

AGNIESZKA KISZTELIŃSKA-WĘGRZYŃSKA  
Łódź

## FROM THE HISTORY OF POLISH-AUSTRIAN DIPLOMACY IN THE 1970S. AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR BRUNO KREISKY'S VISITS TO POLAND

Polish-Austrian relations after World War II developed in an atmosphere of mutual interest and restrained political support. During the Cold War, the Polish People's Republic and the Republic of Austria were on the opposite sides of the Iron Curtain; however, after 1945 both countries sought mutual recognition and trade cooperation. For more than 10 years following the establishment of diplomatic relations between Austria and Poland, there had been no meetings at the highest level.<sup>1</sup> The first contact took place when the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bruno Kreisky, came on a visit to Warsaw on 1-3 March 1960.<sup>2</sup> Later on, Kreisky visited Poland four times as Chancellor of Austria: in June 1973, in late January/early February 1975, in September 1976, and in November 1979. While discussing the significance of those five visits, it is worth reflecting on the role of Austria in the diplomatic activity of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The views on the motives of the Austrian politician's actions and on Austria's foreign policy towards Poland come from the MFA archives from 1972-1980. The time period covered in this study matches the schedule of the Chancellor's visits.

The activity of the Polish diplomacy in the Communist period (1945-1989) has been addressed as a research topic in several publications on Polish history. However, as Andrzej Paczkowski says in the sixth volume of *Historia dyplomacji polskiej* (*A history of Polish diplomacy*), research on this topic is still in its infancy.<sup>3</sup> A wide range of source materials that need to be thoroughly reviewed offer a number of

<sup>1</sup> *Stosunki dyplomatyczne Polski, Informator*, vol. 1, *Europa 1918-2006*, K. Szczepanik, A. Herman-Łukasik, B. Janicka (eds.), Warszawa 2007, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> W. Borodziej, *Die Volksrepublik Polen und Österreich 1948-1956*, in: *Der österreichische Staatsvertrag 1955: international Strategie, rechtliche Relevanz, nationale Identität*, A. Suppan, G. Stourzh (eds.), Wien 2005, pp. 417-430, A. Kisztełińska-Węgrzyńska, *Dyplomacja polska wobec Austrii w latach 1945-1958*, in: „Niemcy-Austria-Szwajcaria. Rocznik Katedry Badań Niemcoznawczych UŁ”, vol. 5, 2012, pp. 179-193.

<sup>3</sup> A. Paczkowski, *Dyplomacja polska czasów kryzysu (1980-1989)*, [in:] *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, vol. 6, W. Michowicz, W. Materski (eds.), Warszawa 2010, pp. 821-825.

research problems. The official governmental documents impose a specific perspective on the theme of international relations. The present article aims to show how the MFA Department 4 viewed relations with Austria. However, it is not restricted only to this theme, which has partly been explored in the context of the relations between Communist Poland and the West by Andrzej Skrzypek in his collective work on the Polish diplomacy in that period.<sup>4</sup> The focus here is primarily on the Polish opinions of the Austrian politician, who was favorable to the Polish issues on the world stage, and who made a personal contribution to the development of trade relations with Poland. The ensuing analysis is based on materials that so far have never been made public.<sup>5</sup>

Federal Chancellor Dr. Bruno Kreisky was a politician who broke the isolation between Warsaw and Vienna.<sup>6</sup> He was born on 22 January 1911 into a family of doctors, politicians, teachers and industrialists. His grandfather, Joseph Neuwirth, was a deputy to the Austrian Reichstag in the 19th century while his father was an industrialist and served as General Director of the Austrian National Bank.<sup>7</sup>

Kreisky studied law and political economics in Vienna, earning a PhD in law. As a socialist youth activist, he was arrested in 1935, and in "the socialist trial" in 1936, he was found guilty of treason and sentenced to 22 months in prison. Following the *Anschluss* in 1938, he was arrested and interrogated for five months. Then he emigrated to Sweden, where continued studying economics and worked as an associate for the Stockholm-based *Konsum* magazine. He also worked as a correspondent for several Western newspapers. At the same time, Kreisky was involved in the emigrant socialist movement, by organizing aid initiatives for soldiers who fled to Sweden, Denmark and Norway. It was at that time that he became acquainted with Willy Brandt. After 1945, acting on commission of the Swedish government, he organized aid for Austria and was involved in establishing the diplomatic relations between Austria and the Scandinavian countries. From 1946-1950 he worked for the Austrian legation in Stockholm.

Upon his return to his home country in 1951, Kreisky became the deputy director of the Austrian President's cabinet. In 1953 he was appointed state secretary in the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and from 1959 to 1966, he served as Foreign Minister. In 1956, he was elected to the Austrian Parliament, *Nationalrat*. In 1954, Kreisky participated in the Berlin Conference, and in 1955 in the Moscow Confer-

<sup>4</sup> A. Skrzypek, *Dyplomacja polska między Wschodem a Zachodem (1976-1981). Historia dyplomacji...*, pp. 731-821.

<sup>5</sup> The only exception is a 9 July 1973 note on the Chancellor's visit to Poland published in the volume *Polskie dokumenty dyplomatyczne z 1973 roku*, (ed.) P. Majewski, Warszawa 2006, p. 369.

<sup>6</sup> Comments on those meetings: B. Kreisky, *Politik braucht Visionen, Aufsätze, Reden und Interviews zu aktuellen weltpolitischen Fragen*. Mit einem Vorwort von Walter Jens, Bonn 1982, pp. 107-150, 238-240.

<sup>7</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives (Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych), D. IV Austria, z. 47/77, w. 7, pp. 1-4, *Notatka biograficzna*, [henceforth: MFAA D.IV Austria]

ence. As Foreign Minister he represented Austria in solving the Tyrol question and was involved in negotiations for Austria's entry to EFTA. He was one of the co-founders and Chair of the Vienna Institute for Development and Deputy Chair of the Theodor Körner Foundation for the Development of Culture and Art. From 1959 he was Deputy Chair of the SPÖ (*Sozialistische Partei Österreichs* – the Socialist Party of Austria) in Lower Austria. He was elected Chairman by the party congress in January 1967.

The party's new leader carefully designed a set of reforms aimed at poverty reduction, full employment maintenance, democratization in all fields of life, Austria's modernization, and the country's partnership with the EEC. As a result, the SPÖ won two parliamentary elections, following which Kreisky was appointed Chancellor in 1970 and 1971. In the latter case, his party won an absolute majority for the first time in Austria's history, which allowed Kreisky to form a single-party majority government (Kreisky II<sup>8</sup>).

