

## THE QUESTION OF CZECHOSLOVAK-GERMAN ARBITRATION TREATY AT THE CONFERENCE IN LOCARNO

On January 20, 1925, the German Foreign Secretary of State Karl von Schubert handed a memorandum to Viscount d'Abernon, British Ambassador in Berlin. The memorandum included a proposal to sign a security pact concerning western boundaries of Germany.<sup>1</sup> The event happened in secret. A project that dominated the European political scene throughout 1925 was born discreet. At first sight, the goal of the memorandum appeared simple and clear. Germany offered to Great Britain and later to France, possibility to sign a pact which would guarantee the Rhineland boundary. However, things were not so easy. There were many problems that needed to be overcome, so the negotiations could be successful. The main goal of the proposal was to satisfy French desire for security on the Rhineland boundary, but at the same time, Germany should be an equal partner in the new security system. Great Britain was expected to become a guarantor of the security pact, so it was necessary to make the duties of a guarantor acceptable to British politicians. Also British-French relations were not ideal in this time. The reason was the French-Belgian occupation of the Ruhr area in 1923.<sup>2</sup> The relations between London and Paris needed improvement. It was essential to fulfil all these assumptions because only under those circumstances could the pact be acceptable to all parties involved and be signed. But there was one other problem that had to be solved. It was the question of the German eastern boundaries along the Czechoslovak and Polish desire for security assurances.

The German eastern boundaries represented one of the main problems during the security negotiations. This problem got even bigger during the year 1925. The German standpoint did not change till the end of the negotiations. Germany was refusing to recognize and guarantee boundaries with Czechoslovakia and Poland.<sup>3</sup> The eastern boundaries were not mentioned in memorandum within the security offer given to Great Britain and to France.<sup>4</sup> The German side assumed that France would demand that her eastern allies<sup>5</sup> should also participate in the security negotiations.

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<sup>1</sup> See the text of memorandum *Locarno-Konferenz 1925. Eine Dokumentensammlung*, Berlin, 1962, no. 2, p. 52-53.

<sup>2</sup> Paul W. Doerr, *British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, Manchester, 1998, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik (ADAP)*, Series A, 1918-1925, vol. XII, Göttingen, 1994, no. 22, p. 50-53. In conversation with British Ambassador on January 14, 1925, Karl von Schubert expressed that this way: "Er [d'Abernon – A. F.] kam selbst auf die Frage zu sprechen, ob wir da nicht auch gezwungen werden würden, unsere Ostgrenze zu garantieren. Ich [Schubert – A. F.] bezeichnete dies als ganz ausgeschlossen, wofür Lord D'Abernon volles Verständnis hatte [...]". *Ibidem*, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> The text of memorandum for France: *Locarno-Konferenz 1925 ...*, no. 5, p. 61-62. Memorandum was presented to France on February 9, 1925.

<sup>5</sup> France had treaties with Poland (February 19, 1921 – text of the treaty: Ladislav Ruman, *Polsko v "tieni" Pilsudského*, Nitra, 2001, p. 17-18, note 12) and with Czechoslovakia (January 25, 1924, the text see for example in journal published periodically by Czechoslovak Foreign Office, in *Zabranění politika 1924*, p. 285-286). Some diplomatic circles expected that French decision to integrate its eastern allies to the negotiation was so firm that it could be one of the most serious problems of the negotiations between

Because of this, in memorandum was offered the possibility that Germany was willing to close arbitration treaties with all states that would be interested in it.<sup>6</sup> If an arbitration treaty was signed, it did not mean automatically that the boundaries between states that signed this treaty were mutually acknowledged and accepted.<sup>7</sup> The German proposal offered arbitration treaties to all states, but to “in Rhine interested powers”<sup>8</sup> was also offered a security pact. The arbitration treaties were from the beginning considered as secondary. For the “in Rhine interested powers”, it was just an amendment to the security pact, for all other countries the only security proposal. The German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann would like to avoid the discussion about eastern frontiers of Germany, but exactly this question appeared as one of the most complicated during the negotiation.<sup>9</sup> At the end, the arbitration treaties were signed by Germany on one side and Belgium, France, Poland and Czechoslovakia on the other.

The negotiation about the Czechoslovak-German arbitration treaty was unconventional. It is not known when the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister was informed about the German security offer. Also the source is unknown. It is only assumed that Czechoslovak Foreign Minister E. Beneš was informed by the French ally and it happened probably in the middle of February.<sup>10</sup> E. Beneš endeavoured to

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powers. *ADAP*, vol. XII, no. 56, p. 136-139. Report of Secretary of State Schubert about the conversation with American Ambassador in Berlin, A.B. Houghton January 28, 1925.

<sup>6</sup> “Zum Abschluß derartiger Schiedsverträge, die eine friedliche Austragung rechtlicher und politischer Konflikte sicherstellen, ist Deutschland auch gegenüber allen anderen Staaten bereit.“ *Locarno-Konferenz 1925 ...*, no. 5, p. 61.

<sup>7</sup> Germany was not ready to acknowledge its eastern boundaries. Some German politicians had a firm belief that there was a possibility of changing the German-Polish boundary without even using military instruments. The Germans could not swallow the existence of “Polish corridor“. Its creation was felt in Germany as unjust. Germany did not possess instruments to get the corridor back on military way, but there was strong belief, that this boundary could be changed on piece way. According to German analysis of Polish economy, Poland stood in real economic troubles. It was assumed, that if the troubles continued, Poland will not be able to survive in current extension. The problems in economics could lead to negotiations with Germany about boundaries and at the end the boundaries could be changed in advantage to Germany, without using a military power. These were the arguments why Germany was not ready to guarantee, even not acknowledge, the Polish-German boundary. “Denn ich [Schubert – A. F.] sei der Meinung, daß die polnische Wirtschaft sich weiterhin in sehr unliebsamer Weise entwickeln würde, daß Polen in seinem jetzigen Ausmaße nicht lebensfähig sei. Ich könne mir denken, daß es durch die polnische Mißwirtschaft zu einer Auseinandersetzung über seine Grenzen kommen könne und daß dann die Grenzen auch ohne Krieg neu reguliert werden könnten und müßten.“ *ADAP*, vol. XII, no. 37, p. 85. K. von Schubert about the possibility, how could the German-Polish boundary be changed.

<sup>8</sup> This expression was used in the text of the security offer. “In Rhine interested powers“ were Germany, Great Britain, France, Belgium und Italy.

