

TO LIVE A BETTER LIFE

I. PRINCIPLES IN PUBLIC LIFE

1. We are a group of people, who find liberty the most important value of every human being. Liberty is to guarantee every citizen possibilities of free and responsible creation of one's own fate and future.
2. The necessity to place liberty as the most important principle is a consequence of exceptional position of every human being. We are aware of human imperfection, yet also convinced that man is called to responsibly shape the world we live in. However, liberty of every individual may not obstacle liberty of others.
3. Human, as a creature actively creating the existing reality, ought to be the subject of every action taken in public interest.
4. We clearly perceive the need of every democratic society to have its own internal bonds, primarily moral, protecting it from collapse. Existence of certain widely shared values, permanently positioning human in a common heritage, is strictly necessary. We believe co-existence of Christian and Liberal traditions inevitable for every civil society to survive and prosper.
5. We find honesty and moderate views indispensable for every public activity. These values command us not to pledge impossibilities and take responsibility for our actions.
6. We identify ourselves with a party, for which common good is a definitely better signpost than particular interests of various pressure groups.
7. In order to implement theoretical conditions for unlimited development of human initiative and - consistently - to allow common good grow and prevail, it is necessary to:
 - the State be democratic and developing on the basis of institutions of civil society
 - the economy be based on free market and private ownership
 - the authorities be limited in their competence and constructed according to the rules of subsidiarity
 - the existence of various views among the citizens be founded on tolerance and renouncement of violence.

II. GOOD AND EFFICIACIOUS STATE

8. Strength and durability of the State ought to be based on freedoms and rights of its citizens. The State ought to interfere only when one's liberty is obstructed by others. Its actions have to be targeted at sustaining security and full rights for every individual to freely develop.
9. Political system of the State ought to guarantee:
 - wide range of liberty for every man and citizen
 - protection of rights and features of individuals
 - clear and effectively implemented law
 - justice in chances and rejection of sexual, educational and ideological discrimination
 - dynamic development of economy and level of civilisation

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- elementary range of internal and external as well as social security
 - protection of national identity combined with openness for the world.
10. The State ought to guarantee liberty of religion and conscience to its citizens. We are for a friendly demarcation between the State and the Catholic Church, as to make both these institutions acting for common good.
 11. Only good Constitution and independent judiciary power is able to guarantee practical realisation and protection of rights of all the citizens. We find the current Constitution of the Republic of Poland accurate and oppose most of the proposals to change it.
 12. Role of the State ought to be limited to guaranteeing the citizens relevant conditions for their development and self-realisation. We are convinced that Poland needs only as little public government and administration, on both national and local level, as possible. There should be less ministries and central executive agencies. The State ought to be responsible for and efficaciously sustain only external, internal and social security, as well as basic stability of the whole economy and monetary system.
 13. Government ought to be decentralised and deconcentrated. As many powers and means as possible ought to be handed over to local government and local communities.
 14. The Republic of Poland may only serve its citizens if it is ruled by honest and competent people. We find it particularly important to destroy the system of corruption links between the business and politicians, and to limit the range of immunity protecting Members of Parliament and Senators in order to ensure its effectiveness only against charges of political nature.
 15. Interference of the State into the life of society ought to be minimal. Non-governmental organisations and their actions are of special importance in this respect. We are deeply convinced that these are the citizens, grouping themselves around particular matters and problems, who know how to solve them best. NGOs are also disburdening the State in their areas of activity.
 16. It is desired to reduce number of paid political posts, not only on the national level, but also - and even in the first place - in regions, counties and boroughs. The growth of bureaucracy has to be stopped.
 17. Creation of the Senate ought to be changed. The Upper House has to become the House of Local Government, consisting of senators elected according to contemporary regulations, and representing regional assemblies.
 18. Proper functioning of the State is overwhelmingly dependent on professionalism and honesty of civil servants. We are for well-educated, non-political and relevantly paid Civil Service.

