
Recognition of the royal status of Prussia by the parties joining the first phase of the Great Northern War (1700-1703)

The policy of Brandenburg Elector Friedrich III, later Prussian King as Friedrich I, has been evaluated by many a historian in very severe terms. It would be highlighted that the Hohenzollern monarchy's dozen-or-so years of involvement in the Spanish Succession War brought Brandenburg-Prussia very little of benefit, compared to the measures involved and outlays incurred. But has this ruler deserved being so assessed indeed? Friedrich III/I focused most of his efforts as a ruler on endeavours to acquire the royal crown, and raise in superiority above the other German-Reich dukes. Raising a sovereign country, which the Ducal Prussia had been since the Wehlau-Bromberg (Welawa-Bydgoszcz) Treaty of 1657, to the rank of a kingdom could be carried out at any moment and only depended upon the Brandenburg Elector's will and resoluteness. After the self-crowning, he sought to avoid a troublesome position, and was afraid of how many courts in Europe might respond. The solution of the issue of gaining an international sanction for the royal status of Prussia was conditional upon the position assumed by the Emperor who led the German Reich whereof the Brandenburg Elector was a member, and whose role was crucial among the European rulers. This is why Friedrich III/I consistently, for ten years, wooed the Habsburgs. However, the Vienna court did not intend to bestow the splendour of kingship on the Brandenburg Elector and rejected the proposals sent by Berlin. This situation only changed on the eve of the Spanish Succession War. On October 2, 1700, the last of the Spanish Habsburg strain offspring, King Charles II, established Phillip, Duke of Anjou and grandson of the king of France, as his successor. Emperor Leopold I opposed this solution as he strove to convey the entire Habsburg heirloom to his son, Archduke Karl (Charles).

After the Spanish king Charles II died on November 1, 1700, the war between Louis XIV of France and the Austrian Habsburg line turned unavoidable. The Viennese court, interested in winning over the ruler of Brandenburg-Prussia, demonstrated its readiness to satisfy Friedrich III's expectations. On November 16, 1700, an

Austrian-Brandenburg alliance arrangement was signed in Vienna, referred to as the 'Crown Treaty', whereby the 1686 alliance was renewed. In exchange for military assistance of 8,000 Brandenburg soldiers, combined as it was with an imperial subsidy of 150,000 guildens, a promise to support the Habsburg party in the future emperor's election and offer political collaboration, Leopold I pledged the Elector that he would recognise his royal title immediately after the coronation.¹

Soon after the Emperor granted his consent, a solemn self-crowning of Friedrich III as King Friedrich I took place in Königsberg. So that the imperial and Polish rights could remain non-infringed, the act's territory was limited to the Ducal Prussia which constituted the sovereign propriety of the Hohenzollern house. The royal title assumed by the Hohenzollern ruler on January 18, 1701, was soon after accepted by George I Louis, Elector of Hanover (as of Jan. 28, 1701); George-Wilhelm, Duke of Braunschweig and Lüneburg, ruling from Celle (Jan. 29, 1701); and, by the sea countries that with increasing frequency took account of the Emperor's doings, incl.: England (Jan. 31, 1701) and Holland (Feb. 11, 1701), which on Friedrich I's wish sent over to his royal court extraordinary missions offering congratulations. Emperor Leopold I followed these countries by approving the royal title assumed by the Hohenzollern as of February 22, 1701.²

The other countries were harder to tackle. It seemed that Prussian diplomatic service would find it quite hard to acquire favourable disposition of the Wettin, as well as the other Northern League members. The Hohenzollern was a provident ruler who wanted to avoid getting involved in the war with Sweden and its allies: the Braunschweig-and-Lüneburg Duke of Celle, Holstein, Elector of Hanover, and the sea states (England and Holland). In planning to join the Spanish Succession War as the Emperor's adherent, he had to woo Saxony, Denmark, and Russia, which all intended to involve Brandenburg-Prussia in the triple alliance against Sweden. These

¹ *Kurbrandenburgs Staatsverträge von 1601 bis 1700*, ed. by T. von Moerner, Berlin 1867, pp. 673-678, 810-823; P. Baumgart, *Die preussische Königskrönung von 1701, das Reich und europäische Politik*, in: *Preussen, Europa und das Reich*, ed. by O. Hauser, Köln-Wien 1987, pp. 65-75; A. Berney, *König Friedrich I. und das Haus Habsburg (1701-1707)*, München-Berlin 1927, pp. 9-18; L. & M. Frey, *Friedrich I. Preussens erster König*, Graz-Wien 1984, pp. 191-192; M. Plassmann, *Der Preis der Krone. Preussische Truppen im Spanischen Erbfolgekrieg*, in: *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte*, N. F., Beiheft 6:2002, pp. 231-232; Ch. Roll, *Die preussische Königserhebung im politischen Kalkül der Wiener Hofburg*, in: *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte*, N. F., Beiheft 6:2002, pp. 190-191.

² C. von Noorden, *Die preussische Politik im spanischen Erbfolgekriege*, „Historische Zeitschrift“, vol. 18:1867, p. 309; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition de la couronne royale de Prusse par les Hohenzollern*, Paris 1888, pp. 309, 341, 372-373; idem, *Histoire de Prusse*, vol. 2, Paris 1922, pp. 128-130, 132; H. von Zwiédineck-Südenhorst, *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitraum der Gründung des preussischen Königtums*, vol. 2, Stuttgart 1894, pp. 368-371.

countries started rendering their consent for advancement of the Elector of Brandenburg to kingship dependent upon the Hohenzollern joining the Northern War. The Elector of Saxony, whose reign extended since 1697 also to the Polish-and-Lithuanian state, as Augustus II, only acted in privy negotiations preceding the Northern War as the ruler of Saxony. It was in this capacity that he entered into a Saxon-Danish defensive alliance of March 24 1698 – originally defensive, then turned into an offensive-defensive covenant (September 25, 1699) – and subsequently joined the Preobrazhensk Treaty (November 11, 1699). The latter was an offensive-resistance alliance between Saxony, Denmark and Russia. Augustus II endeavoured to involve the Brandenburg-Prussia triple alliance and hence expressed his will to recognise the royal status of the Hohenzollern ruler in as early as 1699.³

Soon after the bargaining with the Brandenburg Elector with regard to Elbląg (Elbing) was completed (on December 12, 1699), Augustus II offered Friedrich III, in writing, as of January 9, 1700, a meeting in order to renew their ‘old brotherly friendship’.⁴ The negotiations carried out on January 19-23, 1700 – during the reunion of Augustus II and Friedrich III in Oranienbaum, on the Anhalt/Saxony border – were shrouded in mystery. We can however learn of the decisions made there from the letter of January 26, 1700, sent by the Polish king from Leipzig to the Brandenburg Elector. Augustus II declared his readiness to resume – this time, in writing – the promise he submitted orally a few days earlier to support the Hohenzollern’s royal plans. Beside this, he assured the Brandenburg-Prussian ruler that the Saxon army would provide assistance – in case a war breaks out with Sweden – in a conquest of the Swedish part of Pomerania. It can thus be stated that attempts made by Augustus II at commitments made in view of supporting the Brandenburg Elector’s royal aspirations were conditional upon Friedrich III’s participation in the war against Sweden. The Wettin monarch also posed other demands: he wanted to gain Brandenburg-Prussian help in setting up by the Saxons a hereditary throne in Poland and to cause the turning of some part of the Saxon territory into a strip of land owned by the Hohenzollern, which would separate Saxony and Poland.⁵

³ J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II i Rzeczpospolita 1697-1706*, Kraków 2010, pp. 199-200; C. Hallendorff, *Bidrag till det stora nordiska krigets förhistoria*, Upsala 1897, pp. 118-146; E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen, Schweden und Rußland 1700-1713*, München 1953, pp. 31-33; L. von Ranke, *Zwölf Bücher preussischer Geschichte*, vol. 2, Leipzig 1874, pp. 440-441; J. Staszewski, *O miejsce w Europie. Stosunki Polski i Saksonii z Francją na przełomie XVII i XVIII wieku*, Warszawa 1973, p. 167; A. Waddington, *L’acquisition...*, pp. 171-172.

