

YEARBOOK OF POLISH FOREIGN POLICY 2011—2015



PISM

POLSKI INSTYTUT SPRAW MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH
THE POLISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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Ministerstwo Nauki
i Szkolnictwa Wyższego

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From the Editor

The *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2011–2015* is the only volume describing five years of Polish foreign policy activity. Conventionally, the yearbook is published annually and discusses the past year. Unfortunately, for reasons unknown, in 2012 the publication of the *Yearbook* was discontinued, which created a huge gap in reflection on Polish foreign policy. We decided to supplement it and make up for lost time, although not everything can be restored without any loss of precision in the method applied. It is also important to return to the tradition of the Polish Institute of International Affairs publishing the *Yearbook*.

This edition of the *Yearbook* offers analyses of Polish foreign policy in 15 areas. The authors are PISM analysts. A favourable circumstance in developing a five-year overview turned out to be that for almost the entire period, except the last few weeks, one government coalition was in power and, except for the last few months, one president. Therefore, neither the way policy was conducted nor the administration responsible for it fundamentally changed.

The challenge, however, also methodological, was that what at the beginning of the discussed period was a policy objective had become by the end of the cycle, after implementing the objectives, a determinant for further activities. Hence, there was the need to capture the change in these circumstances over time. However, the point of reference for the assessment of the effectiveness of Polish foreign policy in particular areas was the objectives formulated by the government and presented by the minister of foreign affairs in annual speeches in the Sejm as well as those included in the multiannual programmes.

The year 2011 was the first after Poland regained its sovereignty that the same liberal-conservative parties which had been governing continued after the parliamentary elections: Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska, PO, 39.2% of the votes in the October elections) and the Polish People's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, PSL, 8.4%). The largest opposition group remained the conservative Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS, 29.9%), while parliament was complemented by two social democratic parties—Palikot's Movement (Ruch Palikota, 10%, transformed into Your Movement/Twój Ruch in 2013) and Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej, SLD, 8.2%).

In the second government of Donald Tusk, Radosław Sikorski remained minister of foreign affairs from November 2011 and Tomasz Siemoniak, who replaced Bogdan Klich in mid-2011, became the minister of national defence. In the government of Ewa Kopacz, which was formed in September 2014, the foreign minister was Grzegorz Schetyna. The PiS-led coalition of right-wing parties that

came to power in mid-November 2015 after winning the elections constitutes a caesura in this series and the authors of the articles merely signal the changes to come in politics before the end of the year.

The year 2011 was also the first year of conducting Polish foreign policy after the Smolensk catastrophe in which President Lech Kaczyński and 95 others perished. Bronisław Komorowski, who won in early elections as a candidate of the PO, held office until August 2015. Therefore, the years 2011–2015 in Polish politics are mainly a period of cooperation between the government and the president from the same political environment. Andrzej Duda election to office as president in 2015 turned out to be a sign of upcoming changes on the Polish political scene.

The beginning of 2011 coincided with unprecedented events in the immediate vicinity of Europe—North Africa and the Middle East. Revolutions in countries in these regions soon came to be called the “Arab Spring” and were aimed at overthrowing existing regimes. Ben Ali fled Tunisia. The government of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt collapsed. The international intervention in Libya led to the collapse of its leader, Muammar al-Gaddafi. The attempt to overthrow President Bashar al-Assad in Syria ended in civil war and international involvement. Poland could not remain indifferent to these events, nor as a country with experience in political transformation. It tried to share these experiences, among others, through the European Fund for Democracy, established on the Polish initiative.

The most significant events from the perspective of Polish foreign policy were those following the “Revolution of Dignity” in Ukraine. It broke out in November 2013 as a result of President Viktor Yanukovich’s withdrawal of Ukraine, under Russian pressure, from signing the Association Agreement with the European Union. His subsequent escape from the country after an attempt to brutally suppress peaceful demonstrations, followed by Russian aggression and occupation of Crimea and the creation of quasi-republics in the east of the country with the assistance of Russia, resulted in the non-standard involvement of the Polish president, the government, and the opposition in Ukrainian affairs. The war in Ukraine also resulted in unprecedented migration from this country to Poland, which soon reached several hundred thousand people and continued to grow.

Europe was also confronted with increased migration and refugee flows, mainly from the Middle East, from the end of 2014. The European mass-migration and refugee crisis peaked in 2015, when almost two million people entered Europe, mostly through irregular migration.

Poland’s security policy had to be adapted to, among other things, events from the East and South. It was dominated by a growing threat from Russia. Therefore, Poland’s primary goal was to increase NATO’s ability to defend its member states. At the summit in Wales in September 2014, the Alliance met these expectations

by adopting a “Preparedness Action Plan” aimed at increasing the Allied rapid response forces and shortening the time of their transfer to Central and Eastern Europe. The need to strengthen NATO forces in the region also meant that Poland was less eager to engage in the development of the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

The United States once again proved to be crucial for Europe’s security. The Allied forces in Central and Eastern Europe were increased mainly through bilateral U.S. initiatives. The funds for this purpose came from, among others, the Strengthening European Defence initiative with a budget of \$1 billion dollars, the allocation of which was announced on 4 June 2014 in Warsaw by President Barack Obama. His assurances about the strategic importance of the partnership between the U.S. and Poland for the security of Europe were translated into decisions on the deployment of American forces in Poland. Previously, Warsaw hosted President Obama at the Central and Eastern European Summit in 2011.

The beginning of 2011 found Poland preparing for the presidency of the EU Council in the second half of the year. At that time, Poland was convinced that the EU should not create barriers limiting integration because closer cooperation between the Member States determines economic growth and thus, the recovery from the economic crisis, of which a second wave was experienced by Europe in 2011. Poland built the priorities of the presidency around European integration as a source of growth, a secure Europe, and a Europe benefiting from openness.

Poland, from a newcomer to the EU became the co-host of events and co-author of new initiatives wishing to shape the activities of the EU and increase its influence on the decision-making process. The implementation of European policy was guided by the principle of “more, not less, Europe”. One of Poland’s fundamental achievements was the negotiation of the Multiannual Financial Framework with a more substantial amount of funds for cohesion policy than in the previous perspective. At the same time though, in 2011, the government adopted the “National Plan” for the introduction of the euro, though a year later it ceased to implement it, indicating, among other things, the need to stabilise the eurozone and to prepare Poland in macroeconomic and legal terms.

A historic event for Poland was the acceptance of the highest position in the EU by a Pole. In December 2014, Prime Minister Tusk became the President of the European Council for a two-and-a-half-year renewable term. Also, until the beginning of 2012 (from mid-2009), Jerzy Buzek was president of the European Parliament.

Poland wanted to strengthen its cooperation with the largest EU Member States, i.e., Germany and France. Poland and Germany were brought together by views on the direction of reforms in the eurozone and countering the economic crisis. The divergences concerned, among others, energy policy and relations with

Russia, and from 2015 also the issue of migration. Relations with France revived. Poland managed to revitalise trilateral cooperation within the Weimar Triangle and the years 2011–2015 were the best period of operation.

In the Visegrad Group, Poland strengthened its position as a leader and led its work from mid-2012 to mid-2013. After 2014, the V4's lack of consistency in its policy towards Russia and Ukraine became apparent, which was the source of Poland's disputes with Hungary. After the change of government in Poland in 2015, the new cabinet announced a strengthening of regional cooperation.

Unresolved disputes concerning the Polish minority made relations with Lithuania more difficult for Poland. The Russian aggression against Ukraine mobilised Poland to strengthen cooperation with the Baltic States in order to increase not only military but also energy security.

The Polish authorities increasingly recognised the need to engage in the integration of the Balkan States with the EU. Some activities were related to the presidency of the EU Council, such as Prime Minister Tusk's delivery of Croatia's accession treaty to Zagreb. However, the Polish activities within the EU resulted also in bilateral initiatives towards the region.

In order to support the development of the Eastern Partnership (EaP), which has been an essential instrument of the EU's Eastern policy since 2009, Poland organised a summit of this initiative in Warsaw in 2011. It was a focal point of the Polish presidency of the EU Council. In 2014, Association Agreements were signed between the EU and Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. Poland did not succeed, however, in encouraging most Member States to open up membership opportunities for the EaP countries, not least because of their limited progress in reforms.

Poland co-created the EU's policy of sanctions against Russia after its aggression against Ukraine. Until then, Polish-Russian relations were dominated by the issue of returning the wreckage of the Tu-154M presidential aircraft. Centres for dialogue and understanding were initiated. Small border traffic agreements with the Kaliningrad region were introduced. Similar facilitation of contact with Belarus was blocked by that country's authorities.

The growing importance of China was recognised by Poland. The strategic partnership concluded in 2011 was to intensify and institutionalise the political dialogue. Poland hoped for an increase in exports to China and to attract high-quality Chinese investments. The Chinese 16+1 initiative with the participation of Poland was intended to strengthen cooperation.

This volume is a unique analysis of five years of Polish foreign policy. Subsequent volumes will contain separate studies for each year, in accordance with the concept of this publication. We welcome you to this edition of the *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy*.

I.

THE BASIS OF POLISH FOREIGN POLICY

Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2011
(presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 16 March 2011)

Mr President! Mr Speaker! Mr Prime Minister! Members of the House! Distinguished Guests! Your Excellencies! Members of the Diplomatic Corps!

As I stand before the House to report on Polish foreign policy, I am aware that this is the first time in the history of the Third Polish Republic that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is giving an account of what is almost a full term in office, in a stable government and a harmonious coalition. I am honoured that, in keeping with tradition, the policy address is being heard by the President of the Republic of Poland and the leader of the main opposition party. May this be a good harbinger of the unity and stability of Polish foreign policy, and thus of its effectiveness.

The custom of the policy address was introduced by Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ignacy Jan Paderewski. On 20 February 1919, Paderewski presented the state of Polish affairs as follows: “The rebirth of our Homeland began in darkness, blood and pain. [...] While the happier countries of the Entente have for three months been celebrating complete and utter triumph, we must continue to lead an armed fight to defend our Homeland’s borders.”

The twentieth century saw us rise from physical and political ruin twice more.

In taking stock of my time in office, I am grateful to those who came before me. Krzysztof Skubiszewski became Foreign Minister of a bankrupt country, a member of the COMECON and the Warsaw Pact. The Russian troops still stationed on our territory and our borders were unregulated by treaties. Our neighbours were changing all around us. He left a free Poland with stable relations in the region and en route to joining Euro-Atlantic institutions. Władysław Bartoszewski—the only twice serving Foreign Minister in the last 20 years—worked tirelessly to achieve Polish-German reconciliation. Andrzej Olechowski filed the official application for Poland’s membership of the EU, and it was under Dariusz Rosati that the doors to NATO membership negotiations opened for Poland. When the office of Foreign Minister was held by Bronisław Geremek, we joined the North Atlantic Alliance, and Poland became a member of the European Union under Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz. Adam Daniel Rotfeld supported the Orange Revolution in Ukraine; he is now assisting the uneasy process of reconciliation with Russia. Stefan Meller helped ensure that Poland received a generous share of the EU budget. When Anna Fotyga was Foreign Minister, Poland negotiated the Lisbon Treaty, later signed by Prime Minister Tusk’s cabinet.

