politics and not to put him in a difficult situation towards Christian-democratic opposition," but rather from NATO's stance not to "issue individual declarations towards particular Brandt's actions"⁷³. Although Belgium and the socialists and Christian-democrats in the

⁷⁰ AMSZ, z. 17, t. 57, w. 7, pp. 207–218, P. Harmel's visit in Warsaw (27th–29th July 1970). A statement announced after the end of talks between the ministers of foreign affairs of Belgium [P. Harmel] and PRL, S. Jędrychowski, informative service from 1st August 1970, p. 95. Belgian press wrote that Belgium was the second country (after France) to recognise the Oder–Neisse border and that the Belgian party agreed for the first time to formulate the term of "the border on Oder and Neisse" and not "the Oder–Neisse line" see: *La Belgique reconnaît la frontière Oder-Neisse*, „*La Libre Belgique*” no. 123 du 30 juillet 1970; B. Fromet, "La Pologne et la Belgique", no. 156 du 1 septembre 1970. Harmel justified it by the progress of talks between Winiewicz and Duckwitz.

⁷¹ AMSZ, 28/77, w. 1, Polish-Belgian bilateral relations, informative note, Warszawa 18th May 1971, s.nl.

⁷² AMSZ, ZD, t. 1129 w. 238, code no. 11638, F. Modrzewski to A. Willmann, Brussels 10th Dec. 1970. During his talk with Modrzewski, Davignon expressed "a complete contentment of Belgium on the fact of signing PRL-FRG pact. He informed that Harmel would soon issue a statement to the parliament on this issue ... He promised to confidentially let me review the statement before its announcement". The Belgian party was informed about the talks between PRL and FRG, which is confirmed by Willmann's correspondence with ambassador Modrzewski. See *ibid.* code no. 11191 Modrzewski to Willmann, Brussels 26th November 1970.

⁷³ AMSZ, ZD, t. 1129 w. 238, code no. 11638, F. Modrzewski to A. Willmann, Brussels 10th December 1970.

government standing on the ground of “ultimacy” and “inviolateness” of the European borders on the power play and supported the ratification of pact from December 1970 through Bonn⁷⁴, the subsequent Christian-democratic—socialist government of G. Eyskens (1968–1972) manifested a far-fetched abstinence in this matter. It is confirmed by the content of a statement announced after the talks of ministers of foreign affairs of Belgium and Poland (P. Harmel and Stefan Olszowski) on 15th November 1972, in which both parties limited themselves to assert that “the entering into force of the pact from 7th December 1970 between PRL and FRG and its decisions concerning the Polish Western border got special importance in this process [of lessening the tension] in the same way as the implementation of the pact from 12th August 1970 between the USSR and FRG”⁷⁵. Until 1975, the final stance of the Belgium government on this issue remained consistent with the decision of the group of nine biggest European Economic Community countries (from 13th April 1973), which assumed the possibility to change the borders in Europe by means different than war, which was opposed by the Polish party⁷⁶. Eventually, the formula devised by the USA and the USSR during the second stage of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (issued on 17th March 1975) concerning the borders and foreshadowing their change “according to the international law and with the use of peace tools and on the basis of agreement”⁷⁷ closed this issue within the Polish-Belgian relations as well.

Conclusions

The division of Europe into two fighting camps caused that the problem of the Oder-Neisse border might have become the subject of a tender, in which the stake was not only solving the issue of West Berlin, but also unification of

⁷⁴ AMAEB, 18.820/47, Pologne, Visite en Belgique du Ministre Olszowski, Frans Talemans, ambassadeur de Belgique à Varsovie à M.P. Harmel, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, Varsovie, le 27 novembre 1972, p.l.; AMSZ, ZD, vol. 1322, w. 303, code no. 3096, J. Kociołek to S. Staniszewski, Brussels 20th April 1972; *ibidem*, code no. 7855, J. Kociołek to Kalinowski, Brussels 17th July 1972, p.l.

⁷⁵ AMSZ, 45/77, w. 1, Dep. IV, Polish-Belgian statement, p.l.

⁷⁶ AMSZ, ZD 59/78, t. 29, code no. 5475, J. Kociołek to H. Sokolak, Brussels 17th April 1973, p. l.

⁷⁷ Qtd. in: W. Jarzabek, *Polska wobec konferencji Bezpieczeństwa i Współpracy w Europie. Plany i rzeczywistość*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 149–150.

Germany. The worst of the possible scenarios, according to which the USSR, in exchange for the unification and the revision of the border with Poland, might have obtained the permission for so-called neutralization of Germany (i.e., in practice, its transfer to the communist bloc), loomed large not only Polish communists, who perceived the maintenance of the border as both Polish national interest and a significant element of legitimization their power in Poland. Western powers, in fact opposing the unification of Germany and the revision of Polish Western border did not though alienate Bonn, worrying about being pushed into Moscow's arms.

The German problem occupied a significant place in the Belgian politics. It stemmed from: direct neighbourhood (including fruitful commercial relations) with Germany, and next the Atlantic and free-market partnership. However, regardless of the situation and the importance that subsequent governments attached to their relations with FRG established in 1949, the possibility of unifying Germany filled the Belgian (at least within the nationalist circles) with fear, from which an attempt stemmed, initiated by the Polish diplomacy, to bring the stances together and to search for an ally in the "fight" to recognize the Polish border. What was supposed to be favourable was the support of the Belgian governments (regardless of their fluctuation) the principle of the existence of two German states (Belgium was the first NATO country, who recognized GDR as early as on 27th December 1972). In spite of this, belonging to two different blocs and the gradual extinction of anti-German sentiments in the societies of Wallonia and Flanders caused that the Belgian people could not decide for a complete solidarity with the Polish stance, sustaining "caution" in this issue, which derived from the perspective of European integration. The latter was meant to enable an effective control over FRG's politics and its compliance with the interests of allies from the European Community, and later EEC. All of this made PRL's attempts to recognize the border fruitless. It was the adoption of a new course in FRG's politics towards Eastern Europe in a different international political situation, after W. Brandt's coming into power as a result of elections in September 1969, that led to signing a pact between PRL and FRG. The latter brought the regulation of this issue, sealed at the conference in Helsinki.

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