⁴ Th. von Moerner (ed.), *Kurbrandenburgs Staatsverträge...*, pp. 660-662; E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, p. 34; J. Staszewski, *O miejsce w Europie...*, p. 168; A. Waddington, *L’acquisition...*, p. 173.

⁵ E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, pp. 34-35; J. Staszewski, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Polen und Brandenburg und die preußische Königskrönung von 1701*, in: *Die pre-*

The Oranienbaum meeting bore the fruit of an anti-Swedish Saxon-Brandenburg treaty, signed a few days later in Berlin, by Count (*Reichsgraf*) Jacob-Heinrich von Flemming, plenipotentiary to Augustus II. The agreement of February 2, 1700, referred to as the Leipzig arrangement, was a far cry from what Augustus expected. Friedrich III promised to allow the Saxon troops to cross his territory on their way to the lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and undertook that he would not consent for any march-past of the Swedish army to Saxony or Poland from Pomerania and even would oppose it as far as he could. Thus, casual expectations were only met. Augustus was offered a security from his Brandenburg neighbour and could cast the Saxon army, deployed across the Polish-Swedish borderland, to attack Livonia.⁶

The launch by the Polish king of a war against Sweden did not interrupt the talks conducted between the Dresden court and Berlin with regard to re-ranking the Ducal Prussia as a kingdom. The Hohenzollern ruler did not limit himself to continued negotiations with Count von Flemming, the Saxon envoy at Berlin, and started winning Polish magnates in view of his plans. Having resorted to promises, flattery and bribery, he managed to build a sizeable and influential faction in Poland. The milieu included, among others: Primate Michał Radziejowski, Varmian Bishop Andrzej-Chryzostom Załuski, or Grand Crown Hetman Stanisław-Jan Jabłonowski.⁷

On June 8, 1700, Friedrich III sent to Warsaw a letter in Latin assuring that his new title was not meant to belittle the Commonwealth's rights in any manner whatsoever. He repeated this declaration in German, antedating it as May 2, 1700. These assurances by the Hohenzollern were favourably received by Augustus II, especially that he had been so incited by several Polish magnates, particularly by Primate Radziejowski. As of July 6, 1700 the Wettin monarch undertook, in a written form, that he "shall, under the royal laws and having consulted to this end the Primate and a few Senators, recognise the Elector of Brandenburg as King in Prussia as at the moment he crowns himself".⁸ Once a copy of this King's declaration, written down

ußische Rangerhöhung und Königskrönung 1701 in deutscher und europäischer Sicht, H. Barmeyer, ed., Frankfurt am Main-Berlin 2002, p. 136; idem, *O miejsce w Europie...*, p. 168; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 173-175, 430-431.

⁶ Th. von Moerner (wyd.), *Kurbrandenburgs Staatsverträge...*, pp. 662-663; J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...*, p. 244; C. Hallendorff, *Könung Augusts politik åren 1700-1701. Ett bidrag*, Upsala 1898, pp. 25-26, 30-36; E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, pp. 35-36; J. Staszewski, *Die Beziehungen...*, pp. 136-137; idem, *O miejsce w Europie...*, p. 169.

⁷ K. Piwarski, *Dzieje polityczne Prus Wschodnich (1621-1772)*, Gdynia 1938, pp. 111-113; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 175-188, 191-199.

⁸ E. Ichon, *Die Verhandlungen über die Anerkennung der preussischen Königswürde am Reichstage zu Regensburg (1701)*, Heidelberg 1907, p. 38; K. Piwarski, *Dzieje polityczne...*, p. 111; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 189, 438-442.

on a piece of parchment by Brandenburg envoy to Warsaw, Baron Johann-Dietrich von Hoverbeck, was extracted, the sending by the Polish King of a congratulatory deputation right after the coronation remained to be settled. Endeavours taken to this end by Gottfried Werner, a colleague of Hoverbeck's, soon turned successful. It was decided that the Polish King's envoy would be Krzysztof Towiański, a Crown Cup-Bearer and close relative of Primate Radziejowski. Towiański was well known in Berlin, as he had acted as an envoy there before – in July 1696, he brought the tidings of the death of King John III Sobieski.⁹

Following the concessions extracted from Augustus II, no guarantees were made this time on the Brandenburg-Prussian side of joining the Northern War or providing any assistance to the ruler of Saxony and the Commonwealth. Augustus was unable to – or, in fact, prevented from – keeping a uniform course in the diplomacy of both countries he ruled. He was aware that the Commonwealth estates prevalently offered an adverse attitude toward the royal crowning of the Hohenzollern and waging the war with Sweden alike. The wave of agitation caused by the annexation of Elbląg by the Brandenburg-Prussian army – the town was only returned to Poland on February 1, 1700 – had not faded by then yet in the country on the Vistula. Given these circumstances, it would be rather awkward to expect that assumption by Friedrich III of the title of King of Prussia would come across no protests in the Commonwealth, especially that the country still held the rights to Ducal Prussia. This was expressed by the Ducal-Prussian estates swearing a contingent oath of loyalty to the king and the Commonwealth in case the Hohenzollern dynasty turns extinct. Before Augustus II issued his declaration of July 6, 1700, his plans to get the Commonwealth involved in the Northern War were also turned down. At its deliberations in May 1700, after the Saxon army attacked the Swedish Livonia, the Senate Council spoke against the war with Sweden and refused to offer the Commonwealth's help to the king, reassuring the will to go on along the lines of peaceful relations with the Scandinavian power under the terms defined in the Treaty of Oliwa in 1660.¹⁰

It was only in autumn 1700, as Augustus II ended up in a troublesome situation, following the defeat of Denmark and failed Saxon attack on Riga, that Friedrich III manifested his gratitude for the king's earlier concessions. Pursuant to a Saxon-Brandenburg agreement signed in Kölln on the Spree as of October 27, 1700, he ensured Augustus a Brandenburg military assistance of 6,000 soldiers in the event the

⁹ A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 189-190.

¹⁰ S. Jacobsohn, *Der Streit um Elbing in den Jahren 1698/99. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Beziehungen Polens und Brandenburg*, in: *Elbinger Jahrbuch*, vol. 7, 1928, pp. 1-148; W. Klesińska, *Okupacja Elbląga przez Brandenburgię w latach 1698-1700*, in: *Rocznik Elbląski*, vol. 4: 1969, pp. 88-121; K. Piwarski, *Dzieje polityczne...*, pp. 104-109; J. Staszewski, *August II Mocny*, Wrocław 1998, pp. 110-112; idem, *O miejsce w Europie...*, p. 201.