Today, no one abroad questions Poland's status as a sovereign country. We have overcome the sinister legacy of the partitions and communism once and for all. We have rebuilt our state and made it part of the global democratic architecture. We are no longer perceived as a seasonal product of some treaty, but a necessary and desirable element of the international system. In recent years, we have also regained the freedom to formulate our own policy. We are no longer a petitioner, but a country that elects its position independently, albeit within the limits of European and NATO-wide solidarity. Those who deny this self-evident fact tarnish the legacy of generations of Poles who longed for the time when the Foreign Minister of a free Poland would report on his activities and plans before a democratically elected Parliament.

Ladies and Gentlemen! The global political situation continues to be propitious for Poland. We are an ever more important Western state, but our transatlantic family is no longer the be all and end all. Though we continue to enjoy increasing prosperity and have real defence capabilities, others are getting richer and arming themselves faster. Our Eurocentric world—which we have come to take for granted—is becoming a thing of the past. Every year, the population and economies of NATO member states—or, more broadly speaking, OSCE member states—represent a smaller share of the global population and economy. This trend has its political implications.

At least two questions arise: Will we be able to enlarge the group of countries that consider themselves heirs of the so-called Western world in order to retain our influence? Will we be able, at the very least, to integrate the new emerging powers into existing international institutions? We must look for ways to accommodate these countries' aspirations and thus ensure the international system continues to evolve without anyone resorting to war.

What is our recipe for foreign policy in the second decade of the 21st century? How to maximise our foreign policy's contribution to the success of our country and nation?

First and foremost, we must realistically assess our resources—be they intellectual, social, economic or military—vis-à-vis those of our rivals. We must establish the correlation of power.

Second, we must define our ultimate aim.

Third, we must determine how to run Polish foreign policy in these conditions, and establish which tasks we will undertake.

I do not emphasise realism in my assessment as a rejection of ideals, but rather to improve our chances of realising our aspirations. After all, prudence is a cardinal virtue.

The national interest is not a transcendental entity, but concrete. It was right to align our efforts to our goals in times of subjugation, when we had nothing to lose but our shackles. But the citizens of a free country must behave responsibly, as their descendants inherit their assets. We have moved from one situation to the other in the space of a single generation. It is high time we got used to freedom. Our duty is to calculate rationally, not to play with emotions.

All of us gathered here in the House consider ourselves patriots. To quote the historian Lord Acton, “Patriotism is in political life what faith is in religion.” However, tribal or sectarian hectoring must not be mistaken for patriotism. Each and every one of us has wondered where Poland would be now were it not for the dark times of the Partitions, the nightmare of the Second World War, and the enslavement of communism. We shall never forget those injustices, nor the heroes who stayed true to their Polish identity. It is thanks to them that today we do not have to limit ourselves to lifting spirits. However, responsible policy cannot be based on the mythology of martyrdom. The greatest patriot is not he who talks the most about patriotism, but he who really works to benefit Poland.

Nor does parading a misguided sense of honour elicit respect. When, during the First World War, a tsarist officer asked Wieniawa-Długoszowski what the Polish Legions were actually fighting for, the latter is said to have retorted: “You fight for honour, we fight for our freedom. That is each side is fighting for what it lacks.” Today, our country is fighting for its place on the international stage—not for honour, which no one can take away from us.

Historical resentment is not worth pursuing. Despite all the misfortunes that have befallen us, we now have a good basis from which to rebuild our position. The ever more prosperous Poland, which coexists peacefully with its neighbours, elicits respect and even envy abroad. To those who consider that the greatest expression of patriotism is to accuse a democratically elected government of servility to foreigners, condominium, re-Finlandisation, treason, and betrayal, I say: *Come to your senses!* And understand that today’s Poland—which is founded on democratic and free-market values, which we all sought in our own ways, where many wrongs are still unaccounted for, and which is still far from ideal—is the best Poland we have ever had. Learn to love it!

Members of the House! As we have learnt, confidence of being in the right does not guarantee success. To quote the Norwegian sociologist Stein Rokkan, “votes count, but resources decide.” Let us then evaluate our potential objectively, as is the habit in Germany, France, or Great Britain. Twenty years ago, our gross domestic product, in terms of purchasing power parity, was around USD 160 billion. Today, it is over USD 717 billion, or four and a half times greater. According to International Monetary Fund data, we have overtaken Belgium, Sweden, and

recently even the Netherlands. We are the 20th largest economy in the world, and the 6th largest in Europe. In my opinion, our GDP could grow by another USD 300 billion in this decade.

Our GDP amounts to one-third of Russia's, but is two-and-a-half times that of Ukraine, and thirteen times that of Lithuania. The German GDP, meanwhile—despite the heavier impact the crisis had there—is USD 3 trillion, or four times that of Poland. Spain, with a population similar to Poland's, boasts an economy twice the size of ours. Turkey also outweighs us in terms of potential, although its per capita income is smaller. Let us bear in mind that current revenues alone do not determine potential: accumulated wealth also counts. We still have a fair amount of catching up to do.

We are increasing our trade levels—Polish exports have exceeded 1990 levels ninefold, and they are still higher than they were before the crisis. Last year, they reached a record sum of USD 162 billion. Polish foreign direct investments are already at a level of USD 27 billion. This strengthens Poland's position in the countries in which these investments are made, in particular amongst our neighbours—Germany, Ukraine and Lithuania.

In 2010, for the first time in history, Poland was ranked as a very highly developed country in the Human Development Index. Our position in the global competition index has gone up 12 notches since 2007. Every other young Pole is in higher education. In terms of social cohesion, Poland comes close to developed states. We are perceived as a country that is fighting corruption effectively. In the 2010 Transparency International index, Poland advanced to 41st place out of 180 countries—the highest position in the Visegrad Group, when as recently as 2007 Poland ranked lower than Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

EU membership has made us stronger. EU Member States account for two-thirds of our trade. The EU Cohesion Policy, which includes vital infrastructure investments, has been included in the EU strategy for the coming decade.

We continue to lead in the spending of EU funds. We have received the most regional development assistance that the EU has granted since 2006. In the current Cohesion Policy budget, one in five euros disbursed by the Commission goes to Poland. Since 2007, we have spent over EUR 16 billion. We have managed to create an effective system that is used by corporate and institutional clients and private citizens alike. This translates into growing enterprises and new jobs. It is the result of Minister Elżbieta Bieńkowska's hard work. It also exemplifies the innovative approach of Polish entrepreneurs, local government authorities, officials and social activists, who have turned their project applications into ring roads, training for the unemployed, and cycle lanes. Minister Cezary Grabarczyk has built more roads than his five predecessors put together.

Let us remember, however, that Poland's role is not simply one of a passive recipient of aid. The EU benefits from our advice on relations with our eastern neighbours. We understand how to build regional cooperation and push through measures that benefit us, as was the case with negotiations on the climate and energy package. This is proof of our effectiveness.

Poles hold important positions in the EU. Jerzy Buzek is the President of the European Parliament. Janusz Lewandowski is responsible for one of the European Commission's most important tasks: the EU budget. Our diplomat at the European External Action Service holds a senior post. Polish citizens are the heads of EU delegations to Jordan and South Korea. Though we lost the chair of one of the European Parliament groups, Poles serve as NATO bureau chiefs in Moscow and Kiev, and direct the Alliance's structures in the Caucasus.

We have become an authority on economic matters in Europe. It was not by coincidence that Jacek Rostowski was voted best Finance Minister in Europe's emerging markets and, subsequently, the best Finance Minister in Europe, in recognition of his anti-crisis measures. Interest in the Polish capital market is growing. The capitalisation of the Warsaw Stock Exchange increases year on year: 14 years ago, it amounted to USD 13 billion; today, that figure stands at USD 180 billion. Warsaw is becoming the region's financial hub.

Twenty-one Polish Institutes operate abroad. Poland's dynamic development has inspired thousands of press articles and radio and television programmes. Chopin Year was a promotional success. Polish diplomatic missions organised over 3.5 thousand projects for over 5 million spectators all over the world. The Polish pavilion at the Shanghai Expo attracted 8 million visitors and, thanks to the media, it reached many more millions and become the international symbol of Poland. We are expecting an increase in tourism in connection with the upcoming European Football Championship.

How do others perceive Poland? Despite the occasional incidents that distort our history, Poland gets good press. "Horse power to horsepower," writes *The Economist*. *Der Spiegel* talks of an "uninterrupted blossoming" and characterises Poland as a "regional power." *Le Monde* calls us "Europe's top economic student." Gone for good are the days when Western newspapers printed photos of wooden carts drawn by gaunt mares. We have gone from a "poor cousin" to a soon-to-be member of the eurozone.

Poles are becoming more prosperous. Over 85% of our society recognises the positive impact of our EU membership. Our sense of security has increased. Our standard of living has improved. Poles are the most optimistic nation in Europe.

Members of the House! Having achieved what seemed almost beyond our reach in 1989, today we must set more audacious goals. I am confident that I speak

on behalf of all the members of this House when I say that we want Poland to become not only a secure and prosperous country, but also one with influence. A serious country. So that we, like Spain or Turkey before us, will be able to regain some of our bygone prestige.

A serious country is, in my opinion, one with an economy which—based on modern benchmarks—has a GDP of over a trillion dollars. It is a country that exports more capital and technology than it imports. Whose youth does not emigrate to find work, and whose opportunities attract at least its own diaspora. A country that may not be a nuclear power, but that can deter potential invaders. A country that does not react when provoked, but responds with actions. A country that can fight for the interests of its region. That grants development and humanitarian aid. That, in the international system, is regarded as a problem solver, not a source of problems. Finally, a country that does not wait for others to take a position, but is looked to for leadership. A model worthy of emulating. That is a goal that meets Polish ambitions.

What sort of foreign policy can be conducted in order to achieve this goal, here and now, with our current assets and liabilities, and in the current international environment?

The mission of the Foreign Ministry, as drafted in a statement by its staff, “is to pursue the interests of the Republic of Poland through European and global cooperation for security, democracy and development.” It is also expressed, more briefly, by our motto: “Serving Poland, building Europe, understanding the world.” Let us bear in mind that Solidarity succeeded because its leaders deliberately acted in line with the motto of the Hanseatic city of Gdańsk: “*Nec temere, nec timide*” —neither rashly nor timidly.

Ladies and Gentlemen! The upcoming Presidency of the Council of the EU will provide a great opportunity for us to move closer to this goal. Napoleon Bonaparte once said that “a leader is a dealer in hope.” In these difficult times for the European project, Poland has ideas on how to breathe new life into many EU initiatives.

