

KEY POINTS

- **We are making it clear. The Second World War ended in great injustice. Its cost has never been properly accounted for.**
- That is why we are presenting *Report on losses suffered by Poland as a result of German aggression and occupation during World War II 1939-1945*. Its purpose is not merely to show certain amount of work done and documentation gathered. **The primary reason is to bring the issue forward internationally. We are seeking compensation for what the Germans did in 1939-1945. The report is a call on Germany to take up the subject of reparations.**
- Many countries have received compensation from Germany, but Poland has not. Germany invaded Poland and did enormous damage. The aftermath has persisted to this day.
- Germany has never truly accounted for the crimes against the Polish Nation committed in 1939-1945. **We cannot turn a blind eye to this.**
- A serious state must look after the interests of its own and its nationals. If one country does enormous damage to another, it is on that country to make up for the damage after it has lost the war. **There are no grounds on which to exclude Poland from this rule.**
- Let us call a spade a spade. The victims of Nazi Germany are counted in millions, and millions of Polish families lost all their possessions. Hundreds of towns were turned to rubble, thousands of villages were burnt down, factories, schools and architectural monuments were destroyed – this is the grim picture of World War II, which also brought about devastated infrastructure, burnt libraries and looted or destroyed art collections.
- Due to all of that, the Second World War has had its consequences even today. The standard of living in Poland and Poland's opportunities for development are a direct result of this war, which robbed the Polish citizens of their future. The crimes have not been accounted for. The persons responsible for the machine of destruction and extermination have largely remained unpunished.
- **Is Poland inferior to other countries which received reparations for World War II in the past? Absolutely NOT! We must not accede to the corresponding German propaganda carried out and promoted by certain political parties and media outlets in Poland. Greece or Israel received such funds many years ago:**
 - ✓ In 1960, Germany paid 115 million German marks as reparations to Greece under a bilateral agreement.
 - ✓ Israel also received reparations for the Holocaust as well as the losses suffered during the Second World War. Under a 1952 agreement, the Federal Republic of Germany transferred 3 trillion German marks in supplies that continued for the next 14 years. Moreover, 450 million marks were awarded to the World Jewish Congress. **The government invested these funds in the infrastructure and development of the newly established state of Israel.**

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- Each successive German government would avoid the issue of Polish reparations as much as possible. Unfortunately, this met with the acquiescence of the Polish authorities at the time. **It is our duty to call for justice and reparations for the victims.**
 1. Poland lost **6 trillion 220 billion 609 million Polish zlotys** during the war.
 2. **Over 5 million** citizens lost their lives.
 3. The war set Poland's development back **20 years**.
 4. Over one million families lost all their possessions.¹ Material losses amounted to **797 billion 398 million Polish zlotys**.
 5. Other countries, such as **Greece or Israel**, received reparations, and Poland deserves them too.
 6. We have never relinquished them, and war crimes **HAVE NO STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS**.
 7. We have a moral right to demand reparations and compensation for the wrongs – Polish citizens rebuilt their homeland themselves after it was destroyed by the German occupiers.
 8. We have never waived reparations; we have never received them and no one has ever compensated Poland for the losses caused by the Second World War.
 9. Relations between friends require mutual respect and accounting for the wrongs. We have many things in common with our neighbours and our neighbours do not shy away from talking about their responsibility for the Second World War.
 10. We wish to cleanse our relations of the past faults that rest with the Germans.

REPORT ON LOSSES SUFFERED BY POLAND AS A RESULT OF GERMAN AGGRESSION AND OCCUPATION DURING WORLD WAR II 1939-1945

- After many years of the previous governments' forgetfulness and negligence, we hereby present the *Report on losses suffered by Poland as a result of German aggression and occupation during World War II 1939-1945*.
- The report is the result of the work of the Parliamentary Group for the Estimation of Compensation Due to Poland from Germany for Damages Caused During World War II and **experts in various scientific disciplines**. The report was drafted between 2017 and 2022.
- All the losses suffered by Poland, both material and intangible, occurred primarily **due to the German occupation policy, motivated by the belief in the racial inferiority of the Polish people. The Germans, deliberately and in an organised manner, exterminated the population in the occupied territories; they also intensely, brutally exploited the Polish society.**

¹ Considering the damage to the domicile exceeding 15 per cent.