Swedes attacked the Electorate of Saxony. Invigorated by this agreement, the Wettin monarch resolved to take action without taking the Commonwealth *seym*'s (diet's) decisions into account. He laboured under the delusion that through indulging the Hohenzollern, he would gain in exchange a connection between Saxony and Wielkopolska (the 'Lesser Poland' area) through the Duchy of Krosno. Saxon regiments would move in that way to reinforce the king's position in the Commonwealth whilst taming the Polish nobility's freedoms and privileges.¹¹

When the news on Friedrich's coronation preparations reached the lands on the Vistula, the pre-*seym* Senate Council deliberating in Warsaw on the day the Königsberg celebrations took place – i.e. January 18, 1701 – approved the ranking of Ducal Prussia as a kingdom without protest (save for the vote by Lithuanian Vice-Chancellor Stanisław Szczuka). The Brandenburg diplomacy's labours had not gone down the pan. The Hohenzollern's followers prevailed among the senators. The corrupted senators delayed the convention of the *seym*, but were unpleasantly astonished by the King: Augustus behaved in a way for the Commonwealth not to recognise the royal status of the Brandenburg Elector. On the one hand, the Wettin started looking for another ally and striving for strengthening his relations with Louis XIV of France; on the other, he intended to checkmate the magnate opposition led by Radziejowski, the faction looking for support from the Berlin court against their master's absolutist designs.

Lingering with satisfaction of the commitments made was supposed to serve as an argument in bargaining with the Hohenzollern who consistently refused the Saxon adhesion to the war against Sweden, but could in parallel acquire the nobility's opinion averse toward Brandenburg and, if need be, turn it against the magnates, disposed favourably toward Brandenburg.¹² The Wettin, who was making ready for his trip to Birzhe, to meet the Russian tsar Peter I there, started playing for time. The Berlin court did not look at it idly. A few days after the Königsberg crowning, the Hohenzollern promised Primate Radziejowski 30,000 scudos; Rafał Leszczyński, Starost-General of Wielkopolska, was to receive 5,000 thalers; Konstancja-Katarzyna Towiańska, nee Niszczycka, spouse of Castellan of Łęczyca and mother of Krzysztof Towiański, was promised 10,000 scudos. Hoverbeck, Friedrich I's diplomat, offered Jan-Jerzy Przebendowski, the Voivod of Malbork (Marienburg), a hope to

¹¹ Th. von Moerner (ed.), *Kurbrandenburgs Staatsverträge...*, pp. 670-671; E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen*, pp. 43, 45; J. Staszewski, *O miejsce w Europie...*, pp. 232-233; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 195-196.

¹² F. Lütke, *Polen und die Erwerbung der preußischen Königswürde durch die Hohenzollern*, Beilage zum Jahresbericht des Königlichen Realgymnasiums zu Bromberg, Part. 1: Abhandlung, Bromberg 1912, pp. 9-11; K. Piwarski, *Dzieje polityczne...*, pp. 114-115; J. Staszewski, *O miejsce w Europie...*, pp. 233-239, 250-253; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 313-315.

get 50,000 scudos, once the new status of Prussia comes to a welcome end at a coming *sejm* (diet) session.¹³

The Brandenburg efforts did not remain ineffective. On January 28, 1701, Augustus II prepared a letter with wishes for Friedrich I on the coronation. However, when the Prussian king's extraordinary envoy – Count Christoph von Wallenrodt, the head marshal of Prussia – arrived in Warsaw on February 2, 1701 to notify the coronation, Augustus postponed receiving him at the audience. Embittered at such receipt, Wallenrodt wrote to his king, as of February 8, 1701, that the Polish court has no time for him. During the day, they are busy with military shows and races; in the night, comedies and masked balls are their focus. It was only on February 13, 1701 that the Wettin eventually met his earlier commitments: he received Wallenrodt at an official audience, and dispatched Krzysztof Towiański on the same day to Königsberg, with congratulations. Towiański travelled to the town on the Pregel River as the Polish king's envoy. Unofficially, however, he acted as an emissary of the magnate opposition – primarily, of Primate Radziejowski, his uncle.

In a brief note handed in to Friedrich I on February 20, 1701, Towiański called upon the King of Prussia to act in defence of the Polish freedoms put under threat and to prevent a march-past of Saxon troops through the Duchy of Krosno down to Poland. And, he warned the Hohenzollern ruler against the perversity and impudence of Augustus II: in his opinion, this friend of the day could turn into an enemy, and attack Prussia. This being the case, it is of no surprise that the Hohenzollern welcomed Towiański with generous hospitality in Königsberg, offering him during their meeting a diamond ring whose estimated value was 22,000 scudos.¹⁴

The Berlin court's success turned out to be incomplete, as could have been expected. As a ruler of Poland, Augustus II did acknowledge Friedrich I's royal title, whereas the Polish nobility, presented with such *fait accompli*, protested loudly against this instance of a former liegeman of Poland infringing the rights of the Polish king and of the Commonwealth. As a result, the Wettin monarch's policy with respect to Brandenburg-Prussia brought about intensified political split of the Commonwealth, which approved of establishment of Prussia as a kingdom in only 1764.¹⁵

¹³ A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, p. 316. For the relation between Ms. Towiańska, the Łęczycza Castellan's spouse, and Primate Radziejowski, see: *Tomasza Święckiego historyczne pamiątki znamienitych rodzin i osób dawnej Polski*, wyd. [ed. by] J. Bartoszewicz, vol. 2, Warszawa 1859, pp. 221, 493-494.

¹⁴ F. Lüdtkke, *Polen...*, pp. 12-14; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 315-318.

¹⁵ For more, see: A. Kamiński, *Prusy wobec bezkrólewia po śmierci Augusta III i elekcji Stanisława Augusta Poniatowskiego*, in: *Nad Bałtykiem, Pregolą i Lyną. XVI-XX wiek. Księga pamiątkowa poświęcona jubileuszowi 50-lecia pracy naukowej Profesora Janusza Jasińskiego*, ed. by Z. Rondonańska, Olsztyn 2006, pp. 201-202; F. Lüdtkke, *Polen...*, pp. 15-24; K. Piwarski, *Dzieje polityczne...*, pp. 115-120; H. von Zwiedineck-Südenhorst, *Deutsche Geschichte*, vol. 2, pp. 368-369.

