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THE GERMAN MINORITY IN POLAND

BASIC DATA, STRUCTURE, POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AND TWO EXCURSUSES, ABOUT THE POLISH DIASPORA IN GERMANY AND ABOUT THE SILESIAN AUTONOMY MOVEMENT

Stephan Georg Raabe

It is not easy to find out about the existence of national or ethnic minorities in the EU. In the extensive demographic statistics (edition 2006) of the European Commission, the minorities, which make up estimably 45 million people in the 27 EU countries, do not appear. Searching the internet for minorities in the EU is also not particularly promising. Where everything possible is being counted and weighed: A current overview of which minorities exist in the individual EU countries, of how big they are and what status they have, is almost not to be found amongst the information of the EU. This leaves only the laborious path of analysing the individual states.

According to the census of 2002, Poland has the following population groups, whereas the data concerning minority groups show them to be less than the estimates of observers and the minority organisations say themselves:

Table 1
Population groups in Poland 2002

	Number	Per cent
Polish	36.98 m	96.75
Upper Silesians	173,200	0.45
Germans	152,900	0.40
Belarusians	48,700	0.13
Ukrainians	31,000	0.08
Romanis	12,900	0.03

In addition, there are still several thousand Russians, Lemkos, Lithuanians, Kashubians, Slovenians and Armenians, who together account for less than 0.1 per cent of the population, and another two per cent of population groups respectively “unknown”.

From the German side, the number of Germans in Poland is estimated to be 300,000, which is approximately the number of those who identified themselves as Germans or Upper Silesians in the referendum. The high migration of Polish-German dual nationals to Germany and other Western countries, some of which are still reported in Poland, makes a reliable determination of the Germans actually living in Poland difficult.

THE BACKGROUND

Before the separations at the end of the 18th century, Poland was the home of many ethnic groups: Lithuanians, Latvians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Germans and Jews. The latter, attracted by the great religious tolerance, settled in Poland since the High Middle Ages, peculiarly are still considered, to this day, a national minority and not just a religious community, as they up and into the 20th century were not, or only partially, integrated into the Polish majority culture.

During the time of separation, the Polish people themselves experienced what it meant to be a minority in Russia, Germany or Austria-Hungary. After the rebirth of Poland in late 1918 the population comprised of nearly 70 per cent Poles and just over 30 per cent other nationalities: 14 to 15 per cent Ukrainians also known as Ruthenians, about eight per cent Jews, three to four per cent Belarusians and two to four per cent Germans, whereas the nationalist policy against the Germans led to their partial migration. After the Second World War, the Holocaust, the displacement of Poland to the West, the evictions, relocations and subsequent expulsions the proportion of minorities in Poland decreased to around three per cent at last count. In that, the Upper Silesians, meaning the Germans, who stayed in their homeland, provide by far the largest group. In communist Poland, they were exposed to

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a systematic polish assimilation pressure and quite often repression. Under the impressions of the National Socialist criminal regime and the occupation of German land, all German things, particularly the language and culture, had to disappear from public, but also private life. For a long time, use of the mother tongue German was subject to punishment, which is why some members and representatives of the German minority still only have a poor knowledge of German. For a long time, the presence of Germans in Poland, their history and their culture was largely denied. 1970, when the "Fundamentals of a Normalisation" of German-Polish relations was negotiated, the Polish regime assumed there were only "a few tens of thousands" of Polish citizens of German origin.¹

After 1989, the Germans in Poland could once again acknowledge their heritage and organise freely. When on November 12, 1989 some several thousand members of the German minority – with the support of the German Foreign Ministry – took part in the reconciliation service with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki in the Lower Silesian Kreisau, the surprise was great on the Polish side. Irritation spread as they then even began to unfurl banners saying, "Helmut, you are our chancellor, too".

