

2015 *Maria Ślęzak* Poland

In my presidency, I concentrated on how to increase - by various speaking opportunities - the visibility of the CCBE, its activities and its achievements among lawyers and lawyers' organisations. With the same objective, I initiated a translation of the CCBE newsletter into several national languages, in particular into languages of those member states who joined the EU at the latter stage, as well as those of our associate and observer members.

To help new members to speed up their active participation in our activities, I proposed "Twinning Agreements" between more experienced members and newcomers. In presence of President Lech Wałęsa - creator of "Solidarity", the Twinning Agreement between the Georgian Bar Association and the Polish National Bar Council of Attorneys at law, was signed on the occasion of the Plenary Session in Gdansk on 27-30 May 2015, which took place in the so-called BHP Hall - a symbol of fight against communism, where the Polish non-violent road to real freedom and independence started.

The last months of my presidency were marked with a tragedy that occurred in Paris and Brussels - terrorist attacks, and one of them happened so close to the CCBE premises. The majority of the CCBE delegations supported the CCBE Presidency in cancelling the Standing Committee that was foreseen to be held in Mons. In this context, I really admired the position expressed by the French and Belgian colleagues to stand against violence and attacks and to meet in Mons despite of potential danger.

A very bright element of my term was the Standing Committee in London in February 2015 - as the President of our prestigious

organisation I was invited at a reception at Buckingham Palace and had great pleasure talking with Queen Elizabeth II, who expressed kind interest in our activities.

I am really proud that as the third woman who presided the CCBE, where I met a lot of wonderful people and with many of whom I built very friendly relations and stay in contact till today.

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