When the SPÖ took office, it had to revise its former agenda as an opposition party, and adopt a more realistic approach to the Eastern Block. The anti-communist rhetoric was calmed down. However, the Austrian politicians' views of the transformations behind the Iron Curtain did not indicate a marked improvement of the relations.<sup>9</sup> On various occasions, the Chancellor reemphasized his belief that "there are no signs of liberalization, especially in the context of the events of 1968".<sup>10</sup> When the Social Democrats came to power, the Chancellor revised his approach to the Eastern Bloc countries, which was recognized in the MFA's official documents. Kreisky viewed the changes in Central and Eastern Europe as slow and totally dependent on Moscow's decisions. In The International Advertising Association in February 1973, Kreisky said that the Western democracies, including Austria, had a real obligation to exert an influence on "the hundreds of thousands of people from across the demarcation line that divides Europe into two parts, who have daily access to the Austrian radio and television".<sup>11</sup> According to the Chancellor, the fulfillment of that obligation did not violate the principle of neutrality. Moreover, in his view, the Austrian State Treaty provided tools to promote democracy in Europe.

Bruno Kreisky introduced wide-ranging reforms of the legal system, higher education and social care, for which he won support and recognition in Austria. In his foreign policy, Kreisky pursued the principle of active neutrality. In the first few years after the State Treaty came into force, the Austrian governments had tried to create opportunities for the cooperation between the East and the West. This principle was also followed by Kreisky. It was met with approval by Polish politicians

<sup>8</sup> B. Kreisky, *Im Strom der Politik. Erfahrungen eines Europäers*, Wien 1988, pp. 25-50.

<sup>9</sup> B. Kreisky, *Die Zeit in der wir leben. Betrachtungen zur internationalen Politik*, Wien 1978, pp. 73-102, 107-129.

<sup>10</sup> W. Jarzabek, *Wpływ wydarzeń 1968 r. na politykę zagraniczną PRL*, „Dzieje Najnowsze”, 2008, No. 1, pp. 71-85.

<sup>11</sup> MFAA D.IV Austria, z.47/77, w. 7, *Notatka, op. cit.*, p. 3.

as it offered opportunities for signing economic agreements that were designed to compensate for the poor economic growth in the Communist countries.<sup>12</sup>

The following quotation shows how the Polish MFA viewed Chancellor Kreisky:

“Kreisky is a politician with a strong pro-Western orientation, who skillfully responds to developments in world politics. Despite his anti-communist stand and selective approach to the socialist countries, he aspires to be a European statesman, who is especially keen to normalize the relations between various European countries, to maintain Austria’s position as an active partner in the European dialog, and seek conciliatory solutions. He is able to identify social moods, and, if need arises, he can opportunistically ignore all restrictions, his party’s guidelines and ideological orders. With his great sense of humor, he replies to his opponents’ arguments with retorts. He can tactically capitalize on all of the mistakes his opponents have made. He is always eager to get strongly involved in discussion on every topic, demonstrating a fighting spirit. Many people in Austria dislike Kreisky; some for his Jewish origins, others for his family ‘industrialist’ background, and others for his anti-Semite comments (he was alleged to have called Simon Wiesenthal, head of the Jewish Historical Documentation Centre, a ‘Jewish Nazi’).<sup>13</sup>

The above note was written before the first visit of Kreisky, who was Foreign Affairs Minister at the time.

Bruno Kreisky’s visits to Poland took place in two different periods in the history of Polish diplomacy. The first one, when Kreisky arrived as Foreign Minister in March 1960, fell in the Cold War era, at the time when the Polish MFA was totally dependent on Moscow’s decisions<sup>14</sup>. The subsequent visits, as Austrian Chancellor, from 1973 onwards, took place in the détente period,<sup>15</sup> marked by the easing of strained relations. After the first meeting, Kreisky formed a favorable opinion of the Polish diplomats. In his memoirs, he called them “brave dreamers, who were aware of their political limitations”.

#### 24-26 JUNE 1973 VISIT

The 1970s was the most dynamic period in the postwar history of the Polish–Austrian relations. Both countries capitalized on the atmosphere of the détente period and

<sup>12</sup> W. Jarzabek, *Polska wobec Konferencji Bezpieczeństwa i Współpracy w Europie. Plany i rzeczywistość 1964-1975*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 19-23.

<sup>13</sup> MFAA D.IV, Austria, z.47/77, w. 7, The document *Notatka biograficzna (Biographical note)* dated 1973, and produced in connection with the Chancellor’s first visit to Poland, was supplemented with a one-page text about Kreisky’s wife, Vera. The text contained information about her background, education, interests, family life and relationship with her husband: “What Vera Kreisky appreciates most about her husband is, as she puts it, is his peace of mind and tolerance”.

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed report on the meeting see A. Kisztełińska-Węgrzyńska, *Pierwsza wizyta Bruno Kreisky’ego w Polsce w dniach 1-3 marca 1960 roku w świetle dokumentów Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych*, „Rocznik Polsko-Niemiecki”, vol. 21, 2013, pp. 50-70.

<sup>15</sup> For insights into the political background of the Polish MFA’s activity in that period see W. Jarzabek, *Dyplomacja polska w warunkach odprężenia (styczeń 1969-lipiec 1975)*, in: *Historia dyplomacji polskiej*, vol. VI, W. Michowicz, W. Materski (eds.), Warszawa 2010, pp. 662-692.

international dialog.<sup>16</sup> At that time the Polish-Austrian relations could develop in the new geopolitical conditions conducive to cooperation, which was further reinforced by the legal agreements signed in 1970-1972.<sup>17</sup> That period was also marked by more frequent contacts at the governmental, ministerial and parliamentary levels.<sup>18</sup>

Kreisky's second visit to Poland was regarded as the most crucial of all his meetings with the Polish politicians. The chancellor saw the need for strong cooperation with the Soviet bloc countries in the context of the ongoing energy crisis and was intent on thwarting an economic downturn to avoid similar problems that affected his country in the interwar period. He tried to win the support of the Polish politicians, who after the fixing of the western border issue with Germany, were more eager to cooperate with the countries of Western Europe. Austria was one such country, and its neutral status made it a credible partner for Poland.<sup>19</sup>

The build-up to the Austrian Chancellor's first visit to Communist Poland coincided with the heated discussion on the ratification of the December 7, 1970 Treaty of Warsaw that normalized the relations with the German Federal Republic. Austria was not strongly involved in the debate on the German-Polish relations in 1970-1972. The Polish MFA closely followed the developments in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States as these countries were perceived as political forces that could exert an influence on West Germany's government.<sup>20</sup> In the first half of the 1970s, the Polish diplomats were increasingly active on the political stage as they wanted to capitalize on the favorable international situation and the OSCE contribution.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The developments in the Polish foreign policy of that period are discussed in W. Jarzabek, *Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa wobec polityki wschodniej Republiki Federalnej Niemiec w latach 1966-1976. Wymiar dwustronny i międzynarodowy*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 396-413.

<sup>17</sup> Major civil treaties from that period include the 18 July 1972 mutual visa waiver agreement, which was concluded in Vienna for an indefinite period. The Polish side was represented by Władysław Wojtasik, the Austrian side by Otto Eiselsberg. The agreement was complemented by the consular convention dated 2 October 1972 and signed by Józef Czyrek and Dr Heinrich Haymerle. The convention was then complemented by the Joint Declaration between the Government of the Polish People's Republic and the Austrian Federal Government, which was signed on the same day and confirmed the conditions of the political and economic cooperation between the two countries.