<sup>9</sup> Piotr S. Wandycz, *France and Her Eastern Allies (1919-1925)*, Minneapolis, 1962, p. 331; Radko Brách, *Německé bezpečnostní memorandum z 9.2.1925 a bezprostřední reakce Polska a Československa*, in *Historie a vojenství*, 1994, p. 3-39, especially p. 3-17.

<sup>10</sup> Piotr S. Wandycz, *op. cit.*, p. 334-335. This statement can not be definitely confirmed or confuted. In the Archive of Czechoslovak Foreign Office was not found a document with exact date, when Beneš received the information about German security offer. Wiesław Balcerak, *Politika zahraniční Polska v době Locarna*, Warszawa, 1967, p. 45; Radko Brách, *Československo a Evropa v polovině dvacátých let*, Praha-Litomyšl, 1996, p. 104; Jerzy Krasuski, *Stosunki polsko-niemieckie 1919-1932*, Poznań, 1974, p. 189-190.

include Czechoslovakia into the preparation of guarantee pact.<sup>11</sup> He preferred so called "pact of seven". That should have been an alternative to the German proposal where Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Belgium would mutually guarantee their frontiers and security. In other words, it was an alternative where the German eastern boundaries would have been included. This effort came to nought already during March of 1925.<sup>12</sup> Great Britain did not intend to take on such a large engagement in Central Europe. Also Germany was not ready to give large assurance like that. In this situation, it was necessary to find another form how could Czechoslovakia participate in the security negotiations. There was still the possibility to close arbitration treaty with Germany. The Czechoslovak Foreign Office tried to arrange an appointment between E. Beneš and G. Stresemann. The diplomats had talked about this possibility several times during the year 1925, but the heads of German and Czechoslovak Foreign Office did not meet till the session in Locarno.<sup>13</sup> Minister Beneš demanded to connect Czechoslovakia into the preparation of a new security system and he took part in negotiation about the German offer. Nevertheless, the Czechoslovak and Polish diplomats were on the diplomatic sidelines during this negotiation. However, Beneš's diplomatic activity was not hidden to German politicians. The diplomatic correspondence shows that responsible German diplomatic circles knew about his activity and demands.

The next step of German diplomacy was a surprise. On September 18, 1925, during press conference, Stresemann claimed that neither Poland nor Czechoslovakia reacted to the German proposal from February 9, 1925, which offered a possibility to close arbitration treaty. The truth is that Czechoslovak diplomacy was not in direct connection with the German Foreign Office in this task. Beneš tried to negotiate about the arbitration treaty with mediation of France. He had chosen this tactics to show that he worked in full harmony and conformity with Great Britain and France. He did not want to undertake individual steps. He was afraid that he could be accused of threatening the negotiations and the agreement. Nonetheless that also meant that Czechoslovakia was not officially in touch with the German government in the case of arbitration treaty. This fact used Stresemann in his affirmation from September 18, 1925. Reaction from the Czechoslovak side was quick. Beneš sent instructions to Kamil Krofta, Minister of Czechoslovak Legation in Berlin.<sup>14</sup> Krofta should deliver an official notification to the German Foreign Office that the Czechoslovak government was prepared to negotiate about German offer of the arbitration treaty that was

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<sup>11</sup> Minister Beneš formulated his conception of security pact in memorandum. This memorandum was given to French diplomat on March 2, 1925 and to the British diplomat on March 16, 1925. For the text of these memoranda see: Radko Břach, *Locarno a čs. Diplomacie*, in *Československý časopis historický*, 1960, appendix I, II, p. 694-695. Also Radko Břach, *Německé bezpečnostní ...*, p. 24-38.

<sup>12</sup> Archive of Czechoslovak Foreign Office [further quoted as ACZFO], Prague, *Delivered telegrams 1925*, 271/25, telegram by Beneš from Paris, March 20, 1925.

<sup>13</sup> Radko Břach, *Československo a Evropa ...*, p. 172-178; Manfred Alexander, *Der deutsch-tschechoslowakische Schiedsvertrag vom 1925 im Rahmen der Locarno-Verträge*, München, 1970, p. 80-84.

<sup>14</sup> ACZFO, Prague, *Delivered telegrams 1925*, 956/25, September 19, 1925.

mentioned in memorandum dated on February 9, 1925.<sup>15</sup> Krofta went to German Foreign Office the next day after he received the instructions, on September 20, 1925. Krofta could not talk to Stresemann himself, so he handed the notification to Foreign Secretary of State Schubert.<sup>16</sup> During this meeting Krofta noticed that Stresemann had been mistaken when he had given a press statement claiming that Czechoslovakia had showed the lack of interest in beginning negotiations about the arbitration treaty. Schubert agreed with that, yet tried to excuse Stresemann's action. According to Schubert, Stresemann was not speaking about Czechoslovakia in this case, but his allusion was aimed against Poland.<sup>17</sup> However, Stresemann's public expression and also its effect could not be taken back. The notification handed by Krofta was just Czechoslovak statement that the government was ready to begin the negotiations. It was not an actual project of the treaty. Beneš considered delivered notification as "a pure formality". The negotiations were unofficial till that date. Now they should get official form.<sup>18</sup> During the meeting with Krofta, Schubert tried to explain and obliterate Stresemann's announcements. There was a reason for Stresemann's action. The negotiation about the so-called Rhineland Pact carried successfully forward. The conference of foreign ministers was almost scheduled. Stresemann did not want Czechoslovakia and Poland to take part at this conference. His press statement was intended to draw attention to the following: arbitration treaties with Germany's eastern neighbours were not prepared and elaborated on satisfactory level, so the arbitration treaties with Czechoslovakia and Poland should not be discussed at the same time while security pact. The security pact was, according to him, almost ready. Stresemann attempted to delay the negotiation about eastern treaties. He did not want to negotiate and sign eastern arbitration treaties at the same time as Rhineland Pact because he did not want any connection between Rhineland Pact and eastern boundaries of Germany. This German position was known also to British

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<sup>15</sup> Beneš acted without coordination with Poland in this case. Wiesław Balcerak, *op. cit.*, p. 160. According to historian Balcerak, Beneš's main goal of this step was to achieve a better scope in negotiation for Czechoslovakia. This step was also considered as antipolish. Jerzy Krasuski, *op. cit.*, p. 219-221. Same historians claim that Beneš did it intentionally. Zygmunt Gasiński, *Polish-Czechoslovak Relations 1922-1926*, in *The Slavonic and East European Review* XXXV, 1957, p. 500; Radko Brach, *Československo a Evropa ...*, p. 273- 274. Historian Brach analyzed Czechoslovak archive documents and shows that Beneš sent telegram also to Warsaw. Residential Czechoslovak chargé d'affaires in Warsaw should have announced his action towards Berlin to Polish Foreign Minister A. Skrzyński. The announcement was delivered on September 22, 1925. But at this time the embitterment was already gone.

