I. A selection of opinions expressed during the workshops, seminars and individual interviews

1. Sources of strength and successes of Polish left-wing political forces

- One of the main strengths of the Socialdemocratic Party of the Republic of Poland (Socjademokracji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej – SdRP) at the beginning of the 1990s was its ability to cooperate with many political actors within the large coalition named Left Democratic Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej – SLD). Organisational variety was an advantage because it was based on a strategic community of political goals;

- In that large coaliton collective political leadership of SdRP was naturally accepted by political actors who formed SLD;

- The main advantage of SLD was its ability to represent many various left-wing concepts.

- That ability enabled SLD to start cooperation with other left-wing political parties (Union of Labour - Unia Pracy, Polish Socialist Party – PPS). Political left-wing actors' interests were aggregated effectively, their symbolic identities were accepted and they were present in the parliament bargaining process;

- Cooperation within the SLD coalition was based on the sense of identity of the various organizations and movements that formed SLD. The mechanisms of decision-making within SLD provided an environment where various ideological interests and expectations were taken into account and respected. SdRP coordinated and ensured that cooperation;

- The image of SLD had been created by various ideological identities of the organizations and people who formed SLD. Symbolic effectiveness of that image resulted from cohesion of expected image (reflected by needs of left-wing electorate) and actual image (creation of left-wing political elites);

- SLD's ability to cooperate was a key factor which prevented formation and development of other left-wing political forces with origins in the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza – PZPR);

- Non-authoritarian type of political leadership, with distinctive features of collective type of leadership. Aleksander Kwaśniewski played the role of a coordinator and was widely accepted because of his ability to combine the needs of political leaders with group interests.

- SLD's image as a political coalition was based on ideological values and on a set of principles: loyalty, mutual sympathy, cooperation skills, ability to act together. The main factor which aggregated mentioned elements of that image was a critical attitude towards neoliberal model of systemic transformation promoted by post-Solidarity political elite.

- SLD gave a sense of dignity to people who actively participated in the public life before the transformation of 1989 - thanks to its engagement in the creation of a multi-party system and involvement in the process of political transformation.

- Creation and maintaining relations based on loyalty by members of SLD coalition was strengthened by reactions of external social environment – public discourse was dominated by political actors who originated from Solidarity movement. They tried to dominate in symbolic sphere of public life in Poland.

- Those attributes of identity and image of political left-wing forces in Poland contributed to a larger share of votes for SLD coalition in parliamentary elections in year 1997 despite the fact that new right-wing political force AWS coalition (Electoral Action of Solidarity) was a winner.

- An advantage for creation of a SLD's positive image was the fact that post-Solidarity political forces did not build an alternative left-wing political party(Union of Labour – Unia Pracy – might have been such a left-wing competitor in the first phase of consolidation of Polish party system). Politicians from Solidarity movement did not create a new left-wing political party because they unequivocally supported the neoliberal model of Poland's economic transformation after the year 1989;

- Organisational weakness of right-wing political parties, which were full of personal conflicts and unable to cooperate effectively, strengthened the position of SLD in the Polish party system. That left-wing coalition had a positive image because it was predictable and had no negative characteristics of fragmented right-wing political forces and problems of

internal conflicts which were visible in Electoral Action of Solidarity (AWS) at the end of 1990s.

- Right-wing political parties were not able to use institutional rules of parliamentary democracy for integration and representation in the parliament. Their problem was an absence of a leader who would be able to integrate political interests. Left-wing political forces were in a better position – their leader was Aleksander Kwaśniewski. Lech Wałesa, a historical leader of Solidarity social movement and a president of Poland since 1990 until 1995 was a rather destructive person. Ambitions of various right-wing political parties had been supressing a development of cooperative organisational culture which was an advantage of political actors from SLD.

2. The root cause of the crisis and breakdown of SLD:

- SLD was a part of governing coalition in the years 1993-1997. That fact changed public perception of its image and had an impact on relations between political leaders of SLD and its supporters. Politicians from SLD were governmental decision-makers who were focused on defending a public interest and dependence on electoral basis sometimes could be an obstacle in the whole process of public administration.