<sup>18</sup> Besides the Chancellor's visits, there were a few other visits of Austrian officials in that decade, including the visit of Foreign Minister Rudolf Kirchschläger (13-16 January 1971), and the visit of the members of the Federal Assembly with its President Roland Minkowitsch (2-6 October 1978). Several Polish politicians visited Austria at that time: Foreign Minister Stefan Olszowski (12-15 June 1972), Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz (30 September-3 October 1974), Chairman of the Council of State Henryk Jabłoński (26-30 April 1978), and a group of Polish deputies to the Sejm, headed by Deputy Speaker Andrzej Benez (1-6 April 1975).

<sup>19</sup> In the years 1968-1975 the number of countries with which Poland maintained diplomatic relations rose from 98 to 123, B. Grzeloński, *Dyplomacja polska w XX wieku*, Warszawa 2006, pp. 129-130.

<sup>20</sup> D. Jarosz, M. Pasztor, *Polska-Francja 1970-1980. Relacje wyjątkowe?*, Warszawa 2006, p. 68.

<sup>21</sup> For more details see W. Jarzabek, *Polska wobec Konferencji Bezpieczeństwa i Współpracy w Europie. Plany i rzeczywistość 1964-1975*, Warszawa 2008.

The Austrian Chancellor was first invited to pay an official visit to Poland during the Polish Prime Minister's visit to Vienna in 1965.<sup>22</sup> However, in the wake of the 1968-1970 social unrest in Poland, which resulted in the cooling of mutual relations, the meeting did not take place. The Polish government re-invited the Chancellor in January 1971 during the visit of the Austrian Foreign Minister, Rudolf Kirchschläger, and during the visit of Minister Stefan Olszowski to Vienna in June 1972. During the farewell meeting with the Polish ambassador to Austria, Lesław Wojtyga, Chancellor Kreisky proposed 24-26 June 1973 as the time of his visit to Poland. He also said that he would come to Poland with his wife and the leaders of three parliamentary groups.<sup>23</sup>

The documents dated May 1973, prepared by Józef Czyrek, stated the objectives of the visit. The major purposes were to improve the bilateral relations and develop cooperation in the less active areas of the economy. In addition, the trade agreements signed in the early 1970s needed to be amended (likewise, visa regulations).<sup>24</sup> One of the key topics to discuss was international relations, notably the Treaty of Warsaw, the OSCE contribution, and the future perspectives of the Austrian-German relations. Among the less important issues on the agenda were the need for the conclusion of a long-term economic partnership agreement, revision of the Poland-related content in the history textbooks used in Austrian schools, environmental problems, and cooperation between the Austrian and Polish parliaments. The Polish MFA approved the suggested time of the Chancellor's visit.

The Austrian preparations for the visit were described in an article published in *Biuletyn Specjalny PAP* (the Polish Press Agency Special Newsletter) dated 18 June 1973.<sup>25</sup> In a special interview given to the *Arbeiter Zeitung* daily, the Chancellor talked about his upcoming visit. Kreisky said that he was going to discuss key issues in the field of energy, and that he hoped that his visit would result in lucrative business ventures. He indicated that he would be accompanied by a group of experts on imports to Austria, and that he would leave more detailed arrangements to working parties within the binding trade agreements. The Chancellor also added that his long-term plans were not completely consistent with the applicable laws, which is why he was willing to discuss future changes to them.

The Chancellor's visit was reported in a memo titled *Pilna notatka (Urgent memo)*, dated 9 July 1973, which was submitted to Deputy Minister Stanisław

<sup>22</sup> For more information on Józef Cyrankiewicz's visit to Austria see A. Kisztelińska-Węgrzyńska, *Relacje polsko-austriackie w latach 1965-1968 z perspektywy Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych PRL*, in: *Kraje...*, pp. 191-204.

<sup>23</sup> MFAA, D.IV Austria, z.44/77, w. 7. *Pilna notatka dotycząca wizyty w Polsce Kanclerza Austrii – Bruno Kreisky'ego, 10 maja 1973.*

<sup>24</sup> A. Kisztelińska-Węgrzyńska, *Traktaty polsko-austriackie z lat 1955-1989. Wybór umów dwustronnych*, Łódź 2011, pp. 3-4.

<sup>25</sup> *Kanclerz Austrii o swej przyszłej wizycie w Polsce*, *Biuletyn Specjalny PAP*, No. 141A/18.06.1973, p. 5.

Trepczyński and other state officials. The memo, written by Józef Czyrek, addressed the direct effects of the meeting.<sup>26</sup> Its author criticized Austria's policy towards the Eastern Bloc countries at the time. However, he also remarked that as Austria "had some catching up to do", it was set on improving East-West relations, while the fact that it bordered on Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia was conducive to playing a more significant role in the "détente" period.

During the meeting with the Chancellor, Polish Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz, who talked about the existing problems in the Austrian-Polish relations, focused on the economy. The Prime Minister emphasized the fact that the bilateral trade figures were still as low as before World War II. The Polish side presented an expected level of cooperation and the conditions to achieve it.<sup>27</sup> Major impediments included high customs duties as well as limitations on the supplies of energy, construction and assembly services, and the automotive industry.<sup>28</sup> However, the actual situation was not as bad as the Polish side viewed it. The figures for 1960-1972 were indicative of marked improvement in the trade balance. Back in 1960, the Austrian imports to Poland totaled 813 million shillings while the exports stood at 526 million. By contrast, in 1972, the total of Austrian imports was 1,586 million shillings whereas the exports were peaking at 1,825 million.<sup>29</sup> According to the Austrian politicians, the trade relations had improved as a result of the industrial growth in Poland as well as the promotion of Polish products and improved sales conditions.<sup>30</sup>

During the meetings with the Polish politicians, Chancellor Kreisky discussed the issues of the relations between Austria and its neighbors, the OSCE's future, and mutual exchange. He pointed to the ongoing conflict with Czechoslovakia over the plundered property during World War II and to the dispute over the Yugoslavian minority in Austria. He also thanked the Polish side for its mediation in the dispute with Prague. The Austrian delegation showed an evasive approach to the issue of the Polish-West German relations, refraining from any comments on the dispute over the ratification of the Treaty of Warsaw.

<sup>26</sup> MFAA, D.IV Austria, z. 44/77, w. 7. *Austria-1973, Pilna notatka z 9 lipca 1973.*

<sup>27</sup> A detailed evaluation of the trade between Poland and Austria until 1973 is discussed in: J. Sikorski, *Przyszłość polsko-austriackich stosunków gospodarczych*, „Sprawy Międzynarodowe” 1973, No. 9, pp. 104-113.