No one in the EU expects superhuman feats of us. What is expected, however, is that we be an advocate of the European interest, and an arbiter of national interests. The laws and decisions enacted during our Presidency are meant to benefit over 500 million EU citizens. We must demonstrate maturity and pragmatism. At times, we will seek Solomon solutions. We shall pursue our interest, but we shall not be self-interested. Our interest lies in strengthening Poland’s image as a stable and effective country. In consolidating our good brand.

Returning to the path of rapid and sustainable economic growth of the Union will be a priority. There are three ways of ensuring it. A deeper internal market: an

unobstructed flow of trade, services and workers will boost EU competitiveness. An ambitious budget will enable us to invest in proactive development projects. And, finally, knowledge, expertise and the development of education will help tap into the potential within each and every European citizen.

We will hold an Eastern Partnership summit in Warsaw this autumn. The Civil Society Forum will take place in Poznań. Moldova is due to sign an Association Agreement with the EU. Signing an Association Agreement with Ukraine would, of course, be a success. The Eastern Partnership also consists of projects that support small and medium enterprises, energy efficiency and administrative reform. It also includes dialogue between parliamentarians and efforts to liberalise the visa regime.

We support the enlargement process. The door to Europe was opened for us, and today we hold it ajar for others. The Polish Presidency will aim to finalise accession negotiations with Croatia and continue them with Turkey. Other Balkan states also stand the chance of obtaining candidate status. Poland supports finalising the EU integration of the Western Balkans.

Security will be another priority for our Presidency. A secure Europe is one that responds effectively to crisis situations; a Europe that cooperates with NATO on defence. Events in Libya have strengthened Polish arguments for an enhanced European defence identity. When blood is shed yet again in our neighbourhood—like it was in the Balkans in the 1990s—Europe should speak the language of diplomacy, backed by force.

A secure Europe is also one that oversees the stable supply of energy to all its Member States and citizens. Thanks to the construction of new connections, from 2015 no EU country will be isolated from the European gas and electrical grids. Successive Polish governments have worked hard to achieve this. The aim of our Presidency will be to regulate cooperation with energy exporters and transit countries. A strategic partnership with the U.S., Russia and China will serve the EU's global engagement. Poland will also promote the issue of food security.

There are two great challenges facing the EU in the coming months.

The first challenge concerns the proposal to enhance the coordination of national economic policies and concern for the common currency - the euro. The Franco-German "Euro Pact" calls for harmonising debt ceilings, the retirement age and certain tax bases. These are reasonable proposals. Most of them are already being implemented in Poland. We can draw satisfaction from the fact that the rest of Europe accepted Poland's idea to open up the Pact to all those who conduct an accountable financial policy. The timeframe for our accession to the eurozone—something we are required to do under our Accession Treaty—remains to be

decided. Let the economists decide when and at what rate the advantages of cheaper borrowing outweigh the loss of our economic flexibility.

As Minister of Foreign Affairs, I would like to share with you my political assessment on whether entering the eurozone will strengthen or weaken our position. I believe that this situation is best summarized by an American saying: “You are either at the table, or on the menu.”

The second challenge, of course, concerns the historic changes taking place in the Arab world. Here, the old rule proves valid: that regimes seem most stable just before their downfall. Just as the 1980 freedom protests and creation of Solidarity on the Polish coast symbolised a certain era, so do the current events in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and other countries in the region. Naturally, there are no simple analogies. Let us remember, however, that in 1989 we too were not expected to succeed.

Poland has more to say on the topic of systemic transformation than others. That is why we will share our experience of freedom with the Tunisians, Egyptians and any others willing to make use of this knowledge. We will also warn them against a situation where—as in Russia in 1917, Germany in 1933, and Iran in 1979—greater freedom gave extremists a chance. We hope that the newly democratic Arab states will support the peace process between a democratic Israel and a Palestine on its path to independence.

The Middle East problem is a test for the common foreign policy that is currently in the making. The European Union must speak with one voice, and it must be heard throughout its neighbourhood. It must also make effective use of its funds to promote democracy and human rights. We will support and channel the EU’s energies so that, as well as the Middle East, our Eastern neighbourhood can benefit from it.

Let us not forget that—in accordance with the Lisbon Treaty—assuming the Presidency is not tantamount to being the only conductor in the Council. The President of the European Council and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy are our partners, and we will lead this orchestra together. We will hold our Presidency in line with what Prime Minister Donald Tusk said, when accepting the Charlemagne Prize in Aachen: “We really have confidence in Europe and in its future.”

Ladies and Gentlemen! To take advantage of the current situation, we need stable relations with all our partners, and our neighbours in particular.

We share common interests and democratic values with Germany. This country has consolidated its key position in Europe. It is in our that Germany impacts Europe through the consultation mechanism, on which Member States—including

Poland—have significant influence. The alternative, Germany's leadership "by traditional methods," as one Christian Democratic politician put it, would be worse.

Poland and Germany—despite their differences in potential and location—take a similar view of the EU neighbourhood. They work together to foster democracy, both in the south and the east. Our common initiatives in Ukraine and Belarus increase our impact. Close cooperation with Germany paves the way to the top levels of EU decision-making. It helps us in our dealings with Russia. Germany is also Poland's biggest economic partner. Trade levels have been growing: in 2010 our exports to Germany amounted to EUR 31 billion, EUR 5 billion more than in 2007, before the economic crisis. Our trade with Germany is also bigger than Germany's trade with Russia.

On the eve of the 20th anniversary of the Treaty on Good Neighbourhood and Friendly Cooperation, we have stepped up our discussions about Polish minority rights. We are addressing current issues, like unhindered access for ships to the Świnoujście port and future LNG terminal.

Together with Germany and France, we have finally reactivated the Weimar Triangle at the level of heads of state and government, where we hold discussions about EU relations with Russia and other Eastern European states, as well as about defence cooperation.

Our relations with France, one of the major foreign investors in Poland and our partner in many political and economic projects, are good. Great Britain, which shares our views on, among other things, the EU internal market and security, also remains our close partner. We cooperate with Italy and the Holy See for the protection of the rights of Christians in the world.

Members of the House! Those who believe that one way of thinking reigns in Russia are mistaken. Russia is developing and opening up to the outside world, though it does so according to a cultural code different to ours. There are of course those who still "live in the past" and continue to long for superpower glory and heavy-handed rule. However, many Russians, including top leaders, are becoming aware of the need to curb corruption, modernise the economy, and enhance the rule of law and democracy. In short—they realise modernisation is necessary. I am not sure which way Russia will go. But I do know one thing. If it chooses the democratic path leading to integration with the West broadly understood, then Poland will perhaps gain the most from this in Europe.

However, no matter how Russia is ruled, and indeed because Poland creates its foreign policy independently, we need to shape our relations with this important neighbour. There are people in Poland, also in this House, who are building their political credo on eternal enmity towards Russia. We have shunned the logic that states that anything that is bad for Russia must be good for Poland.

The remedy for our concerns about Russia is a modern Poland, which builds its strength on its economic potential, its ties with its allies and its international position. And, just in case, on a modern defence system. The fact that we have no major disputes with Russia only strengthens our position in Europe.

In spite of the crisis, our trade turnover with Russia, according to preliminary data, amounted to USD 24 billion in 2010, up 40% from 2009. We have negotiated a local border traffic agreement that opens up the Kaliningrad Oblast to Europe. The Strait of Baltiysk is now navigable.

We have acted to increase Russian awareness of the crimes committed by the Stalinist regime, as evidenced by the adoption of a Russian Duma resolution on Katyń. I wish to thank the parliamentary caucuses, almost all of which voted in favour of the bill to create a Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation. While differences of interests and assessments prevail, and despite the difficulties relating to the Smolensk investigation, the balance of the last three years of Polish-Russian relations is positive. Our philosophy of making gestures of good will and then acting on the basis of reciprocity has been proven to work.

Ukraine's fate broadly lies in the hands of the Ukrainians. Politicians associated with the Orange Revolution have fallen short of expectations. Declarations expressing the willingness to accede to European institutions must be supported by hard-earned reforms. Corruption, a weak legal system and lowered democratic standards make it difficult for Poland to create a European perspective for Ukraine. However, our bilateral cooperation remains stable. We have set up a Polish-Ukrainian Partnership Forum. We have implemented a local border traffic agreement. Last year, we issued 450 thousand visas in Ukraine—almost as many as all the other Schengen Area countries put together. Despite the crisis, we have opened two new consular offices in Ukraine and established a new seat of the Consulate General in Lviv to reduce visa queues.

Ukraine is our strategic partner. Its accession to the EU is in our long-term interest. Consequently, every time Poland is in a position to do so, and Kiev wants us to, we shall provide Ukraine with our support.

Our policy towards Belarus is determined by conditionality. The fate of the fraternal and European Belarusian nation is something we hold especially dear. I have said on numerous occasions that Poland is in a position to significantly help Belarus, if it decides to follow the path to transition. However, we must respond with equal strength when Belarus strays away from this path and violates fundamental human and civil rights. I am confident that the time will come when we will be able to support a reform-minded Belarus that is open to European cooperation.

For over 20 years, Visegrad has been a necessary and effective format. Our relations with the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary have never been better.

We coordinate our positions, including in the run-up to European Council meetings. The success of the Visegrad Group provides an example of how regional cooperation can lead to EU membership for Eastern Partnership countries.

Lithuania and Poland should work together in international policy. After the fall of communism, the Polish nation supported Lithuanians on their road to independence, which they pursued under conditions tougher than ours. In our joint NATO and EU aspirations, we built institutions for governmental and parliamentary dialogue worthy of our common, centuries-old history. We are prepared to return to deeper cooperation. However, we ask that the teaching of Polish language not be further degraded and that the long voiced demands of Poles in Lithuania be carried out. These are loyal citizens of a democratic Lithuania with a right to preserve their identity, culture and property. We welcome President Dalia Grybauskaitė's recent statement about the equal role of Poles in her country. We continue to believe that it will be fulfilled. The upcoming Parliamentary vote on a new education bill will be an important litmus test of how far Lithuania is prepared to go in order to protect the rights of its minorities. We appreciate Lithuania's role as the Presidency of the Community of Democracies. We have been following the activities of the Lithuanian Chairmanship of the OSCE with approval.

Our alliance with the United States in NATO remains strong. Our relations with the U.S. are friendly, but mature, given our respective potentials. However, we are aware that U.S. priorities lie elsewhere: in the Middle East and—increasingly—in Asia. Whether the United States will be able to come to our aid in every situation is uncertain.

We supported the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan, but we also know how to look after our own interests. We have negotiated beneficial agreements concerning the deployment of elements of the ballistic missile defence system and the status of US forces in Poland, while maintaining the primacy of Polish jurisdiction. Poland is happy to host American soldiers on its territory for the first time. U.S. Air Force planes will also be stationed in Poland.