- Dismantling SdRP and creation of Left Democratic Alliance as a political party in 1999 started off the decomposition of political unity of SLD as an ideological project from the left side of the political market. The decision was based on following assumption: organisational pluralism of SLD was no longer its advantage but it became a problem for cohesiveness of its image, electoral chances and governing skills (paradigm of political marketing). Some politicians, who were interviewed by us (we used in-depth interview research to obtain empirical data), stressed legal determinants of dismantling SdRP and creation of SLD as a political party. In their opinion that decision had no direct impact on weakening ideological identity of a new left-wing political party. During focus group interviews different opinions were revealed. That decision had also negative ideological consequences;

- SLD as a political party was based mainly on the logic of electoral competition. It resulted in a gradual weakening (or even disappearing) of stable relations between progressive ideological forces in Poland and their political representation from the parliament;

- Importance of ideological elements in SLD's image decreased and was replaced by elements based of pragmatism, effectiveness; AWS's image was changing in opposite direction. Citizens started to perceive SLD not as an anti-establishment political party but as a stabilizing factor in a political system, which offered its members channels to begin a career in public administration.

- Gradual decomposition of social elements in SLD's image. Including concept of „Third Way" in SLD's agenda, which were at broadening electoral basis, were not an effect of fulfilling expectations of members and supporters of this left-wing political party, but they were introduced by party elite.

- SLD was a pragmatic political party focused on seeking offices but not on introduction social justice and rules of civil society. Absence of ideological long-term vision was replaced with a new strategic goal – accession to the European Union. The weakness of that strategy was in a fact that it was not an original political project of SLD, but it was promoted by other political forces and non-governmental organisations;

- Implementation of that strategy was limited by financial and institutional conditions which were the effects of mistakes and failures of AWS-UW coalition; it also influenced the social elements in SLD's image. The level of support for accession to the EU among party elite and ordinary members of SLD was rooted in common pro-European attitudes visible in Polish society. That strategy and its political implications were not widely discussed in the party's internal debate.

- Internal mechanisms of participation in SLD's decision-making process were weakened or even they started to show signs of atrophy. That phenomenon caused evolution of SLD into typical electoral party machine in which some members were mainly interested in controlling public administration (government, parliament, local communities);

- In the years 1999-2003 there was an increase in the level of membership in SLD in comparison to the period when SLD was a coalition (a two-fold increase). It caused deterioration of ideological coherence and internal relations based on internal democracy and participation procedures. It also had psychological consequences – the importance of pragmatic attitudes increased and the party officials became autonomous.

- Noticeable growth of financial support for SLD from government budget (an effect of new law implemented for the entire party system) strengthened the autonomy of party officials.

- Winning the parliamentary elections by SLD in the year 2001 was the next phase of weakening internal democratic procedures, ideological and political relations. Almost all party leaders (including politicians from voivodship level) became officials in governmental administration. Organisational processes in the party slowed down. Signs of dissatisfaction and frustration appeared. Weaker personal relations between leaders and ordinary citizens reduced efficiency of controlling procedures within SLD. That process resulted in appearance of PR problems in some voivodships.

- Atrophy of internal democratic procedures in SLD started to divide membership basis of that political party into two distinctive groups – party officials (more active) and ordinary members. The rapid growth of the number of SLD members changed an organisational culture of that left-wing political party into more hierarchical and less participatory at the same time.

- Non-participatory type of party leadership caused a growing level of frustration not only among ordinary members of SLD but also inside party elite: some regional leaders, parliamentary representation and local activists. Their reaction resulted in an attempt to create some internal ideological platforms.

- That frustration of party members was strengthened by mainstream media. They started to pay more attention to personal conflicts inside SLD. The programmatic activity of the entire party and its ministries in government was neglected.

- Institutional position of regional party leaders was too strong, especially in the case of leaders being in charge of voivodships' party organisation. There were close psychological connections between their image and the image of the main leader. Negative communication consequences of their actions had been weakening the image of national party leaders and the image of the whole organisation.