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND INTEGRATION

After in 1990 many organisations of the German minority had already been formed, on September 15, 1990 at a meeting of representatives of German companies in Breslau it was decided to form a Central Council, based in Groß Strehlitz (Strzelce Opolskie) near Opole. One year later, on August 27, 1991, it was registered as "Association of the German Social-Cultural Societies in Poland" (VdG) with its seat in Opole. By its own account, VdG had about 250,000 members in 2008 (2007: 290,000). As an umbrella association, it has nine regional associations as permanent members, six associate members and five

1 | Cf. Gregor Schöllgen, "Wenn die Worte versagen. Bundeskanzler Willy Brandt und die schwierige Verständigung mit Polen: Die Vorgeschichte des 7. Dezember 1970," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 7, 2010, 8.

independent agencies, including each one youth, women and farmers' organisation as well as education, business and charitable societies.

There are also a dozen German- or dual language media editors for newspapers, radio and television. By far the largest Association has its seat in the Voivodship Opole, with around 130,000 members (2007: 180,000) and about 300 local associations, the so-called German Friendship Circles (DFC), the second largest Association in the Voivodship Silesia has approximately 70,000 members. The office of the VdG has six employees.²

The Organisations of the Germans in Poland are charitably involved and are significantly supported through funds out of the federal budget. These range from economic development such as the Foundation for the Development of Silesia up to youth and adult education like the house of the German-Polish Collaboration in Gliwice, Opole. In addition, the support through "rich" Germany occasionally evokes envy and resentment, especially since "the Germans", for many years, have had the advantage of free access to the western job markets and its associated earning potential, which the "Poles" were only granted a little at a time. Not until May 1, 2011, the complete opening of Germany's job market comes into force.

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Thus the life of the German minority in Poland remains a constant balancing act between the necessary integration into the Polish majority and the preservation of their own identity, while the emphasis is increasingly being put on the merits of a "multi-cultural identity of the region".

Partially forgotten or neglected by the old homeland Germany and regarded with distrust or even rejected by their new home Poland, many of German origin living in Poland feel that neither Berlin nor Warsaw, neither the German refugee organisations nor the German minority organisations, represent them. So on one hand, the Upper

2 | Next to the Chairperson, Maria Neumann, there are also desk officers for Culture, School, Media and External Relations, Bookkeeping and Administration. Cf. <http://vdg.pl>.

German is taught to native speakers since 1992 in Polish public schools. In 2004, the number of schools rose from ten to 332, which were visited by around 35.000 students.

Silesian Autonomy Movement was able to grow strong. On the other hand, the importance of ethnic affiliation and thus the integration into the organisations of the Germans decreases, which is furthered by the estrangement of the German language and culture. Admittedly, Polish public schools have been teaching German to native speakers since 1992, the number of these schools even rose from ten to 332 in 2004, which were visited by around 35.000 students. Still, there is no separate schooling system for the German minority, such as a bilingual lyceum (secondary school).

NEW BEGINNINGS IN TERMS OF PERSONNEL

The last two years have seen a new generation in both the leadership of the VdG as well as the Opole Association. Norbert Rasch, a scholar of German studies born 1971, is the Chairman of the Social-Cultural Society of the Germans in Opole Silesia since April 26, 2008. Before that, the long-time Chairman Henryk Kroll, born 1949, who represented the minority from 1991 to 2007 in the Sejm, the Polish Parliament, without interruption, had resigned. Rasch, who since 2005 is a member of the Parliament of the Voivodship Opole, stands for the trend towards a shift in focus, away from economic and infrastructure policies towards culture and language policies, in order to ensure the survival of the minority. Since May 11, 2009, he also belongs to the new board of the VdG, whose Chairman since has been the trading entrepreneur Bernard Gaida Vintage, born 1958, from the Upper Silesian Dobrodzień (Guttentag). Similar to Rasch, Gaida also sees the creation of schools through comprehensive German lessons as a priority. He especially wants to take care of the "identity of the minority" and a maximised utilisation of minority policy opportunities of Polish legislation.³

3 | Cf. Martin Schmidt, "Bernhard Gaida – Mann der Hoffnung," *Berliner Schlesische Nachrichten* (ed. Landsmannschaft Schlesien – Nieder- und Oberschlesien Landesgruppe Berlin/Mark Brandenburg e.V.), 02/2009, 4 et seq.

