



**Ralf Nickoleit, Master Sergeant in the Bundeswehr, and his Polish Wife Daria, née Wągrowska, had their church wedding in the Szczecin Garrison Church last weekend.**

### **First Meeting**

Ralf, who was borne in the city of Leverkusen in the German Land North Rhine-Westphalia, joined Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin in mid-2005 and moved into an apartment in the heart of the city. At that time, Daria, who comes from Stargard Szczecinski, a town barely 50 kilometers east of Szczecin, was going to Szczecin University. So, the two had met and fallen in love in the Polish city.

They still communicate in three languages – mainly in English, but also in Polish and German. "My wife's command of German is much better than mine of Polish", Ralf has to acknowledge.

In 2007, the young relationship had to pass a first acid test already when Master Sergeant Nickoleit, together with his comrades in Multinational Corps, had been serving in the ISAF Headquarters in the Afghan capital of Kabul.

### **Honour Guard With Sabers**

After the registry office wedding in December 2007, Daria and Ralf now said yes in a church ceremony. Many guests – relatives and friends – accompanied the bride in a classic white

wedding dress and the groom wearing the Bundeswehr's black dress uniform into the garrison church of the city of Szczecin. Among them also a delegation of Multinational Corps Northeast led by the Senior German Officer, Colonel G.S. Peter Baierl.

After the end of the church ceremony, which partially had been held in German as well, bride and groom walked through an honor guard formed by soldiers saluting with drawn sabers. In front of the church, the married couple let a pair of white pigeons fly into the bright blue sky over the city. Subsequently, Sergeant Major Norbert Speicher handed over a gift on behalf of the soldiers in the Corps, which made him the first in a long row of well-wishers. Afterwards, the married couple and their guests moved to the wedding party.

### **Future Planned**

Daria and Ralf Nickoleit, who meanwhile share a flat in Szczecin, do not worry about their future. The sergeant major's tour of duty in Multinational Corps Northeast will end in summer next year. According to plans made by the Bundeswehr personnel management, a subsequent assignment in the city of Storkow, situated only a few kilometers southeast of Berlin in Brandenburg, is a probability.

"This way, we can stay in close proximity to my wife's family", Ralf Nickoleit looks into the future. After a first German course, which she completed successfully, Daria Nickoleit will improve her command of German in further courses until then. Accordingly, the two of them do not have to worry about the professional future of the graduate environmental specialist in Germany.