I should be remarked that by sanctioning the Hohenzollern ruler's royal status as of February 13, 1701, Augustus II the monarch of Poland did not then-as-yet do it as a Saxon elector. What is more, he forbade February 14, 1701 his deputy to the Reich's parliament in Regensburg, Count Georg von Werthern, to recognise the Hohenzollern as a King of Prussia. Having more freedom of action compared to in the Commonwealth, the Wettin ruler did not eventually succeed in coercing Friedrich I to take part in the war against the Swedes. He finally quit on June 3, 1701, by conveying, via v. Werthern, his consent for the Hohenzollern to use the royal title. The new Prussian king could not expect that an extraordinary Saxon mission would arrive at his court in Berlin, and so limited himself to sending a thankful letter from the Köpenick castle on June 24, 1701.¹⁶

The Berlin court's bargaining with Denmark, one of the Hohenzollern's close allies for years, abounded with numerous turns and twists. Denmark's king Christian V has namely entered, as from January 31, 1682, into a defensive alliance with the Brandenburg Elector Friedrich Wilhelm, which was renewed as of June 21, 1692 for another ten years, with Friedrich III, the "Great Elector's" successor¹⁷. A friendly relationship between Copenhagen and Berlin was testified to by the Danish king's initiation into the Hohenzollern's coronation plans a number of months before the Königsberg act took place. Shortly before his death, Christian V bound himself (on August 25, 1699) to support the projected establishment of Prussia as a kingdom; his position in this respect was maintained by his successor to the Danish throne, Friedrich IV.¹⁸ It is worth mentioning that the reconciliations as to matters of vitality to Friedrich III were made in direct contacts between him and the Oldenburgs. The two consequent Brandenburg-Prussian envoys to Copenhagen, Pierre de Falaiseau (1690-1698) and Adam-Otto von Viereck (since December 1698), were not informed of the negotiations going on. This still held true until September 24, 1700, as expressly evidenced by a so-dated letter by the Brandenburg Elector, a fragment of which has been quoted by French historian Albert Waddington.¹⁹ The ruler of Brandenburg-Prussia has by then obtained a written commitment from the king of Denmark to support the Hohenzollerns' royal aspirations. On February 13, 1700,

¹⁶ E. Ichon, *Die Verhandlungen*, pp. 38-42; J. Staszewski, *Die Beziehungen...*, pp. 139-140.

¹⁷ Th. von Moerner (ed.), *Kurbrandenburgs Staatsverträge*, pp. 428-429, 572-574; S. Hartmann, *Die Beziehungen Preußens zu Dänemark von 1688 bis 1789*, in: *Neue Forschungen zur brandenburg-preußischen Geschichte*, vol. 3, Köln-Wien 1983, pp. 3-4, 9-11, 341-344.

¹⁸ A. Hojer, *König Friedrich des Vierten glorwürdigstes Leben*, Part 1, Tondern 1829, p. 40; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, p. 261.

¹⁹ A. Waddington, *L'acquisition*, p. 261, footnote 7. For a list of Brandenburg envoys to Copenhagen, see: *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Länder seit dem Westfälischen Frieden (1648)*, ed. by L. Bittner, L. Groß, vol. 1: *(1648-1715)*, Oldenburg i. O.-Berlin 1936, pp. 29-31.

Friedrich IV promised in a letter to the Brandenburg Elector that he “shall contribute, similarly to what the King of Poland did, to implementation of the designs that are pleasing to him”. Following this up, Friedrich IV sent to Berlin a legation led by a young count Christian Detlef von Reventlow. On March 20, 1700, he provided to the Brandenburg Elector a declaration of the Danish king promising to acknowledge his future royalty and support the Hohenzollern case by the Copenhagen diplomacy among the other powers, especially France.²⁰

The reason behind the great amiableness displayed to the Hohenzollern ruler by the Oldenburg monarch was the same as the one that pushed the Saxony Elector to do a similar thing: preparing for the Northern War. Involved in a conflict with the Holstein ruler, brother-in-law of the Swedish king, the King of Denmark was aware that Augustus II and Russia were too far away to possibly help him out in case of emergency; hence, he looked for other means of securing himself, through seeking support from the Elector of Brandenburg. As it turned out, in exchange for recognition of Prussia ranked as a kingdom, Friedrich III had to tighten his relationship with Denmark through entering into a secret anti-Swedish alliance with this country. On April 6, 1700, Christian Detlef von Reventlow signed at Kölln-an-der-Spree a secret treaty with Brandenburg-Prussia that (in item 4) promised to the Hohenzollern, for joining the coalition against Charles XII of Sweden, the Swedish area of Pomerania – so-called Western Pomerania [*resp.* Cispomerania or Hither Pomerania – the *Vorpommern*], including Stettin (today, Szczecin), Rügen and the Mecklenburg city of Wismar.²¹

The Prussian king-to-be was not willing to get involved in the Northern War commenced in 1700 with the Danish army’s attack on Holstein. On April 24, 1700, Friedrich IV summoned the Berlin court to assault Stettin whose garrison of 1,200 soldiers was not capable of defending itself on its own. The Hohenzollern ruler did not take advantage of the Swedish troops’ weak numerical force in the Western Pomerania and rejected the tempting offer from the Danish party. The Copenhagen court could only express its regret to Berlin as the Brandenburg Elector had not used the opportunity to efficiently oppose “their shared enemy”²². In his incessant effort to attract Brandenburg-Prussia to the war, Friedrich IV renewed, as of May 27, 1700, his asseverations of friendship and readiness to soon felicitate the royal title to the Hohenzollern ruler. This time, in an effort to save his face against the ally, Frie-

²⁰ E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, p. 38; A. Waddington, *L’acquisition...*, pp. 261-262, 445-446.

²¹ Th. von Moerner (ed.), *Kurbrandenburgs Staatsverträge*, pp. 663-665; W. Buchholz, *Schweden und die preußische Rangerhöhung von 1701*, in: *Die preußische Rangerhöhung und Königskrönung 1701 in deutscher und europäischer Sicht*, ed. by H. Barmeyer, Frankfurt am Main-Berlin 2002, pp. 166-167; S. Hartmann, *Die Beziehungen...*, pp. 22-23; E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen*, p. 38; A. Waddington, *L’acquisition...*, p. 262.

²² A. Waddington, *L’acquisition...*, p. 262.

drich III dispatched 8,000 Brandenburg soldiers to his state's frontier on the Braunschweig-Lüneburg Duchy in June, telling them to station at a fortified camp on the Elbe, in Lenzen. As it soon after occurred, this was a fake military demonstration: the Brandenburg force did not sabotage the rear of the troops fighting against the Danish army, remaining torpid.²³

The passive position assumed by Brandenburg-Prussia enabled the Holstein ruler's allies, i.e. the Swedes, supported by an English/Dutch squadron, to commence their unhindered invasion of Zealand in order to subdue Copenhagen. Frustrated by the bad luck, Friedrich IV was forced to sign, as of August 18, 1700, assisted to this end by the sea countries, a humiliating peace at Traventhal, to withdraw from the war, break the alliance with Russia and Saxony, and confirm full sovereignty to the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp.²⁴

Resulting from these events, the Brandenburgian-Prussian-Danish relations have grown harsh. Friedrich IV did not need anything else from the Hohenzollern. He had given him his word all right before then, and committed himself in writing to support the royal aspirations but did not have to be quick at issuing the final decision now. Adam Otto von Viereck, the Brandenburg envoy to Copenhagen, came across a deep dissatisfaction of the Danish people, and disrespect. The Danish dignitaries were deceiving him at each step. The Great Chancellor, Count Conrad von Reventlow, promised him in early December 1700 a letter from Friedrich IV with congratulations to the Hohenzollern on the coronation, but eventually served none. In turn, Danish privy counsellor Christian Siegfried von Plessen announced to Viereck that his lord would still have to wait till his royal title was acknowledged, and did not change his opinion in spite of the Brandenburgian diplomat's insinuations.²⁵

The diplomatic representatives of Denmark at the Berlin court behaved in a similar manner. The Danish minister Hans Heinrich (Henrik) von Ahlefeldt left Berlin in September 1700; his secretary Franz von Hagen declared to the Brandenburgians three months later that the Copenhagen court was waiting for what the other courts would do with regard to recognising the royal status of Prussia. Viereck still tried to back Friedrich III's interests. In a letter sent on January 15, 1701 to the Hohenzollern, he wrote that he had demanded in Copenhagen an official dispatch with coronation congrats from the Danish monarch, but proved incapable of attaining anything. The Danish diplomats have remained demonstratively distant from

²³ S. Hartmann, *Die Beziehungen...*, pp. 23-24; E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, pp. 40-41. A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, p. 263, specifies that 6,000 Brandenburg soldiers were meant to obstruct the Braunschewig troops' invasion on Denmark.