<sup>16</sup> ACZFO, Prague, *Krofta's Archiv*, carton 23, without number, September 22, 1925, express to Geneva. In an official announcement of the German Foreign Office to the press, it is stated that Krofta handed Czechoslovak notification directly to Stresemann, no to Schubert. This was intentional and Krofta had been informed about this step.

<sup>17</sup> German Foreign Office was using this explanation repeatedly. Announcements of German diplomats were not aimed against Czechoslovakia. Several objections of Czechoslovak envoys were rejected with this explanation: German statements about necessity of changing the eastern frontiers or expression that there had been lack of interest in beginning negotiations about arbitration treaty. *ADAP*, Series A, 1918-1925, vol. XIV, Göttingen, 1995, no. 71, p. 187. Schubert's notice concerning the meeting with Krofta, September 20, 1925. Also many Czechoslovak diplomats believed German allusions to revision of eastern boundaries were aimed against Poland.

<sup>18</sup> ACZFO, Prague, *Delivered telegrams 1925*, 983/25, September 25, 1925.

Ambassador in Berlin. During conversation between Schubert and D'Abernon on September 21, 1925, Schubert expressed opinion that participation of Czechoslovak and Polish envoy at the conference would have been gratuitous. According to Schubert their participation could have complicated the negotiations.<sup>19</sup> D'Abernon understood German reservations concerning the participation of Beneš and Skrzyński at conference. D'Abernon added that also British government was looking for other possibilities how could Polish and Czechoslovak security demands be satisfied without their participation on the prepared conference of foreign ministers.<sup>20</sup> One possible solution was to allow Beneš and Skrzyński participation at the conference only after initial negotiations about Rhineland Pact. The Rhineland Pact was not, according to Stresemann, their concern so there was no need for them to be present at the conference during initial meetings. The exact day when the negotiations about Rhineland Pact would be over could of course not be scheduled. France insisted on participation of Czechoslovakia and Poland at the conference. France also wanted the east arbitration treaties be closed at the same time as Rhineland Pact and wanted to give French guarantee upon this treaties.<sup>21</sup> However, it was obvious that the negotiations with Germany would not be easy.<sup>22</sup> One of the last conversations at Czechoslovak-German level before beginning of the Locarno conference was Krofta – Stresemann meeting dated on September 25, 1925.<sup>23</sup> Stresemann wanted to thank Czechoslovak government for readiness to begin the negotiations about the arbitration treaty. This was the official purpose of meeting. Yet, also on this occasion Stresemann expressed his opinion that it would be better if Beneš would not

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<sup>19</sup> *ADAP*, vol. XIV, no. 72, p. 188-192. Schubert's notice about conversation with D'Abernon on September 21, 1925.

<sup>20</sup> "Ich [Schubert – A.F.] fragte Lord D'Abernon, ob man in London der Ansicht sei, daß die Polen und Tschechen an der Konferenz teilnehmen sollten. Lord D'Abernon antwortete, dieser Ansicht sei man in London nicht; man suche aber eben auch dort augenscheinlich nach einem Ausweg, wie man die beiden Länder befriedigen könne." *Ibidem*, p. 190. "Bei bisherigen Verhandlungen wurde Westen und Osten streng unterschieden und für Osten keinerlei territoriale Garantie in Aussicht genommen. Die nach Pressemeldungen erwogene Zuziehung Polens und Tschechoslowakei zu Verhandlungen über Westpakt würde Abkehr von bisherigen Verfahren bedeuten, die erhoffte Ergebnisse offensichtlich gefährden müßte. Zuziehung Vertreter Polens und Tschechoslowakei zu geplanter Ministerbesprechung uns daher durchaus unerwünscht." Stresemann's instruction toward German diplomats September 12, 1925. *ADAP*, vol. XIV, no. 59, p. 155. For British politics toward Czechoslovakia at this time see: Jindřich Dejmek, *Velká Británie a Československo v době jednání o Západní garanční pakt (leden-prosinec 1925)*, in *Český časopis historický*, 2000, 4, p. 775-806.

<sup>21</sup> "Im Anschluß hieran streifte Briand auch Frage französischer Garantie Ostschiedsverträge, worauf ich entgegnete, daß hierüber offenbar Hauptstreit entbrennen würde, da deutsche Regierung derartige Garantie kaum würde annehmen können. Briand meinte, auch er halte diesen Punkt für den kritischsten. Frankreich könne aber keinesfalls seine Bundesgenossen sitzen lassen und müsse deshalb an Garantie-Idee festhalten." *ADAP*, vol. XIV, no. 105, p. 265-266. Report by German Ambassador in Paris concerning conversation with French foreign minister A. Briand, September 29, 1925.

<sup>22</sup> *ACZFO*, Prague, *Delivered telegrams 1925*, 969/25, September 22, 1925. "S Němci budeme ohledně textu arbitrážní smlouvy mítí potíže a rovněž budou činiti překážky naší smlouvě garanční. [With the Germans we will have problems, as far as our arbitration treaty is concerned and they will also do difficulties to our treaty of guarantee]."

<sup>23</sup> *ADAP*, vol. XIV, no. 82, p. 216-217, September 25, 1925. Schubert's recommendation for Stresemann how to lead conversations with Krofta.

participate during the opening meetings of the conference.<sup>24</sup> It was clear expression of the fact that he would like to delay Czechoslovak (and also Polish) participation at conference.

Negotiations concerning the Czechoslovak-German arbitration treaty were unconventional. Before session in Locarno, there were talks neither about content of the treaty nor was presented any actual project.<sup>25</sup> There was just a foggy scheme of the expecting arbitration treaty. Beneš believed that during the negotiations he could win France and Great Britain for his vision how security pact and arbitration treaties should look. This is indicated by his own proposal of arbitration treaty (even two) that he brought to negotiation in Switzerland. To secure participation of Polish and Czechoslovak delegation at the conference in Locarno was not easy. German diplomats tried to avoid their involvement and wanted to sign arbitration treaties with eastern neighbours on another date. France was not ready to abandon their allies and wanted them to take part at session. To satisfy both sides, it was concluded, that Czechoslovak and Polish delegation should take part just during the later meetings of the conference.