- We believe that the report presents the scale of the losses suffered by Poland, and that it will serve to initiate an open substantive dialogue between the two countries, ultimately leading to the settlement of the issue of reparations and war compensations.

German aggression against Poland

- The German aggression against Poland was the first and extremely brutal campaign of the Second World War. In 1946, the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg singled out several categories of German crimes, which included planning, launching and waging of the war of aggression, murdering of prisoners of war and civilians, mass extermination in extermination camps, show executions. It is really difficult to find another example of such a methodical and gigantic crime left unpunished in the history of modern Europe.
- During the Second World War, Poland suffered the greatest losses in men and state property among all European countries compared with its total population and assets. The total number of Polish citizens murdered was approximately 5 million 219 thousand.
- These losses occurred not only due to war operations, but primarily due to the German occupation policy. That policy was characterised in particular by intentional and organised extermination of the population in the occupied territories of the Polish state, severe exploitation of Polish society (including through forced labour), and deliberate destruction of property, including the demolition of Poland's capital city of Warsaw and thousands of Polish towns and villages.
- Tangible goods stolen by the Germans are still being recovered. For instance, in 2018, an antique *lekythos* (a ceramic vessel) stolen shortly after the outbreak of the war by Kommando Paulsen – a dedicated German unit assigned to loot Polish cultural goods – was discovered in an auction house in Munich 73 years after the end of the war. Since 2016, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage has already recovered nearly 600 works of art lost during World War II. 130 restitution cases are currently pending in 15 countries around the world.

Consequences of the Second World War for Poland

- Poland and Poles have been experiencing the negative effects of World War II in the areas of demography, economy, infrastructure, development of science, education and culture to this day. Each year of war and occupation caused Polish development to recede in all aspects of public, economic or social life.
- Polish citizens lost the opportunity to accumulate capital for generations to come, while the savings, works of art, cultural goods and valuable possessions of their ancestors were plundered by the Germans. Contemporary Poland would have been in a completely different place in terms of civilisational development in comparison to other countries in Europe and elsewhere in the world had it not been for the consequences of World War II. Several generations of decimated Poles were condemned to the enormous effort of reconstructing the country from war damage and helping it rise from the ruins.
- To this day, the Republic of Poland has not received either the full amount of the war reparations granted by the decision of the Great Powers in Potsdam or even compensation adequate to the war losses and occupation damage suffered.

Losses suffered by Poland as a result of a German aggression and occupation during World War II 1939-1945

- **Demographic losses:**

- ✓ **5.2 million (5,219,053)** Polish citizens murdered as a result of German policy,
- ✓ **196 thousand** children taken away from their parents and deported to the Third Reich (15-20 per cent returned to their homeland),²
- ✓ **11.4 million** – the decrease in the population of Poland as a result of the Second World War, which was started by Germany.

The total value of losses as at 31 December 2021 is:

**6 trillion 220 billion 609 million Polish zlotys,
approx. 1 trillion 532 billion 170 million US dollars.**

- ✓ The estimated value of material losses is **797 billion 398 million Polish zlotys**.
- ✓ Estimated losses in Poland's GDP due to human losses – lost wages – amount to approx. **4 trillion 786 billion 965 million Polish zlotys**, approximately equivalent to 1.179 trillion US dollars³.
- ✓ Losses in cultural goods and works of art⁴ amount to **19 billion 310 million Polish zlotys**⁵,
- ✓ Polish banks, credit institutions and insurance companies collectively lost **124 billion 125 million** Polish zlotys.
- ✓ The estimated value of the losses incurred by the Ministry of State Treasury as a result of war operations and the German occupation⁶ and due to the activities of the occupying power's Bank of Issue in Poland is **492 billion 811 million Polish zlotys**
- ✓ Estimates of GDP losses due to German occupation during World War II amount to **202 billion 9 million⁷ US dollars [PLEASE NOTE – the amount is not included in total losses]**.

²157,000 children who were kidnapped.

³ The economic valuation of human losses – a calculation which presents the potential contribution to the GDP which would have been made by the people who were murdered, or became seriously ill or crippled as a result of the war, children stolen by the Germans and forced labourers, had they had the opportunity to work in Poland.

⁴ Without the eastern lands, which were incorporated into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics after the Second World War.

⁵ The presented amount does not include damage to historic architecture and other buildings related to cultural goods. This type of loss is presented in the section of the report dedicated to losses of buildings and other structures.