²⁴ O. Haintz, *König Karl XII. von Schweden*, vol. 1: *Der Kampf der schwedischen Militärmönarchie um die Vormacht in Nord – und Osteuropa*, Berlin 1936, pp. 39-43; S. Hartmann, *Die Beziehungen*, p. 24; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, p. 263.

²⁵ A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, p. 263.

the Hohenzollern's coronation celebrations; the plots of François Bouton, Count de Chamilly, the French Ambassador to Copenhagen, caused Friedrich IV not to haste with reply to the notification of the royal coronation presented to him in late January by Adam Otto von Viereck.²⁶

Friedrich I's envoy was soon after to see continued increase of anti-Prussian sentiments. In the course of a grand conference held in Copenhagen on February 10, 1701 with Danish ministers – the Great Chancellor Conrad von Reventlow and privy counsellors Johann Hugo von Lente and Christian Siegfried von Plessen, he had to defend his lord against fierce attacks from the Danish party which accused the ruler of Brandenburg-Prussia of perfidious behaviour during the last war with Sweden and Holstein. If Count Podewils, a Prussian minister, is to be trusted, the threat of broken-off negotiation was defused by mediation of a representative of the sea countries' interests – the Danish Prince George who was espoused to Anne, the Queen of England. Resulting from this turn, Friedrich IV sent his congratulations to Berlin on the coronation, on February 19, 1701; two weeks later, he promised to send Hans Heinrich von Ahlefeldt as an envoy to the town on the Spree. Encouraged by these gestures, the Prussian king sent his chamberlain Johann Wilhelm von Tettau to Copenhagen, in April 1701, as an extraordinary legate bringing thanks for assistance in obtaining the royal title.²⁷

The king of Denmark was reluctant to bring the matter to a quick end and piled up various hindrances before Friedrich I with regard to the court ceremonial and etiquette. For instance, he refrained from assigning primacy to the Hohenzollern's First Minister Johann Kasimir Kolbe, Count von Wartenberg, as he maintained that the Danish Great Chancellor Reventlow did not require this each time from the Prussian deputy Viereck while in Copenhagen. He also called into question the sequence of sitting at audiences and the types of garment used by diplomats, calling for the procedure to be uniformed. All these disputable questions were finally settled in July 1701, in the course of negotiations carried out by the Prussian deputy to Hamburg, Leberecht von Guericke, with Reventlow and Ahlefeldt. September 3, 1701 saw the Danish envoy Hans Heinrich von Ahlefeldt acknowledge the royalty of Friedrich I at a special audience held at the Berlin court, thus normalising the relations between the two states.²⁸

²⁶ S. Hartmann, *Die Beziehungen...*, p. 25; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 263-264, 374.

²⁷ Comte de Podewils (ministre d'Etat en 1747), *Mémoire sur les anecdotes les plus importantes du règne de Frédéric I, roi de Prusse. Dans les Miscellaneen zur Geschichte König Friedrichs des Grossen, publiés par la direction des Archives de Prusse*, Berlin 1878, p. 423; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 374-375.

²⁸ S. Hartmann, *Die Beziehungen...*, pp. 25-27; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, p. 375.

The Brandenburg-Prussian state put to a tough test also its relations with Russia, the third anti-Swedish coalition player. The Hohenzollern dispatched a mission to Moscow in as early as October 1700 – before he had the royal crown put on his head in Königsberg. The mission was led by Baron Marquard Ludwig von Printzen. He was officially tasked with undertaking mediation between Russian tsar Peter I and Augustus II, Elector of Saxony and king of Poland, on the one hand, and the winning Swedish sovereign Charles XII. The legation's unofficial aim was to gain Russia's recognition of the Hohenzollern's royal title.²⁹

The task seemed relatively easy to deliver as Peter I had been put in a very tough position after the Traventhal treaty, unsuccessful Saxon attack on Riga (in summer 1700) and Russia's defeat at Narva (November 30, 1700). However, similarly to the Danish king, he found it hard to hide at first his disapproval for Friedrich III's conduct. The cooperation between Russia and Brandenburg-Prussia, initiated in June 1697 though a personal meeting between Friedrich III and Peter I on a yacht moored on the Pregola near Königsberg, and the oral agreements concluded on that occasion for mutual assistance, had not resulted in the Hohenzollern ruler getting involved in the war against Sweden. Friedrich III rejected an offer to accede to the anti-Swedish alliance, as proposed to him by the tsar, via Printzen, in early 1699. He sent away empty-handed the tsarist envoy, Prince Yuri Yurievich Trubetskoy, a boyar, who in early August 1700 solicited in Berlin a perpetual Russian-Prussian-Brandenburgian covenant, coupled with the Hohenzollern monarchy joining the war against Sweden right after the Scandinavian power was attacked by Russia. This being the case, the way the 1697 oral agreement was interpreted grew to become the central point of reference in further negotiations between Berlin and Moscow. In the Russian party's opinion, Friedrich III promised thereby to support Peter I not only in the defensive but also in an offensive one – a view which was fiercely denied by the Brandenburg-Prussian party.³⁰

The Brandenburg-Prussian-Russian talks for recognition of the Hohenzollern ruler's royal status were much delayed. Printzen arrived in Moscow in early days of February 1701, only to leave soon thereafter in order to accompany Peter I on his trip to Birzhe where a convention attended by August II was due to be held. Thus, he commenced bargaining with Chancellor Fyodor Alexeyevich Golovin only in late March/early April 1701. Right from the outset of these talks, he came across a strong

²⁹ J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...*, p. 356; E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, pp. 49-50; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, p. 381.

³⁰ J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...*, pp. 67-70, 159, 200; E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, pp. 41-42; A.D. Putiata, *Vopros o prusskom sojuzě v pervuju polovinu velikoj severnoj vojny*. Sbornik Moskovskago Glavnago Archiva Ministerstva inostrannykh děl, vol. 1, Moskva 1880, pp. 83-85, 96-104; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 268-271.

line held by the tsarist party. Golovin reminded Printzen of the obligations undertaken by Friedrich I in 1697 and pressed on Brandenburg-Prussia to join the war against the Scandinavian power. And it was this particular aspect that he rendered recognition of Friedrich I's royalty conditional upon. Later on, however, finding Printzen tenacious, the Russian party was to limit its demands to bringing a few Prussian regiments under the tsarist command.