III. LOCAL GOVERNMENT - POWER CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE

19. We find local government one of the foundations of an appropriate political system, of strong and free Poland. It enables and stimulates local initiatives in our country to be created and develop.
20. We entirely support the local government reform, introducing three levels of it. We are convinced that the idea of local government is implemented the best in a self-governed borough, county and region.
21. Number of regions and counties ought to be dependent on financial abilities of each proposed unit of local government. Properly functioning, strong and well-managed regions will present equal partners for the regions of European Union.
22. We present an opinion, that the idea of local government is developing the best, when combined with as-little-as-possible interference of the central government. Further limitation of central administration and its

powers will lead straight to the effective decentralisation of public finance and make an overall majority of financial means being handed directly to local authorities.

23. In our opinion local government is not only about local administration. It is in the first place about learning and promoting active attitude towards one's own problems and their possible solutions. This is why we support the development of other forms of self-government, such as pupil boards, youth city councils, parliaments of students, chambers of commerce and of various professions.

IV. ECONOMICAL DEVELOPMENT

24. Mechanisms of free market are the best means to define produced goods and services offered. Free competition gives the consumer a chance to opt for best quality, and the producer - an ability to multiply profits. Private ownership, freedom of economical activity and laws that stimulate entrepreneurship construct the foundation of economical system and create well-being of the citizens.
25. Economical freedom needs interference of the State to be minimised and referring only to control of the financial system and anti-monopoly activities.
26. Legal system has to define strict rules for the economy, as to eliminate possible frauds. It has also to adapt itself to changing economical conditions. The State ought to protect adaptation of Polish law to the law of European Union.
27. It is necessary to finish privatisation as fast as possible. Privatisation of such sectors of economy as telecommunications, energy, mining, metallurgy, fuel industry, transport and banking is particularly important.
28. Privatisation in sectors of economy currently monopolised by the State ought to be combined with demonopolisation.
29. The State ought to ensure re-privatisation of property robbed from its legal owners during territorial changes after the Second World War and the Communist dictatorship. It ought to be returned in kind (if possible) or through a national system of re-privatisation bonds, enabling owners to purchase property being privatised.
30. The budget has to be balanced. We find stability of money and low public debt two pillars of stability and development of the whole economy.
31. Public sector borrowing rate ought to be vastly limited. Creation of public debt ought to serve investment and not current consumption.
32. Monetary discipline ought to be increased. Stability of money ought to be protected by an independent central bank.
33. The capital market in Poland ought to develop and strengthen.
34. Agriculture is a sector of economy in particular need for deep changes. From the viewpoint of Poland joining the EU it is necessary to increase effectiveness of agricultural production and size of farms, and - subsequently - decrease the number of people working there. This problem must not be solved by donations. The State ought to act for versatile development of rural areas. In order to make modernisation of agriculture free from outbursts of anger it is necessary:
- to develop servicing, agrotourism and other forms of economical activity beyond agriculture
 - to let the modern infrastructure (such as roads, telephones, etc.) expand, making such economical activity possible
 - to improve education in rural areas
 - to win all the advantages of eco-production, and to introduce appropriate and globally recognised health food certification system
 - to support new co-ops, producer groups and loans-banks
 - to popularise and support technical progress in agriculture.

35. The tax system ought to be clear and transparent, and changes to it be introduced only with a proper earlier notice. This, in our opinion, is the only way to guarantee safe conditions for private enterprise in Poland. Taxes ought to be as low as possible and serve only elementary needs of society. Creating inefficacious "welfare state" has to be opposed. We find line tax with the final rate not higher than 20 per cent the most just and effective form of income tax.
36. Corporation and personal income taxes ought to be levelled out.
37. There ought to be only on rate of Value Added Tax, with an exception for goods and services indispensable for health, education and culture. New rate of the tax ought not to be higher than 20 per cent.
38. Legal regulation of economical activity ought to be revised in order to eliminate all the useless bureaucratic burden imposed on the economy.
39. It is necessary to vastly reduce range of concessions, and make all the inevitable ones of them winnable only through auction.
40. Donations for State-owned subjects of economy have to be eliminated. We find quiet acceptance for these donations, such as abolition of their obligations to the State, and especially to the National Insurance Agency, particularly shameful.
41. In order to create more workplaces it is necessary to eliminate bureaucratic barriers for entrepreneurs, including regulations bringing down elasticity of the work market and increasing costs of work.
42. Privileges of certain branches of economy, as well as those of crews of privatised companies, need limitation.
43. Existence of the right of employees to strike ought to be balanced with creation of right for employers to carry out lockouts.
44. Such forms of strike and protest that threaten public safety or subvert the State itself are inadmissible. Every illegal strike or protest ought to be brought to order with every lawful means available.

V. EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE

45. Everyone, who intends to learn, ought to have possibilities to be taught at every level.
46. The State ought to assure possibilities of learning at elementary and high-school level through financing it in full. Higher education ought to be paid for. Access to it for the less well-off ought to be increased through a system of easily receivable and low-rated student credits.
47. Education ought to be financed through education bonds, covering all the costs of learning in local-government-owned schools, and partially (in an amount equal to the mentioned costs) in private and "social" schools. This would be an embodiment of a proved rule that money follows the pupil, and the State supports the persons learning instead of school as an institution.
48. It is particularly important for the schools to become supervised by parents and local communities. We therefore vehemently support handing over the schools to local government. We find private and "social" (i.e. run by parent-associations or churches) schools equally important to the local-government-owned. We are convinced that all these schools ought to be treated by the State on equal bases, as they create wide-range offer to choose from for parents and pupils.
49. The school curricula ought to pay attention not only to the amount of knowledge to be taught, but also to teaching of personality creation and practical problem-solving. It is desirable to learn practical skills, inevitable at the work market, such as foreign languages, word-processing skills (including the Internet) or driving.
50. Technical schools ought to be free to adapt their curricula to the needs of the work market in order not to educate people with narrow and often useless skills.
51. The course of education at universities ought to be individualised,

especially through introduction of the so-called "point system", enabling students to choose preferred subjects, terms of exams and lecturers. Changing university for another one (including foreign countries) during the studies ought to become an integral part of the whole system.

52. Good teachers ought to be rewarded for the effects of their work, through promotions and means of prestigious nature. Abolition of the Teacher Card, document that in its current shape supports the so-called "negative selection" for the profession, and that may seriously damage introduction of the education reform, is therefore necessary.
53. The State ought to make every possible effort in support of scientific research in Poland. There has to be created a special system of grants, that would ensure honest carry-out of research in branches of science of low or no commercial value, but important for proper functioning of the State and society.
54. In the sphere of culture, the State has to protect creators of feats of no commercial value, but necessary for proper development and cultivation of Polish cultural traditions.
55. Authorship rights ought to become abided as soon as possible. This will make Polish artists able to act normally on a normal market, and also guarantee an adequate level of intellectual ownership protection.

VI. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY

56. We find guaranteeing the citizens security, as well external as internal, one of the most important assignments of the State in rapidly changing world. To bring this idea into life it is necessary to include these positions respectively in the budgets of boroughs, counties and the regions, as well as in the central budget.
57. We find widely-regarded prevention activities, including educational schemes, inevitable.
58. The "zero tolerance" rule has to be applied in order to effectively trace and punish every wrongdoer, including minor offenders.
59. All structures of the State have to declare an incessant war against organised crime and mafia-style activities.
60. Police ought to possess wide rights, enabling her to fight crime efficaciously. It has also to be de-bureaucratized, moving as many paper-shuffling policemen to the streets as possible. Particular attention has to be paid also to prevention activities, including not only proper caution, but also education. Every citizen has to be able to defend one's own health, life and property. This right has to be clearly and precisely expressed, so that using it was not punishable.
61. Local government plays important role in defence of the citizens against crime. Municipal guards ought therefore to be reformed into municipal or local police forces, with competencies enabling them to efficaciously fight local crime.
62. Local community initiatives for improvement of security, such as neighbourhood watch, are of particular importance for us. They ought to receive support from the State and local government.
63. In our opinion one of the greatest obstacles met by people seeking justice is deep ineffectiveness of Polish judiciary. In order to improve it the employees there have to be better-paid and pressured in order to make themselves more effectively working. The courts have to be better supplied with inevitable office equipment. Proper and secure working conditions have to be granted.
64. In order to achieve greater effectiveness in detection and punishing dangerous crime there is an urgent need to strengthen punishments for relapsers and make practical use of such institutions as controlled purchase or police provocation.
65. The armed forces ought to consist of regular (operational) units and the so-called territorials.