⁶ The amount includes tax and monopoly losses as well as property losses in assets administered by the State Treasury.

⁷ **This amount is not included in the total losses. It is quoted primarily for its informative and scientific value, which remains enormous.**

DEMOGRAPHIC LOSSES IN POLAND DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR DUE TO THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE GERMANS

- The Polish state suffered enormous population losses during the Second World War. These were the result of a deliberate and consistent policy of Germany, which sought to annihilate Polish citizens and thereby allow the Germans who live in the east to gain additional “living space”.
- **As a result of this policy, approximately 5.2 million people were exterminated, while the country’s population decreased by almost 11.4 million citizens after the war. The vast majority (80 percent) of the extermination victims resided in cities, and to a lesser extent (20 percent) in villages.**
- The Germans particularly persecuted the Polish intelligentsia and any “leadership element” – social activists, teachers, Catholic clergy and rabbis, lawyers and doctors who could organise resistance against the occupier. The losses of the Polish intelligentsia ranged from a dozen or so to even a few dozen percent in various groups of professionals.

Situation of children

- The German authorities in occupied Poland used a variety of political and legal measures to reduce the population of its citizens. **They deliberately created the worst possible living conditions by depriving Poles of the chance of proper nutrition, which led to increased mortality. This primarily affected children, as 169,000 of them died due to excessive mortality caused by diseases and shortages.** At the same time, approximately 157,000 children were taken from their parents and deported to the Reich to be Germanised; they never returned home.
- In the Former Lands alone,⁸ 1.672 million people under the age of 18 lost their lives, including 708,000 children of the Jewish faith. Orphanhood and semi-orphanhood of Polish children was a consequence of the German extermination plans.

Loss of population potential

- After the end of World War II, only 77 per cent of children had both parents. The loss of population potential between 1940 and 1944 in the form of unborn children amounted to 1.029 million and between 1946 and 2017 to 3.964 million, in total 4.993 million.
- Approx. 590,000 people suffered severe health detriments and contracted permanent illnesses which undermined the health of Poland’s population. **The demographic consequences of World War II and the five years of German occupation were and still remain a significant obstacle to Poland’s economic development in spite of the fact that many years have passed after they ended.**

⁸ Former Lands – a term used to describe the part of the territory of Poland after World War II between the border with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, established in May 1944, and the western and southern borders of Poland as at 31.08.1939. Sometimes (e.g., in publications of Statistics Poland) these lands also included the former Free City of Danzig.

A summary of demographic losses

The total number of Polish citizens murdered	5 219 053
The number of children deported to the Third Reich	157,000
The number of persons who died before the age of 10	Approx. 20 per cent of the persons who were murdered
The number of people with severe bodily injuries and persons with permanent illnesses, including mental illnesses developed due to the war.	590,000

Economic valuation of human losses suffered by Poland during World War II⁹

- **Actions taken by the Germans against the Polish state during World War II caused a number of losses, both material and immaterial. Out of intangible losses, human losses – the loss of life and damage to the health of Polish citizens – have without a doubt been the most significant.**
- **the generally accepted methodology of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was used to determine the value of material losses, in particular the methodology of counting wages as a component of GDP. **This allows the calculations to be as objective as possible, after so many years which have passed since the German crimes.****
- **We have assumed a scenario where 5.2 million people “naturally” live to their old age and continue to work. This methodology allowed us to estimate that the death of 5.2 million Polish citizens caused a total loss of GDP of 4 trillion 298 billion Polish zloty, equivalent to approximately USD 1.056 trillion¹⁰. The damage caused by disability, disease, kidnapping children and forced labour caused a total GDP loss of 497 billion 942 million Polish zloty, equivalent to approximately **123** billion US dollars.**
- **The exclusion of the next generations, who had not been born due to the extermination of their potential parents, caused our estimate to reach the minimum based on the adopted methodology.**

MATERIAL LOSSES INCURRED BY POLAND BETWEEN 1939 AND 1945

- **The team responsible for calculating material damage estimated the total value of losses suffered by Poland as a result of the destruction of residential and non-residential buildings in urban and rural areas, historical and sacred buildings, as well as other buildings which cannot be put in any of the above-mentioned categories.**
- **Wartime losses in industry and crafts were part of the looting of property which had been prepared by Germany long before 1 September 1939. The looting was one of the methods to Germanise the Polish lands, and it was linked to the genocide planned and carried out against Polish citizens, primarily against the citizens of Jewish origin.**

⁹ An approach based on lost GDP expressed in terms of labour-related wage losses. We have calculated the value of lost wages by considering a scenario where the war did not occur, and the 5.2 million persons who died due to the German aggression would have continued to work under the conditions prior to World War II.