THE MINORITIES ACT IN POLAND

On January 6, 2005, after more than ten years of debate, with the votes of the then ruling Left and the Civic Platform PO, the Sejm passed the "Law on National and Ethnic Minorities and Regional Languages". It thereby fulfilled a task of the Polish Constitution and thus created a good basis for the co-existence. The law was hailed as a major progress by the German minorities. Representatives of the national party "League of Polish Families" (LPR) on the other hand saw this as the first step "of a broader campaign to Germanisation" of the region.⁴

Controversial was previously mainly the quota for the use of a minority language as official language next to Polish in the communities. If the members of a minority make up more than 20 per cent of a community, then, since 2005, they have the right to use their native language when in contact with the local authorities. At the same time, these communities have the opportunity to put up bilingual city and street signs, which after a few years was used more and more, especially in Opole Silesia where the vast majority of the German population group lives, but partially led to resistance and resentment among the Polish population. A total of 30 municipalities could probably introduce bilingualism, 28 in the Opole Voivodship and 2 in Silesia. As of now, 24 communities have already implemented this. Likewise seven of twelve Pomeranian communities that meet the minority quorum have introduced Kashubian as a second language. The municipality Punske, populated by many Lithuanians, and the municipality Gorlice, inhabited by Lemkos in Lesser Poland, are also bilingual. Twelve communities in north-eastern Poland could also introduce Belarusian as a supplement.

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4 | The contents of the minority law is available in German: <http://www.bilingual.com.pl/pdf/Polnisches%20Minderheiten-gesetz.pdf> (accessed February 3, 2011); Cf. Renata Mróz, "Polen verabschiedet neues Minderheitengesetz," in: <http://polen-news.de/puw/puw73-15> (accessed February 3, 2011); Markus Waschinski, "Die deutsche Minderheit in Polen," *Polen-Analysen* Nr. 26, 2008, 6.

Table 2

Communities with a German population over 20 per cent and/or German mayors

	Per cent	Number	German mayors
Voivodship Opolskie / Opole			
District Kędzierzyń-Koźle / Kandrzin-Cosel			
Bierawa / Birawa	24.6	2,010	
Cisek / Czissek	☑ 42.4	2,978	Alojzy Parys
Pawłowiczki / Pawlowitzke	20.7	1,802	
Polska Cerekiew / Groß Neukirch	21.9	1,082	Krystyna Helbin
Reńska Wieś / Reinschdorf	34.5	3,042	Marian Wojciechowski
District Kluczbork / Kreuzburg			
Lasowice Wielkie / Gross Lassowitz	☑ 37.6	2,735	
District Krapkowice / Krappitz			
Gogolin	☑ n/a	n/a	Joachim Wojtala
Krapkowice / Krappitz	n/a	n/a	Andrzej Kasiura
Strzeleczy / Klein Strehlitz	☑ 41.6	3,418	Bronisław Kurpiela
Walce / Walzen	☑ 31.7	1,970	Bernhard Kubata
Zdzieszowice / Deschowitz	n/a	n/a	Dieter Przewdzing
District Olesno / Rosenberg			
Dobrodzień / Guttentag	☑ 25.0	2,762	Róża Koźlik
Gorzów Śląski / Landsberg	n/a	n/a	Artur Tomala
Olesno / Rosenberg	23.8	4,608	
Radłów / Radlau	☑ 27.9	1,295	Włodzimierz Kierat
Zębowice / Zembowitz	☑ 42.1	1,782	Waldemar Czaja
District Opole / Oppeln			
Dobrzeń Wielki / Groß Döbern	☑ 20.3	2,885	Henryk Wróbel
Chrzastowice / Chronstau	☑ 25.7	1,705	Helena Rogacka
Komprachcice / Comprachtschütz	☑ 29.5	3,260	Paweł Smolarek
Łubniany / Lugnian	☑ 27.4	2,486	Krystian Baldy
Murów / Murow	☑ 31.0	1,955	
Prószków / Prosaku	☑ 30.2	3,046	Róża Malik
Ozimek / Malapane	n/a	n/a	Marek Korniak
Tarnów Opolski / Tarnau	☑ 23.8	2,447	
Turawa	20.6	1,983	Waldemar Kampa

