

The study deals with the relations between Frederick William, the Elector of Brandenburg, and the Estates of the western countries within his composite state, Cleves-Mark, during the 1640 and the first half of the 1650. Using the analysis of the means which they used for their mutual interaction, it tries to follow the general strategies of both parts as well as their political concepts. The attention is focused on one of the main controversial points between the ruler and the Estates – the foreign policy of the Estates, which was turned mainly towards Netherlands, towards the Estates of Jülich-Berg and towards the central institutions of the Holy Roman Empire. While the Estates considered their foreign policy activities to be completely legitimate means of protection of their own rights, the elector saw them as a threat to his sovereignty, and therefore he operated forcefully against them. Part of the so called “minimal programme” of the ruler, which was a collection of requirements he considered necessary to enforce his own sovereignty, were attempts to secure his own monopoly on the execution of foreign policy. Within the relations between the ruler and the Estates during the pursued period dominated consensual strategy, based in negotiations and agreements.