- In year 2002 the reform of electoral law on a municipal level was introduced. Its political consequences were negative for SLD because it introduced direct elections of local mayors and presidents of cities. Before its implementation the project of electoral reform was presented in an internal party debate as a tool for party consolidation. In local elections a phenomenon of anti-SLD political coalitions were often created. These coalitions managed to deprive SLD of its stable position in many municipalities. It was an additional source of frustration for party members on a local level and caused critical reaction

aimed at the party executive. National party leaders did not predict negative effects of those legislative changes.

- SLD was not able to react efficiently to criticism presented in the media; some journalists portrayed SLD as a political party which was corrupted, non-ideological and full of nepotism.

- Year 2004 was the turning point for SLD's position in the Polish party system. There were some events which had an impact on SLD's image: visible crisis of leadership, secession of some important parliamentarians, creation of new left-wing party (based on former members of SLD) - Social democratic Polish Party (Socjaldemokracja Polska – SDPL). All these facts suggested public opinion that SLD as a political party had lost attributes of predictability, cohesiveness, openness to various form of social democratic values.

3. Causes of permanent crisis of SLD:

- Since 2004 there have been signs of deterioration of SLD as a dominant political representative of left-wing social and ideological sources which was able to coordinate interests of various political left-wing groups, cooperate with its social environment. Before 2004 SLD was led by party leaders who worked together without open competition.

- In election to the European Parliament in 2004 and in parliamentary election in 2005 there were two competing left-wing electoral lists –list one constructed by SLD and second list made by SDPL. Also in presidential election in 2005 the same problem appeared – Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz (the former Polish prime minister) supported by SLD and Marek Borowski (the chairman of SDPL). That personal split had negative consequences for potential supporters of left-wing political forces: it divided them into two groups and is a demobilising factor for potential voters because of its impact on an image of SLD;

- Rivalry between two competing left-wing political parties became more important for them than an ideological necessity of fighting with right-wing political forces. The winner in that rivalry was SLD whose organisational logic was affected by a dichotomous psychological filter of dividing people into two groups: our own group and the others.

- Creation of electoral left-wing coalition named Lewica i Demokraci – LiD, Leftists and Democrats (consisting of SLD, SDPL, Unia Pracy, Partia

Demokratyczna) before parliamentary election in 2007 was an attempt made by SLD to restore stable relations with other left-wing political forces and improve image. Coalition existed only for a year. It was broken off by SLD and caused an increase of psychological isolation inside SLD and in relations with public environment. That fact also strengthened the mood of competition on the left side of the Polish political market.

- The crisis of leadership had been growing. Despite gaining a nearly 14% of votes by SLD presidential candidate Grzegorz Napieralski in year 2010 parliamentary election in year 2011 were not satisfactory for the entire party. Inside SLD a mood of isolation was increasing. The causes of electoral results in year 2011 are attributed to some politicians who decided to develop their political career outside SLD.

- After parliamentary election in 2011 a new left-wing political party gained a representation in Sejm – a lower house of the Polish parliament. It was Palikot's Movement – in Polish Ruch Palikota – RP, later renamed to Your Movement – in Polish Twój Ruch – TR (named after its creator and chairman – Janusz Palikot). Competition on the left of the political spectrum became more emotional and ideological. Rivalry between SLD leader Leszek Miller and PM leader Janusz Palikot was based mainly on emotions, and fight for the image of „genuine left-wing political party" was ideologically driver (personalization of that conflict was made by mainstream media). That process had destructive consequences for the image of the left-wing political forces in the public eye and caused the cognitive disorientation of citizens who had leftist political preferences.

- Selection of Magdalena Ogórek as a candidate of SLD in a presidential race was another factor which deepened the decomposition of SLD image and the weakness of personal relations inside the membership basis. In the beginning her position in polls was on an acceptable level and reflected the ideological discipline among supporters of SLD. In next phase of the presidential electoral campaign actions and declarations of Magdalena Ogórek were not in line with the expectations of her potential electorate. As a result a large share of her potential electorate did not vote and sometimes she was contested in public.