¹⁰ The figures are stated at prices and rates as at the end of 2021.

Exploitation of the Polish economy for the Third Reich

- **The archival documents and literature which are available today allow us to conclude that the seizure of property and the use of the Polish economy for the purposes of the Third Reich, in particular for its war needs, had been prepared as early as in the mid-1930s.**
- **The German intelligence and German academics had been systematically collecting detailed information on the Polish economy. This primarily concerned the key Polish enterprises, in particular their technical equipment, potential and sources of supply. The suitability of these enterprises for conducting war operations after Poland had already been occupied was also assessed.**
- **The estimated value of material losses suffered by Poland between 1939 and 1945 due to the German aggression amounts to 797 billion 398 million Polish zloty.**

The losses of the Republic of Poland in the area of cultural and artistic property during World War II

- **It is not possible to estimate in financial terms the cultural heritage which consists of centuries of uninterrupted evolution of a nation's intellect and spirit.**
- Trends and prices on the art market tend to change rapidly. It is difficult to estimate the final selling price of a specific object, if it would be the same, lower or higher in relation to similar surviving works by a specific author. It is not possible to give an approximate price that would now be paid at an auction for Rafael's *Portrait of a Young Man*, stolen from the Czartoryski Museum.
- **The most appropriate method of realistically mapping the change in the value of cultural assets between 1939 and 2018 involves the use of the dollar valorisation method.**
- **Based on a study of the material collected and compiled by the Office of War Restitution and Compensation of the Ministry of Culture and the Arts, taking into account dollar valorisation, the losses in cultural goods and works of art incurred as a result of war operations and the German occupation within the 1939 borders of the Republic of Poland, excluding the eastern territories which were incorporated into the USSR after World War II, amounted to 1.254 billion Polish zloty, which as at 31 December 2021 corresponds to 19 billion 310 million¹¹ Polish zloty.**

LOSSES IN BANKING AND INSURANCE SUFFERED BY POLAND AS A RESULT OF WORLD WAR II

- **On the territory of the General Government¹², the majority of banks and credit institutions were closed by the Germans, thus causing excessive losses to their assets. All Polish financial institutions in the territories incorporated into the Reich were liquidated and the financial assets generated by such institutions were transferred to the account of the Main Trust Agency East in Berlin.**

¹¹ The presented amount does not include damages to historic architecture and other buildings related to cultural goods. This type of loss is presented in the section of the report dedicated to losses to buildings and other structures.

¹² An administrative-territorial unit established by the Third Reich pursuant to a decree issued by Adolf Hitler on 12 October 1939 which covered a section of the German-occupied territory of the Second Polish Republic (including, among other, Warsaw, Kraków and Lublin) that was not directly annexed by the Third Reich.

- In 1949, the British discovered an account holding the funds acquired after the liquidation of state banks¹³ in the equivalent of several billion contemporary zlotys; the funds are still awaiting collection.
- Social security institutions in the territories incorporated into the Reich were also completely stripped of their assets.
- In Kraków, Jewish and Polish banks were closed down, while the representative offices of key German banks were allowed to start operating. Due to the economic importance of Warsaw, Jewish credit institutions were closed down first, followed by the removal of Jews from boards of directors and control was taken over the assets of credit institutions.
- The losses of Polish credit and savings institutions and their clients incurred due to the war operations and the German occupation within the 1939 borders of the Republic of Poland, excluding the eastern territories which were incorporated into the USSR after World War II, amounted to 5.8 billion Polish zloty, equivalent to **89.3 billion** Polish zloty as at 31 December 2021. This amount does not include damage to real estate owned by these institutions, as it is included in the section of the report on losses to buildings and other facilities.
- The social insurance institutions¹⁴ suffered particularly heavy war losses in terms of material resources and movable property¹⁵. **The available materials show that the war losses suffered by the Social Insurance Institution Supply Centre totalled 15,932 million Polish zloty, including: cash – 300 thousand Polish zloty, in bank deposits – 777 thousand Polish zloty, in bills of exchange – 35 thousand Polish zloty, supply debtors – 3,131,000 Polish zloty, goods, movables and equipment – 10,383 million Polish zloty, real estate – 1,207 million Polish zloty, miscellaneous – 99,000 Polish zloty.**

Summary of losses

- Polish banks, credit institutions and insurance companies collectively lost 8.059 billion pre-war zlotys as a result of the German aggression and occupation between 1939 and 1945, equivalent to PLN **124 billion 125 million** as at 31 December 2021.