*Problem of German eastern boundaries at Locarno conference during main meetings*

During the last exchanges of official notes between Allies and Germany in the end of September 1925, Locarno, a town in Switzerland, was chosen as a place for negotiation talks.<sup>26</sup> For the first time since conference in Versailles war winners and losers met at this kind of diplomatic negotiations. A lot of hope was put into the negotiations.<sup>27</sup> All diplomatic trifles and diplomatic protocol played important role. It has to be considered that it was not easy to find agreement also in procedural affairs like a vote of the conference chairman. First proposed candidate for the chairman was British Foreign Minister Austen Chamberlain, but the German delegation did not agree. Finally, the negotiations were without an official chairman.<sup>28</sup> Protocol and diplomatic affairs were relatively important.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Gustav Stresemann, *Vermächtnis II*, Berlin, 1932, p. 182-184; Gregory F. Campbell, *Confrontation in Central Europe. Weimarer Germany and Czechoslovakia*, Chicago-London, 1975, p. 151.

<sup>25</sup> Both sides just agreed that arbitration treaties that Germany had closed until that time built a good basis for negotiation about future Czechoslovak-German treaty. Gustav Stresemann, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

<sup>26</sup> British Foreign Minister A. Chamberlain preferred London. Edgar Vincent d'Abernon, *Memoiren. (1924-1926). Ein Botschafter der Zeitwende*, vol. III, Leipzig, s.d., p. 203. Later was considered to do the session in Geneva, but also this proposal was refused. British Ambassador in Berlin thought: "Die Genfer Atmosphäre ist zu stark von polnischen und tschechoslowakischen Duft erfüllt." *Ibidem*, p. 213. Locarno was acceptable for all participants. *ADAP*, vol. XIV, no. 78, p. 205-206. Schubert's notice September 23, 1925.

<sup>27</sup> German delegation was accompanied to the railway station before the journey to Locarno by nuncio. ACZFO, Prague, *Political reports Berlin 1925*, no. 51.

<sup>28</sup> Radko Brach, *Československo a Evropa ...*, p. 290.

<sup>29</sup> ACZFO, *Delivered telegrams 1925*, 1015/25, October 2, 1925. Czechoslovak delegation in Switzerland informed that there were problems to book accommodation in Locarno for the Czechoslovak delegation. Finally, the accommodation was reserved in Grand Hotel. It was also a residence of British, French, Belgian delegation as well as Italians and Polish Foreign Minister A. Skrzyński. German delegation was accommodated and "isolated" in distant hotel Esplanade. *Ibidem*.

The negotiation talks began on Monday October 5, 1925. Particular meetings took place without publicity. The journalists got a brief communiqué after every meeting.<sup>30</sup> The bases for negotiation were proposals prepared by legal experts during their session in London.<sup>31</sup> Neither Beneš nor Skrzyński were in Locarno at the time of conference opening. Czechoslovak and Polish envoy travelled to the conference on October the 6, 1925. The train-journey was quite long and German diplomats hoped that the two delegations would not show up in Locarno before the evening of October 8, 1925.<sup>32</sup> Concerning the Czechoslovak-German arbitration treaty, serious troubles were not expected.<sup>33</sup> Beneš arrived to Locarno on Wednesday, October 7, 1925, and Skrzyński one day later.<sup>34</sup> The German goal was to delay their participation on the conference as long as possible. German delegation believed that if the pact between Germany on one side and Great Britain, France, Belgium and Italy on the other would be done, it would be easier to discuss the question of arbitration treaties. Consequently, Polish and Czechoslovak envoy would not have an opportunity to step into the negotiation with their own demands and efforts.

The information about the official meetings of the conference is detailed. Proceedings of the conference are published.<sup>35</sup> The first meeting began at 11:00 a.m. on October 5, 1925. There was a consensus that all delegates should have same rights and opportunities to step into the negotiations and express their opinion. This was a change especially for German delegation. First time since war, Germany was a partner and not just an object of negotiations. The position of Germany rapidly changed. So did the position of Czechoslovakia. Beneš's possibility to present his opinion and demands was low. Already during the first day of conference, one of the most complicated questions was discussed: the eastern arbitration treaties and French guarantee to them. Thanks large notification exchange and conversations of legal experts in London, the delegates knew the opinion of partners on the topic. German chancellor Hans Luther and German Foreign Minister G. Stresemann had clear instructions from their government how the negotiations should be led. As far as the

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<sup>30</sup> For published version see *Schulthess' Europäischer Geschichtskalender 1925*, München, 1929, p. 432-434.

<sup>31</sup> Report by German legal expert F. Gaus about the session in London August 31-September 4, 1925. *Locarno-Konferenz 1925 ...*, no. 20, p. 120-138.

<sup>32</sup> *ADAP*, vol. XIV, no. 116, p. 307. Note by Minister of German Legation in Warsaw, October 3, 1925.

<sup>33</sup> *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 (DBFP)*, First Series, vol. XXVII, London, 1986, no. 509, p. 810-813. Chamberlain on October 2, 1925. "M. Benes has made it clear that he heartily supports the pact and that, provided peace is maintained between France and Germany, he considers Czechoslovakia safe. No difficulties need be anticipated from his side, nor do I expect any serious difficulty in regard to Czechoslovakia from the side of Germany." *Ibidem*, p. 811.

<sup>34</sup> On October 7, 1925, in the morning French Foreign Minister A. Briand had conversation with German Chancellor H. Luther. Briand announced him that Polish delegation will arrive to Locarno on October 8, 1925. Luther was surprised and answered with question "Already?" Briand tried to calm him down and explained that neither Czechoslovak nor Polish delegation will take part at main meetings of the conference. Luther's note about discussion with Briand on October 7, 1925. *Akten der Reichskanzlei: Weimarer Republik, Kabinette Luther I und II*, vol. II, Boppard am Rhein, 1977, no. 174, p. 683-687.