Percentage = Proportion of German, ☑ = bilingual municipalities

	Per cent	Number	German mayors
District Prudnik / Neustadt			
Biała / Zülz	☑ 42.0	5,103	Arnold Hindera
Głogówek / Oberglögau	☑ 24.3	3,680	
District Strzelce / Groß Strehlitz			
Izbicko / Stubendorf	☑ 28.1	1,563	Brygida Pytel
Jemielnica / Himmelwitz	☑ 23.7	1,822	Joachim Jelito
Kolonowski / Colonnowska	☑ 41.1	2,703	Norbert Koston
Leśnica / Leschnitz	☑ 26.9	2,409	Łukasz Jastrzębski
Ujazd / Ujest	☑ 25.2	1,607	
Voivodship Śląskie / Silesia			
District Racibórz / Ratibor			
Krzanowice / Kranowitz	☑ 20.5	1,285	
Rudnik / Rudnick	☑ n/a	n/a	

Percentage = Proportion of German, ☑ = bilingual municipalities

The law also provides for financial support of the State for the cultural activities of minorities. Beyond that, it contains nothing new. Most sections were in previous laws and regulations, such as the right to their own language, tradition, culture, its own educational and cultural institutions, native tongue education as well as their own first and last name. However, this new law determines for the first time which groups count as an ethnical minority. The law therefore refers to the national minorities of Armenians, Germans, Lithuanians, Russians, Slovaks, Czechs, Ukrainians, White Russians, to Jews and four ethnic minorities, which are the Karaites, Lemkos, Romani and Tatars, but not to the, in the recent years constituent, ethnic group of Silesia. It also regulates the use of the language of the Kashubians, located in the area southwest of Gdansk. The current Prime Minister Donald Tusk comes from Kashubia.⁵

5 | Additional literature: Peter Oliver Loew, "Nationale und ethnische Minderheiten," in: Dieter Bingen, Krzysztof Ruchniewicz (eds.), *Länderbericht Polen*, (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2009), 360-372; Markus Waschinski, "Die deutsche Minderheit in Polen," *Polen-Analysen* Nr. 26, 2008; Stephan Georg Raabe, "Zur Lage der deutschen Volksgruppe in Polen," *KAS-Länderbericht*, 2005.

Table 3

Communities with Auxiliary Languages

Kashubian	Voivodship
Sierakowice	Pomorskie / Pomerania
Bytów	Pomorskie / Pomerania
Stężyca	Pomorskie / Pomerania
Chmielno	Pomorskie / Pomerania
Szemud	Pomorskie / Pomerania
Linia	Pomorskie / Pomerania
Kartuzy	Pomorskie / Pomerania
Lithuanian	
Puńsk / Punskas	Podlaskie
Lemko	
Gorlice	Małopolskie / Lesser Poland

THE POLISH DIASPORA IN GERMANY

For the Polish Politics a good treatment of the national minorities in their own country is important insofar as there are autochthonous Polish minorities living in Lithuania, Belarus and the Ukraine and there is a large Polish-speaking group in Germany. There are often disputes over the treatment of the Polish minority in Lithuania. For the Polish speaking population in Germany, Poland wants similar rights as the German minority has in Poland, referring