¹³ Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego, Państwowy Bank Rolny, Bank Polski.

¹⁴ At the outbreak of the Second World War in Poland, Social Insurance Institutions included entities which operated on the basis of the Social Insurance Act and the Ordinance on Social Insurance for White-Collar Employees, as well as on the basis of specific laws which separately regulated specific types of social insurance in the western districts of Poland.

¹⁵ These included the equipment for: offices, sanatoriums, hospitals, physical treatment facilities, chemical and analytical laboratories, medical and dental outpatient clinics, dental prosthetics laboratories, pharmacies, transport and communication fleets

LOSSES OF THE TREASURY OF POLAND INCURRED DURING WORLD WAR II AS A RESULT OF WARFARE AND THE GERMAN OCCUPATION AND FROM THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BANK OF ISSUE IN POLAND

- **Due to the war operations and German occupation the Polish treasury suffered the following losses:**
 - ✓ Property losses, which included losses incurred by the Treasury administration and enterprises subordinate to the Treasury Ministry in: buildings, factory machinery and equipment, office facilities and equipment, cash, currency and securities, as well as fabrications and raw materials.
 - ✓ Tax and monopoly losses, which included losses in: direct taxes – tax arrears collected by the German occupant remaining as at 1 September 1939 and taxes assessed and collected during the occupation.
- **Losses incurred due to the activity of the Bank of Issue in Poland set up by the Germans in the General Government also were exceptionally severe.**
- Also in this case the funds belonging to the Bank of Issue were discovered in Reichsbank in the total amount exceeding several hundred billion contemporary zlotys, which still await collection.
- **In total, the material losses in property administered by the Ministry of State Treasury and in tax and monopolies incurred as a result of warfare and the German occupation amounted to 28,540,255,923 pre-war zlotys.**
- The liabilities of the Reich and the Reichsbank towards the Bank of Issue in Poland accounted for the majority of the assets of the Bank of Issue. The assets remaining in Poland constituted only a fraction of the total assets of the Bank of Issue. **The total amount of claims against the German Reich and the Reichsbank for the operations of the occupational Bank of Issue in Poland as at 1 July 1949 was 12,747,192,956.89 Polish zlotys.**

The estimated value of losses incurred by the Treasury as a result of warfare and the German occupation, and due to the activities of the occupational Bank of Issue in Poland

- The best chance to realistically represent the change in the value of losses suffered by the State Treasury due to warfare and German occupation of the territories of the Second Polish Republic¹⁶ and due to the activities of the occupational Bank of Issue in Poland is provided by the use of the dollar valorisation method.
- **Following this method, the total estimated value of losses incurred is 31,998 billion zlotys of 1939, which as at 31 December 2021 is equivalent to 492 billion 811 million Polish zlotys. This amount does not include material and personal damage within the administrative scope of the Ministry of State Treasury.**

¹⁶ Without the lands incorporated into the USSR after the Second World War.

ESTIMATES OF GDP LOST DUE TO THE GERMAN OCCUPATION DURING WORLD WAR II – *NOTE* – THESE ESTIMATES DO NOT COUNT TOWARDS THE OVERALL CALCULATION OF LOSSES

- The commonly agreed methodology of the economic costs includes the loss of the GDP stream. Based on archival statistical data, it is possible to reconstruct both the GDP stream and the counterfactual history illustrating the path of economic growth which would have existed had there been no war. This method allows to estimate the value of the lost GDP stream during the war period and to illustrate the extent of the lost economic potential in the post-war years.
- **The destruction caused by the Germans reduced the potential of the Polish economy by approximately 55 per cent.** Due to the fact that the loss of society's income stream is irreversible, the Polish economy has been pushed down onto a lower growth trajectory.
- **The lost GDP stream from the Second World War period has never been compensated to Poland. A lower GDP level has become the reality for Polish citizens throughout the entire post-war history.**
- Assuming that the average growth rate of the Polish economy during the occupation is maintained, the estimates of GDP losses are naturally much higher. Relative to the counterfactual scenario assuming a pre-war GDP growth trend with an annual dynamic of 2.07 per cent, the total loss of GDP value in the period 1939-1945 amounts to 53.775 billion Polish zlotys of 1938.
- After conversion into US dollars and adjusting for US dollar inflation, at the end of 2021 the total sum amounts to 202.009 billion US dollars. Assuming that the German occupation had not contributed to diminished efficiency of factors of production, thus the Total Factor Productivity (TFP) level had remained at the constant 1938 level in the period 1939–1945, the sum of GDP losses would be 36.187 billion Polish zlotys of 1938.
- **After converting to US dollars and adjusting for USD inflation at the end of 2021, we arrive at a total of USD 202 billion 9 million.**