Our government supports cooperation between Polish and U.S. companies, particularly in searching for shale gas. Together, Poland and the United States are more effective in promoting democracy around the world.

Members of the House! Three main ideas have guided me during this term in office: (1) reliability; (2) solidarity; and (3) modernisation.

During my time of office, Poland has been building its reliability in the area of security. Our demands to strengthen the role of Article 5 or those concerning new security interests have won the support of our allies and are reflected in NATO's New Strategic Concept.

Ukraine and Georgia have been given the prospect of NATO integration, if they want it, in the form of the Bucharest Summit Declaration, reiterated in the “open door policy” of the New Strategic Concept. The new Allied ballistic missile defence system implemented according to plan will be capable of destroying more types of missiles from all directions. Together with Norway we have influenced European thinking about short-range nuclear weapons. We are ensuring that the Alliance adjust properly itself to the new challenges relating to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and cyber-terrorism. Minister Bogdan Klich has established a Centre for Cyber Security. We plan to join NATO’s Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn.

We act to enhance NATO’s cohesion. We aim to do away with anachronistic divisions between “old” and “new” members of the Alliance. We point to the need to deploy NATO defence infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe. This region deserves the same level of security as that enjoyed by Western Europe. Thanks in part to our efforts, NATO has adopted contingency plans for Poland and the Baltic States. Together with other Allies, we are policing the air space of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. By maintaining our spending at the level of 1.95% GDP for the coming years, we are—both in NATO and in the European Union—an advocate for making a better use of defence budgets in Europe.

As promised, we withdrew from Iraq—and we did so in a way appreciated by both the Iraqi hosts and our allies. In 2009, we decided not to engage in UN-led operations in the Middle East and were thus able to quickly respond to NATO’s call for support in Afghanistan, where we have been pursuing objectives in accordance with the UN Charter. Poland has increased the number of its troops by 30% since April 2010. The Polish military contingent is the seventh largest out of the 48 ISAF states, and the fifth largest European contingent.

There is no easy way out of Afghanistan. Its future will soon be sealed for many years. In accordance with NATO’s decision, 2011 has marked the beginning of the process of handing over responsibility for security to the Afghan people. 2014 should see the end of the presence of our combat units there. We intend to keep our word and here too demonstrate our reliability.

Europe, and Central and Eastern Europe in particular, is of utmost importance for Poland. The Baltic Sea region is also an area of Polish interest. However, we reject the philosophy of “it’s not our business, we are too far away to get involved.” We have political and economic interests in other parts of the world. Whether Poland will remain an important European actor or just a regional partner will depend on how well we engage with these regions.

For this reason, Poland has been building its image as an important European Union Member State capable of influencing the EU’s external policy. The Prime

Minister's visit to India and the President's upcoming visit to China, our biggest business partner in Asia, serve this purpose. Japan and South Korea are interested in increasing their investments in Poland. We want to develop trade and business contacts with Asian countries in many sectors: infrastructure, finance, tourism and high-technologies. We are looking into developing our economic cooperation with Latin America and the ever more dynamically developing Africa.

Members of the House! As Horace wrote, "For it is your business, when the wall next door catches fire." Solidarity holds a special meaning for Poles. Not only the administration, but also dozens of Polish NGOs are involved in supporting the Belarusian people. In the name of solidarity, a month after most of the Belarusian presidential candidates were beaten up and detained, we organised a donor's conference in Warsaw, at which several dozen delegations representing states and international organisations dedicated over EUR 87m to the cause.

The political and economic transformation in Poland was made easier by the support of our friends. Now we are helping others. Over the last two years, the value of Polish development aid—addressed both to Eastern Partnership countries and to the countries of the global South—has exceeded a billion zloty. As a token of international solidarity, we share our experience and support reforms and independent media outlets. In order to effectively support human rights and civil society, we are establishing a Foundation for International Solidarity. We have been consistent in linking development projects with support for democracy, also at the local level. We are training Ukrainian border guards, social workers in Georgia and nurses in Zambia. We are sending volunteers abroad and building schools.

We sympathise with peoples who demand freedom. Last year's summit of the Community of Democracies demonstrated this support. It is no coincidence that the Secretariats of the Community of Democracies and the OSCE Offices for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights are based in Warsaw. We have put forward the idea of creating a European Endowment for Democracy, aimed at supporting democratic processes in the entire European neighbourhood.

Solidarity in the European dimension also means eliminating disparities in development. We do not want the difference in GDP per capita between the poorest and the richest Member States to be sevenfold as is the case today. We do, however, want to join forces with others in our drive for stability, prosperity and high living standards in Europe and its neighbourhood. Last year, in the face of the looming crisis, we supported Iceland and Latvia with loans of USD 200m each. We have been particularly committed to the cause of Moldova. Thanks to the joint support of Poland, Sweden and Romania, it has moved closer to European standards. Ukraine should sign an Association Agreement with the EU soon, and Moldova will start negotiating a Free Trade Agreement with the EU shortly.

Speaking of solidarity, let us remember the Polish diaspora and Poles living abroad. The main task of our new diaspora policy is to establish a feedback mechanism between Poland and its citizens abroad. It is in the interest of Polish communities to support the Polish state, because its every success strengthens their position in their country of residence. We are helping the Polish diaspora and Poles living abroad in various ways, soliciting their assistance in the implementation of our country's interests. The more effective this implementation, the stronger their position.

Members of the House! Polish diplomacy is increasingly effective. The consular service best shows the functioning of the modernised Foreign Ministry. In 2008–2010, we cut 81 jobs. At the same time, the number of consular acts increased by 15 percent. This was made possible thanks to computerisation—mobile consular offices and electronic procedures. A consular rapid reaction team assists Polish citizens during natural disasters such as the one in Haiti, when travel agents go bankrupt, or during the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. In Egypt, we issued documents in holiday resorts not only to Poles but also to other EU citizens whose countries lack our modern tools. Thanks to the on-line registration system, the number of Poles participating in elections outside our borders has increased. Consular services are also generating budget revenue—last year this amounted to PLN 150m.

In order to make savings and exchange good practices, we encourage our partners to share diplomatic missions. The first joint consular office of the Visegrad Group countries opened in Cape Town last year. A consul of the Kingdom of Sweden is officiating in the Polish Consulate General in Kaliningrad.

Our diplomats have been equipped with secure notebooks and smartphones. Negotiations with foreign partners take place in real time. Thanks to satellite phones, we have maintained contact with our missions after a revolution has broken out or a natural disaster occurred. We are introducing an electronic document circulation system. We will soon launch a new Ministry home-page, together with 150 thematic and foreign mission websites. Over the last three years the Ministry has become, in the managerial sense, a global corporation.

Young people again see diplomacy as an attractive career path. Over two hundred candidates competed for fewer than 20 places at the Diplomatic Academy last year. While building this modern service, we continue to remember our tradition. I have made 16th November, the day Marshal Józef Piłsudski dispatched a cable proclaiming the rebirth of the Polish state, Foreign Service Day. The Council of Ministers has decreed the establishment of the “Bene Merito” distinction, awarded to Poles and foreigners who strengthen our country's position abroad.

We are overhauling the Ministry's infrastructure, because one cannot hope to be a serious international player with embassies with Communist-period interiors. Before the start of our Presidency, we will open new offices of our Permanent Representation in Brussels, across the street from the European External Action Service. This is the biggest capital investment in the history of Polish diplomacy. It will serve us for many years to come. In the summer, we will open the new residence of the Polish Ambassador in Washington and the new office of the Permanent Mission to the UN in New York, and a new Consulate in London in the autumn. Investment work is under way in London, Vilnius, Tbilisi, and Baghdad. Finally, once we learn the winner of the design contest, we will start building a new embassy in Berlin.

These investments have been accompanied by savings in the form of closing down redundant missions and the sale of unnecessary property. We are economical. We have modernised the Ministry. Today, Polish diplomacy stands alongside the best in the world.

In a few weeks' time, the government will adopt the catalogue of Polish foreign policy priorities for 2011–2015. Our thinking is both strategic and operational. We are assisted by research centres in planning our policy. The Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) and the Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) have been ranked among the top twenty best public research centres in the world. Under the Ministry's oversight, deep reform is taking place in Poznań's Institute for Western Affairs. Global think-tanks—the U.S.-based GMF and the European Council on Foreign Relations—are opening offices in Warsaw.

Members of the House! This has been a difficult three years. At times we felt all hope had left us. Polish soldiers fell in Afghanistan. The plane crash near Smoleńsk took the lives of the President of Poland and many of our colleagues, among them my close associates, including Andrzej Kremer, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was especially dear to me.

At times, the world seemed to be teetering on the edge of chaos. Dictators, from North Korea to Libya, remained unpunished. We witnessed unjust wars, like the Russo-Georgian conflict. Cold War ghosts have returned. The economic crisis has shown the fragility of the global order. Social, demographic and climate-related challenges have made us realise once and for all that Poland's favourable international environment is not a given.

However, even the most difficult of circumstances can also bring hope. The self-immolation of a young man with no future can trigger a democratic revolution that will change the face of the Middle East. International institutions can learn lessons from the crisis. We admire the efficiency with which Japan is coping with the natural disaster that has befallen it.

Mr President! Mr Speaker! Mr Prime Minister! Members of the House! In closing, let me once again formulate our goal: Poland as a serious country; an enviable partner. We can become such a partner—provided we continue our prudent policy—within a decade. This is doable. Let us bear in mind, however, that such status cannot be self-awarded or won by stamping one's feet or shouting. An international position is something that can only be gained in the eyes of others. The less internal squabbling and the fewer external brawls, the more fundamental work we engage in, and the faster we shall achieve our aim.

Ignacy Jan Paderewski gave us a piece of advice on how to continue the work that had then just begun. It has now been entrusted to us, and we shall hand it over to our successors in a better condition than we inherited it:

“Poland is not going left or right. If it were to go consequently in one or the other direction and reach the final limits, it would find itself either in the ditches of reactionism or in the puddles of anarchy. Poland advances but straight, straight ahead...”

Thank you for your attention.

Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2012
(presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 29 March 2012)

Mr President! Madam Speaker! Mr Prime Minister! Government Ministers! Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Members of the House!

A year ago, I reported on our activities covering a full term in office. Today, as the longest-serving Minister of Foreign Affairs in the history of free Poland, I will unveil plans for a second term. Thanks to the trust you have put in the Civic Platform-Polish People's Party coalition—as reflected in the last election results—Polish foreign policy has become more stable, and more predictable.

The correlation of forces around Poland is still propitious, though less so than recently. I see no threats to peace. Every year, Poland is moving closer to occupying its rightful place in the world. But the West's economic and military might, as well as its prestige, have weakened. The Community decision-making method is being increasingly questioned in Europe and the economic crisis has made the European Union less attractive as a civilisation and less capable of exerting influence. The United States is cutting defence spending and reorienting towards the Pacific region. Thanks to high raw material prices and the determination of the Russian leadership, efforts are underway to unite former post-Soviet states around a political decision-making hub alternative to Europe.