Friedrich I did not even consent to these softer desiderata: he was aware that even a smallest troop of his military supporting the Prussian army would lead Brandenburg-Prussia to an unwelcome war against Charles XII. On dismissing the Russians' hope for provoking a Swedish-Prussian conflict, Printzen highlighted – in line with the instructions he was to adhere to – his master's great merits to the Northern League, based on the objection against the Swedish army's march-past from Pomerania to Saxony.³¹ At the same time, he complained against anti-Prussian designs of Augustus II, the Saxonian elector and Polish king, an ally to Russia, and reproached him on turning the Commonwealth against Friedrich I's coronation as a king. Also, he charged him of an intent to subdue, in an alliance with Louis XIV of France, the Brandenburgian Prussia, or commit an absolutist coup d'état in Poland. Although the Russian party did not fully trust these revelations, they proposed to Berlin, in June 1701, to enter into an arrangement for protection of the existing political system of the Commonwealth, which gave the Prussians a hope for territorial gains in Poland in case Augustus II attacked the Hohenzollern's estates.³²

The use of the Polish 'trump card', indication to the tsar of a common goal associating him with Brandenburg-Prussia, and the necessity to take protective measures against Augustus II's possible switch to Charles XII's party, all rendered further negotiations facilitated to Printzen. Reconciled with a failure in gaining military assistance from the Prussians, the Russians seemingly started to make recognition of the Hohenzollern's royalty dependent on entering by Brandenburg-Prussia into peace mediation. This action resulted in Peter I's acceptance, on July 5, 1701, of Prussia ranked as a kingdom and soon thereafter, of the Prussian mediation. Yet, the tsar declared in parallel that he should propose his peace-related demands only if the mediators guaranteed in writing they would strive for reinstating for Russia a part of the lands it had previously lost. Augustus II consented to Printzen's mediation as well.³³

³¹ J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...*, pp. 356-357; E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, pp. 45, 49-51.

³² J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...*, pp. 358-363; E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, pp. 48-49, 51.

³³ J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...*, pp. E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, pp. 50, 53; A.D. Putiata, *Vopros o prusskom sojuzě...*, p. 104; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, p. 382.

Although neither Peter I nor Augustus II were zealous enough to conclude a peace, the Prussian king, meeting his obligations, sent Printzen to the Swedish king in late August to intermeditate for the peace. However, the mediation failed. Charles XII refused audience to Printzen who arrived in November 1701 at the Swedish quarters at Würgen in Courland; Count Karl Piper and General-Major Karl Magnus Stuart, the Swedish king's collaborators, rejected a priori an option to enter into cooperation with Russia.³⁴ The final chord in fulfilment of the Moscow arrangements between Golovin and Printzen was the arrival in Berlin in early November 1701 of Russian Ambassador to Copenhagen, Andrey Petrovich Izmailov. The tsarist diplomat, whose task was to continue negotiations for signing a Prussian-Russian treaty, was offered a solemn public audience at which he expressed Peter I's friendship for Friedrich I, the new King of Prussia. This gesture of the tsar of Russia, quite significant in propaganda terms as it was, was highly appreciated by the Hohenzollern.³⁵

The Brandenburg-Prussia ruler's close associations with Saxony, Denmark and Russia had adverse bearing, on the eve and in the early phase of the Northern War, on the Berlin court's strivings in Sweden and Holstein for recognition by these countries of ranking of the Hohenzollern monarchy as a kingdom. Friedrich I/III remained since the outset of his rule in a defensive alliance with Sweden and had it renewed as of July 11, 1696 and June 23, 1698, respectively.³⁶ By means of these arrangements, he bound himself not only to maintain a relationship of friendship with the Scandinavian power but also to defend together with it the existing political system of the Commonwealth and to provide assistance in obviating the dispute between the king of Denmark and the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp. The rules of Holstein – or, in fact, the Dukes of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp – were put into a rather complex situation in terms of legal framework and political system. They have freed themselves from Denmark's tributary dependence in Schleswig under the treaties of 1658-1660, gaining sovereignty therein. They remained liegemen to the emperor as rulers of a portion of Holstein situated in the Reich and members of the Lower Saxony District. Good Prussian-Holstein relationships had dated back at least to the late 1680s when Christian V, king of Denmark, attempted at taking part of Schleswig away from Christian Albrecht, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp. Together with a few other rulers, the Hohenzollern got involved in liquidation of this conflict and persuaded Denmark by way of diplomatic pressure to conclude, as of June 30, 1689, a peace in Altona and to

³⁴ J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...*, p. 358; E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, pp. 57-58.

³⁵ W. Buchholz, *Schweden...*, p. 177; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, p. 382. Por. *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter*, vol. 1, p. 432.

³⁶ Th. von Moerner (ed.), *Kurbrandenburgs Staatsverträge...*, pp. 478-481, 618-620, 638-639; W. Buchholz, *Schweden...*, pp. 165-166; E. Cohn, *Der Bündnisvertrag zwischen König Friedrich I. von Preußen und Karl XII. von Schweden vom 29. Juli 1703*, in: *Jahrbuch der Philosophischen Fakultät zu Königsberg / Pr.*, 1 (1921), p. 1.

return the lands taken off in Schleswig in 1684 (incl. Trittau, Steinhorst, Tremsbüttel, and the isle of Fehmarn). He was one among the treaty's guarantors too.³⁷

The Hohenzollern ruler did not alter his policy after Christian Albrecht died (January 6, 1695) and was followed by his son Friedrich IV as the ruler in the Duchy of Holstein. April 18, 1695 saw an arrangement concluded by the Hohenzollern with the new ruler of Holstein, whereby the former consented for titling Friedrich IV a descendant of the kings of Denmark, whose genealogy stemmed from king Friedrich I. Hence, the title of 'His Grace' [more literally, 'Illuminated'] (*Durchleuchtigst*) came in place of 'Right Honourable' ['Mighty'] (*Hochgeboren*).³⁸

Brandenburg-Prussia's friendly relationship with Holstein was increasingly colliding, however, with the Berlin court's policy toward Denmark. The Hohenzollern, who renewed a defence alliance with Denmark for another ten years as from June 21, 1692, watched the reappearing Danish-Holsteinian conflict with increasing concern. In response to the armed attack of Holstein by the Danish king in 1697 and his undertaken demolition of the fortifications built in the Holstein area, the Duke of Holstein brought about a tight relation with Sweden. In his strife to ensure sovereignty for himself and protection against the Copenhagen court's incorporative plans, Friedrich IV married in 1698 to Hedwig, daughter of Swedish king Charles XI, thus establishing himself as brother-in-law of Charles XII, and subsequently assumed the command-in-chief of the Swedish army in Germany. He also entered into anti-Danish alliance with the Dukes of Braunschweig-Lüneburg. The Brandenburg-Prussian ruler placed a bet on the Danish party – all the more so that he was at that time soliciting Copenhagen's mediation in the dispute with the Commonwealth for Elbląg (Elbing).³⁹

In spite of having evaded fulfilment of the obligations implied by the secret Prussian-Danish treaty of April 6, 1700 and not having joined the Northern War on the anti-Swedish coalition part, Elector Friedrich III fell from grace at the Stockholm and Holstein courts. He also put at risk deteriorated relations with England and Holland, the sea countries that together with him had guaranteed peace in Altona in 1689, and entered then on, in 1700, a close alliance with Sweden. After Denmark invaded Holstein in March 1700 and was defeated by the Swedes, supported by the

³⁷ Th. von Moerner (ed.), *Kurbrandenburgs Staatsverträge...*, pp. 517-518; L.A. Gebhardi, *Geschichte der Königreiche Dänemark und Norwegen*, vol. 2, Halle 1770, pp. 2216-2218; S. Hartmann, *Die Beziehungen*, pp. 4-5; P. Kobbe, *Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte vom Tode des Herzogs Christian Albrecht bis zum Tode König Christians VII.*, Altona 1834, pp. 7-11.