Q&A

Q: What are the chances of receiving any money from Germany?

- **Germany presents itself as a moral power, as the conscience of Europe. If the German state really is a beacon of morality, it will certainly pay compensation and reparations for the actions it committed in Poland between 1939 and 1945.**
- Reparations have a multidimensional nature; beyond the strictly material aspect, they have moral and educational character. A change in the attitude of Germans towards Polish citizens through understanding that the particularly difficult social, political and economic situation of Poland after 1939 until today is largely their fault, would prove to be the implementation of the basic moral and educational component of reparations. The material component would be a natural additional component of a genuine process of guilt redemption.

Q: Why do you still talk about the war? After all, it happened 75 years ago....

- Poland continues to suffer the consequences of the war caused by Germany. The losses suffered by Poland and inflicted by the Third Reich are immense and besides affecting the population they also have a material and moral dimension. These include the impoverishment of the country and society, the loss of over 5.2 million inhabitants, enormous losses in every area of life and a general civilisational lag in relation to other European countries. This report is an attempt to answer the question of the potential economic, social and cultural stage Poland would have found itself in had it not been for the German aggression of 1 September 1939.
- This report was created solely due to the commitment and cooperation with the Polish National Foundation. **It was prepared and reviewed by eminent representatives of Polish science.**
- **The imposed communist regime and the sovereignty restricted by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics provided little opportunity to make a reliable and comprehensive estimate of war losses, and to effectively raise the issue of war reparations and compensations, individual reparations or restitution at international forums.**
- **On the other hand, since 1989, in Poland there has been no political will to carry out such large-scale, reliable and meticulous research and to compile and publish a report.**
- **Individual cities and towns had already drafted reports describing war losses. Out of these publications, the best known is the report on Warsaw's war losses, prepared in 2004 by the "Warsaw War Losses Assessment Team," appointed by Lech Kaczyński – the Mayor of Warsaw at the time. The report *Straty Warszawy 1939-1945* estimates the material losses (excluding human losses) suffered by Warsaw as the result of German actions during World War II at 20.74 billion zlotys at their 1939 value.**

Q: How can you even say that the issue of reparations and World War II has not been settled - what about the 2+4 Treaty?

- **In the final settlement treaty, also known as the 2+4 Treaty, signed in Moscow on 12 September 1990, the issues of war reparations and compensations had not been dealt at all in relation to Germany. The Treaty involved closing the issue of the II World War. Besides, Poland was not a signatory to this treaty.**
- **The Polish and German governments signed an agreement after the conclusion of the 2+4 Treaty (16 October 1991) which gave rise to the Foundation for Polish-German Reconciliation. The Foundation was awarded 500 million German marks, an amount that was to be supplemented by voluntary contributions from German companies which had benefited from the forced labour of Polish workers.**
- **In total, from 1992 to mid-2004, this foundation paid out over 731 million zlotys to 1 060 689 persons, which means an average of 689.97 zlotys per person (approx. 150 euros). It follows that these payments, similar to the aid for the victims of pseudo-medical experiments, could not be considered compensation, but were merely humanitarian aid to Polish citizens – the victims of the Third German Reich.**
- **It is worth noting that until 2004, Germany had been paying out humanitarian aid to Western Europeans more than a dozen times higher per person than that for the Poles.**

Q: After all, Poland “renounced its right to reparations.” It took years, but we finally reached reconciliation. Why do you want to destroy that?