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to the German-Polish Neighbourhood- and Friendship Treaty of 1991, which celebrates its twentieth anniversary on June 17 of this year. In round-table discussions at the invitation of the two interior ministries in February 2010 and with the participation of representatives of the German minority in Poland and the Polish Diaspora in Germany, the support of these population groups was discussed. Articles 20/21 of the German-Polish Neighbourhood Treaty grant the Polish Diaspora in Germany the same rights as the German Minority in Poland, although both the status of the population – established population on one hand and immigrants on the other – as well as the settlement patterns and the population structures in the two countries are different. In the Weimar Republic, the Polish were recognised as a national minority. Immediately before

the Second World War, however, the leadership of this Minority was arrested and interned in concentration camps in Sachsenhausen and Buchenwald. Shortly thereafter, the recognition as a minority was revoked by decree through the National Socialist dictatorship, the Polish minority organisations were prohibited and their property was confiscated. With the westward shift of the German-Polish border to the Oder-Neiße line in 1945, the territories in which an autochthonous Polish minority was established, (especially the border regions of the Prussian provinces of Upper Silesia, *Grenzmark* Posen, West and East Prussia), were now part of the Communist-ruled Poland. This is why today the Polish population in Germany is no longer recognised as a national minority, although the legal liquidation of the Polish minority before the war was lifted, with the coming into force of the Constitution of the Federal Republic in 1949. The majority of the Poles now living in Germany are German-Polish emigrants, who together with the Polish-born population make up approximately 1.3 per cent of the population (just over one million people according to the census of 2005). Between 1950 and 1989 alone, about 1.2 million German emigrants and their families came to the Federal Republic of Germany.

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Nevertheless, from Warsaw's point of view, the treatment of the Polish Diaspora is by far not the same as the privileges that the Germans have in Poland, which is why a greater promotion of language and culture, of organisational structure and the granting of participation opportunities is pushed for. Representatives of the Polish community also demand that the Poles in Germany are recognised as a national minority and the granting of the resulting rights. They also demand the elimination of what is in their opinion an asymmetry in the implementation of the German-Polish Neighbourhood Treaty. This carries political dynamite. As there are parliamentary elections due in the coming up fall, national-conservative forces will probably pick up this topic.

The Polish Diaspora is organised in the Union of Poles and in the Polish Congress in Germany, albeit with a relatively low number of members. Typically enough, the Chairman

of the Union of Poles, Marek Wójcicki, came to Germany on the "German minority ticket" in the 1980s, which illustrates the peculiar conflict situation. A special role belongs to the Polish Catholic Mission in Germany, which, in addition to its pastoral work, offers education for children in Polish.

REPRESENTATION OF THE GERMAN MINORITY IN THE SEJM AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

Since 1991, the German minority submitted their own lists to the Sejm elections, whereby it is exempt from the five-per cent hurdle, which was introduced in 1993. In the first completely free elections in 1991, approximately 132,000 (1.19 per cent) people across the country voted for the lists of the German minority (DMi), 74,000 of which from Opole Silesia. This led to seven Member of Parliament mandates; in 1993, the DMi won four seats, 1997, 2001 and 2005 only two mandates in each year. In the 2007 elections only 32,462 (0.2 per cent) voted for the DMi. Thus, the support steadily decreased in the parliamentary elections. In the Sejm, the DMi is now only represented

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by one Member of Parliament, Ryszard Galla, who is also the President of the House of German-Polish cooperation in Gliwice. The reasons for the weak performance in the 2007 elections on one hand was the increased voter turnout in the province of Opole (2005: 33.5 per cent; 2007: 45.5 per cent), which was connected to the fact that the election was characterised as a national referendum against the national-conservative party "Law and Justice" (PiS)⁶ and on the other, lay in the decreasing commitment, especially of younger people towards the political representation of the DMi, the lack of mobilisation as well as the over-ageing.

Added to this is the hidden labour migration from the region, which particularly applies to dual citizens. According to a study by the Voivodship Opole in 2007, approximately 330,000 autochthonous people are registered in the region, roughly a third of the total population. Among them are about 80.000 people, nearly a quarter, who live

6 | With a low turnout, the DMi so far had, in relation, better results because of its good network for mobilising of voters. From the rise in turnout by 12 per cent, however the major parties benefited disproportionately, particularly the Civic Platform PO, but also the PiS.

abroad, either partially or the whole time. Therefore, a part of the potential voters for the DMi is simply not present, as can also be seen in a regional comparison of the voter's turnout, where the Voivodship Opole generally has the lowest, in particular in the districts with a strong German population. In 2007, the voter turnout there was six to seven per cent below the already low average of 45.53 per cent.

