



Everybody was being occupied with daily routines when Mr Reinhold Robbe entered the Baltic Barracks on November 19th, 2008, bringing a completely unexpected check on the conditions the German soldiers working in at the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast (HQ MNC NE).

Coming with a visit

Mr. Reinhold Robbe's function is the Parliamentary Commissioner of the Armed Forces, an institution linked to the German Parliament, which is in charge of direct contacting German soldiers and civilian personnel serving at different units, headquarters or commands, and assessing their working and living conditions. It is important to notice that soldiers can freely talk to him about anything what is on their mind regardless the chain of command. The Commissioner prepares an annual report gathering his conclusions and recommendations, which is afterwards presented to the Bundestag as well as to the public. However, if there is a matter of the utmost urgency, he can address the Minister of Defence directly.

Obviously, the Commissioner is not able to meet all German soldiers at the same time. For that reason, any soldier can write a letter or petition addressed directly to him. As Mr Robbe admitted, he investigates approximately 6,000 of such motions per year.

Optimal Headquarters

About 85 German soldiers and civilian personnel of the Bundeswehr serve at the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast (HQ MNC NE) as well as the German Element and the German Office of Defence Administration. Therefore, Mr Robbe's visit was part of carrying out his typical duties. He met the German soldiers and discussed their service, living conditions and social life. He was interested in every aspect of living in Szczecin. As he said, his impressions were very positive. The soldiers admitted they were satisfied with the working conditions and options of spending their free time. He noticed the developing integration of the German community within the local environment and very good relations with the Polish colleagues and other nations, too. The possibility of attending the Szczecin International School by the children of the German personnel was also assessed positively rising the attractiveness of serving and living in Szczecin, especially for families with children. It is essential not only for learning the cooperation between children from different nations but also for the cohesion within the whole Corps' family.