- United Left (Zjednoczona Lewica - ZL), created by main left-wing political parties (among them was SLD and RP) was an ideological attempt to prevent next electoral defect. The main image problem of that electoral project was in its origin – ZL consisted of two two left-wing political parties which had been in a deep conflict sine 2011 parliamentary election. Psychological

reliability of ZL was weakened by the fact that it was symbolised by two leaders who had been opponents in a parliamentary debate for four years – Leszek Miller (SLD) and Janusz Palikot (TR). United Left was a typical electoral project, based on political marketing assumption without earlier wide internal discussion. Hence it could mobilize only the most staunch leftist voters;

- In year 2015, when United Left was formed, a new left-wing political party appeared – RAZEM (in English: Together).

4. Proposals for rebuilding positive image and social trust in left-wing political forces in Poland

Following opinions, related to fundamental ideological values of the left, were shared by the majority of the respondents:

- the left must rediscover main elements of its image based on social responsiveness, social justice, defence of employee rights, dignity of working class, resistance against wider social stratification and unemployment, fight with any form of discrimination, guarantee of public free public health service and education,

- the left should consistently defend the principles of the secular state,

- objection to all forms of catholic and right-wing indoctrination,

- determind and consistent defence of two democratic principles: rule of law and constitutional order.

This part of the interview revealed also major differences, even contradictive opinions, between the respondents.

- restoring an image of a political party which is powerful and socially responsive;

- an increase in activity of SLD on a personal and organisational level in various actions of the civil society;

- defence of dignity of people who were hard-working and socially engaged citizens before the year 1989;

- defying harmful and unfair discourse of „political history";

- full implementation of procedures related to internal democracy in political parties;

- restoration of mutual trust and loyalty among party members.

Contradictory opinions and expectations were also expressed, especially regarding a possible cooperation with other left-wing political forces.

Some respondents said that it was necessary to create conditions for consolidation, wide cooperation and building electoral left-wing coalition. There were also opinions on a need of stopping ideological conflict on the left of the Polish political spectrum, restoration friendly relations between people and groups involved in activity of SLD in the past.

Other respondents declared that all previous attempts to build wider coalitions had failed because partners had not been loyal. In their opinion the best strategy would be rebuilding a positive image of SLD and implementation of strategy focused on an autonomous political role of SLD.

Most of the participants of our research, who are former members of SLD or are currently members of other left-wing political forces, reveal a sceptical attitude towards closer cooperation with SLD. Following opinions were recorded:

- SLD lost reliability based on the element of social responsiveness;

- Present image of SLD would be a problem in the process of building a new left-wing coalition;

- SLD is not a reliable partner – it is inclined to show signs of domination;

- SLD is not able to rethink sources of its mistakes and avoiding making them in the future;

- SLD is not based on inclusiveness and internal democratic procedures.

- There is a need to create a new left-wing political force based on partnership and participation which should cooperate with progressive social collective actors.

II. Views of the members of SLD regarding the strategic challenges that the party will be facing in the near future

Delegates for Convention of SLD in may 2015 were asked to fulfill a questionnaire which was prepared by researchers in cooperation with Programmatic Commission of National Council of SLD. It included close-ended

and open-ended questions covering such issues as ideological identity, programmatic and political tasks, an issue of possible cooperation with other political forces. The same questionnaire was fulfilled by participants of three research seminars which were organised in following voivodeships: Lubelskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Mazowieckie. A group of 220 persones took part in that survey. Some of conclusions based on analysis of open-ended questions were presented above.

Below we present results of survey related to close-ended questions. Participants of our study were submitted a list of eighteen ideological goals and programmatic tasks. After reading them they asked to estimate their importance from individual point of view using a 10-point scale (1 was the least important, 10 was the most important). Each respondent could point and estimate an importance of goals and tasks which were included in a questionnaire.

The first table presents a ranking of goals and tasks sorted on a basis of their importance indicated by their mean evaluation. The higher value of evaluation, the more important is the chosen goal or task.

Table 1

No.	GOAL/TASK	MEAN EVALUATION
1	Defence of Poland's Constitution	8.87
2	Public health service	8.85
3	Defending social rights of employees	8.69
4	Free public education	8.64
5	The State takes care of equal life chances	8.14
6	Fight against marginalisation and social inequalities	8.14
7	Protest against tightening anti-abortion law	8.01
8	Advocacy for independent judicial system	7.94
9	Building new kindergartens and nurseries	7.71
10	Defence of free media system	7.56
11	Secularity of the State	7.30
12	Fight for the equal rights of women and men	7.22
13	Higher tax rates for the rich	7.20

14	Higher level of social allowances	6.81
15	Defence of ethnic and national minorities	6.71
16	Environmental protection	6.62
17	Support for independent culture	6.24
18	Defence of LGBT minorities' rights	6.03

Next, respondents were asked to point out which goals and tasks were the most important. They could indicate several of items from the list, beggining with the most crucial. There is table 2 below which includes results with perecentage values.