<sup>28</sup> Active economic cooperation was based on long-term trade agreements, the first of which was signed on 9 September 1971. In accordance with its provisions, all payments were to be settled in a convertible currency rather than through the clearing systems which had been used before. The quota system was abolished and the trade was liberalized. The principle of most favorable treatment was officially confirmed in accordance with GATT Article 1. The agreement also stipulated conditions for the free flow of goods and finance.

<sup>29</sup> J. Stairbacher, *Austriacko-polskie stosunki gospodarcze*, „Austria-Polska. Czasopismo Społeczno-Kulturalne”, 1973, p. 13.

<sup>30</sup> R. Salinger, *Austriacko-Polska wymiana towarowa wyrazem dobrych stosunków między obu krajami*, „Austria-Polska. Czasopismo Społeczno-Kulturalne”, 1971, p. 33.

Regarding the Austrian-Polish relations, the Chancellor pointed to their solid base. In his speech, Kreisky assessed the conditions for the trade development. He pointed to the poor transport network; in his view, major modes of transport, including rail, road and water networks, needed to be expanded. The networks were overloaded, which is why a proposal was put forward to expand the existing waterways through the Danube-Main-Rhine canal and the Danube-Oder-Elbe canal. To coordinate the growth of the economic relations, five working teams were set up: a) for fuels and energy, b) for the steel and iron industry, c) for the agricultural and food industry, d) for the construction industry, and e) for the political issues and the final communiqué.

The most important decisions were made during the plenary session. Austria put forward a proposal to co-finance the construction of a 300-600 MW power plant in Poland through the supplies of equipment worth 100-200 million dollars. Other proposals included transit through Czechoslovakia, a contract for the purchase of 0.7 million tons of Polish coal per year at favorable rates, and expansion of the Płock refinery. Among the most important offers was the 10-million-dollar contract for the Budimex enterprise, which was commissioned to do construction work in Austria.<sup>31</sup>

In the conclusion of the document, it was positively outlined that during the press conference the Chancellor said that his visit "had opened a new era in the mutual relations". Also, it was emphasized that a special team should be established to assess the implementation of the adopted recommendations.<sup>32</sup>

Bruno Kreisky's visit to Poland resulted in economic agreements concluded in 1973 and 1974.<sup>33</sup> Among them was one of the most important trade agreements signed after World War II: the contract for the electrical energy supplies from Poland to Austria and the contract for the import of investment assets and appliances on credit terms to Poland.<sup>34</sup> On the same day, two other documents were signed: the Agreement between the Polish People's Republic and the Republic of Austria to pre-

---

<sup>31</sup> In magazine articles, Austrian politicians many times emphasized the significance of those agreements for the development of the mutual relations. Cf. J. Staribacher, *Austriacko-polskie stosunki gospodarcze*, „Austria-Polska. Czasopismo gospodarczo-kulturalne”, 1979, No. 107, p. 9, R. Salinger, *Polsko-austriackie stosunki gospodarcze w fazie konsolidacji*, „Austria-Polska. Czasopismo Gospodarczo-Kulturalne”, 1979, No. 107, p. 53.

<sup>32</sup> MFAA, D.IV Austria, z.44/77, w. 7. *Austria-1973, Pilna notatka z 9 lipca 1973*.

<sup>33</sup> Another trade agreement concluded on 6 September for a period of 10 years regulated the growth of economic, industrial, and scientific-technological cooperation as well as the principles of industrial cooperation between both countries. Yet another agreement was signed on 22 September 1976 for the years 1977-1981. Poland and Austria agreed to adjust the GATT provisions to their own trade flow, including the principle of most favorable treatment. The Agreement on the Development of Economic, Industrial and Scientific-Technological Cooperation between the Government of the Polish People's Republic and the Austrian Federal Government, signed on 6 September 1973, came into force on 5 November 1973.

<sup>34</sup> The agreement concluded on 2 October 1974 came into force on the same day. In the years 1973-1974, a total of seven bilateral agreements were signed. Most of them are in force to date.



vent double taxation in income and wealth taxes, and the long-term program of the development of the economic, industrial, and scientific-technological cooperation.

The news releases on the Chancellor's visit to Poland focused on his trips to Kraków, Katowice and Oświęcim and the meetings he attended in these places.<sup>35</sup> The Polish dailies did not provide any commentary on the significance or effects of the visit. There was hardly any coverage in magazines, either. The only exception was a long commentary by Marian Podkowiński in the magazine *Perspektywy*. The author gave a positive assessment of both countries' contribution in the build-up to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and of Chancellor Kreisky's strong commitment to maintaining his country's neutrality. In the concluding section, the correspondent focused on the improved visa services and the growth of tourism, which he saw as positive elements of economic cooperation.<sup>36</sup> Favorable views of Kreisky's government were expressed by Jan Moszczeński and Erwin Scharf.<sup>37</sup> On the Austrian side, the feedback was also positive. For example, Fred Sinowatz, the Federal Minister of Education and Art, assessed the Austrian-Polish cultural relations in favorable terms. Among the praiseworthy projects and initiatives were the Austrian reading room in Warsaw (established in 1965), the work of the textbook committee, the library cooperation, the Austrian-Polish Society in Vienna, and the personal diplomacy of Tadeusz Ritter and Franz Theodor Csokor.

#### 31 JANUARY - 2 FEBRUARY 1975 VISIT

On the eve of Chancellor Kreisky's third visit, Poland's foreign policy focused on the future of its western border along the Oder-Neisse line. Though in this respect Poland's relations with 'third' countries were of an informative nature and were not directly linked with the border issue, during all bilateral meetings the Polish politicians emphasized the need for maintaining the status quo in the Polish-German relations. For western countries the 1970 Treaty of Warsaw was a recognition of the Oder-Neisse border by West Germany. However, the Polish diplomats had doubts whether this was the case.<sup>38</sup> During the meetings with representatives of western states, the Polish side tried to encourage the western press to address the issue of the lack of compensation for the victims of Nazism.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Kanclerz Austrii Bruno Kreisky przybędzie do Polski*, „Głos Robotniczy” 22 June 1973, No. 147, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> M. Podkowiński, *Neutralność i współlistnienie*, „Perspektywy” 1973, No. 25, p. 26.

<sup>37</sup> J. Moszczeński, *Wyborcza jesień przed Alpami*, „Życie Warszawy” 1973, No. 265, p. 5; E. Scharf, *Niebezpieczeństwo zagrażające neutralności Austrii*, „Problemy Pokoju” 1973, No. 10.

<sup>38</sup> W. Jarząbek, *Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa...*, p. 408.

<sup>39</sup> W. Jarząbek, *Władze PRL wobec problemu reparacji i odszkodowań od Republiki Federalnej Niemiec 1953-1989*, „Dzieje Najnowsze” 2005, No. 2, p. 91.