We are forced to push forward with our plans at a time of global crisis. But before we get accustomed to the fact that Poland is coping with its aftermath better than any other country in Europe, I wish to remind you that this has not always been the case. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, citizens of the Second Polish Republic suffered from wide-scale poverty. In 1935 Poland's GDP was half that of 1929, while unemployment in the East of the country topped 50 per cent. We live in difficult times, albeit not as dramatic as those I have just described. During this crisis, the Polish economy—which ranks sixth in Europe—is expanding, not contracting. According to the OECD, since 2007 we have been the fastest growing economy in this select group of 34 richest countries in the world.

Let me repeat once again: today's Poland is the best Poland we have ever had. As the chief of Poland's diplomacy, I believe it is my task to pursue Polish foreign policy in such a way as to substantially help improve our security, bring greater prosperity and boost our strength.

Members of the House! Last year the main instrument which enabled us to buck and reverse worrying trends was, naturally, the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. I am proud to state that despite the adverse

circumstances, Poland's leadership is widely viewed as the best one since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

"Poland in the Vanguard of Europe"—to quote *Libération*, "The Oscar for Best Presidency Goes to Poland"—*Hospodářské noviny*, "Poland Holds Off Euroscepticism"—*El País*, "Let's Learn the European Spirit from the Poles"—an Italian daily. These are just a few of the foreign press headlines devoted to the Polish Presidency.

Our countrymen were of a similar favourable opinion: no less than 68 per cent of Poles consider our Presidency a success. We have reaffirmed our status as a heavyweight Member State. We changed Poland's image from a country which only benefits from the EU to a country which—true—benefits, but also inspires others to act. Today when others think of Poland, they think of economic growth, a modern country, and effective governance—we have become a partner worth courting.

Poland has proven that it is a reliable and responsible state—a country which creates solutions, not problems. We have kept faith in the European Union, advocating the principle of "more Europe—not less." We have safeguarded EU cohesion in the face of proposals which undermined the very idea of the entire Community project. Thanks to Polish efforts, the European Parliament adopted the so-called six-pack—a set of regulations and directives enhancing the Eurozone's economic order. In my opinion, had the EU adopted it earlier, we could have avoided a crisis as severe as this one. The Polish Presidency also drafted the "European Consensus on Growth"—a report comprising recommendations on how to spur economic growth in Europe. Our Presidency also brought the EU closer to the adoption—after 30 years in the pipeline—of a compromise on the EU patent. We also signed an accession treaty with Croatia and closed six negotiation chapters with Iceland. Our administration demonstrated efficiency; our officials showed competence and effectiveness.

Despite the EU's involvement in its Southern neighbourhood, the Polish Presidency managed to table an offer to the East. We agreed on the text of the Association Agreement with Ukraine, due to be initialled as early as tomorrow. We have initiated negotiations on similar agreements with Georgia and Moldova. Whether our Eastern neighbours' European aspirations will come true will depend largely on them. Warsaw hosted the 2nd Eastern Partnership Summit, at which EU Member States adopted a declaration on Belarus' non-compliance with democratic standards. The debate on the text of the declaration also demonstrated that, unfortunately, not all Eastern Partnership countries are aware of the fact that the path to Europe leads through respect for the European standards of democracy.

I ask the Eurosceptics, how do you imagine our Eastern policy without the European Union? Could we have funded a project equal in scope to the Eastern Partnership by going it alone? It is there, in the East, that the phenomenon

described in academic textbooks on European integration is most clearly visible: thanks to the EU, Poland's influence is increasing manifold.

Ladies and Gentlemen! During our Presidency, we kept with tradition and worked to ensure stable surroundings for the European Union, in both the Southern and Eastern dimensions of its neighbourhood policy. Both these vectors of our policy will be supported by the European Endowment for Democracy. We already have the necessary political agreement to initiate the project, which may begin operating before the end of the year. Poland is helping Arab states that are setting out on the difficult path of modernization and democratization.

We engage Europe in the pursuit of common objectives, including those of utmost importance for Poland's foreign policy. At the same time, we give the EU the strength and means to put into action the objectives of the Union as a whole. Our successful Presidency strengthened Poland's position in the EU—indeed, all around the world. Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acted on behalf of the High Representative on the occasion of 14 meeting with third countries; I myself deputized for Catherine Ashton several times. I spoke on her behalf before the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs and headed EU missions in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Thanks to the Presidency, Poland's brand awareness has been raised globally. We are using this to effectively pursue our interests beyond Europe, particularly in Asia and Latin America.

During the Presidency we acted on behalf of the entire European Union, while at the same time looking after our national interests. A testament to this is the fact that the European Commission's proposal on the 2014–2020 multiannual financial framework continues to serve as the basis for further negotiations. We oppose initiatives aimed at giving Poland less funds from the EU budget on account of our robust economic growth. We do not want to be punished for being a success story!

During the negotiations, we will initiate a round of intensive cooperation between the Polish parliament and parliaments of EU Member States. In direct coordination with Visegrad Group countries and the Friends of Cohesion Policy group, we will strive to prevent the budget negotiations from becoming an agreement between the biggest countries.

European investments are key for Poland: they help fend off the crisis and bolster domestic market activity. They are advantageous not only for its immediate beneficiaries; they also indirectly benefit the net payers by racking up profits for enterprises from these countries. This is also our contribution to the development of the entire Community.

For many years now, Poland has responsibly pursued its economic and financial policies. The provisions adopted fifteen years ago in our Constitution are now being copied by the rest of Europe. The draft provisions of the European "Fiscal Compact" repeat Article 216 of our Basic Law. We had no doubts that acceding to

the Fiscal Compact was in Poland's best interest. By 2015 we want to fulfil all of the convergence criteria and be able to adopt the euro. It is in Poland's political interest to accede to the most tightly-knit group of countries that use the single currency.

The Presidency was the time of influencing Europe. But it also helped us understand the European Union—not as debutants, but as its co-hosts. President Bronisław Komorowski weighed in on the issue while addressing parliament, calling the Presidency—and I quote—“the crowning of Poland's efforts, of the hard work of the entire Polish society and [...] all of the governments in power since 1989, all of our Presidents.”

Members of the House! On Tuesday, the government adopted two documents. The first is Poland's foreign policy priorities for the current year. The text itself is classified, but I can tell you that it is the first such document to include a list of strategic economic projects which we will fervently support. Last year, our diplomats made over 600 interventions on behalf of Polish companies active in over 60 countries; many in regions outside Europe, for example in war-torn Libya.

The second document, drafted pursuant to the Government Administration Branches Act, is entitled “Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy for 2012–2016”. It is the first foreign policy strategy to have been published in the last twenty years. It presents a detailed analysis of our objectives and the tasks that lie ahead. The document will be published in the next few minutes on the Foreign Ministry website. Madam Speaker, if possible, I would like to request that the “Priorities...” be included in the minutes of this session of the Sejm. Therefore, I would like to address here only those issues which I see as particularly crucial or pressing.

On account of our bilateral trade, but also increasingly due to the similarities between our economic cultures and political concepts, Germany is our most important European partner. Whether we look at its population, GDP, or the voting powers acquired under the Lisbon Treaty, Germany is the biggest shareholder in the European Union. The ‘biggest’—with around one-fourth of shares—but not the ‘dominant’ one. This means that it is difficult to get anything done in the EU against Germany's will, but it also means that in order to implement its ideas, Germany must look for more than just one partner. If a given endeavour is at risk, obviously it is the biggest shareholder that has the greatest responsibility—and the most means—to come to the rescue. We want to work together towards a stronger Union. As I said to our German friends during my speech in Berlin: “Provided you include us in decision-making, Poland will support you.”

We welcome our intensified cooperation with France, also in the Weimar Triangle framework. It is a good sign that France is beginning to appreciate Poland's input in shaping a strong European leadership. We regret the fact that the United Kingdom—a country so dear to generations of Polish immigrants, including myself; which embraces a philosophy of freedom and particularly economic freedom that

we share—is not willing to become a leader of European defence. We are looking forward to close political dialogue with the new governments of Spain and Italy.

We are working shoulder to shoulder with Sweden in implementing the Eastern Partnership and ushering in change in the EU's entire neighbourhood. The world took notice of our disarmament proposals put forward together with Norway, a country which is also a source of inspiration for us in the field of sustainable exploration of natural gas deposits.

In July, when Poland takes over the Visegrad Group presidency, we will table a set of initiatives aimed at beefing up our excellent relations with the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Today Hungary shoulders the responsibility for our region's reputation in the field of respecting democratic principles. By 2016 we will have established the Visegrad Battle Group—our regional input into the development of the EU's defence capacity. Our key partners—Romania and Bulgaria—will be invited to take part in many projects, including those coordinated within the Visegrad Group. We are glad to see our ties with Estonia and Latvia grow ever stronger. In our relations with Lithuania, we are hoping for a new opening with the government which will be sworn in after the October elections. Unvaryingly, we support Israel's right to exist within secure boundaries, but we advise against war with Iran. We encourage dialogue with the Palestinians.

Ladies and Gentlemen! In the East, things are worse than we would have wished, but much better than they had been in the past, or than they could be right now. We must count on evolutionary change to occur. Both Poland and the EU will offer incentives for further transformation in reply to tangible transformation activities, in line with the principle of “more for more.” One day, we would like to look at our Eastern neighbours and quote the words of Professor Jan Kieniewicz, “this is neither East, nor West—it is Europe, quite simply. Europe in the continent's Eastern section, or an Intermarium of free citizens returned to Europe after many centuries.”

Ukraine remains our most important non-Atlantic strategic partner. We are invariably willing to support it—so long as it chooses its pro-European destiny. We call on the Ukrainian authorities to create political conditions—including standards of opposition treatment and electoral and judicial norms—which will make it possible to sign and implement the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. We are looking forward to great football entertainment during the upcoming European championship.

We hope that the new president of Russia will lead his country on a path of modernization, in line with the expectations of Russian society. We will continue to work towards Polish-Russian reconciliation, which should take on a spiritual dimension during the upcoming and first-ever visit of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

We are glad that the Agreement on Local Border Traffic with the Kaliningrad Oblast is due to be implemented soon; we are all the more surprised by signals pointing to plans to deploy new-generation offensive arms in the area. We are pushing hard for the return of our property—the wreckage of the Tu-154 plane in which our leaders and friends perished.

In its relations with Europe, Belarus unfortunately insists on sticking to the principle of “less for less.” In line with the proposal put forward by Donald Tusk during the Eastern Partnership Summit, we have prepared a cooperation offer which will await the day when repression ends and the political opposition is allowed to play its due role.