Table 2

1	Public health service	61.8%
2	Defence of Poland's Constitution	58.2%
3	Free public education	50.9%
4	Defending social rights of employees	50.0%
5	Fight against marginalisation and social inequalities	32.7%
6	Secularity of the State	32.7%
7	Advocacy for independent judicial system	19.1%
8	The State takes care of equal life chances	19.1%
9	Protest against tightening anti-abortion law	17.3%
10	Building new kindergartens and nurseries	17.3%
11	Defence of free media system	17.3%
12	Fight for the equal rights of women and men	11.8%
13	Higher tax rates for the rich	10.9%
14	Higher level of social allowances	10.0%
15	Environmental protection	6.4%
16	Defence of LGBT minorities' rights	3.6%
17	Support for independent culture	2.7 %
18	Defence of ethnic and national minorities	1.8%
	Other	14.5%

Next three tables consist of rankings for the first place of the list (table 3), for the second place (table 4), for the third place (table 5).

Table 3

1	Defending social rights of employees	27.3%
2	Public health service	15.5%
3	Defence of Poland's Constitution	15.5%
4	Fight against marginalisation and social inequalities	12.7%
5	Secularity of the State	8.2%
6	Free public education	4.5%
7	Fight for the equal rights of women and men	3.6%
8	Advocacy for independent judicial system	1.8%
9	Protest against tightening anti-abortion law	0.9%
10	Higher level of social allowances	0.9%
11	Building new kindergartens and nurseries	0.9%
12	Higher tax rates for the rich	0.9%
13	Defence of free media system	0.9%

Table 4

1	Public health service	20.9%.
2	Free public education	12.7%
3	Defence of Poland's Constitution	10.9%
4	Defending social rights of employees	8.2%
5	The State takes care of equal life chances	6.4%
6	Advocacy for independent judicial system	6.4%
7	Secularity of the State	5.5%
8	Building new kindergartens and nurseries	5.5%
9	Fight against marginalisation and social inequalities	5.5%
10	Protest against tightening anti-abortion law	3.6%
11	Higher level of social allowances	2.7%
12	Environmental protection	1.8%
13	Defence of free media system	1.8%
14	Fight for the equal rights of women and men	1.8%
15	Higher tax rates for the rich	0.9%
16	Defence of LGBT minorities' rights	0.9%

Table 5

1	Free public education	14.5%
2	Defence of Poland's Constitution	12.7%
3	Secularity of the State	11.8%
4	Public health service	9.1%
5	The State takes care of equal life chances	6.4%
6	Building new kindergartens and nurseries	6.4%
7	Advocacy for independent judicial system	5.5%
8	Defending social rights of employees	4.5%
9	Protest against tightening anti-abortion law	4.5%
10	Defence of free media system	4.5%
11	Higher tax rates for the rich	3.6%
12	Fight for the equal rights of women and men	2.7%
13	Higher level of social allowances	2.7%
14	Fight against marginalisation and social inequalities	2.7%
15	Environmental protection	0.9%
16	Support for independent culture	0.9%

The next 14 close-ended questions related to evaluation (10-point scale) of the present political sitution of SLD.