<sup>35</sup> German proceedings see: *Locarno-Konferenz 1925 ...*, no. 25, p. 144-195. British proceedings: *DBFP*, vol. XXVII, appendix, no. 1-15, p. 1078-1175. French proceedings in Polish version: Józef Łaptos, *Protokoły obrad konferencji w Locarno. Zapis delegacji francuskiej*, Krakow, 1982. Valuable are also Stresemann's notes and diary concerning the conference: Gustav Stresemann, *op. cit.*, p. 186-204.

east arbitration treaties were concerned, German demand was that in the text should not be a single remark about boundaries. Boundaries should have been excluded from the treaty. Also French guarantee to eastern arbitration treaties should have been refused.<sup>36</sup>

One of the longest conversations dedicated to the east arbitration treaties took place during second session on October 6, 1925.<sup>37</sup> Neither Beneš nor Skrzyński were in Locarno on this day. The main discussion about the problem developed between Stresemann and Briand. Both statesmen wanted to find a solution of this problem as soon as possible. They would prefer mutual agreement in this case before the arrival of Beneš and Skrzyński to Locarno. During this session, France was defending Czechoslovak and Polish demands and interests. It is obviously that Czechoslovak and Polish diplomats were not present at the part of negotiations dealing with their immediate concern. Also they could not express their position on these matters. During the negotiation talks, Germany did not express disagreement with conclusion of arbitration treaties with Czechoslovakia and Poland. Germany was ready to conclude these treaties. Czechoslovak and Polish diplomats demanded a provision (clause) in the treaty that would exclude military power and war as means of resolving conflicts between Germany on one side and Czechoslovakia and Poland on the other. Germany did not want to accept this demand. Stresemann declared several times that Germany would not use military power against neighbours, but was not ready to sign a treaty that would express it directly. Another problem was the French desire to guarantee the arbitration treaties between Germany and its eastern neighbours. Stresemann wanted to avoid it. French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand was decided to guarantee the treaties and willing just negotiate about the form and extension of guarantees. He was interested in finding such a formulation that could be acceptable for all sides.<sup>38</sup> A sharp discussion on this issue broke out between Stresemann and Briand during the second meeting of the conference. Stresemann expressed German opinion: Germany considered the guarantees for east arbitration treaties as meaningless. Germany had to join the League of Nations, or the Rhineland Pact would not come into effect. Stresemann considered German entry into League of Nations as satisfactory security assurance for Czechoslovakia and Poland.<sup>39</sup> Briand mentioned the fact that League of Nations was not strong enough to provide security assurances. If the League had the power, the Rhineland Pact would be also gratuitous.

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<sup>36</sup> Instruction for the German delegation: *Locarno-Konferenz 1925* ..., no. 24, p. 143.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 25, p. 149-154. *DBFP*, vol. XXVII, appendix, no. 5, p. 1091-1096.

<sup>38</sup> Briand did not mean to give up the possibility to guarantee the eastern treaties. "Wenn dagegen fundamentale Schwierigkeiten vorliegen, und man von Frankreich verlangen wolle, daß es seine Verbindlichkeiten gegenüber östlichen Freunden aufgeben und auf die Garantie verzichten solle, so könne der Pakt nicht zustande kommen." *Locarno-Konferenz 1925*, no. 25, p. 151.

<sup>39</sup> The discussion continued on October 7, 1925, between Briand and Chancellor Luther. This conversation did not bring the solution closer. Neither of politicians was ready to change his mind. *Akten der Reichskanzlei* ..., vol. II, no. 174, p. 684-685.



League of Nations was not able to comfort the security desires.<sup>40</sup> That was the reason why, according to France, it was necessary to conclude amending guarantee treaties for German-Czechoslovak and German-Polish arbitration treaty. This French demand was not a new one. Briand tried to involve Poland and Czechoslovakia into security negotiations since February 1925. Since the beginning he also demanded to guarantee their arbitration treaties. Primary French aim was that right to guarantee an arbitration treaty should be anchored in the Rhineland Pact. About this possibility spoke the paragraph 6 of the Rhineland Pact. This paragraph had been reduced several times during the negotiations. At the seventh meeting of conference on October 13, 1925, almost whole of it was eliminated and replaced by common formulation. This happened without any protests.<sup>41</sup> The main reason for German statements was that Germany did not agree with its east boundaries. German diplomats did not hide their disagreement with these boundaries even in Locarno.<sup>42</sup>

During the seventh meeting on October 13, 1925, an agreement on main issues was achieved. The Rhineland Pact was ready. So were the conditions for German entry into the League of Nations. Only the arbitration treaties left. Germany should conclude with all neighbours, east and west, arbitration treaties. All these treaties should have had similar text. On October 14, 1925, A. Chamberlain took the initiative to speak with Stresemann. Chamberlain was interested to know whether it would be a problem for German delegation if Beneš and Skrzyński took part in the meeting about arbitration treaties between Germany on one side and Belgium and France on the other.<sup>43</sup> Chamberlain believed that their participation at this meeting would make easier the negotiation about east arbitration treaties.<sup>44</sup> Stresemann agreed to it.<sup>45</sup> The main content of eight meeting on October 15, 1925, was the discussion

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<sup>40</sup> More about League of Nations: Peter Krüger, *Locarno und die Frage eines europäischen Sicherheitssystems unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Ostmitteleuropas*, in Ralph Schattkowsky, *Locarno und Osteuropa. Fragen eines europäischen Sicherheitssystems in den 20-er Jahren*, Marburg, 1994, p. 9-27.

<sup>41</sup> *Locarno-Konferenz 1925 ...*, no. 25, p. 182-187.

<sup>42</sup> On the French question, if Germany intended to change his eastern boundaries with power, the German answer was "No, not with power". "Was sei der grundlegend wichtige Punkt? Die Grenze. Wollte man sie mit Gewalt ändern? Die Vertreter Deutschlands hätten gesagt: Nein, nicht mit Gewalt." *Ibidem*, p. 151.

<sup>43</sup> *DBFP*, vol. XXVII, no. 541, p. 875-878. Conversation between Chamberlain and Stresemann on October 14, 1925. This event had complicated diplomatic background. Polish delegation was already too nervous. The negotiations were almost at the end and Poland still has not participated at the main meetings. That was the reason why Polish delegation intervened by French ally and wanted Polish and Czechoslovak envoys to take part at official meetings of the conference. More about this diplomatical struggle: Wiesław Balcerak, *op. cit.*, p. 185-186.

