



Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen  
des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen  
Deutschen Demokratischen Republik



Permanent Representation  
of the Republic of Poland  
to the European Union  
in Brussels



Ständige Vertretung  
der Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
bei der Europäischen Union  
Brüssel



WIELKOPOLSKA  
REGION

HESSEN



## Information on the exhibition:

‘Lernt Polnisch’ is organised in the House of the Regions - Hessen and Wielkopolska because of the unique character of this partnership. As the only Polish region and German land, we have been cooperating for many years in Brussels where we share our premises. In the context of the exhibition this partnership also has a symbolic dimension.

‘Lernt Polnisch’ (English: Learn Polish) is only one of countless slogans that appeared in the GDR in 1980-1981 inter alia: as graffiti on walls, shop windows and as postcards. The courage and strength shown by the ‘Solidarność’ trade union gave East German oppositionists hope for reforms and for a political breakthrough. GDR leaders were afraid of such developments. They feared that the same scenario could take place in the GDR. Therefore, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) instructed its secret police- Stasi to closely monitor public reactions and stigmatise pro-Polish attitudes. In late October 1980, the SED-regime went even further and closed the border with Poland.

That tension between hope and fear, courage, protest and persecution, has been documented by the BStU (the Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic) in its exhibition entitled ‘Lernt Polnisch’. It conveys a strong message and emphasises the symbolism of photos from that period. The exhibition features numerous examples of graffiti and flyers with pro-Polish slogans scrupulously collected by the Stasi in its acts. The photos are accompanied by extracts from Stasi reports depicting opinions of GDR citizens about ‘Solidarność’.

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## PROGRAMME - 29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 6.30 P.M.

### WELCOME NOTE

**Mark Weinmeister**

Hessian Secretary of State for European Affairs

**Representative of Wielkopolska Region**

### SPEECHES

**H.E Ambassador Reinhard Silberberg**

Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to the EU

**H.E Ambassador Marek Prawda**

Permanent Representative of Republic of Poland to the EU

### INTRODUCTION

**Dr. Helge Heidemeyer**

Head of Unit Education and Research, Agency of the Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former GDR

### OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION AND RECEPTION