- **International law does not recognise the statute of limitations for war crimes or crimes against humanity nor the statute of limitations for the right to compensation for such crimes.**
- In addition – considering the contents of, among others, the Hague Convention (IV) of 1907, the arrangements of the Potsdam Conference and the conduct of Germany towards other states injured during the Second World War by concluding agreements with them and paying compensation – Germany should compensate Poland for the damage inflicted during the Second World War.
- In addition, the contents of applicable acts of international law and post-war practice in the field of reparations, including the discriminatory policy of the Federal Republic of Germany towards Poland and Polish citizens compared to other countries which received much higher compensation despite the fact they had suffered lower material and personal losses, speak in favour of Poland claiming compensation from Germany for the damage caused during the Second World War.
- The alleged unilateral statement of the Council of Ministers of 23 August 1953 on the renunciation of war reparations by the People’s Republic of Poland violated the Constitution of 22 July 1952 in force at the time, as the matters related to the ratification and denunciation of international agreements fell within the competence of the Council of State and not the Council of Ministers.
- **This declaration was forced upon the government of the People’s Republic of Poland by the Soviet Union. Moreover, according to the minutes of the meeting of the Council of Ministers held on 19 August 1953, the renunciation applied only to the German Democratic Republic.**
- **A potential renunciation of reparations towards Germany would have required a prior peace treaty with the four Allied Powers, as only they had the authority to change the Potsdam formula.**

Q: Won’t the reparations effort spoil the Republic’s good relations with Germany?

- **Good relations must be established on a solid foundation of truth and not on concealments, half-truths and pretending that nothing happened.** As a country, we lost approximately 5.2 million citizens, the material losses amount to over USD 196 billion. **These facts had never been worked through in German-Polish relations.**
- **Poland, as the formal victor – as the only state-participant in the anti-Hitler coalition which had been fighting against totalitarianism from September 1939 until the last day of the war – did not regain its independence and was subordinated to the Soviets.**
- **It is difficult to deny the facts that Germany has never accounted for the war, for the enormity of the losses Poland suffered in 1939-45.**

Q: Why do you continue to open up old wounds?

- We open the discussion; we expect historical justice and reparation for the damage caused to Poland by the Germans during World War II. It is our right and our duty towards the 5.2 million victims, the Polish citizens who perished during the Second World War.

Q: *Why only reparations from Germany? What about reparations from Russia?*

- Germany was the first aggressor against Poland, there would have been no 17 September if it was not for its attack on 1 September 1939. However, we cannot exclude taking steps against Russia.

Q: *Why should Germans born after the war have to pay for their fathers and grandfathers?*

- This is due to the fact that successive generations of Poles continue to suffer the consequences of the terrible losses that Poland has incurred – losses that have impoverished us, hindered our development and economic growth. But most importantly: Poland has irretrievably lost approximately 5.2 million citizens.

Q: *Aren't you afraid that the Germans might now request payments from Poland for Lower Silesia, Masuria and Szczecin?*

- **These decisions had not been made with Poland's participation.** We do not want territorial changes in Europe. We only expect justice and reparation from Germany. **Russia and Stalin took away Germany's territories, just as we lost the Kresy (eastern borderlands).**

Q: *Are the efforts for reparations going to reduce German investment in Poland?*

- There are no such concerns. **Germany was and continue to be our economic partner.** We only want justice and redress; we are not urging a boycott of German products or investments in Poland.

Q: *Aren't you worried that you are not going to achieve much apart from a diplomatic scandal and spoiling good relations with the Federal Republic of Germany? The issue of reparations was closed a long time ago.*

- We look forward to a debate with the Germans, to remind them of the damage they have done to Poland, we give an opportunity for an open debate and recognition of Poland's right to reparation for the Polish citizens who were murdered. **We do not want a diplomatic or economic war; we only want historical justice and a dignified remembrance for our ancestors.**

Q: *Do you want to provoke an international crisis by publishing the report?*

- The report is not going to trigger any crisis. **Greece is also making the same case.** We must demand what has been neglected for decades – historical justice and reparation for the losses suffered. No one has done this for us so far and no one is going to do it for us; we have to take care of our dignity and our right ourselves.

Q: *Is the subject of reparations being pursued at the request of the Law and Justice Party?*

- The project is not commissioned by the Law and Justice Party, it is handled by a parliamentary committee.