At the invitation of Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz, Bruno Kreisky arrived on his third (this time unofficial) visit with his wife on 31 January 1975. The Chancellor was accompanied by Finance Minister Hannes Androsch and Head of the Chancellor's Office Alfred Reiter. The main topic of the meeting, which was held in Zakopane, was scientific-technological exchange. The Polish side was headed by Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz.<sup>40</sup>

By the mid-1970s, the Polish public opinion had grown accustomed to frequent visits of top politicians from non-Eastern Bloc countries. The editors of Polish dailies were selective as to which international stories to include on the front pages. In this respect, unofficial visits were given hardly coverage in the Polish media. No wonder that the press commentaries on the Kreisky-Jaroszewicz meeting were scarce. The only exception was a one-page feature article by Marian Podkowiński on the contemporary Austrian-German relations. Its author praised the Austrian Chancellor for his determination to sign economic partnership agreements with East Germany.<sup>41</sup> Of greater significance to the Polish side was the upcoming visit of Austrian President Rudolf Kirchschläger, scheduled for the same year.

This event is worth elaborating in order to provide a better overall perspective of the then Polish-Austrian relations. Rudolf Kirchschläger's visit on 20-24 May 1975 was the first ever visit of an Austrian President to Poland. Prior to his trip, the President had invited the Polish correspondents to a special meeting so that they could present the upcoming event in a suitable manner and give it the publicity it deserved.<sup>42</sup> Accompanied by Foreign Minister Erich Bielka-Kaltreu, and First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) Edward Gierek, the President visited the city of Katowice and Westerplatte in Gdańsk, where the first battle of World War II had been fought. The main objectives of the visit were to enhance the trade cooperation and to start cooperation on third country markets.<sup>43</sup> At the time, the Austrian affairs were covered in the context of the parliamentary elections and the world crisis.<sup>44</sup>

Those visits were recorded in the MFA archives. It was indicated that the talks on the topics initiated by the Chancellor were continued by the President and resulted in a treaty signed on 23 May 1975.<sup>45</sup> In their talks with their Polish colleagues, both

<sup>40</sup> *Nieoficjalna wizyta kanclerza Bruno Kreisky'ego*, „Głos Robotniczy” February 1975, No. 27, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> M. Pokowiński, *Stanowczy kanclerz*, „Perspektywy” 1975, No. 6, p. 8.

<sup>42</sup> M. Podkowiński, *Obiad w Hofburgu [przed wizytą prezydenta Austrii w Polsce]*, „Perspektywy” 1975, No. 20, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> MFAA D.IV Austria, z.16/81, w.13. *Notatka informacyjna o wizycie prezydenta Austrii Rudolfa Kirchschlägera w Polsce (20-24.V.1975)*. The two sides agreed to start joint investments in Congo and Cameroon, and to extend the scientific-technological cooperation. At the end of the meeting, it was announced that Prime Minister Jaroszewicz would pay a visit to Austria.

<sup>44</sup> Z. Ramotowski, *Mat kanclerski. Austria po wyborach*, „Życie Warszawy” 1975, No. 233, p. 5; J. Moszczeński, *Kreisky po raz trzeci*, „Życie Warszawy” 1975, No. 260, p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> The Agreement on the Cooperation in Health Protection between the Polish People's Republic

Austrian politicians emphasized the need for extending the economic cooperation. Those activities were continued during working team meetings held from 30 June – 2 July 1975 in Vienna. The Polish side was represented by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Eugeniusz Kułaga; the Austrian side by Secretary General of the MFA: Heinrich Haymerle.

The 1975 diplomatic activities were concluded by Polish Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz's visit to Vienna on 11-13 September. In his talks with the Chancellor, the Prime Minister stressed the role of culture in the bilateral relations and the need for the growth of the tourism industry through the abolition of visas.<sup>46</sup> The following is the Chancellor's comments on the meeting with Jaroszewicz, which were published in the *Austria-Polska* magazine:

"We have come to regard as our neighbors not only the bordering countries, but also all the Danube basin countries as well as those countries, such as Poland, with which for centuries we have maintained strong links. With respect to those countries, we have consistently pursued a policy of normalization, as I called it in 1959, and my visit to Warsaw 15 years ago was instrumental in this process. It was that kind of policy that was central to further developments that resulted in European détente".<sup>47</sup>

Chancellor Kreisky's third visit was one of many working meetings held in 1975, and it opened a new era of bilateral contacts. They involved coordinated multi-faceted activities that were designed to find solutions for the new institutions established to improve the economic and social exchange. The Polish-Austrian contacts were one of the many arenas of bilateral relations that were supported and developed by the top officials of the Polish Communist regime, which in the 1970s was open to the West. The CSCE final document was regarded as an act that confirmed the outcome of World War II (along with the post-war borders). Most of the western diplomats, including the Austrian ones, admitted that there was no other choice but accept the status quo. Even though after 1975 the German issue still ranked high on its foreign policy agenda, Poland became increasingly oriented towards the remaining western countries.

#### THE SEPTEMBER 1976 VISIT

In the years 1976 and 1977 the relations with Austria were not prioritized compared to western democracies with which Poland developed its diplomatic contacts. Historians of diplomacy say that this period was marked by "the intensified political

---

and the Republic of Austria, signed on 23 May 1975, came into force on 6 June 1976. It was not published in the Journal of Laws and is in force to date.

<sup>46</sup> *Owocna wizyta państwowa*, „Austria-Polska. Czasopismo Gospodarczo-Kulturalne”, 1975, No. 94, p. 11.

<sup>47</sup> B. Kreisky, *Dwudziestolecie traktatu państwowego*, „Austria-Polska. Czasopismo Gospodarczo-Kulturalne”, 1975, No. 94, p. 15.

efforts to reinforce Poland's economic position" and the symptoms of economic recovery, which resulted from the increased status of Poland among the Eastern Bloc countries. Based on the MFA documents from that period, Poland emerged as a country whose support was sought by western democracies. The economic figures were clearly indicative of the positive trends in Polish-Austrian trade, and, according to the Polish print media, the economic forecast predicted continuous growth.<sup>48</sup>

In the second half of the 1970s, the Polish foreign policy started to capitalize on the diplomatic work of Edward Gierek and Foreign Minister Stefan Olszowski. After concluding agreements with Portugal and Spain, Poland maintained active contacts with all of the Western European countries. At the time, Austria was among the countries that were keen to develop trade relations with Central Europe, including Poland. Austrian enterprises had very good experiences in this area. A good example is the VOEST-ALPINE company which cooperated with Polish enterprises in developing countries. The leaders of the Communist Party in Poland sought new paths of development, and that time cooperation with non-Comecon countries was generally endorsed.<sup>49</sup>

Chancellor Kreisky's fourth visit, which was also unofficial, was scheduled for 16-19 September 1976. This working meeting was preceded by the visit of Chairman of the Council of State Henryk Jabłoński to Vienna (26-30 April 1976). The Chancellor met with Secretary General Edward Gierek. The Polish side's preparatory materials contained a remark that emphasized the significance of unofficial meetings, with Poland setting a good example for other Eastern Bloc countries. A similar meeting format was proposed to Kreisky by Hungary. In fact, it was the Austrians who initiated such 'direct' talks, which superseded consultations with non-decision makers. As the political relations evolved in the 1970s, the Chancellor spoke highly of Edward Gierek and Stefan Olszowski.<sup>50</sup>

A week ahead of the visit, referred to as semi-official, the Polish Embassy in Vienna supplied the list of the delegation members and the planned agenda. The Chancellor and Minister Josef Staribacher were accompanied by a doctor and a security officer.<sup>51</sup> Among the topics on the agenda were world security, the East-West dialog, the Middle East issue, large projects as well as energetic and economic cooperation in third country markets. The Austrian delegation arrived in Warsaw on the late evening of 16 September, and traveled to Łańsk, where the sessions were scheduled to be held.

