



6 May 2016

## INFORMATION ON THE DECISION OF THE MINISTER OF CULTURE AND NATIONAL HERITAGE

On 5 May 2016 Minister of Culture and National Heritage Piotr Gliński informed me about his decision to merge the Museum of the Second World War with the Museum of Westerplatte and the War of 1939. The new institution is to be called the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk, but from a formal point of view it shall be a completely new institution, with its statute and detailed programme of activity yet to be drafted. This shall automatically result in the dismissal of the current management and consequently facilitate changing the entire existing concept of the Museum, particularly its permanent exhibition.

On the other hand, Minister Gliński did emphasise in his letter that his decision would not result in limiting the topics covered by the permanent exhibition of the Museum of the Second World War, which is being produced. At the same time, however, he stated that “the new institution shall talk about the history of the events during 1939–1945 taking into consideration the specificity and tragedy of the Polish experience” predominantly by means of “emphasising the fact that that biggest conflict in modern history began with the German invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939,” with the latter objective to be achieved by merging Westerplatte with the Museum of the Second World War.

I wish to stress that the currently produced permanent exhibition of the Museum of the Second World War already meets all the criteria enumerated by the Minister, as it thoroughly discusses both the tragic experiences of Polish citizens during the war and the defence of Westerplatte in September 1939. This is discussed in detail in the Function and Content Programme, which I provided to the Minister this January. Consequently, in my opinion there are no content-related reasons to alter the shape of the exhibition.

At the same time I wish to remind that pursuant to Article 5 of the Act on Museums the merger of the Museum of the Second World War with the Museum of Westerplatte and the War of 1939 is conditional on a positive opinion of the Council for Museums on the Minister’s decision. I expect that the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage shall fulfil its legal obligation to consult such an important decision.

I wish to believe that the organisational changes announced by the Minister shall not paralyse the process of the production and installation of the permanent exhibition of the Museum of the Second World War which is now at a very advance stage. But considering the negative opinions about our Museum voiced, for instance, by Secretary of State in the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage Jarosław Sellin, I have every reason to fear that they shall become a pretext to interfere with the content of the exhibition and subject it to the current political needs.



I also wish to express my hope that Minister Piotr Gliński shall fulfil his promise expressed during our conversation on 18 April this year regarding the publication of the four reviews of the permanent exhibition of the Museum of the Second World War commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. I hope that the reviewers shall reveal themselves too and take part in a debate on the exhibition's content with historians of the Museum of the Second World War and members of its Advisory Board, who created the permanent exhibition of the Museum of the Second World War.

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