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Desperately seeking... A future for solidarity in Europe New tasks and ideas for citizenship education.

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1. To the Polish ear the word “solidarity” sounds in a special way due to its very specific point of reference. Most of all, it is the anti-Communist Independent Self-governing Labour Union “Solidarity” from the period 1980-1981. The then leader of the “Solidarity”, a workman, Lech Wałęsa, was awarded The Nobel Peace Prize (1983). In the Polish case, one should also indicate two more points of reference: the Christian “ethics of solidarity” strongly associated with the “Solidarity” movement itself, and – in the broader context – the ethos of fighting under the slogan “for our freedom and yours” (dating back to the XIXth century), which signified the solidarity of armed struggle for the freedom of nations against oppressive power and, which is often forgotten, was most recently used already after 1989 to convince the citizens to military intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In my presentation, I would like to address the problems with solidarity, which are related to the history of the region and affect the present times [as presented in my new book: *Koniec pokoleń podległości* (“The end of dependence generations”), Warsaw 2018].

The echo of the past could be found in the dictionaries. In the Polish Language Dictionary (Polish Scientific Publishers PWN, ed. IX, Warsaw 1994), setting aside the legal understanding of the word, it is understood as “mutual support and cooperation, co-responsibility, compliance with someone's views, aspirations and behavior; unanimity”. Then, examples of solidarity are enlisted: family, civic and professional; solidarity with friends, solidarity of parents in dealing with children. After the fall of communism, as one could see, there is no question of any supra-national solidarity.

2. The past is looming over the current understanding of solidarity in many different ways. In the subject, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were indicated as “Post-Transformation Countries”. Note that even this at the moment is questioned. Law and Justice rules under the slogans of correcting mistakes from the period 1989-1990 (including breaking up solidarity with those who, in the opinion of the governing, do not deserve it morally, e.g. members of secret services in a communist state, etc.).

This phase is not over, therefore challenges for the future from the Polish perspective should be drawn with extreme caution. However, let me point out the most important of them:

- firstly, in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the common understanding, experiencing and practicing of solidarity was not easily transferrable from the times of



opposition against communist authorities (dependent on the USSR) to the level of the new state; for many citizens a more reliable "intermediary" for real solidarity in practice turns out to be the term "nation";

- secondly, further to the above mentioned, one is confronted with a question of how to, in the next step, take the practice of solidarity to the European level; after 1989, the network of European ties was partly founded on redressing the historical wrongs and equalization of developmental backwardness of the "other Europe" (Jacques Rupnik) through financial transfers and formalized linking of states with each other (the differences in historical experience were to be overcome by legal procedures); however, these are not levels (international order, state, applicable law) on which understanding, experiencing and practicing solidarity would be common in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe;
- thirdly, in the discussion about the crisis of solidarity at the international level we are dealing with an additional conceptual confusion. When, among others, the EU and NATO were opening under the slogans of solidarity, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, rather than the policy of "solidarity", practiced a policy of equalizing historical harm, guarantees of modernization and future prosperity, and finally ensuring geopolitical security. From this point of view, European solidarity has never been a priority.

Further in my presentation, I would like to elaborate on the above mentioned issues on the basis of statistical data and source literature.

3. Naturally, one could easily find opinions proclaiming the ultimate end of European solidarity. Nevertheless, keeping in mind that at the international level, „Solidarity is not the same thing as charity” (Jürgen Habermas, Why The Necessary Cooperation Does Not Happen: Introduction To A Conversation Between Emmanuel Macron and Sigmar Gabriel on Europe’s Future, see: <https://www.socialeurope.eu/pulling-cart-mire-renewed-case-european-solidarity>), I would like to further make an attempt to provide an answer to the question of the future of solidarity in Europe and educational strategies. It is my belief that in this area it is essential to consider both the broadcasters (creating networks, top-down educational offers), as well as intermediaries and recipients of the message about the European solidarity.

The Treaties of Rome, signed at the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitol, set the path to the formation of a specific understanding of European solidarity. In its early days, not much more than a decade since the end of World War II, it was construed as the "common market", primarily competitive against the USSR and the US, including the so-called "Nie Wieder" policy and promises of well-being. Generosity, which is appealed for in times of crises at the turn of the XX-XXIth century or simply times of less prosperity (low economic growth, low birth rate, etc.), basically the solidarity for the future must stem from other intellectual and emotional resources.

One of the basic challenges for the future is therefore not only the European construction itself, but also the common perception of EU and its contemporary practice of pan-European



cooperation. It is worth considering during our panel whether the countries of V4 are struggling with diplomatic packaging of their own position, or indeed we are dealing with deeper European discrepancies in sensitivity, experience and political positions.

In the educational part of the panel devoted to the future of solidarity in Europe, however I would like to talk about its two aspects from a less abstract perspective:

- The first one, as the president of the board of a Polish NGO, i.e. the diagnosis on the basis of the practical experience of a person in charge of a foundation in Poland, also having engaged in multiple tasks in European networks,
- The second one, as an academic of University of Warsaw. I would like to share my ideas drawn from the experience of grants realized in the member states of EU (most of all Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship at University of Copenhagen, 2016-2018).

On the basis of my own experience I would like to propose and discuss several possible solutions as to how to – realistically, not abstractly – „join forces and develop spaces and strategies of solidarity across the European borders in the field of citizenship education and civil society”.