<sup>48</sup> A. Skrzypek, *Dyplomacja polska między Wschodem a Zachodem (1976-1981)*, in: *Historia dyplomacji...*, pp. 731-733.

<sup>49</sup> H. Apfalter, *Koncern VOEST-ALPINE jako partner polskiej gospodarki*, „Austria-Polska. Czasopismo Gospodarczo-Kulturalne”, 1979, No. 107, p. 55.

<sup>50</sup> MFAA D. IV Austria, z.31/82, w. 4, t. 49. Tezy do rozmów Towarzysza Premiera P. Jaroszewicza z Kanclerzem Austrii Bruno Kreisky'm podczas nieoficjalnej wizyty w Polsce 16-20 IX 1976.

<sup>51</sup> MFAA D. IV Austria, z.31/82, w. 4, t. 49, Ciphertext No. 2526/III of 9 September 1976.

For the Polish side, one of the key economic objectives was the inclusion of the domestic enterprises in the construction of the West-Austria-Gasleitung gas pipeline, in participation with French companies. Another proposal was the involvement of the Budimex company in the reconstruction of the *Reichsbrücke* bridge, based on its previous steel construction experience. Another appealing offer for the Polish side was construction of the Oberdorf-Voitsberg coalmine. Other major projects in third country markets included the construction of cement plants in Turkey and Tunisia, the construction of an artificial oil refinery in Algeria or the construction of a phosphate fertilizer plant in Yugoslavia as well as the construction of sugar refineries in Egypt, Ecuador and the Philippines.<sup>52</sup> Among minor joint projects were the transfer of electrical energy, the construction of systems to produce petroleum coke, cooperation with the *Steyr-Daimler-Puch* group, and the employment of Polish specialists in Austrian companies.

The last economic problem on the agenda was customs duties. The concern of the Polish side was the elimination of duties between Austria and the EEC, which was scheduled for January 1977. It was announced that special provisions would be made to regulate the exchange of goods on terms favorable to Poland. The bargaining chip was the act of 14 May 1977 providing a basis for foreign entities to do business in Poland.<sup>53</sup>

The cultural agenda included topics such as the work of the textbook committee, the exchange of theater and opera artists, the collaboration of research institutions and the need for consultations on issues of higher education and science at the ministerial level. Positive feedback was provided on the cooperation of university rectors and joint research projects in science. In the course of the discussion, the participants stressed the significance of the Polish-Austrian Joint Committee for Economic, Industrial, Scientific and Technological Cooperation and recommended that it should continue its work.

That meeting did not make any headlines in the Polish dailies, and was analyzed only in a few feature articles in the Polish magazines.<sup>54</sup> The comments on the Chancellor's visit focused on the traditional and new elements of the bilateral relations, such as trade, economic reforms in Austria and the Austrian-Polish Society.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> MFAA D. IV Austria, z.31/82, w. 4, t. 49. Tezy do rozmów Towarzysza Premiera P. Jaroszewicza z Kanclerzem Austrii Bruno Kreisky'm podczas nieoficjalnej wizyty w Polsce 16-20 IX 1976.

<sup>53</sup> Two days after Chancellor Kreisky left Poland, an important trade deal was signed in Vienna: the Long-term Agreement of 22 September 1976 on the Commodity Turnover and Payments and Economic Cooperation between the Government of the Polish People's Republic and the Austrian Federal Government.

<sup>54</sup> E. Lasota, B. Kreisky, *Sylwetka tygodnia*, „Tygodnik Kulturalny” 1976, No. 40, p. 2; T. Bodulan, *Z sympatii i wzajemnych korzyści*, „Czas” 1976, No. 48, p. 21; T. Brodzic, *Mosty i polityka*, „Prawo i Życie” 1976, No. 46, p. 13, M. Podkowiński, *W stronę odprężenia*, „Perspektywy” 1976, No. 49, p. 18.

<sup>55</sup> W. Kozub, *Socjaldemokracja austriacka a powiązania Austrii z EWG*, „Sprawy Międzynarodowe” 1976, 2, p. 119-128, Z. Kamiński, *Mekka na dwa tygodnie*, *Korespondencja z Innsbrucku*, „Życie Warszawy” 1976, No. 14, p. 6; *Na temat wizyty Henryka Jabłońskiego w Austrii* („Perspektywy” 1976,

Two weeks after the visit, the Polish Press Agency Special Newsletter published a detailed commentary of the Chancellor's speech delivered at the meeting of the Social-Democratic deputies in Linz. In it, Kreisky outlined his vision of the foreign policy for the years to come.<sup>56</sup> He also commented on the disarmament processes and the role of trade with the Eastern Bloc countries, speaking in favor of granting new credits to the Central European countries, and strengthening this field of Austria's foreign policy.<sup>57</sup>

This approach to future cooperation met with strong approval from the Polish politicians as it was in line with their foreign policy priorities after the signing of the Helsinki Accords. The top objectives were to maintain good or at least proper relations with France, the USA, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries, to maintain and strengthen the external funding of the Polish economy, to obtain access to technological upgrades for the economy, and to promote Polish culture overseas.<sup>58</sup>

The Chancellor's fourth visit to Poland resulted in the acceleration of the diplomatic activities aimed at concluding new bilateral agreements, which led to the further growth of the bilateral relations. As a result, in the years 1977-1978 a total of five agreements were signed.<sup>59</sup>

#### FIFTH VISIT: 24-26 NOVEMBER 1979

The Chancellor's last visit to Poland was preceded by a working team meeting, during which legal conditions for further talks had been agreed on. From 6 to 11 November 1979, the Joint Committee for Economic, Industrial, Scientific and

---

No. 17, „Życie Warszawy” 1976, No. 92, „Życie Warszawy” 1976, No. 96, p. 5, ŻW 98-103); A. Czarnocki, *Austria a Europejska Wspólnota Gospodarcza*, „Studia Nauk Politycznych” 1976, No. 2, p. 131-152; J. Wańkiewicz, *30 lat Towarzystwa Austria-Polska. Piotr Jaroszewicz i Bruno Kreisky o rozwoju polsko-austriackiej współpracy. Korespondencja z Wiednia*, „Życie Warszawy” 1976, No. 249, p. 4, No. 250, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> *Kanclerz Kreisky o polityce zagranicznej*, Biuletyn Specjalny Polskiej Agencji Prasowej, No. 1124/14 October 1976, p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 9.