Q: *How much did the project cost? Who covered the costs of research and editing the report?*

- The Polish National Foundation created the organisational base and financed the work of the expert team and the printing of the report. The Polish National Foundation does not derive any profits from its publication. **The report is the property of the entire Polish nation.**

Q: *Why are you spending public money from state-owned companies on risky activities that put us in conflict with Germany?*

- We have a right and a duty to demand historical justice and reparation for the losses suffered from Germany. We want to redefine relations, to base them on the truth and not on silences and misrepresentations. **The world needs to know who were the perpetrators and who were the victims of the war. Otherwise, in 20-30 years, when all war witnesses have passed away, it will turn out that it was Poland that started the Second World War.**

Q: *Don't you have any worries that by publishing this report Poland might disgrace itself in Europe, that we might be going to come off as vindictive slanderers?*

- **The greatest disgrace is the fact that no balance of war losses has been made to this extent so far.** The disgrace is the fact that the consequences of the Second World War in such a long-term perspective have not been debated and publicised both in German-Polish relations and internationally.
- Poland has, without a doubt, suffered excessive human, material, intellectual, economic and cultural losses. We expect reparations; this is not frivolous litigation but a moral right to the truth.

Q: *You are suddenly using big words about culture, but you are only after money.*

- As early as 1995, Polish diplomacy approached Germany with a proposal to consider funding the search for and possible redemption of the works of art and cultural property looted in Poland during the Second World War.
- **Unfortunately, German diplomacy avoids any discussion of reparations for the deliberate and premeditated destruction of Polish culture by the Germans during World War II.**

Q: *Are you planning to publish a report on the losses suffered by Poland from the Ukrainians? If that is the case, when is it going to be out?*

- The crimes in Volhynia were committed by the Ukrainians upon the consent and the approval of the Germans. Volhynia was occupied by the Third Reich, and during this occupation the responsibility for the harm caused also fell on the occupying power.
- The Third German Reich is responsible for the mass murders committed by other nations against the citizens of the Republic of Poland in the territories that remained under German occupation. It should be emphasised that the German aggression against Poland on 1 September 1939 was also followed by an armed attack by the Soviet Union on 17 September 1939. This was a result of the Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact signed on 23 August 1939, where the Nazi Germany and the USSR decided to divide the Republic of Poland into exclusive areas of influence.
- From the moment the Soviet army entered the territory of the Republic, it committed atrocities in the occupied territories, murdering not only prisoners of war but also civilians.
- Further consequences of the Soviet Union's aggression against the eastern territories of the Republic included the mass deportation of Polish citizens deep into the Soviet Union, most often to Siberia, the systemic plundering of the occupied areas of Polish state property as well as the property of private individuals.

Q: *What are the chances that the representatives of the German government will actually read the report?*

- The copies of the report will be sent to, among others, 709 members of the Bundestag, key ministries and authorities in the Federal Republic of Germany. **We hope that the German government will take a serious interest in the problem.**

Q: *Does Poland ever stand a chance of enforcing even part of the reparations for the losses it suffered during World War II?*

- Yes, reparations have a multidimensional character. Apart from the strictly material aspect, they have a moral, educational character. A change in the attitude of Germans towards Poles from understanding that the particularly difficult social, political and economic standing of Poland after 1939 is largely due to their fault would be the realisation of the basic moral and educational reparation component. The property component would constitute a natural additional item of a genuine expiation process.

Q: *Who is going to receive the reparations? Poland as a country or specific individuals and their families affected during the war?*

- The report deals with Poland's losses as a country, **but we do not rule out individual claims by the victims' families.**
- Millions of Polish citizens, who suffered unimaginable physical and mental suffering and, in addition, often lost all their possessions, have never been compensated. Attempts to seek individual compensation before the courts have proven unsuccessful.
- **The Germans do not recognise judicial decisions made in other countries where they have committed war crimes. Even at the current stage of development of the protection of human rights, they avoid liability for damages and hide behind immunity from legal proceedings.**

Q: *Is the report reliable enough to persuade the German side to pay war reparations to Poland?*

- The report is reliable, credible and very well documented. It was written by highly-regarded scientists. We want the Germans to become familiar with it, we want the report to spark off a great debate.

Q: *Don't you have any concerns that after the report is published, the citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany will start to demand the return of the property left behind in the territories lost by Germany after the Second World War and, in extreme cases, even a revision of the borders?*

- We do not have such concerns. **The report describes the losses; we are not calling for a revision of the borders in Europe, but for discussion and redress.** The German citizens should take an interest in how, internally, legislatively and morally, they have dealt with the consequences of the Third Reich's aggression towards other countries, including Poland.