³⁸ Th. von Moerner (ed.), *Kurbrandenburgs Staatsverträge...*, pp. 599-600.

³⁹ O. Haintz, *König Karl XII. von Schweden*, vol. 1, pp. 29-30; S. Hartmann, *Die Beziehungen...*, pp. 14-20; P. Kobbe, *Schleswig-Holsteinische Geschichte*, pp. 10-13; E. Olmer, *Kristian V:s öfverfall på Holstein-Gottorp vid Karl XI:s död*, in: *Historisk Tidskrift* vol. 18, 1898, pp. 6-48.

English and Dutch fleet, and then withdrew from the war, the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp assumed unfriendly attitude toward the Hohenzollern, once the former had his full sovereignty reinstated under the agreements concluded in Traventhal on August 18, 1700. He was never to acknowledge the establishment of Prussia as a kingdom.⁴⁰ This situation remained unchanged after Friedrich IV fell in a battle fought against the Saxon and Polish army near Kliszów on July 19, 1792, which brought victory to the Swedes. The Holstein party was slow to accept the Königsberg coronation still on October 16, 1702. A letter written by Magnus von Wedderkop, President of the Holstein Privy Council, to Leberecht von Guericke, a Prussian envoy to Hamburg, states that the official reason for this delay was minority of the new Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, Karl Friedrich (Charles Frederick; born April 30, 1700).⁴¹

The Hohenzollern was to wait longer still till his assumed royalty was recognised by the Stockholm court. Prevarication between Saxony, Denmark and Russia, on the one hand, and Sweden and Holstein on the other was effectively to Frederick I/III's detriment. Charles XII of Sweden learned of the intended promotion by Emperor Leopold I of the Hohenzollerns' dominion to a kingdom a few weeks before the Austrian-Brandenburg alliance arrangement referred to as the 'Crown Treaty'. The message of it, together with the conditions posed by the Habsburg ruler, upon which his consent for the coronation was ultimately conditional, had been sent from Berlin at the early date of October 8, 1700 by Swedish resident Justus Henrik Storren.⁴² Charles XII took a very distant position against the Hohenzollern's strivings and did not congratulate him on the promotion. Storren, his diplomatic representative at the Berlin court, remained demonstratively distant against the coronation ceremony, limiting himself to notifying his lord of the Brandenburg Elector Friedrich III leaving for Königsberg. It may be supposed that Charles XII's intent was to pay the Hohenzollern back in this way for the numerous cases of infringement by the Brandenburg-Prussian party of the provisions of the 1660 Oliwa peace treaty and defensive arrangement with Sweden of 1686 (renewed in 1696 and 1698), and for Friedrich I/III's recent actions aimed at preventing the Scandinavian army's march-past from Pomerania to Saxony.⁴³

As the Hohenzollern's royal title had consistently been refused, Storren had to leave Berlin; shortly after February 26, 1701, he arrived in Szczecin (Stettin), then in Swedish hands. Rejection by Charles XII of the Prussian demarche for the royalty led to deeming Storren a *persona non grata*, obstructing his way back to the town

⁴⁰ A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, p. 343. See also: G. Jonasson, *Karl XII och hans rådgivare. Den utrikespolitiska maktkampen i Sverige 1697-1702*, Upsala 1960, pp. 122-124.

⁴¹ A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, p. 343.

⁴² W. Buchholz, *Schweden...*, pp. 172-173.

⁴³ W. Buchholz, *Schweden...*, pp. 165-168, 173-174; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 264-266.

on the Spree.⁴⁴ The events assuming such course, the mission to Stockholm of Prussian diplomat Count Friedrich Christoph von Dohna was doomed to failure, albeit the two sea countries, England and Holland, did their utmost to reconcile Friedrich I/III with Sweden. English and Dutch envoys then staying in Stockholm acted in defence of the Hohenzollern; the Great Pensionary of Holland Anton Heinsius went as far as reporting his readiness to intercede for the King of Prussia with Count Nils Lillieroot, the Swedish deputy to The Hague. In spite of these actions, the Swedish party stuck to their fixed position. The talks held in Stockholm by Count von Dohna in March 1701 with Swedish ministers: the Great Chancellor, Count Bengt Oxenstierna, and the counsellors Karl Piper and Tomas Polus yielded no fruit as these dignitaries withheld any decision, claiming they feared embarrassment in the their master's eyes.⁴⁵

Friedrich I continued to be named 'Elector of Brandenburg' by the Swedes, which made Count von Dohna's position quite awkward while in Stockholm. Encouraged by this, Louis XIV of France started earnestly solicit conclusion of a French-Swedish alliance against the Hohenzollern. In a letter sent on August 18, 1701 to the French Ambassador in Sweden – the post was held then by Count Louis Guiscard-Magny – he ordered that resolute diplomatic action be taken to effectively establish an alliance between Swedish king Charles XII and Augustus II of Poland against the 'Brandenburgian Elector'. The French were reluctant to recognise the Hohenzollern's royal status. Although Charles XII was not quite fond of these French designs, Count von Dohna could not wait any longer till the Scandinavian court changed its position with regard to the Königsberg coronation. Dismissed from his mission as from August 14, 1701, he hung about winding up of the Prussian Embassy in Sweden. He departed Stockholm only on October 30, 1701, after he last met Bengt Oxenstierna, and left for Kołobrzeg (Kolberg).⁴⁶

Any normalisation of the Swedish-Prussian relationship was becoming increasingly distant. In November 1701, Charles XII did not receive Friedrich I's envoy, von Printzen, at an audience. Also, he did not respond to offers proposed on behalf of Prussia by Austrian envoy Gotthard Helfried Count von Welz⁴⁷. The situation started changing only in autumn 1702, following the defeats suffered by Augustus II and the Commonwealth being flooded by Swedish army. The action for mediation of an understanding between Berlin and Stockholm, undertaken by Jakub-Ludwik Sobieski, son of king John III of Poland (died 1696), encountered a fertile ground. Friedrich

⁴⁴ W. Buchholz, *Schweden...*, pp. 174-178; *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter*, vol. 1, p. 483; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 266-267, 377.

⁴⁵ A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 377-378.

⁴⁶ E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, p. 53; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 376, 378.

⁴⁷ E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen*, p. 53; A. Waddington, *L'acquisition...*, pp. 378-379.