<sup>44</sup> Christian Höltje, *Die Weimarer Republik und das Ostlocarno-Problem 1919-1934*, Nürnberg, 1958, p. 85; Gustav Stresemann, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

<sup>45</sup> In his diary Stresemann added that he agreed to this only after Chamberlain's assurance that a communiqué will be prepared. This communiqué should make clear that Beneš and Skrzyński were allowed to participate at the negotiation only because Rhineland Pact was already prepared and the content of the meeting was arbitration treaties. The arbitration treaties which Beneš and Skrzyński wanted to close were similar to the German-French and German-Belgian treaty. Gustav Stresemann, *op. cit.*, p. 197. Stresemann did not want any connection between Rhineland Pact and eastern arbitration treaties.

about arbitration treaties.<sup>46</sup> At the beginning of this meeting Chamberlain presented proposal that also Czechoslovak and Polish envoy should participate at negotiations about German-French and German-Belgian arbitration treaty. This proposal was accepted. Only in this moment were Czechoslovak and Polish delegations allowed to enter the meeting room.<sup>47</sup> It was already last but one day of conference. The real possibility to influence the negotiations was low. Stresemann recorded in his diary a famous remark evaluating the position of Beneš and Skrzyński:

“Mr. Beneš and Skrzyński had to sit there waiting in the antechamber until we let them in. That was the situation of the states that were previously coddled because they were the servants of others and that were dropped in the moment when it was believed that there could be an understanding with Germany.”<sup>48</sup>

Proceeding of this meeting was brief. Beneš and Skrzyński had the opportunity to express their opinion to the content of arbitration treaties. The base was German-French arbitration treaty. Its content was confirmed without objections. Neither Beneš had any objections to this text. He was ready to sign similar arbitration treaty with Germany. He had already spoken to Chancellor Luther and Foreign Minister Stresemann. The only issue brought up by Beneš was the preamble. There were some differences in opinion between Czechoslovak and German diplomats.<sup>49</sup> Neither Skrzyński expressed any objections to the text of treaty. During stage on October 15, 1925, the texts of arbitration treaties between Germany on one side and Belgium and France on the other were accepted. German-Czechoslovak and German-Polish treaty should have been discussed the next day, at the last day of conference. This fact restricted Czechoslovak and Polish possibility to procure any changes in the text of the treaties. Another fact that lowered Czechoslovak and Polish position during the negotiation was that from the very beginning was agreed that all arbitration treaties should have the same text.<sup>50</sup> Although negotiations about east arbitration treaties should continue the following day, in the evening on October 15, 1925, during banquet Chamberlain announced that conference was successful.<sup>51</sup> He did not consider next day's negotiations as important. He was sure that Czechoslovakia and Poland would accept the treaties without objections. The question of east arbitration treaties was just a formality since then.

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<sup>46</sup> *Locarno-Konferenz 1925 ...*, no. 25, p. 190-192.

<sup>47</sup> Gregory F. Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>48</sup> “Die Herren Benesch und Skrzynski haben dort im Nebenzimmer sitzen müssen, bis wir sie hereingelassen haben. Das war die Situation der Staaten, die bisher so sehr in die Höhe gepöppelt wurden, weil sie Diener der anderen waren, und die man in den Augenblick fallenließ, wo man glaubte, sich mit Deutschland verständigen zu können.“ Gustav Stresemann, *op. cit.*, p. 243; Gregory F. Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>49</sup> Beneš wanted to insert in the text of preamble non-attack clause or expression that both sides resigned from war as instrument to solving bilateral problems.

<sup>50</sup> It is known that legal experts met on that day in the evening in Skrzyński's work room in Grand Hotel to discuss the text of the German-Polish treaty. Wiesław Balcerak, *op. cit.*, p. 187; Jerzy Krasuski, *op. cit.*, p. 223-224. How the Czechoslovak-German treaty was discussed on this evening, or if it even was discussed, is not quite clear. Radko Brach, *Československo a Evropa ...*, p. 315, note 311.

<sup>51</sup> Oskar Butter, *Beseda o Locarně, in Zabraněná politika 1925*, p. 1358.

The negotiations continued the next day on October 16, 1925.<sup>52</sup> The meeting began at 16:00 and the content was German arbitration treaties with eastern neighbours. The meeting was not long. It did not last more than 2 hours. It was aborted and renewed at 18:30. The issue of east arbitration treaties was discussed really quickly. Between 16:00 - 18:30, German arbitration treaties with eastern neighbours were discussed. The agenda consisted of the text of Final Protocol, place and date when should be the treaties and the pact signed, date of Rhineland Pact publication, telegram to Swiss government. Before the meeting was renewed there was also a break. Beneš did not achieve demanded non-attack provision. The preamble contained only an expression that both sides hope for peace development. The text of Czechoslovak-German and Czechoslovak-Polish arbitration treaty was approved without important changes. At the time when these arbitration treaties came to negotiations, the main problems and question of the conference have already been solved. The Rhineland Pact was ready and all interested sides were satisfied. Arbitration treaties built a part of the pact, but were not as important as the question of Rhineland Pact. For France and Belgium the arbitration treaties were just amendment to the Rhineland Pact. For Czechoslovakia and Poland this treaties were only one of their direct concern. October 16, was already twelfth day of difficult negotiation talks. The main powers found agreement and nobody wanted to risk this agreement just because the security demands of Czechoslovakia and Poland were not fulfilled. This was one reason why the question of east arbitration treaties was not discussed to details. In the discussion about the guarantee pact, the arbitration treaties were secondary. The same were considered the Czechoslovak and Polish foreign ministers. After the break at 18:30 all delegates met once more in order to sign the Final Protocol and initial the Rhineland pact. Chamberlain did not hide satisfaction.<sup>53</sup> According to Stresemann, Polish Foreign Minister could not hide his displeasure and after initialling he left the room as first, acrimonious.<sup>54</sup> Czechoslovak and Polish foreign ministers took part at the official meetings of conference just during the last two days. That was a compromise between German and French demands. Stresemann was against any participation of Beneš and Skrzyński at conference, Briand wanted his allies to take part. The Rhineland Pact and arbitration treaties were signed without any changes in London on December 1, 1925.<sup>55</sup>

*Czechoslovak-German negotiations outside the official conference meetings*

No one could envy the position of Czechoslovak and Polish Foreign Ministers at the Locarno Conference.<sup>56</sup> Their experiences at Locarno were hardly pleasant. They did not participate in the early meetings of negotiations which were of

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<sup>52</sup> Charles Petrie, *The Life and Letters of the Right hon. Sir Austen Chamberlain*, vol. II, London, 1940, p. 287-290.

<sup>53</sup> Oskar Butter, *op. cit.*, p. 1359.

<sup>54</sup> Gustav Stresemann, *op. cit.*, p. 234; Piotr S. Wandycz, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

<sup>55</sup> For speeches by this occasion, see: *Schulthess' Europäischer Geschichtskalender 1925*, München, 1929, p. 444-447. One part of Beneš's speech by this occasion, see: Kamil Krofta, *E. Beneš a československá zahraniční politika 1924-1933*, in Edvard Beneš, *Boj o mír a bezpečnost státu. Československá zahraniční politika v projezech ministra dra Ed. Beneše*, Praha, 1934, p. 18.