REGIONAL ELECTIONS 2010

The DMi is still strongly represented on the local government level of the Opole region, for example in the regional Parliament and in the district and municipal councils. Here, through its extensive network, it has a good tool for voter mobilisation, which, at such a low voter turnout, is a strategic advantage.

In the regional Parliament, the DMi, which evades a clear political classification, has been part of the government in various coalitions since 1998, since 2006 with the liberal-conservative Civic Platform (PO) and before that with the post-communist "Alliance of the Left Democrats" (SLD). The deterioration of the German-Polish relations during 2005 to 2007, when the national-conservative PiS was in office, according to representatives of the minority was felt even in the local government, particularly when the regional government faced a President of Government from the PiS. However, the current situation is also not without tension, as the governmental formation after the regional elections on November 21, 2010 made clear.

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In these regional and local elections, the DMi achieved good results in the Opole region. In the Voivodship Opole, the regional Parliament received 17.77 per cent of the votes (+0.47 per cent over 2006), which is the second best result after the Civic Platform PO who received 31.93 per cent. In total, the minority received 53,670 votes, an increase of 4,539 votes compared to 2006. Thus, the negative trend of recent elections was stopped: In 2006, the minority received 49,131 votes, however in 2002 the received 54,385 votes (18.61 per cent).

In the last two legislatures, the minority had seven representatives in the Sejmik, the Voivodship Parliament, before that even 13 mandates. Now there are six, which is due to the strong election results of the Civic Platform (PO, 12 mandates, +4) and of the "Alliance of the Left Democrats" (SLD, five MP's). Law and Justice (PiS) also received five seats, and the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) two.⁷

Table 4

**Results of the regional elections
in the Voivodship Opole**

Election Committee	Votes	Per cent
PO	96,449	31.93
PiS	52,664	17.43
German Minority (DMi)	53,670	17.77
SLD	50,479	16.71
PSL	36,655	12.13
PPP	6,528	2.16
Others	5,631	1.87

Source: Official results according to the electoral commission (Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza), http://wybory2010.pkw.gov.pl/Komunikaty_PKW,2; Wyniki_glosowania_do_sejmikow_województw_według_komitetów_wyborczych_i_województw (accessed February 3, 2011).

The German Minority (DMi) members of the Sejmik are:

1. Hubert Jerzy Kolodziej – Teacher, School Director, Education Officer of the Association of German companies VDG;
2. Norbert Rasch – Chairman of the Social-Cultural Society of the Germans in Opole Silesia (SKGD);
3. Herbert Czaja – Chairman of the Chamber of Agriculture Opole;
4. Krystian Adamik – Doctor of medicine;
5. Józef Kotys – Vice Prime Minister the Voivodship Opole;
6. Andrzej Kasiura – previously a board member of the

7 | In the Voivodship Warmia and Mazury Urszula Pasiawska, on the list of the Polish People's Party PSL was voted for by the German minority and elected to the Sejmik. Cf. Krzysztof Świerc, Agnieszka Szotka, "Erfolg der Deutschen Minderheit bei der Kommunalwahl," *Schlesisches Wochenblatt*, E-Paper, http://www.wochenblatt.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=237 (accessed February 3, 2011).

Voivodship Opole (regional government) was able to assert himself with 1,549 votes (52.53%) in the runoff elections for mayor of the district town Krapkowice (Krappitz) on December 5, against the PO candidate Maciej Sonik (1,400 votes, 47.47%). The current Vice Chairman of the Parliament, Ryszard Donitza, will succeed him.