66. Polish Armed Forces ought to be reformed into a professional army, basing on volunteers, particularly in reference to the operational units. Common training of the citizens for the needs of territorial forces (with no regular barrack-service, however) is necessary.
67. Number of officers has to be vastly reduced, and their promotions based on personal utility for a NATO-standard army.
68. Possibility to serve the so-called substitutional military service at will of drafted and serving as closely to the place of living as possible ought to be granted already in presence.
69. Fighting pathologies in the army, such as these known under the name of "wave", ought to be carried on, particularly through better supervisory of commanders over the soldiers' activities (which we strongly advise).
70. Budget expenses for the defence ought to be in the first place spent on equipment modernisation (and of course on its exploitation).
71. System of civil control over the army ought to be developed, and legal acts on functioning of the State during martial law periods passed through Parliament as soon as possible.
72. Reorganisation and reconstruction of Civil Defence system, enabling it to effectively resist natural catastrophes, is inevitable.
73. Poland ought to press ahead for further improving qualifications of Polish officers and quality of equipment in order to make them comparable to those in other NATO countries. Operation Units of this organisation, including strategic nuclear forces, ought to be deployed on Polish territory.

VIII. SOLUTIONS TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS

74. Only further dynamic and long-term economical development can guarantee growth in number of workplaces and reduction of unemployment. This is the main reason for continuing actions assuring further development of Polish economy.
75. Every man ought to act to earn a living himself and those to look after, with the just level of chances guaranteed. Nevertheless, we recognise there are particular situations when society has to support persons, who with no fault of their own can not assure themselves a proper standard of living.
76. Social security ought to be performed in various forms and be directed to people in real need, as its role is to make them independent, and not dole-addicted. It is necessary to turn the current trend of "poverty production" and stimulate development of individuals.
77. Social security system has to be constructed basing on subsidiarity, which however must not mean a simple handout of public means. Every person ought to be let to solve problems on one's own, then with help from the family and - subsequently - the local community, leaving help of the State as the very last resort.
78. Lack of lodgings is an important social problem. We do not want, as others do, make unrealistic promises in that matter. In our opinion, the most important factor improving supply of lodgings on the market is growth of the economy as a whole, which is always followed by an increase in people's incomes. However, some actions supporting this supply ought to be undertaken, including:
 - development of variety in forms of housing financing
 - help in raising housing-fit grounds and simplifying housing regulations
 - Co-operatives Act reform in order to widen rights of housing co-ops members
 - development of infrastructure (e.g. roads, water supply) by local authorities so that houses could be built on new grounds.

VIII. REDUCTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT

79. Education is an unemployment insurance of its kind. There is not many higher educated among the unemployed as well as not many unemployed among the higher educated.
80. Unemployment has to be fought actively, e.g. through re-qualification, and not only through protective activities, often creating possibilities for frauds, such as dole-drawing by persons having no rights to do so.
81. In order to increase number of legal workplaces the current Labour Code has to be adapted to the rules of market economy in a way that will encourage employers to abide the law in this respect (liquidation of the so-called 'grey-zone employing').