PiS took possession of leftist social programme	8.35
SLD lost an element of social respnsiveness in its image	7.91
SLD should support anti-PiS political initiatives	6.84
SLD should strive for agreement of the left-wing political forces	8.12
In municipal election SLD should be independent and built its electoral lists on a basis of local party activists	7.23
Many leftist and centrist politcial forces distanced themselves from SLD	8.01
The great anti-PiS coalition will never be formed	6.48
If the great anti-PiS coalition is formed, SLD should be a memeber of it	6.69
SLD members should particpate in demonstrations organized by KOD	5.95
SLD should place ideological values over pragmatic goals	7.71

Rebranding of party will help to regain trust	3.65
In order to regain public trust SLD should conduct a wide ideological debate	7.30
In order to regain public trust SLD should conduct a wide programmatic debate	7.92
In order to to regain public trust SLD should strengthen procedures of internal democracy	7.96
As an active memebr of SLD I have a feeling of participation in the most important aspect of decision-making system in SLD	6.07
SLD should oppose political history implemented by PiS	8.59

The next three questions related to evaluation (10-point scale) of the current political situation under the PiS government

	Mean evaluation
Is democracy endangered in Poland?	8.23
Will Poland be isolated in the EU?	7.98
PiS will be holding power for a long time thanks to social programm for families „500+"	6.76

Open-ended questions related to the most important issues

In the final section of the questionnaire there were two open-ended questions related to the most important issues in the present activity of SLD and in a long-term perspective.

In the present activity of SLD following issues were indicated as the most important:

1	Preparation of a socially responsive programme for SLD	51.00%
2	Higher quality of internal democratic procedures (consultations on the most important issues with party members, democratic way of selecting party candidates for elections))	35.5%

3	Preparation for municipal elections	34.5%
4	Improvement of PR strategy of party (communicable, uniform, cohesive, precise, offensive message))	33.9%
5	Activity of party on a national level and on a personal level (social engagment, defence of Poland's constitution, participation in demonstrations)	18.5%
6	Rearrangment of party structure (displacement of egoistic attitudes, rebuilding structures, promotion of positive and hard-working members – especially young ones)	18.5%
7	End of ideological war on the left of the political spectrum, regaining public trust, restoration of cooperation with people who left SLD or stopped contacts with the party	17.8%

In a long-term perspective following issues were considered by respondents to be the most important:

1	Regaining public trust and rebuilding reliability using a new pro-social programme *	62.3%
2	Improvement of communication with potential voters, better PR, public activity, participation in demonstrations, contacts with youth	36.3%
3	Improvement of internal democratic procedures, better communication inside party, personal rejuvenation of the party	32.3%
4	Preparation for parliamentary election	28.7%
5	Unification of left-wing political forces, consolidation, wide coalition	18.5%
6	Defence of Poland's constitution	10.2%
7	Rebranding, rejuvenation of the leadership, new leader	8.2%

* In the first place in this ranking following issues were mentioned: social justice, rights of employees, creation of new jobs, defence of workers' dignity, elimination of precarious jobs, municipal housing, taking care of the socially excluded, fight with increasing social stratification, raising pensions, public and free health services

Respondent also estimate ideological distance of SLD to other political parties (using 10-point scale, 1- the closest, 10 – the most distant) in three dimensions: programme, view of the world, politics. Polish Initiative (Inicjatywa Polska), a

political group which originated from SLD and United Left was included in the list.

Distance related to programme:

Razem	4.35
Inicjatywa Polska	4.49
PSL	5.55
PO	5.93
Nowoczesna	6.48
PiS	6.57
Kukiz'15	6.65
Korwin	7.26

Distance related to view of the world :

Razem	3.78
Inicjatywa Polska	4.06
Nowoczesna	5.79
PO	5.94
PSL	6.28
Kukiz'15	7.12
Korwin	7.55
PiS	8.45

Distance related to politics:

Razem	4.20
Inicjatywa Polska	4.44
PSL	5.60
Nowoczesna	6.36
PO	6.38
Kukiz'15	7.73
Korwin	7.73
PiS	8.34

Which political force could be in a coalition or in a programmatic alliance with SLD?

Razem	53.6%
Inicjatywa Polska	24.5%
owoczesna	21.8%
PSL	17.3%

PO	12.7%
PiS	1.8%
Korwin	1.8%
Kukiz'15	0.9%
Żadne	7.3%

SLD should not enter a coalition or a programmatic alliance with:

PiS	63.6%
Kukiz'15	39.1%
Korwin	37.3%
PO	22.7%
Nowoczesna	10.9%
PSL	9.1%
Inicjatywa Polska	1.8%
Razem	0,.9%
KOD	0.0%
Żadne	2.7%