TUSK AVERTS SCANDAL

The PO, PSL and DMi entered the elections, expressing their will to continue their previous coalition. However, only 24 hours after the elections, the PO formed a coalition with the PSL and the "Alliance of the Left Democrats" (SLD), which the DMi was informed of through the press. The regional head of the PO, Leszek Korzeniowski, justified this by stating that the cooperation had not been as expected, that agreements were not upheld and that the DMi had acted too selfish. "They kept the money in their own pockets", he claimed.⁸ Furthermore, the new coalition was perceived more positively in Poland. For allegations were constantly made by the party headquarters that the minority enjoyed too many privileges and was exaggerating in the exercise of their rights, such as bilingual town signs. This scandal regionally hit like a bomb. Quickly, the public talk was of an "anti-German coalition". After all, the DMi had emerged from the elections as the second largest party in the Sejmik. Nevertheless, there were also counter votes in the PO. The European MP Danuta Jazłowiecka from Opole criticised the exclusion of Germans openly as a "mistake" of fellow party members. The Opole Voivodship is under particular scrutiny and support from Germany, it was said. Besides, the German tourism in the region is an important economic factor. The cold disempowerment of DMi immediately caused the head of PO and Prime Minister Donald Tusk to call for action. As a result, the PO Opole included the DMi in the government.⁹ The Voivodship is

8 | "Korzeniowski: w centrali były zarzuty, że MN ma za dużo przywilejów" (allegations were constantly made by the party headquarters, that the minority enjoyed too many privileges), in: *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Opole), November 21, 2010.

9 | Website of the German-Polish Association Local Political Partnership (AKP), "Tusk wendet Skandalkoalition ab. Deutsche Minderheit bleibt in Oppelner Regierung," December 3, 2010, in: <http://akp-dialog.de/index.php?view=article&catid=35%3Aaktuelles&id=76%3A2010-12-03> (accessed February 3, 2011).

now governed by a grand four-way coalition, whereas the DMi however, has to accept disadvantages. The PO as the strongest parliamentary group provides the Marshall. However, neither of the two Vice-Prime Minister positions were awarded, as it would correspond to the proportional representation, to the Germans. The former German Vice Marshall Józef Kotys, who by far had the most votes in the elections, has to remain on the sidelines. As a successful politician and string-puller, his outstanding election result speaks for him. His profile was probably too dominant for the PO. The PiS alone, now with five of 30 seats in the Sejmik now form an opposition.

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Concerning the results of the German minority in local elections: 28 candidates from the DMi ran for mayor or community leaders, 24 of which were elected, 19 in the first round on November 21, 2010, and five in the runoff elections on December 5, 2010. The DMi provides 49 Council members to the district assemblies (2006:54). There, the distribution of seats is as follows:

Table 5

Seats won by DMi in regional elections 2010 and 2006

Community	Seats won in 2010	Seats won in 2006	Mandates total
Strzelce Opolskie (Groß Strehlitz)	9	10	19
Krapkowice (Krappitz)	7	7	19
Kędzierzyn-Koźle (Kandrzin-Cosel)	5	8	21
Olesno (Rosenberg)	9	8	19
Prudnik (Neustadt)	5	3	17
Opole (Oppeln)	12	16	25
Kluczborg (Kreuzburg)	2	2	19

Source: Written statement of Joanna Mróz, spokesperson of the Social-Cultural Society of the Germans in Opole Silesia, November 26, 2010.

In the districts Namysłów (Namslau), Brzeg (Brieg), Nysa (Neisse) and Głubczyce (Leobschütz), the DMi did not provide their own candidates. In the municipalities, the DMi won 278 council mandates (2006:304). The DMi

therefore received a total of 357 mandates (2006: 365) in regional and local elections.

IRRITATION ABOUT THE SUCCESS OF THE SILESIAN AUTONOMY MOVEMENT

In regional elections, the movement Autonomous Silesia (Ruch Autonomii Śląska, RAŚ) won 122,781 votes (8.49 per cent) in the Voivodship Silesia and three seats in the Sejmik. Through this, they became the fourth-largest party after the PO (22 MP's) the PiS (11) and the SLD (10). The PSL won two seats. 2006, the RAŚ received 58,919 votes (4.35 per cent) and a mandate. The Germans in the Voivodship did not provide their own list. Its candidates were members of various election committees, but supported in particular was the RAŚ.¹⁰

The Germans in the Voivodship Silesia did not provide their own list. Its candidates were members of various election committees, but supported in particular was the RAŚ.