<sup>58</sup> A. Skrzypek, *Dyplomacja polska*, op. cit., p. 732.

<sup>59</sup> These were: 1) the Agreement of 26 April 1977 between the Government of the Polish People's Republic and the Austrian Federal Government on the Implementation of the Agreement between Poland and Austria on Cultural and Scientific Cooperation, which was signed on 14 June 1972 in Vienna; 2) the Trilateral Agreement of 31 August 1977 between the Government of the Polish People's Republic, the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic on the Security and Completion of Deliveries, Transit and Reception of Electrical Energy from Poland through Czechoslovakia to Austria; 3) the Agreement of 16 December 1977 between the Government of the Polish People's Republic and the Austrian Federal Government on Customs Cooperation and Assistance; 4) the Extradition Agreement of 27 February 1978 between the Polish People's Republic and the Republic of Austria; 5) the Agreement of 27 February 1978 between the Polish People's Republic and the Republic of Austria on Legal Assistance in Criminal Cases.

Technological Cooperation held its meeting in Vienna.<sup>60</sup> The main point on its agenda was to streamline the exchange of goods. During that meeting, on 7 November Polish Foreign Minister Stefan Olszowski spoke with Chancellor Kreisky, who suggested that both countries cooperate in a huge energy recovery project. This fact was reported to the Polish MFA by Ambassador Andrzej Jedynak, who asked for an immediate reaction. The Austrians put forward a proposal to construct a nuclear power station in Poland. The investment was to be financed by Austria and West Germany, while the transit was to go through Hungary or Czechoslovakia. In the Chancellor's view, the proposal was designed to broaden the East-West cooperation. Kreisky also wanted to avoid a wave of social protests against the construction of this facility in Austria.<sup>61</sup> Such protests were held during the construction of Austria's only nuclear power station in Zwentendorf, which never went into operation. According to the Chancellor, the government lost the support of 6% of its voters, most of whom were young people.

The Austrian Chancellor was invited to Poland by Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz. Kreisky was accompanied by Vice-Chancellor and Minister of Finance Hannes Androsch, Minister of Industry, Trade and Craft Dr Josef Staribacher, and a group of senior officials and experts.<sup>62</sup> The Austrian delegates wished to discuss the largest possible number of topics with the decision-makers. "Delegating top issues to officials is doomed to failure ... such issues should be resolved only at the political level. This approach shifts responsibility away from the officials".<sup>63</sup>

Bruno Kreisky's fifth and last visit (24-26 November 1979) concluded the previous efforts geared towards developing the bilateral economic relations. The Austrian and Polish sides discussed the details of the trade exchange at the level of small business entities, and adjusted the terms and conditions of agreements to the changing European reality.

The post-visit commentaries were largely favorable in tone and centered on the benefits of the economic exchange between the two countries.<sup>64</sup> The Polish dailies praised foreign policy solutions. "International prestige has become one of the sources of Austria's new national identity". There were many references to the political successes of the Social Democrats, the Austrian reforms, and the active foreign pol-

<sup>60</sup> The results of the working group meeting were elaborated by a joint committee meeting in Vienna from 20 to 24 November. The outcomes were reported directly to Minister J. Staribacher, who shared them during his visit to Poland. MFAA, D.IV Austria, z.4/84, w. 3, t.1.

<sup>61</sup> Ciphertext No. 1977/IV of 8 November 1979. MFAA D.IV Austria, z.4/84, w. 3, t.1.

<sup>62</sup> The arrival of the Austrian delegation was covered by „Życie Warszawy” of 24 & 25 November 1979, p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> Ciphertext No. 1977/IV of 8 November 1979. MFAA D.IV Austria, z.4/84, w. 3.

<sup>64</sup> A. Lubowski, *Austria: Wyrwać wśród mocniejszych. Korespondencja z Austrii*, „Życie Gospodarcze” 1979, No. 46, p. 15; D. Luliński, *Odnaleziona tożsamość. Korespondencja z Austrii*, „Trybuna Ludu” 1979, No. 276, p. 6; J. Reiter, *Wiedeński widok na świat*, „Życie Warszawy” 1979, No. 277, p. 4; H. Chądzyński, *Bliscy partnerzy. Polska – Austria*, „Życie Warszawy” 1979, No. 276, p. 5.

icy, which was favorable to the Eastern Bloc countries<sup>65</sup>. Janusz Reiter in his article titled *Wiedeński widok na świat* (*The Viennese view of the world*) pointed to the fact that Kreisky as a politician was more popular than his own party. The quoted poll figures showed that the Chancellor's position in Austria was unsurpassed.<sup>66</sup>

The working team developed suitable agreements during the following three months. These were the last agreements concluded between Poland and Austria before the declaration of martial law in Poland and the consequent freezing of the bilateral relations.<sup>67</sup> The year 1979 marked the end of the prosperity period in the Polish-Austrian economic relations. The trade figures peaked at 9.4 billion schillings in 1976. The following years saw a substantial decrease, though the figures were still relatively high compared to the early 1970s.<sup>68</sup>

The working team meetings resulted in subsequent legal solutions, the most important of which is the Protocol dated 20 February 1980. This document complemented the agreement concluded on the same day as well as the previous trade agreements. It listed industrial sectors that were ready for economic cooperation and Polish enterprises that were involved in the trade exchange. The text was supplemented with Austrian proposals for the cooperation with Polish enterprises in third markets. The Austrians proposed nine groups of investments, primarily in the Middle East and Asia.

With the political and economic crisis of the early 1980s, the cooperation of the Polish diplomats with Bruno Kreisky's government declined. The last agreement, signed on 2 May 1980 by Austrian Foreign Affairs Minister Willibald Pahr, concerned purchases of grain in the years 1980-1983. The agreement comprised the conditions for the purchase of 300 tons of grain a year by the Polish side in Austria. It also listed the kinds and quality of exported grains, and specified the competences of the so-called Working Team that was designed to monitor the grain quotas and delivery deadlines. The payment conditions as well as the institutions responsible for transaction financing were determined by the Austrian side. Any cereal exports from Austria to third markets made by the Polish side would always require Vienna's approval.

---

<sup>65</sup> An interesting comment on the work of Polish journalists and reporters covering Austrian affairs was made by Ambassador Jedynek in his September 1979 telegram. He emphasized the need for a permanent correspondent to Vienna, who would provide reliable information to the Polish public opinion about the situation in Austria. The Ambassador also said in his message that while more than 30 reports were published in the Polish media outlets, those stories portrayed Austria as a country of "music, wine and landscapes", which was a stereotype. MFAA, D.IV Austria, z.4/84, w. 3.