IX. PENSIONS AND HEALTHCARE - BETTER SOLUTIONS

82. Retirement insurance system has to be reformed basing on the rule, that the rate of pension depends on the quantity of financial means transferred to personal account of every particular person insured.
83. Possible earlier retirement for those working in dangerous conditions ought to be financed through their respectively increased contributions. As this solution rises costs of work in dangerous conditions, it will also lead to the employers reducing number of employees working in these conditions.
84. Change in the health service financial system ought to lead to the whole medical services system being ruled by free market principles, so that standards of serving were improved and simultaneously bureaucracy of the health service limited. This is why we propose:
 - to introduce market competition among the institutions financing healthcare, and to combine it with opening healthcare market for private insurance companies (as it is already happening in the so-called "second and third pillar" of retirement insurance system)
 - privatisation of the health service institutions, such as hospitals, dispensaries, clinics, etc.
85. Taking role of sport and physical culture into consideration as an important factor creating general development of every human being, we find it necessary to take every possible step towards their further development. We are deeply convinced, that the State ought to support associations and unions acting for sport and physical culture.
86. Our priority is development of mass amateur sport. We find professional sporting inevitable for popularising sport among the people, for developing patriotism and national pride.
87. Local authorities ought to pay particular attention to making proper use of sport objects owned by them, as well as to increase their number. They ought to take changes in the lifestyle into consideration in order to support development of amateur sporting. New cycling routes, local stadiums and other recreation places have to become distinctive features of this approach as to let the youth use their energy better and increase safety on the streets.
88. Helping in rehabilitation and attending sport places by the disabled is a very important matter, as this brings them - through sport - back into active life. New clubs, assembling the disabled, ought to be supported.
89. Making physical culture popular among the youth and children has to be treated as health prophylactics, which will lead to limiting expenses on health in the future. Number of physical culture classes ought to be increased in elementary and high schools to at least four per week.
90. Every symptom of corruption and frauds in sport has to be vehemently counteracted, including full control of sport associations and unions financed by the State and local government.

X. HEALTHY AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

91. Natural environment is our common wealth, also to be used by future generations, and has therefore to be specially protected.
92. Improvement in the state of environment that we have been observing since 1989 is an obvious proof for the free market economy being the best system for natural environment. Emerging of rational cost balance acted for lower energy consuming and adoption of less polluting technologies. However, there are still some necessary actions to be taken in order to improve the present state of environment. This refers in particular to waste management, energy saving and policy of space management, that would not collude with rules of balanced development.
93. It is desired to expand areas of widened nature protection, e.g. through creating new national parks.
94. The current environment protection financing system, based on the rule that necessary funds are drawn from polluters is generally correct. However, greater attention has to be paid to avoiding frauds when these means are divided.
95. It is necessary to increase and support every effort of the citizens or the non -governmental organisations for environment protection.
96. Educating has a great role in natural environment protection. Therefore problems of this environment ought to be discussed during special classes in elementary and high schools.
97. Broadly understood international cooperation is necessary in solving ecological problems.

XI. MEDIA, THE INTERNET, NEW TECHNOLOGIES - CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

98. Free, professional and responsible media are an inevitable part of every properly functioning democracy. We are therefore deeply convinced to resist every attempt to limit their freedom, support every initiative for improving ethics and responsibility of the media for the contents of their broadcasts, counter every action aimed at taking public media under partisan control, and liberate them from any political pressure; in our opinion, the most practical way of de-politicising the media is their privatisation; the State may implement its educational and cultural policy through appropriate contracts with private broadcasters.
99. Further existence of unprofessional and strongly political National Board of Radio and Television is utterly pointless. Current procedures of "rationing" frequencies by the NBRT ought to be replaced with auctions, while general administration over ranges and frequencies of broadcasting handed over to the already existing Polish Radiocommunication Agency.
100. Informatisation of the World and development of modern technologies is one of the foundations of economy and social life in our times. We are therefore devoted to support increase in the meaning of teleinformatics and new technologies in Polish economy (similar to what happens in the EU countries) through providing special economical stimulators in order to make Poland not only a consumer, but also producer of these technologies. There also exists a need to modify and modernise education schemes, so that they were compatible to all these processes.
101. Development of the Internet is making access to information and the life of society easier, especially for disabled and persons living far away from cultural and economical centres. Making access to it as wide as possible ought to be a top priority of public authorities. We propose creating a strategy for increasing access to the Internet, and widening actions to popularise it, such as "Internet for schools".
102. Liquidation of monopolies in telecommunications - as one of the factors accelerating development, ensuring improvement in quality and decrease in prices of telecommunication services (including access to the Internet)

- ought to be intensified.