The United States is our most important non-European partner. We get on especially well whenever and wherever we decide to join forces and foster the ideals of freedom and democracy. We are glad that U.S. companies are prospecting for Polish shale gas reserves and bidding to provide technologies for planned nuclear power plants. We will welcome with open arms the permanent U.S. military detachment to be stationed in Poland. We stand ready to implement the Poland-U.S. agreement on the missile defence base, even though we are aware of the fact that U.S. plans may be subject to modification, for example, if an agreement is reached on Iran’s nuclear programme. We expect President Barack Obama to fulfil his obligation to include Poland under the visa waiver programme, even though we note that visa-free travel to the U.S. now requires payment and prior registration.

Members of the House! Our security is first and foremost in the hands of the Polish Armed Forces; in the international dimension we count on NATO support. According to NATO’s budget office, in the past twenty years Poland overtook all other countries in terms of defence spending increases, which amounted to 210 per cent. We will do our best to make sure that the decisions taken at the upcoming NATO Summit strengthen the Alliance’s capabilities to fulfil its primary objective: to safeguard the territorial integrity of its Member States. We also expect a decision on the pullout from Afghanistan. Pursuant to the already adopted timeframe, Poland will phase out its activities; by the end of this year, we will cease combat and begin operating as a training mission. Political arrangements are currently underway which would make it possible to announce in Chicago the achievement of so-called interim operability of NATO’s ballistic missile defence system.

The experiences of the Polish Presidency show us that EU Common Security and Defence Policy is unfortunately impossible to implement in a group of 27 countries, and that we must initiate tighter cooperation between willing countries, in line with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty.

This year we begin the campaign to make Poland a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2018.

Members of the House! We are providing new momentum to the local government and civic dimension of our foreign policy. We have received new budgetary allocations—PLN 8 million in all—which will enable us to support Polish towns and regions to establish and maintain valuable contacts with their counterparts abroad.

We have streamlined our network of diplomatic missions. They will be located wherever Poland interests are present. Wherever Poles invest, work, vacation and visit families and friends. The closing of selected diplomatic posts was accompanied by the opening of others: two new consulates in Sebastopol and Vinnytsya, soon to be followed by the consulates in Donetsk and Smolensk. The recently launched e-Consulate system makes it possible to file visa applications via the Internet. A few weeks ago, we inaugurated a Polish Institute in Tokyo. As part of the Polish cultural offensive in Asia, we are planning on setting up two more Institutes: in Beijing and New Delhi.

At the same time we are rationalizing employment in the MFA headquarters and in our missions abroad. But a reduction in staffing levels is not an aim in itself; our goal is to optimize the Foreign Ministry's workflow and to build a competent and citizen-friendly foreign service. A foreign service in which paychecks are higher, but which also imposes higher demands on its staff. For our diplomats to live up to these expectations, this year we are planning an across-the-board reform of our in-service training system.

Last week we initiated a design contest—which we hope will be final—for our Embassy in Berlin. Next month I will officially open the new residence of the Polish Ambassador to the United States. Our consulate in the City of London is being renovated. At the same time we will be selling over-large or redundant real estate in Cologne, Paris, Washington, Lille and Brussels.

Thanks to a decision taken by this House, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will take over the Senate's responsibility for managing funds to support the Polish diaspora and Poles living abroad. I wish to thank the Senate for its great work in caring for our fellow countrymen and women all over the world. We wish to continue this task, providing the Polish diaspora with judicious support, in line with its real needs in the country of residence. Access to Polish education will be our top priority. Our long-term goal is to make the Polish diaspora a viable entity, helping it to support Poland ever more effectively.

Members of the House! My speech before the German Society for Foreign Affairs—delivered at the peak of the eurozone crisis—sparked a heated discussion both at home and abroad. At the time, I criticized Germany for not engaging itself enough in saving the euro area, of which Germany is the biggest beneficiary. I said that, "I fear German power less than I am beginning to fear German inactivity." I am glad to note that two events have taken place since then. Germany gave

the European Central Bank a green light to inject EUR 1.018 trillion into the eurozone banking sector, thus mitigating the crisis. Second, Germany elected Joachim Gauck as its new President, who chose Warsaw for his first foreign visit. As a country with such a noble man for President, Germany really no longer gives us any cause for fear.

I wish to once again thank the House for weighing the vote of confidence in my favour by 292 votes to 152—much more than required by parliamentary arithmetic. However, out of respect for the opposition's dissenting opinions, I would like to return to two notions which dominated the discussion: sovereignty and federalism.

The first recorded use of the word 'sovereignty' dates back to 1576 and Jean Bodin, who used it to denote a sovereign's exclusive right to exercise legislative and executive power in his territory. When the sovereign has been replaced by the people, it has come to be defined as the capability to exercise exclusive political authority over a given territory and population—independently of any external entities. This definition, too, is clearly anachronistic.

After all, whenever we subject ourselves voluntarily to the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, or hand over a Polish national to an EU Member State court pursuant to a European arrest warrant, do we really feel that we have lost the authority to govern ourselves? Do you really lose the feeling of being your own host at home by implementing this or that European directive? Do we lose the joy stemming from independence after losing a vote in the European Parliament? Not in my view.

Sovereignty today is thus something more subtle than just the exclusivity of political power. It is the feeling that we will not lose our ability to take good or bad decisions at any stage of the process of enhancing international cooperation. In other words, it is just as our forefathers saw it: nothing about us shall be decided without us. What is crucial is whether we have subjected ourselves to the rules voluntarily, and whether we have the ability to withdraw from the system as a last resort. The European integration process meets both of these criteria. We acceded to the EU after long efforts, as a result of a nationwide referendum. Meanwhile the Lisbon Treaty—negotiated by President Lech Kaczyński—introduced an "exit clause" for Member States wanting to withdraw from the EU.

Eurosceptics need to understand that the way of thinking about international politics, which originated from the Peace of Westphalia, is too simplistic today. To perceive international relations solely in the category of a "Jurassic park" is to distort reality. As a founding father of the Community once said—I quote—"A thinking European can no longer take Machiavellian delight in his neighbour's failures."

In today's world, unrestrained sovereignty is solely the province of autarchic, self-isolating states—unreliable states. The Belarusian leader brags before his

people of having absolute sovereignty, for example in the face of “EU pressure.” This means that he can indeed throw oppositionists into prison, while at the same time remaining totally dependent on those who supply oil and gas to Belarus, or who give the country credit guarantees—and then threaten to withdraw them. Similarly, the North Korean regime is at the mercy of China, and continues to negotiate new shipments of U.S. food aid.

The only effective way to preserve the practical capability to act is to build alliances of like-minded countries. European policies are precisely the tools which help strengthen Polish sovereignty. As Václav Havel once noted, “Yelling about non-specific national interests is simply a way of masking one’s lack of self-confidence, and it is surely not the only way of acquiring prestige or a unique position within the Community.”

Sovereignty grants us the status of a subject of international relations, and a rather large one at that: in the top thirty of the UN’s 200 member states. May this sovereignty function not as an incantation preventing us from concluding advantageous agreements, but as an instrument to pursue our interests and aspirations. Leszek Kołakowski pertinently said, “Sovereignty [...] is not about a country being able to remain indifferent to the existence, interests and aspirations of other countries. In this sense, even the United States cannot be called sovereign. A country enjoys sovereignty not through a lack of real limits imposed by others or through an—unfeasible—economic autarky, but because it takes any and all decisions, whether good or bad, by itself, also when such decisions are forced upon by the circumstances or by others: even a country which decides on a course of action as a result of a threat from one of its neighbours retains its sovereignty; after all, it may decide otherwise—even to act against its own best interests.”

Greece’s current position depicts the dilemma of defining sovereignty. Not for one moment has the country lost its legal sovereignty. All of Greece’s decisions are taken by way of a democratically elected parliament and government. Greece is free to announce insolvency, return to its national currency, and try to cope with the crisis on its own. But, put into practice, the need to obtain aid to fund the recovery programme forced it to adopt certain laws within prescribed deadlines, and to accept supervision over the implementation of these laws by external entities. There is nothing outrageous about this. Just as an unreliable debtor must sell off his loan security or start living within his means, no country has the right to live at others’ expense. This is both an economic fact and a moral imperative.

It all began when, in 2008, the market began to question the arbitrary decisions taken by financiers, who—sitting in front of their computer screens 10 years ago—concluded that being a member of the euro area alone guarantees a country’s solvency. After a period of illusory equilibrium in an apparently stable Eurozone, we are back to square one: a country is only as reliable as its assets.

Thus, the most sure-fire way to retain real sovereignty is to shape a country's finances—its deficit and debt—in a way which would encourage investors to buy its bonds at a sustainable borrowing cost. As long as countries need credit, they will have to offer government bonds at a yield which someone is willing to accept.

How does Poland fare in this reckoning? How are we safeguarding our financial sovereignty? Where are we on the scale between the soundest financial standing and insolvency?

Let us not forget that the Polish People's Republic gave up the ghost as a bankrupt state. After imposing marital law, the Communist authorities declared insolvency and for a decade Poland did not service its foreign debt. Only the free Poland negotiated a debt reduction, exchanged old debt for Brady bonds, and made its way back to international financial markets.

The shifts in our bond yields are a good illustration of David Hume's thesis, which states that there is no better indicator of a country's richness than the rate of interest it pays. In 1994 in order to find buyers for Polish bonds with a three-year maturity period, we were forced to offer a 16-percent interest. In 2000 it fell by half, to just over 8 per cent. A decade on, investors were glad to be paid just over 5 per cent.

This February, the yield on Polish ten-year euro-denominated registered bonds was just 4.8 per cent. The government of Portugal has to pay at least 12 per cent to sell an analogous set of securities. According to stock exchange quotations, last month the yield on our ten-year eurobonds fell below 4 per cent for the first time in history. Italian and Spanish ten-year notes were priced higher. What is more, this month—for the first time in history—the cost of insuring five-year Polish bonds was lower than that of its French equivalent. Even before, we had already outdone Spain, Italy and Belgium. We are now hot on the heels of Austria.

This is a measure of a country's real trustworthiness, which cannot be disputed. Investors—who put their money where their mouth is—rely on hard data, not fleeting impressions. When their opinions of Poland are coherent with good reviews in the press, it should be a source of satisfaction. We should build a modern version of Poland's patriotism based not on bloated honour, but on solid achievements.

Since the appointment of the Donald Tusk government, the yield on our five-year bonds fell by 1.1 percentage points. These data are not mere statistics, but carry measurable implications for the national budget and for taxpayers. According to my calculations, a one per cent drop in the cost of government bonds amounts to savings of almost PLN 7.6 billion in annual debt-service costs. That represents 38 hospitals, or 34 state-of-the-art combat aircraft. This is our annual bonus for being financially responsible.

The struggle for financial credibility is therefore a struggle for the strength of our country and for the prosperity of its citizens. But it is also much more

than that. It is also a struggle for our practical sovereignty. This is because other countries—but not us—lived above their means, established overly generous social security and pension systems, and ended up losing markets' confidence. Today, they are facing the threat of losing the ability to shape their own financial and economic policy.