I was eager to have his royalty finally recognised by Sweden, while the victorious Charles XII increasingly cared for winning Poland over – without its existing ruler, Augustus II, though. Prussia was to facilitate for the Swedish king the dethroning of the Wettin ruler; the latter was to be replaced, in recognition of successful mediation, by Jakub-Ludwik Sobieski. December 8, 1702 marked the first correspondence contact entered into between Karl Piper, the secretary of the Swedish state, and Friedrich I, consistently called ‘Elector of Brandenburg’ by the Swedes. Consequently, early 1703 saw Prussian-Swedish negotiations held in the Hague, in view of entering into a bilateral pact.⁴⁸ The Russian party endeavoured to draw the Berlin court away from a closer alliance with Sweden by proposing to Friedrich I, in late March 1703, to seize the entire Polish area of Prussia in exchange for joining the war against Charles XII. Yet, the Hohenzollern’s reply to this offering was evasive.⁴⁹

On July 30, 1703, the Prussian deputy Wolfgang von Schmettau and Swedish diplomat Nils Lillieroot signed in the Hague a treaty between Prussia and Sweden. Backdated as July 29, 1703, the treaty had Charles XII recognise the Hohenzollern’s royalty, promising that in future peace negotiations concluding the war with Poland he would demand the same from the Commonwealth. In exchange, Friedrich I accepted the rules of cooperation of both countries in the territory of the Commonwealth and with respect to it, as imposed by the Swedish party. He guaranteed neutrality of the Brandenburgian part of Prussia in the warfare going on in the Commonwealth area, committed himself to support Jakub-Ludwik Sobieski’s interests, and not to provide any assistance to Augustus II whatsoever.⁵⁰

The Prussian-Swedish treaty came out as a support for the anti-Saxon opposition in Poland and for the Wielkopolska Confederation, entered into in Środa on July 9, 1703, setting conclusion of a peace with Sweden as the primary goal for itself. The treaty also enabled to reinstate the diplomatic relations between Prussia and Sweden, as marked by installation in March 1704 of Count Anders Leijonstedt as Swedish ambassador to the Berlin court.⁵¹

⁴⁸ W. Buchholz, *Schweden...*, pp. 179-180; G. Jonasson, *Karl XII:s polska politik 1702-1703*, Stockholm 1968 (Studia Historica Upsaliensia XXVII), pp. 135-146.

⁴⁹ J. Burdowicz-Nowicki, *Piotr I, August II...*, p. 236; E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, pp. 92-93, 95.

⁵⁰ *Preussens Staatsverträge aus der Regierungszeit König Friedrichs I.*, publ. by V. Loewe, Leipzig 1923, pp. 40-41. Cf. discussions of the Prussian-Swedish pact in: W. Buchholz, *Schweden...*, pp. 180-181; E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, pp. 97-98; J. Staszewski, *O miejsce w Europie...*, pp. 400-401; A. Waddington, *L’acquisition...*, p. 380.

⁵¹ W. Buchholz, *Schweden...*, p. 181; G. Jonasson, *Karl XII:s polska politik...*, pp. 157-160; J. Poraziński, *Epiphania Poloniae. Orientacje i postawy polityczne szlachty polskiej w dobie wielkiej wojny północnej (1702-1710)*, Toruń 1999, pp. 34-36; *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter*, vol. 1, pp. 483-484; M. Zwierzykowski, *Samorząd sejmikowy województw poznańskiego i kaliskiego w latach 1696-1732*, Poznań 2010, p. 189.

As it soon after turned out, Prussia did not have to get unduly involved in the political happenings on the Vistula and support, together with Sweden, Jakub-Ludwik Sobieski's rights to the Polish crown. As of December 23, 1703, Charles XII announced Sobieski candidate for the Polish throne and took action in view of dethroning Augustus II, which effectively yielded a resolution of the General Council of Warsaw, of February 16, 1704, renouncing allegiance to the Wettin and announcing interregnum. The action for handing over the Commonwealth rule to Sobieski was however thwarted by Augustus II who arrested Jakub-Ludwik on February 27, 1704 and put him in the Königstein prison.⁵² Thus, the Hohenzollern attained recognition of his royalty by Sweden without it being necessary to fulfil any burdensome obligations. The guarantee of staying neutral in the military struggle going on between Charles XII and Augustus II can hardly be perceived in terms of such obligations indeed. Involved since 1702, by virtue of agreements concluded earlier on with the emperor, Holland and England, in the Spanish succession war fought in the west of Europe, Friedrich I would rather avoid creating for Brandenburg-Prussia the other warfare front along the eastern section.

Analysis of Friedrich I/III's endeavours to recognise promotion of Prussia to a kingdom by countries participating in phase 1 of the Northern War implies that diplomatic assistance of the sea powers: England and Holland and of the emperor did not play a decisive role here.

By taking advantage of the Wettin's dynastic ambitions, checkmating Sweden, skilfully stoking mutual distrust of rulers of the anti-Swedish coalition countries and making perfect use of each of their troubles, the Berlin court succeeded to achieve its goal in the years 1701 to 1703, and this without any significant financial outlays or military contributions. The Commonwealth, which contrary to its king did not recognise the royal status of Prussia, was no special exception. It has to be borne in mind that the country was embroiled in the armed conflict not out of its will, and the tempest of the Northern War, brought into the country on the Vistula by Augustus II, made the Polish-Lithuanian state completely powerless. This paved the way for Friedrich I to enter into an even stronger liaison with the emperor, England and Holland, and to offer increasingly numerous troops to fight against the French army, pursuant to subsidies agreements subsequently concluded with these countries, thus becoming increasingly in demand as a coalition member. The Prussian army amounted to a to-

⁵² E. Hassinger, *Brandenburg-Preußen...*, pp. 114-117; K. Jarochoński, *Porwanie Jakóba i Konstantego Sobieskich przez Augusta II na drodze między Olawą a Wrocławiem dnia 27 lutego 1704 roku*, in: idem, *Opowiadania i studia historyczne*, vol. 2, Poznań 1863, pp. 73-135; R. Martens, *Die Absetzung des Königs August II. von Polen*, in: *Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins*, vol. 8, 1882, pp. 75-77; J. Poraziński, *Epiphania Poloniae...*, pp. 114-117; J. Staszewski, *August II Mocny...*, pp. 149, 152-153.

tal of 44,000 in 1709, whereof as many as 31,200 – some 75% of the army – fought against France on the Po, Rhine and in the Netherlands.⁵³

One of the reasons for such state of affairs – i.e. the Hohenzollern conscious departure from the idea of being more active the Baltic Sea zone – was the strivings for recognition of Prussia as a kingdom by the other European rulers. By the time its relations with Sweden, the last of the Northern War's first phase participants, got normalised, the Kingdom of Prussia had not yet been recognised by a dozen-or-so countries. Acceptance from at least some of them (France, Spain, Electorate of Bavaria, Electorate of Köln) was dependent, as it then seemed, upon the final victory of the Habsburgs and their allies in the Spanish Succession War.

⁵³ M. Braubach, *Die Bedeutung der Subsidien für die Politik im Spanischen Erbfolgekriege*, in: *Bücherei der Kultur und Geschichte*, vol. 28:1923, p. 124; L. & M. Frey, *Friedrich I.*, pp. 202-205; C. von Noorden, *Die preussische Politik im spanischen Erbfolgekriege*, in: *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 18:1867, pp. 329-330, 334; M. Plassmann, *Der Preis der Krone....*, pp. 236-237, 253-254.