<sup>56</sup> Historian P.S. Wandycz considers their position as "humiliating". Piotr S. Wandycz, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

such interest to their respective countries. There were some negotiations between Czechoslovak and German diplomats outside the official sessions of the conference, on an unofficial level. The reconstruction of these sessions is difficult and in some cases we must rely on memoir literature.

During first days after arrival to Switzerland, Beneš evaluated the situation for Czechoslovakia as “little optimistic”<sup>57</sup>. This way he described the situation in telegrams for the Czechoslovak Prime Minister, President and Czechoslovak Legations in several states. Yet, too optimistic mood was not in place.<sup>58</sup> Also Skrzyński sent positive reports to Poland.<sup>59</sup> Several unofficial sessions between Czechoslovak and German politicians can be reconstructed. Minister Beneš met with Stresemann twice, on October 11 and October 14, 1925. During the first meeting on October 11, 1925<sup>60</sup>, they talked about German-Czechoslovak arbitration treaty and about possibility that France could guarantee this treaty. It seems that the text of the treaty was not discussed in detail. Beneš was ready to sign arbitration treaty with the same text as France and Belgium. Politicians discussed also the question of German minority in Czechoslovakia, but only marginally.<sup>61</sup>

On October 13, 1925, Beneš talked to German Foreign Secretary of State K. von Schubert. The conversation concerned common affairs. It seems that Schubert tried to bring the problem of German minority in Czechoslovakia to discussion. Czechoslovak diplomats were not willing to discuss this matter in Locarno or elsewhere. Minorities question was considered as a domestic matter and not a topic for the international discussion. German politicians considered this topic as one of their trump cards against Beneš. It is one of the reasons why they repeatedly tried to bring this topic to discussion. German envoys believed that if they open this question, Beneš could be yielded to German demands and concepts of arbitration treaty. They assumed that Beneš would like to get a rid of the topic and find solution in question of arbitration treaty as soon as possible. After this conversation, Schubert assumed that Beneš was ready to do concessions.<sup>62</sup> This Schubert’s observation was important, because the next day Beneš had meeting scheduled with German chancellor Hans Luther.

During Beneš-Luther meeting on October 14, 1925, current political affairs were discussed.<sup>63</sup> On this session Stresemann was also presented. On this occasion Beneš tried to change the preamble of Czechoslovak-German arbitration treaty. He demanded a non-attack provision or resignation from war. War should be denied as

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<sup>57</sup> ACZFO, Prague, *Delivered telegrams 1925*, 1034/25, October 12, 1925.

<sup>58</sup> Radko Brach, *Československo a Evropa ...*, p. 304.

<sup>59</sup> On October 10, 1925, sent Skrzyński to Warsaw following telegram: “W Locarno front francusko-angielsko-polski jest jednolity: żadnych różnic, żadnej rozbieżności, żadnej nieufności.” Wiesław Balcerak, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>60</sup> ACZFO, Prague, *Delivered telegrams 1925*, 1046/25, October 12, 1925.

<sup>61</sup> Stresemann notice about this session is brief: “7 Uhr: Besuch von Benesch. Schiedsgerichtsfrage, Minderheitenfrage gestreift.” Gustav Stresemann, *op. cit.*, p. 193; Manfred Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>62</sup> “Beneš schien schon etwas nachgiebiger geworden zu sein.” *ADAP*, vol. XIV, no. 142, p. 382. Schubert’s notice dated on October 13, 1925.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 382, note 4.

instrument for solution of problems in bilateral relations. Beneš presented to Luther and Stresemann a draft of treaty with this text. This draft was rejected on German side. They tried to explain this rejection with public opinion in Germany.<sup>64</sup> After rejection of this first proposal, Beneš reputedly pulled another treaty draft. However, also this one was refused without discussion.<sup>65</sup> There are very few sources concerning this event<sup>66</sup>, but the negotiation of Czechoslovak-German arbitration treaty was obviously unconventional. Czechoslovak possibilities to bring own drafts or demands were low. In spite of this, Beneš evaluated in telegrams to Czechoslovakia the session as friendly, fair and correct.<sup>67</sup> Neither during official sessions nor during unofficial meetings of the conference was Czechoslovak delegation able to procure their demands and efforts. On October 16, 1925, Chancellor Luther announced to German President Paul von Hindenburg that German delegation had to resist against extensive Polish and Czechoslovak demands during the conference in Locarno. According to Luther, it was “hard struggle” but Germany was successful.<sup>68</sup> The Rhineland Pact as well as arbitration treaties were just initialled in Locarno on October 16, 1925, and signed in London without changes on December 1, 1925.

Germany could be satisfied with the results and also with conference procedure. On the other hand, for Beneš and also for Skrzyński, the way they were treated during the conference was an unpleasant experience. It is paradox that it happened in Switzerland where Beneš was usually celebrated because of his work on the stage of League of Nations. Could Beneš expect this kind of treatment at the conference? The negotiations that anticipated the conference in Locarno allowed assumption that the question of arbitration treaties would be considered as secondary. British and German politicians did not try to hide that participation of Czechoslovak and Polish diplomats was gratuitous according to them. They should take part at the conference only after Rhineland pact would be prepared.<sup>69</sup> France finally agreed to this. The Locarno Pact consisted of five related treaties: the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee, restricted to western borders of Germany. France, Belgium and Germany

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<sup>64</sup> *Akten der Reichskanzlei ...*, vol II, no. 190, p. 743, note 5. October 19, 1925. Stresemann announced to German president Paul von Hindenburg that non-attack pact in the east was refused. Germany closed only arbitration treaties with the eastern neighbours and Czechoslovak and Polish demands were successfully rejected. He appreciated especially the fact that the text of the arbitration treaties did not contain any allusion concerning boundaries. *Ibidem*, no. 201, p. 781.

<sup>65</sup> G. Fuchs, *Význam “Locarna” v německo-československých vztazích*, in *Československý časopis historický*, XXIX, 1981, p. 847-878. This Beneš's treaty drafts mentions also historian Höltje. Christian Höltje, *op. cit.*, p. 84. Texts of these proposals are not known, they were not found in Archive of Foreign Office in Prague either.

<sup>66</sup> The best known document is the Stresemann's diary, where he described this session as follows: “Der erste Vorschlag des Herrn Benesch wurde von uns ohne Diskussion a limine zurückgewiesen, worauf sich herausstellte, daß Benesch sich vergriffen und einen anderen gemeint hatte, der auch zur Stelle war, und einen zweiten zur Diskussion stellte. Dieser zweite Vertrag ist ebenfalls nicht Gegenstand der Diskussion geworden.“ Gustav Stresemann, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

<sup>67</sup> ACZFO, Prague, *Delivered telegrams 1925*, 1066/25, October 15, 1925.