Rudolf Kołodziejczyk founded the movement in 1990. Since 2003, the historian Jerzy Gorzelik chairs it. It links in particular to the Autonomous Voivodship Silesia in the Second Polish Republic between the wars and wants to achieve more autonomy for the region, which is why it is sometimes accused of anti-Polish tendencies. Today's Voivodship, after the territorial reform in 1999, makes itself up from the Voivodships Katowice, Częstochowa and Bielsko-Biala and includes mostly the territory of the former Autonomous Voivodship Silesia. Formed in 1922 out of the part of Upper Silesia, it was separated from the German Reich and Austria-Hungary after World War I, as a result of a referendum and rebellions. Then as now, the region with the industrial agglomeration area between Gliwice and Katowice is the most densely populated Voivodship in Poland. The German parties – the Catholic People's Party, the German Party, and the German Social Democratic Party – in the 1920s elections achieved 21-30 per cent, and provided a representative to the six-strong government, the Voivodship Council.

In the now newly elected Sejmik, the RAŚ is part of a coalition with the PO and PSL, which amongst other things, was openly criticised by the Polish President Bronisław

10 | Cf. Świerc, „Erfolg der Deutschen Minderheit...“, n. 7.

Komorowski and President of the EU Parliament Jerzy Buzek, who had his constituency in Katowice. Not until his second attempt on December 10, the Chairman of the RAŚ Jerzy Gorzel was voted into the board of the Voivodship, the regional government, where he is responsible for education, culture and external relations. During the first election a week earlier, there had been a stalemate, as some PO representatives refused to vote for their coalition partner. This, as well as the national reports in the major Polish newspapers, showed the irritation that the relatively strong performance of the Autonomy Movement evoked.

Overall, the RAŚ received 40 mandates in regional and municipal elections: three in the regional parliament, six in the district assemblies, seven in the larger city councils and 24 in municipalities:

In Godów (District Wodzisław) through Mariusz Adamczyk (re-elected with 90.3 per cent) and in the rural community Lyski (District Rybnik) through Grzegorz Gryt (64.67 per cent) it provides the directly elected mayors and the majority in the municipal council. In the regional assembly of Rybnik with a 25.61 percentage of votes, it has five mandates, in the regional assembly of Wodzisław with a 7.91 percentage of votes, it is represented with one mandate. In the cities, the RAŚ in Czerwionka-Leszczyny (ger. Czerwionka-Leschczin, District Rybnik, ca. 29,000 inhabitants) – centre of the Polish rebellion under Wojciech Korfanty between 1919 and 1921 – is represented with four mandates (20.48 per cent) in Mysłowice (ger. Myslowitz, 75,000 inhabitants) with two (9.29 per cent) and in Ruda Śląska (143,000 inhabitants) with one mandate (8.18 per cent).¹¹

PROSPECTIVE

As the major parties do not play a dominant role on the local level, but are often surpassed by the local citizen's committees, the DMi will probably continue to play a larger role here. It also has a good chance, to continue to form a central force, regionally in the Opole Voivodship, insofar

11 | Cf. Ruch Autonomii Śląska, http://www.autonomia.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=631 (accessed February 3, 2011).

as it maintains its own cultural identity and prevents the ongoing exodus of Germans. This calls for increased efforts with regard to the linguistic and cultural promotion and a perspective on life in the Upper Silesian region. At national level, however, involvement in the major political parties promises more success in contributing towards the integration of the German minority in Poland.

While the DMi fits into the given political context because of the minority law, the RAŚ, due to their aspirations for greater autonomy of Silesia (eastern Upper Silesia) evokes irritation in Poland. It will probably continue to play the role of a specifically cultural and political force in the region, whereas locally it is not anchored as strongly, which should give reason for the Polish majority society to handle the autonomy movement with more composure.

The author thanks Luke Skwiercz for the assistance in researching the local election results of the German minority.