

To whom it may concern

Certain sections of the Polish media including Twitter and the blogosphere have recently taken up the issue of whether Radek Sikorski did indeed complete a university education when at Oxford in the first half of the 1980s. A former colleague of Sikorski's at the Polish foreign ministry, Minister Waszczykowski, has alleged that he merely completed a three year course at Oxford and then paid 10 pounds to win the right to put the letters MA after his name. Thus, in effect, that Sikorski fraudulently claimed that he had completed a full university education as understood in Poland – five years of study which grant a magisterium (MA).

The charge of fraud results from a misunderstanding about the degree system at Oxford and Cambridge, as well as Dublin, where a three year course of study results in a Bachelor of Arts (BA). Three years of study is the full degree and is recognized as such by everyone in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Should graduates wish to study further they can go on to do M Lit's, M Phil's, M St's, M Eng's or M Sc's, but the BA is the basic and full degree for the great majority of students.

The MA is a formality which can be conferred on a graduate seven years (six at Cambridge) after he or she matriculates. At Oxford and Cambridge, MAs have the right to elect the Chancellor of the University (largely a honorific role) and at Oxford the Professor of Poetry and the High Steward – the Deputy Chancellor.

The issue deserves clarification given the degree of interest it has aroused. Also, the Polish student society at Oxford University has protested that the charges have, in Poland at least, sought to diminish the value of a degree from the University. For this reason the Oxford and Cambridge Society in Poland expects a public apology by the author to its members who include Radek Sikorski and other graduates of the University

Krzysztof Bobiński

Aleks Domaradzki

Annie Krasieńska

President & Treasurer,

Membership Secretary

Events Secretary

Oxford and Cambridge Society in Poland

www.oxbridgepoland.org