<sup>66</sup> J. Reiter, *Wiedeński widok na świat*, „Życie Warszawy”, 24 & 25 September 1979, p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> These were: the Agreement of 20 February 1980 on the Extension of Economic, Industrial Technological Cooperation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises between the Government of the Polish People's Republic and the Austrian Federal Government, and the Protocol of 20 February 1980 on Enhanced Cooperation in Third Country Markets between Polish and Austrian Enterprises.

<sup>68</sup> J. Staribacher, *Austriacko-polskie stosunki gospodarcze*, „Austria – Polska. Czasopismo Gospodarczo-Kulturalne”, 1979, No. 107, p. 9.



The ideas to build a nuclear power station (a project to be co-financed by the Austrian side) or a copper mine in Poland failed to materialize. The plans, which were presented by the Chancellor himself, were designed to make Poland one of Austria's long-term economic partners. They also proved that – in Austrian eyes – Poland stood out from the other countries of the Eastern Bloc. The political crisis in Poland put an end to the period of economic and political cooperation. The last positive event in that period of the Polish-Austrian relations was Prime Minister Edward Babiuch's visit to Vienna on 25-26 June 1980.<sup>69</sup> On 8 December 1981, both countries exchanged diplomatic notes over the suspension of the provisions of The Mutual Visa Waiver Agreement Dated 18 July 1972.<sup>70</sup> In the documents from the 1980s there are many references to Bruno Kreisky's accomplishments. The Austrian politician was praised for the development of the mutual relations and his personal diplomatic efforts. In the 1980s, the Chancellor was several times invited to pay another visit to Poland, but all of the efforts were in vain.<sup>71</sup>

#### CONCLUSIONS

In 1986, Polish historian Henryk Wereszycki found Bruno Kreisky to be "arguably the most prominent statesman of the Second Republic of Austria".<sup>72</sup> The Chancellor won the Austrians' support thanks to his charisma and effective decisions. Under his leadership, in 1971, his party won an absolute majority for the first time in Austria's history. He headed the Social-Democratic government for the next 13 years at the time of Europe's deepening recession. However, building on Austria's neutrality, the Chancellor managed to protect his country from the economic crisis. He capitalized on the agreement on tariff reduction concluded with the EEC, and on the bilateral agreements made with the Comecon countries.

Bruno Kreisky was the first Austrian politician who in the 1960s saw the need to reach out to the Eastern Bloc countries. His active foreign policy, which in terms of priorities was similar to Willy Brandt's diplomacy, gained momentum in the détente period. However, his approach to the Polish politicians was not uncritical. The transcripts of the bilateral talks, disclosed by the Polish sources, show him as a firm and uncompromising politician.

The Polish MFA thoroughly prepared the agendas for the meetings with the Chancellor. A great deal of correspondence was exchanged prior to the first visit.

<sup>69</sup> The following year, Foreign Minister Józef Czyrek paid a working visit to Vienna. For the next three years (until 1984), the diplomatic contacts were frozen.

<sup>70</sup> The agreement was suspended until 30 June 1982. The first attempt to resume the proper relations was made during the visit of former Foreign Minister Erwin Lanc, who came to Warsaw to give a talk at the Polish Institute of International Affairs.

<sup>71</sup> MFAA, D. IV A, z.13/88, w.6. Notatka z rozmowy ministra spraw zagranicznych PRL tow. Ol-szowskiego z federalnym kanclerzem Austrii F. Sinowatzem z dn. 12 czerwca 1985 r. w Wiedniu.

<sup>72</sup> As cited in H. Wereszycki, *Historia Austrii*, Wrocław 1986, p. 313.

The number of letters exchanged in relation to the 1970s visits was incomparably smaller, largely thanks to the resolution of the Western border issue, which topped Poland's foreign policy agenda after World War II. After 1970, when the border was recognized by West Germany, Poland demonstrated a calculated approach towards all attempts of strengthening the bilateral relations with the western countries. On all such occasions, the Polish politicians speculated what benefits Poland could derive from signing particular agreements, and whether or not they could negotiate more favorable conditions. This approach is reflected in both official documents, notes published in the diaries or in the correspondence. The Gierek era was in general marked by greater openness to the West, as a result of which MFA officials were given more discretion to advance their efforts. Formally, the new possibilities were outlined in a 30 January 1973 resolution adopted by the Politburo of the Polish United Workers' Party titled "On the principles of the coordination and organization of the Polish People's Republic's foreign relations". Overall, Poland's relations with Austria in the years 1960-1979 deserve a positive appraisal, compared to the relations with other western countries. While Austria was perceived as a relatively small country both demographically and economically, the Polish side on numerous occasions emphasized Vienna's contribution to strengthening peace in Europe and pointed to its common interests with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

In sum, Bruno Kreisky's visits yielded positive results for Poland. In political terms, the Polish decision-makers gained a strong partner in the build-up to and during the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Poland was perceived as a relatively liberal country, which in some ways could pursue its policies without Moscow's consent, and aimed at broadening its impact on the global stage. With regard to the economic cooperation, Austria set out legal conditions for the exchange of goods, technology transfer, and execution of investments financed through Poland's loans. However, it was in the field of culture that Austria could enjoy the first fruits of its consistently pursued policy of "openness to the East", with Warsaw and Prague being the prime beneficiaries.<sup>73</sup>

As Polish diplomacy historian Wanda Jarzabek put it, "The détente period offered new diplomatic opportunities; however, whether or not they were seized was very much up to the people in power and their ability to recognize those opportunities".<sup>74</sup> Bruno Kreisky viewed Poland as a partner to cooperate with and consistently tried to implement his policy until the declaration of martial law in Poland. However, it was not until the onset of the political crisis that the Polish diplomats started to perceive the Chancellor as an ally and partner for hard times.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> A. Burka, *Was blieb vom Fenster in den Westen? Zur Auslandskulturpolitik Österreichs im Ostmitteleuropa seit 1945 am Beispiel Polens und der Tschechoslowakei/Tschechiens*, Frankfurt am Main 2012, pp. 145-179.

<sup>74</sup> As cited in: W. Jarzabek, *Dyplomacja polska w warunkach...*, p. 666.

<sup>75</sup> Ciphertext No. 2270/II of 30 May 1981, MFAA, D. IV A, z.46/84, w.2.

Agnieszka Kisztełińska-Węgrzyńska, PhD, the Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz (akisztełinska@gmail.com)

**Keywords:** Bruno Kreisky, Austria, Polish People's Republic, diplomacy

#### ABSTRACT

*Federal Chancellor Dr Bruno Kreisky overcame isolation in the Warsaw–Vienna contacts. The first major event in the history of mutual relations after World War II was his visit as the then Foreign Minister to Warsaw on 1-3 March, 1960. In the following years this politician paid four more visits to Poland as Chancellor in June 1973, January/February 1975, September 1976 and November 1979. The course of the visits and assessment of their effects provide insight into the role of Austria in the diplomatic activity of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 1970s. The information on the assessment of Kreisky's motives as a social democratic politician and a commentary on Austria's foreign policy towards Poland come from the archives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the years 1972-1980.*