This unprecedented growth of Poland's credibility did not materialize out of thin air. It is the result of two decades' worth of Poles' hard work. A sound policy pursued by the government—which did not let itself be manoeuvred into macroeconomic recklessness—did its bit to help. That's because the patriotism of today is about more than squabbling with our more powerful neighbours. It is about patiently laying the foundations of Poland's strength.

What's the moral of the story? If you want to do something to boost Poland's credibility—indeed, it's sovereignty—support further public finance reform. Raise your hand in favour of the government's pension reform. And if you fail to raise your hand, put away those slogans about sovereignty.

Members of the House! After my speech in Berlin, there was much mention of the term 'federation'—sometimes as an accusation, or even an insult. Let us listen to what Juliusz Mieroszewski, a columnist for the Polish Paris-based "Kultura" monthly, had to say on the subject: "Every federation is always a sum of compromises. Gone are the days when we federalized others. Today, the only federation possible is one based on complete equality. It may come to be that the pursuit of a federation scheme will entail the need to make sacrifices. Those who declared and continue to declare that "we shall give nothing away" should be reminded that it is more advantageous to make certain sacrifices for the sake of having a political system in Europe that will guarantee Poland safe development for hundreds of years to come, instead of shouting that we shall give nothing away and when disaster strikes, to leave the Country on the eighteenth day of the war."

I do not agree to the term 'federation' being used in the Polish public debate as a synonym for 'treason'. After all, for long periods of our history we operated within unions: confederations and federations. Together with our neighbours, we established federations of states—personal unions, as well as federal states—real unions. I said this in Berlin, and I shall say it again today. Beginning in the late 14th century, we joined forces with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Had our personal union in the early 17th century with Russia worked, we would not only have avoided the partitions, parliamentarism might have advanced back then as far as the Pacific. Now for a maths exercise: in Poland's thousand-year history, we experienced no less than four centuries of federation. Here I would like to quote Pope John Paul II's famous Roman appeal from 2003: "from the Union of Lublin to the European Union." A wise federation may thus serve as a path to building strength in unity, and not to losing our identity.

When trying to answer the question what would be the best constitutional compromise today, thinking about what suits us best will not suffice. One must ponder the possible scenarios of EU development and think about how Polish concepts can be made part of what the other members of the European family are willing to accept.

In the first scenario, which seemed not inconceivable last autumn, the EU collapses. As early as 1924, Paul Valéry asked, “This Europe, will it become what it is in reality, that is, a small cape of the Asiatic continent?” After the events of the last several months, we can no longer take the European Union’s survival for granted.

Here is the worst-case scenario. In a Union whose future is up in the air, some Community policies die off. Those that still remain are vestigial. The Schengen system is dismantled bit by bit; more and more countries shut their borders to fend off economic migrants from other Member States. The single labour market disappears as a result. Obviously, the Multiannual Financial Framework falls apart—after all, who would be willing to pour billions of euros into something that might have to be written off anyway? As a consequence, Common Agricultural Policy and Cohesion Policy funds dry up. Because countries are unable to compensate for lower competitiveness with Community transfers, they reimpose customs barriers. The Socrates-Erasmus student exchange programme collapses: nobody can afford to send young people abroad to study. Egoism, particular interests and protectionism take hold. Europe returns to its tragic past. Solidarity loses out to “survival of the fittest”. The external dimension of EU foreign policy is washed away completely: European Neighbourhood Policy, trade policy, the European External Action Service. A divided Europe loses its chance to remain a key player in international trade and politics. Tired with defence spending stinginess and a general European inefficiency, the USA opt out of NATO. Russia fills the void left by the West in the East; China fills the void in Asia. The Arab world is engulfed by transformation crises. Europe is no longer a role model for anyone.

Where is Poland in this nightmarish vision? It is left to fend for itself on the periphery of a stagnant Europe. It is grappling with an uncompleted modernization process; its security foundations are undermined.

The second—unfortunately very plausible—scenario is that of a drift. The European Union retains its current shape. Debt-stricken Member States toil to repair their public finances. Controversies over the euro continue to surface, but they are not bitter enough to bring about a collapse. European politicians manage to extinguish the fires, but they have no clue where the sparks that set them off come from. Somehow the individual policies operate, but are faulty and at the mercy of Member States. Because tough decisions are constantly put off, the EU economy fails to expand. Sclerosis sets in. Somehow, Europe manages to hobble along, but it resigns itself to decline.

The third scenario—a remedy for the first two—is that of utopian federalism. By this I mean a type of federalism which assumes replacing Member States with a unitary supranational state. Sovereignty is transferred to Brussels. The right to secede is abolished. Last week, I was astonished to hear a socialist government minister from “old Europe” suggesting that the European Parliament be strengthened in a manner which would pave the way “for the abolition of national parliaments.” There are also some politicians in Poland who dream of producing “cookie cutter” Europeans.

I want to say it loud and clear to the utopians: such a Union should not, and will not, exist. Not only is your vision ahistorical and removed from reality, it is outright harmful to the ideal of European integration. We are not willing to build a uniform, bureaucratic super-state managed by an isolated and impersonal elite of Eurocrats.

Finally, the fourth scenario: deeper integration and the creation of a stable political union. This is our vision. We assume that Member States will forever remain independent. With the right to exit the EU. And the right to define the scope of powers transferred to the Community level. I believe that identity, culture, religion, way of life, and the principal tax rates should forever remain in the hands of nation states.

We are neither utopians nor naïve euro-enthusiasts. We have our feet firmly on the ground of political realism. We know that the end of history has not arrived. That in today's Europe you must fight for your national interests. If anyone in this House still harbours any doubts, let me just add: we will never renounce our Polish identity. Just as Germans are not renouncing their German identity, or Frenchmen their Gallic one, we too will remain Poles. The European identity will not replace the Polish one; it may only strengthen it.

We will, however, be steadfast in our support for deepening integration whenever it serves Poland and Europe. For tightening EU external border controls. For completing the single services market—which would boost Europe's GDP by an extra 1.5 per cent—and for establishing a single digital market, another 4% rise in GDP. For implementing a competitive energy market—trading in particular in gas—which would banish the spectre of energy-related blackmail and cut costs for consumers. The European Commission should have a similar competence in single market affairs as in competition policy. In order to make this happen, we need less directives and more regulations, applicable directly.

We are in favour of strengthening both the Community method and democracy by combining the post of President of the European Commission and that of the European Council, elected by the European Parliament or perhaps even by universal suffrage. Some MEPs should be elected from a pan-European list of candidates. Today I am saying this not only on my own behalf, but pursuant to a decision taken by the Council of Ministers.

Political union means offloading past burdens and past inhibitions. Putting forward solutions, co-shaping the European Union. This is Poland's vision of Europe. All the while, we are aware that Poland's say in European matters will be bigger as the country's economic standing improves, and if the Polish elites are responsible and pro-European.

Upon handing the Presidency over to the Danes, Prime Minister Donald Tusk reminded us that "the history of European integration shows that each crisis pushes the European project forward." Poland is disappointed with the wait-and-see approach that currently dominates Europe. A real-life political union calls for an ambitious budget. In the United States, the federal budget amounts to some 30 per cent of GDP; in the EU it hovers around 1 per cent. Moreover, only one-tenth of the EU budget stems from own contributions. This share should increase, also by way of a financial transaction tax.

That is why I repeat: further integration with a view to permanent political union is in Poland's interest. Only such a form of integration is capable of reinforcing Community institutions. Only political union gives us a chance to reinforce democracy on the EU level and to promote Europe to the rank of a superpower.

I devoted much room to clarifying certain terms because—to quote Ludwig Wittgenstein—"the limits of my language are the limits of my world." Despite what dogmatic Marxists tend to say, we are not slaves to the impersonal forces of history; we can alter the course of history according to our ideas. After all, "In the beginning was the Word." And words must not confine us to a world which will never return, but inspire us to build a Europe in which Poland is an indispensable power.

Ladies and Gentlemen! We are on the right path. Poland's voice is being listened to and heard throughout Europe, while our proposals are the object of careful analysis. If Poland is to cement its position in the first league of European countries, we must dispassionately analyse our potential and influence. We must act in the spirit of uprisings and battles won—not lost. Poland must be stronger, not just braver.

I ask the House to accept this Information.

Thank you for your attention.

Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2013
(presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 20 March 2013)

Mr President! Madam Speaker! Prime Minister! Government Ministers! Your Excellencies! Ambassadors! Members of the House!

It is my honour to present this information on the goals of Poland's foreign policy for the sixth time running. As I stand here today, I can say with satisfaction: Poland's international position is strong. We are cementing our standing in the European Union, which continues to integrate and grow—in spite of the crisis.

Without forgetting about our past, first and foremost we look to the future. We think like free men and women living in a free and prosperous country. We know that today, more than ever before, we are the masters of our own fate. We are shaping our foreign policy independently, in line with our own conscience and to the best of our knowledge.

What is an effective foreign policy today? It is no more and no less than the result of a correlation of forces, meaning the mutual impact of material and immaterial factors that influence a country's ability to achieve its goals. It is the art of reinforcing propitious circumstances and making optimal use of the amassed potential. To quote the French statesman Aristide Briand, "the art of reconciling the desirable with the possible."

The most important tool when building a country's international position is naturally diplomacy, but its efficiency depends on the strength of the country as a whole, which in turn varies over time. It must always be measured relative to other subjects of international relations. In order to correctly assess Poland's geostrategic position today, we must take a look at our country from an historical perspective. It is thus crucial to evaluate our past significance, our position in the present-day hierarchy of countries, and feasible future scenarios.

We have faced strategic dilemmas many a time in history. Our fate would depend on the sense of responsibility of the nation's leaders—on their conscience and their understanding of the rules governing political and social life. First and foremost—on a realistic assessment of our capabilities. As Józef Piłsudski once said, "I can think for five Polands, but implement only that which the one [Poland] is capable of."

We were on the peripheries when capitalism was on the rise in modern Europe. The first manufactories were built in the west of Europe in the 13th century, but only arrived in Poland by the end of the 16th century. During the Middle Ages,

Polish gross domestic product per capita was close to the average of rich Western European countries, amounting to approximately 80% of their levels in the 14th and 15th centuries. Similarly, we were not yet far behind in terms of fiscal strength, i.e. the ability of state administration to collect taxes and, in turn, pursue public investments.

Delays and obstructions to the process of modernization were to become the fundamental cause of Polish problems and tragedies. They resulted in weaker growth and backwardness, as well as inefficient state structures. Even though Poles were still relatively well off, the royal coffers lay empty.

In other words, our country's fiscal strength did not correspond with our still large tax collection potential, which remained strong. On the eve of the Great Sejm, in 1788 Poland's GDP fell to just 16% of its British equivalent.