<sup>68</sup> *Akten der Reichskanzlei ...*, vol. II, no. 200, p. 779-780. Luther's report for president Hindenburg. October 16, 1925. Germany closed treaties with Czechoslovakia and Poland, but as Stresemann remarked “nach unserem System“. *Ibidem*, no. 201, p. 781.

<sup>69</sup> ACZFO, Prague, *Delivered telegrams 1925*, 997/25, September 29, 1925.

should not resort to war against each other. The guarantors of this treaty were Great Britain and Italy.<sup>70</sup> In addition to that, the Locarno pact contained four arbitration treaties between Germany on one side and France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Poland on the other.<sup>71</sup> All these treaties should enter into force only after German accession to League of Nations.<sup>72</sup> During the session in Locarno, guarantee treaties between France on one side and Czechoslovakia and Poland on the other were also signed. These treaties were not part of the Locarno pact and were not mentioned in the Final Protocol of the conference.<sup>73</sup> On October 17, 1925, Krofta, having Beneš's authorization, met with Schubert and handed him a copy of Czechoslovak-French guarantee treaty. Czechoslovak diplomacy considered it appropriate and loyal to inform this way the German side about the content of Czechoslovak-French treaty.<sup>74</sup> The arbitration treaties signed in Locarno provided for pacific settlement of disputes by means of arbitration and conciliation. The difference in text of these treaties existed in preambles. The western arbitration treaties were amendment of the Rhineland Pact. This was also written in the preamble. The arbitration treaties with German eastern neighbours built a part of Locarno pact, but in their preambles was not a clause mentioning the Treaty of Mutual Guarantee (the Rhineland Pact). It meant that these two treaties were just indirectly connected in the new security system. Czechoslovak-German and Polish-German treaty did not obtain the guarantees of Great Britain and Italy. The demand to insert a non-attack clause into the text failed as well as the clause that states would not resort to war. There was just common formulation that both states hope for peace development. The arbitration treaties were closed in the shadow of the Rhineland Pact. Different appraisal of German eastern and German western boundaries could not be overlooked. It was too obvious. Also the kind of treatment with Czechoslovak and Polish envoys indicated much.

Locarno was a signal that Germany was on its way back to the club of political Powers. Germany's position on the international stage was going to be better.<sup>75</sup> The Locarno treaties were considered as amendments to the Versailles-system. They represented new security assurances. Six years after the Treaty of Versailles had been signed, there was a desire to close amend assurances. After Locarno Conference, the relations between Powers obtained new quality. The conference was successful. Even contemporary politicians were surprised how quick

<sup>70</sup> The text of the treaty in German language see: *Locarno-Konferenz 1925 ...*, p. 197-202.

<sup>71</sup> The text of Czechoslovak-German arbitration treaty see in *Zahraniční politika 1925*, p. 1464-1467.

<sup>72</sup> In February 1926, Germany introduced his claim to become a member of League of Nations. German became member on September 10, 1926. Ludger Grevelhörster, *Kleine Geschichte der Weimarer Republik (1918-1933)*, Münster, 2002, p. 111.

<sup>73</sup> The question of French-Czechoslovak and French-Polish guarantee treaty has not been followed in this article. Radko Brach, *Spojenecká smlouva mezi Československem a Francií z 25.1.1924 a garanční dohoda čs.-francouzská z 16.10.1925*, in *Historie a vojenství*, 1994, 6, p. 3-21; Jan Ciałowicz, *Polsko-francuski sojusz wojskowy 1921-1939*, Warszawa, 1970, especially p. 129-141; Bohumila Ferenčuhová, *Malá Dohoda, Locarno a bezpečnost Slovenska v 20-tych letech*, in *Slovensko vo vojách a konfliktach v 20. storočí*, Bratislava, 2003, p. 50-74, especially p. 71-72; Christian Höltje, *op. cit.*, p. 87-89.

<sup>74</sup> *ADAP*, vol. XIV, no. 142, p. 381-382, note 2. Schubert's note on October 13, 1925.

<sup>75</sup> Wolfgang Michalka – Marshall M. Lee, *German Foreign Policy 1917-1933. Continuity or Break?*, New York, 1987, p. 83-84.

the Powers were able to find agreement.<sup>76</sup> Locarno was something where Beneš was willing to retreat. As the development of the negotiations shows, he also had no other choice. German diplomats considered Locarno as a beginning. In the end, it could be the boundaries revision in the east although the talks concerned only peace revision. The treatment with German and Czechoslovak envoys was different. Seven years after the war, Germany was treated like a partner in negotiations. Compared with the negotiations concerning the Treaty of Versailles, it was a great difference. Also treatment concerning Czechoslovakia has changed since the conference in Versailles, but in opposite way. The way how the Germany eastern neighbours had been treated was warning for future development.

Different politician interpreted the treaties in different ways. There were many possibilities how could be the treaties presented to public. Politician tried to persuade public in their counties that everything what could be done for the country was done and in some cases even more. The treaties caused large response all over the world. Divine services which wanted to thank for the treaties took place also in the USA.<sup>77</sup> Observing the preparation and negotiations concerning the arbitration treaties between Germany and its eastern neighbours, it is obvious that the question of German eastern boundaries became one of the most complicated questions on the European diplomatic scene. The circumstances remained hidden from the contemporary public, but the situation in central-eastern Europe obviously changed. The main political powers found consensus. It was necessary to connect Germany into economic relations in Europe. The economic integration went hand in hand with political integration. With the return into the political life of Europe, Germany was bolder in expressing their demands. Germany's efforts were not new. However, with increasing German power, also Great Britain and France were more willing and in several years even forced to listen to German proposals and demands. Germans considered eastern boundaries as secondary. Also the participation of Czechoslovak and Polish Foreign Ministers at the conference in Locarno was considered as secondary. Eastern boundaries of Germany were *de facto* acknowledged to be a problem in Locarno Conference. This problem was silently avoided during this conference and the solution was recessed without any outlook of the solution. If we want to judge Locarno treaties and their importance for Czechoslovakia, it is necessary to become familiar with the circumstances under which these treaties were signed. That was the goal of this article.

ALENA FERIANCOVA

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<sup>76</sup> Edgar Vincent d'Abernon, *op. cit.*, p. 236. Notice dated October 20, 1925. "Die Verhandlungen in Locarno nahmen einen besseren Verlauf, als sogar die optimistischsten unter uns gehofft haben."

<sup>77</sup> ACZFO, Prague, III. Sektion, carton 289, nr. 201839.