103. There has to be a long-term scheme created to promote among the youth the idea to "build Polish information society", i.e. society which creates large part of domestic product by reprocessing information instead by producing material goods. If such a scheme comes to exist, role of authorities and non-governmental organisations is very important in it.

XII. CONSTANTLY BETTER POSITION OF POLAND IN THE WORLDY

104. Access to NATO is the greatest achievement of Polish foreign policy. In presence, our main objective is to create conditions assuring effective realisation of obligations existing under the North Atlantic Treaty.
105. After the access to NATO the most important assignment of Polish foreign policy is membership in the EU. Poland ought to defend its position and interests during the access negotiations. Preparations for Polish membership in the EU ought to include appropriate changes in legislation and economy in order to make this process profitable for both sides.
106. We find development of good relationships with our neighbours an equally important matter. We find role of the youth crucial in this respect, as meetings and mutual relationships of young people are usually destroying negative stereotypes of the past. The Republic of Poland ought to support and develop cooperation of its young citizens with their peers from all over Europe. We pay particular attention to contacts in the so-called Weimar Triangle. As young Poles we perceive it our moral duty to create links between free and developed EU and the youth from states laying behind our Eastern borders. We feel obligated to bring help to our friends, including particularly the nation of Belarus, for the sake of Democracy, Human Rights and elementary freedoms.
107. We support international cooperation on local level in the Euroregions and other forms of local coexistence.
108. We support regional, over-the-border cooperation of non-governmental organisations of the youth.
109. We support further enlargement of EU and NATO.
110. We ought to act incessantly for strengthening Democracy all over the World and resist breaking Human Rights wherever it takes place.
111. We recognize particular role of the Council of Europe, which is covering many countries of our continent with its activities supporting development of Democracy and promoting Human Rights. We are for making the formula of membership in the CE as wide as possible in order to prevent poorer and unstable countries being excluded from the European family.
112. Poland ought to cultivate Polish language and traditions wherever the Poles live. This particularly refers to large groups of Poles abroad. As for our fellow citizens, who were deported against their will into distant parts of the Soviet Union in the 1940s and 1950s, Polish government ought to make their return possible and provide them with elementary living means.

History of MD

The Young Democrats Association was formed by uniting a youth section of the Democratic Union - "The Youth Forum - Democratic Union" and The Liberal - Democratic Congress, the "Young Liberals" Association.

The Founding of Unification took place on February 19th 1994 in Warsaw, more than two month before the Unification of the Democratic Union with the Liberal - Democratic Congress and the creation of the Freedom Union. This is why the name "Young Democrats" is not derived from the name of the party with which the YDA is connected - which makes it different from most political youth organisations. At the moment of its formation the YDA had about a thousand members assembled in local branches.

The first months of the Young Democrats Association fell on the electoral campaign before the self - government elections in 1994. Several members of the Association participated in those elections, and ten of them were elected to various city councils.

The Association managed to organise several conferences during the first year of its existence. They were an opportunity to exchange ideas, as well as to discuss the most important problems of young people. Since it was created the Young Democrats Association has been treating international contacts as a priority. In July 1994 it has become an observer - member of the DEMYC (Democrat Youth Community of Europe) - an "international" associating youth structures of centrist and centre - right wing parties from all Europe. It has also begun a co-operation with similar organisations in its neighbouring countries. At the DEMYC congress in July 1995 the Young Democrats Association became full member of this organisation, and a representative of the YDA has been elected the vice -president of DEMYC. Our member also fulfilled that function during another term during in 1997-1999.

The political activity of the Young Democrats in 1995 was concentrated on the electoral campaign of Jacek Kuron. Many members of the Association took an active part in it, often among those running the campaign as executives.

The numerous problems which lie in the scope of interest of the Association, forced it to call to life programme teams working on such problems as: foreign affairs, ecology, economics, education, national safety.

At the same time the international activity of the Association was developing. In January 1997 the Young Democrats Associations participated in the founding congress of the YEPP (Youth of the European People's Party), an organisation uniting youth structures of the members of the European People's Party. A representative of the YDA has been elected vice-chairman of this organisation. The YDA was also the host to the first YEPP council in May 1997. It also developed friendly relations with the German "Junge Union" and the Moderata Youth Organisation from Sweden.

In 1997 it began printing it's own monthly "Impuls". The acquired financial means made it possible to print several thousand copies monthly which were distributed free among the Associations members and sympathises.

Another way in assuring better contacts between members was the opening of the YDA pages in the Internet. This means of communication is very often used by the Association. Besides nation-wide pages there are also local pages and a discussion list.

In the parliamentary election in 1997 almost twenty YDA members applied from the Freedom Union lists. The Association organised courses for them on conducting electoral campaigns. Many members occupied important functions in electoral staffs, some being even heads of regional electoral committees. Two members of the Associations became Members of Parliament in the course of this election.

The YDA press is constantly developing - new local bulletins are published. A new nation - wide bulletin "Nasze Strony" (Our Pages) printed more professionally and in more copies than the previous one appeared. New YDA Internet pages have also been opened. In May 1998 the Association was again host to a meeting of the DEMYC executive committee.

In July and August 1998 internships in ministries of several weeks duration was organised for the first time for the YDA members, during which they have had the opportunity to make themselves acquainted with their functioning.

In the local self-government election in 1998 the Association was conducting its own campaign as a part of the Freedom Union campaign. Almost a hundred candidates from the Young Democrats Association were elected into different councils. The YDA members have found their way into local administration and even became vice-presidents of city councils.

The national council of the Freedom Union has voted to associate the YDA with the FU, thus the YDA has become the only associated organisation with the FU.

In March 1999, at the II YEPP congress a representative of the Young Democrats Association was elected vice-president. Two months later a member of the Association was elected financial auditor of the DEMYC. At the same time the YDA has organised a "Eurometing" in Poznan with participants from about fifteen organisations from all over Europe.

As an expression of its interest in international affairs the YDA organised several demonstrations and protests against the violation of human rights in Yugoslavia and the autocratic government in Byelorussia. It has also organised a demonstration in favour of Poland joining the NATO pact.

In 1999 the YDA again played host to representatives of youth organisations from all over Europe during another meeting of the YEPP council.

In the second half of 1999 the YDA concentrated on the discussion on the project of the Higher Education Bill, especially on the parts discussing the principles of financing studies . The Association was of the opinion, that the old inept system allowing, to some extent, payments for studies should be done away with, and be replaced by a effective one based on credits and scholarships.

The issue of military service was also debated. In 1999 the YDA presented a project of army reform which suggests it should become a fully professional force.

January 21 2001 is a turning point in the history of the Young Democrats Association. In face of several negative symptoms observed in the Freedom Union, which was no longer able to achieve its goals, the Young Democrats Association has decided to leave the Freedom Union and to join the newly formed "Citizens Platform" - a new party recruited mostly from ex - members of the Freedom Union and other centre - right wing parties.

The Association has now more than 160 local sections in all voivodships, in all about 7000 members. The largest sections are in campuses, but there are also many sections in small towns.

Local branches are politically active on a local level, organising demonstrations, conferences, meetings on important public issues such as: fighting violence, defence of human rights, education reform - to mention only a few. Often local sections organise courses in civil knowledge, free market

economy (for example stock exchange), human rights or practical Internet. They also organise charity, cultural, sports or recreation events. Local sections often organise meetings with politicians, scientists, people from the media and businessmen.

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