Meanwhile, our neighbours and their armies continued to grow stronger. Poland still existed—at least formally—but no longer played a role on the international stage. Contrary to Poland's national interest and nominal sovereignty, foreign armies stationed in our territory. Under the partitions most of Poland had not experienced the industrial revolution. The Second Polish Republic was thus unable to join the global economic vanguard of the time. Despite flagship initiatives like the port in Gdynia or the Central Industrial Region, Poland was economically lagging behind its neighbours. The customs war with Germany lasted 10 years, blocking bilateral trade altogether. To better picture the scope of such a challenge, just imagine where we would be if we were unable to export goods to our main output market today.

Poland remained an island of relative freedom bounded by consolidating totalitarianisms. Their leaders were more or less overt in their hostility towards our country. As it would later turn out, we could not count on the solidarity of our allies. At the same time, the military chasm separating Poland and its bellicose neighbours continued to grow. In 1933-1939 Poland's military spending—although totalling 20% of our GDP—amounted to just 7 percent of German expenditures. We all know how that ended.

Poland's situation 30 years ago was equally tragic, though for altogether different reasons. During the long darkness of martial law, a depressing stability was imposed on us by the bipolar world order. The country's rulers failed to make use of their absolute power to implement the necessary reforms and steer the country out of the economic doldrums. In 1981 our GDP per capita amounted to a paltry 41 percent of the Western European average, only to fall to 30 percent—the lowest level in history—a decade later, at the start of the transformation. Today we are nearing 59 percent, or as much as 64 percent when compared with

the EU average. I dedicate these numbers to the apologists for statism seated on both sides of this chamber.

So how does our situation today measure up against this backdrop? The age-old dilemmas that every country must face—which the historian Paul Kennedy boils down to the single question of “guns, butter, or investments” in his book *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*—have never before been so easy to reconcile. We are one of the few NATO countries to maintain military spending at recommended levels, all the while preserving fiscal stability and not forgetting about our commitment to future generations. Only Poland and a few other NATO countries have increased their defence spending since the onset of the crisis.

The last twenty years are a period of continued economic growth. One full generation of Poles knows recession only from textbooks on economics, and from news from other countries. We are registering constant GDP growth, which has translated into a marked improvement in living standards. The forecasts are promising: analysts reckon that by 2030 Poland’s nominal GDP will grow by 70 percent. We are making efficient use of EU funds. Here I would like to pay my compliments to Minister Elżbieta Bieńkowska, whom I believe is absent today.

We are improving our position in national brand rankings. The findings of one report show that Poland ranks 20th globally—among around 200 UN member countries—with the value of the Polish brand rising by 75 percent. Solutions such as the “fiscal anchor,” inscribed in our constitution, are today a source of inspiration for other countries. It is also thanks to our successful EU presidency and efficient preparations for Euro 2012 that others are acknowledging Poland’s accomplishments and organizational skills. All credit goes to all those Poles who built this free homeland, which so many generations had dreamt of! Other challenges, however, remain: a negative demographic outlook that limits our fiscal potential, low levels of private investment, and declining productivity growth rates. Poland must start to create new competitive advantages and enhance its growth model—based on increasing productivity—with the ability to innovate.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the House! The history of our country has shown time and again that periods of stagnation and recession have given way to moments of rapid acceleration. Measured in decades, they had more significant consequences than any other individual events—suffice it to mention the intense bids for modernization under King Casimir the Great, King Stanisław August, or Prime Minister Władysław Grabski. All of these periods have two things in common: first, they would shape Poland’s statehood for decades to come; second, they were never 100% successful, in the sense that they failed to close the growth gap between Poland and Western Europe.

Our dilemmas today come at precisely this kind of time—when we already have reason to be proud. Following a successful transformation, Poland is tempted to slow down and bask in its own undisputed achievements. After all, our country has never been more prosperous. But the role of diplomacy—as I perceive it—is to wisely support the process of modernization and to ensure that Poland thrives in a stable and friendly international environment.

Looking at International Monetary Fund projections, if we are consistent in our stance and the economic climate remains favourable, within two decades Poland's GDP per capita will reach Western European levels. This will not, however, mean that we will have reached the end of the road and that our living standards and wealth levels will have become aligned with the West's. For historical reasons, Poland's delayed process of wealth accumulation—be it personal or national—will take longer still. Last year, the average Pole put aside just 3% of his income, compared to almost 7% for the average Czech, and as much as 10% for the typical German. We are still building the roads, railways, stadiums and theatres that other countries already have. To sum up—we need a generation of stable growth to achieve the production capacity of Western Europe and around 30 years to reach its quality of life levels.

Members of the House! I stand before you to report on Poland's foreign policy just a few weeks after the European Council took its decision on the Multiannual Financial Framework. This was an issue of such importance for the government and for Poland's future growth perspectives that Prime Minister Donald Tusk assumed personal responsibility for the negotiations. The sum of 106 billion euros that was secured, including almost 73 billion towards cohesion policy and almost 29 billion euros towards agriculture, is the fulfilment of the electoral promise made by the Civic Platform and the Polish People's Party. Standing before the President of the Republic and the entire Sejm, I take pride in these words: Prime Minister, you have more than honoured your promise to the People.

These massive sums are also evidence of the fact that, thanks to our methodical and bottom-up approach, we are capable of executing momentous political projects on the international stage. In spite of the crisis raging across Europe, we have patiently worked our way towards this success: from the election of Janusz Lewandowski as the EU Budget Commissioner, to the establishment of the Friends of Cohesion Group and the negotiation pact with the Visegrad Group, to cooperating with France and convincing Germany and the UK that they should support an austere budget, albeit one in which cuts would not mainly affect countries that are on their way up. My first deputy—Minister Piotr Serafin—efficiently supported PM Tusk in steering clear of troubled waters. In these budget

negotiations, Poland proved a long-distance runner capable of wisely balancing its energy reserves and winning the race—both individually and as a team.

Members of the House! Now that the battle has been won, it is time to reflect. Indeed, a reformed European architecture is being constructed before our very eyes. Integration is increasingly being spurred on by cooperation in the areas of finance and banking. The Eurozone has changed considerably since the crisis first erupted. We appreciate the great efforts taken by the EU-17. A lot has been done to turn the euro area into a future zone of stability and predictability. We will be able to safely join the Eurozone—which we are today helping to fix—only if it undergoes such changes and reforms. But choosing to permanently remain outside the euro area would limit our room for manoeuvre. We will thus face a choice: we can either stay in the mainstream of economic, financial, and political integration, or we can stand on the sidelines, squandering the opportunity to achieve faster growth and have our say in EU policies.

Europe is still grappling with the crisis, but European integration continues to progress. This is evidenced by a continuation of the EU policy of enlargement and the adoption of the Fiscal Compact signed by 25 Member States. Prime Minister Tusk has managed to let Poland shape the architecture of the Eurozone—even though we are not yet members of the bloc. The next phase of the process of closer integration is the plan to create a banking union. We subscribe to the idea, though we must be sure that our rights and interests will be respected. The first stage of negotiations on this union—the establishment of European supervision—looks promising.

Today's Europe is also increasingly divided into circles of integration. Whether we like it or not, what was once the stuff of theory is fast becoming political reality. The interested Member States may at any moment initiate enhanced cooperation, all the while undertaking to maintain its open-ended nature.

Today, the countries that use the euro undoubtedly make up the European core.

They are complemented by the Schengen zone...

... and the Fiscal Compact.

What is Poland's position within these circles of integration, or as some say—within a Europe of many “speeds”? In light of the turmoil in the south and the insular British approach, we stand a chance of becoming part of the hard core of European decision-makers. Even though we are already a Member State to be reckoned with, to further boost our significance we should be ready to adopt the euro. But only in a way that bolsters our economy. Just like Slovakia did four years ago; despite widespread fears to the contrary, inflation in the country fell

immediately and big supermarket chains rounded prices down, not up. The common currency will soon become legal tender in other countries in our region—Latvia and Lithuania are set to follow in Estonia's footsteps.

Poland's membership of the Eurozone will bring tangible benefits that will depend on the strength and state of preparation of our economy, as well as on the final zloty-to-euro exchange rate. This means benefits for consumers as well as businesses: cheaper loans, no more exchanging currencies when going abroad, easier Internet shopping, greater ease of doing international transactions, simpler EU fund accounting for companies and, last but not least, greater trust among foreign investors. The common currency is also about depriving politicians of the right to act irresponsibly or spoil good money. If you're serious about public finance, you shouldn't fear being fined for dealing recklessly with future generations' money. After all, what we get in exchange is the guarantee that we won't be left to your own devices in the event of a crisis. If so, I would like to quote Józef Ignacy Kraszewski and ask those who remain in doubt: why are you afraid of change, even when it's for the better?

Members of the House! Faced with the rise of a new European Union centred on the eurozone, we must honestly ask ourselves what type of EU relations will best suit our national interest. And I'm not just talking about the mid-term perspective, which I have outlined here, meaning when and at what exchange rate to implement stage three of the Economic and Monetary Union. We must wisely and carefully assess the timeframe and conditions for making this step, but let it be clear: joining the eurozone lies in Poland's strategic interest. What is at stake is the geopolitical consolidation of our country for decades and perhaps—hopefully!—for centuries to come.

Indeed, the European Union is home to decentralist forces. Buoyed by the crisis, national egoisms have surfaced. Sadly, the interest of the Union as a whole tends to be pushed aside and subordinated to domestic politics. Some think they can order *à la carte*, playing pick-and-mix with just those items on the menu that tickle their taste buds. In other words, they think they can profit from the benefits of integration without doing their share of the work. They are under the illusion that once outside the EU, they could carry more weight and enjoy greater freedoms. But if the European Union were to be but a temporary free trade area, then the question once posed by a certain MEP would be an adequate one: why should the British taxpayer co-fund the construction of the Warsaw underground? Solidarity and cohesion only make sense if we perceive our own fate as the common fate of all Europeans.

The share of EU economies in the global GDP, meanwhile, has fallen by almost one-fourth over the last 20 years and is set to fall further still. The opposite

is true for non-European powers, which will witness dynamic growth. If China manages to avoid a debt crisis, 2016 may already be the year in which the country overtakes the EU in terms of economic might.

And so my warning is: visions of EU countries going it alone on the global stage are dangerous fantasies. This also applies to the UK, whose share in the EU GDP is 14%, not to mention Poland, which has a 5% share. Demographic trends are another adverse factor for Europe, and one that is even more inexorable.

Our continent accounted for almost 20 percent of the global population in 1960, but for less than 12 percent in 2000. In 2040 the figure will dwindle to just over 8 percent.

Faced with these changes, we should create a transatlantic free trade area agreement—the European Union and the United States—especially since it is yet another argument in favour of a strong global voice for the EU. No European country would be capable of going solo and negotiating such a good deal for itself. We Poles have experienced firsthand that the common European interest is not an abstract concept, but a tangible phenomenon. This was the case when we lifted the Russian embargo on imports of Polish foodstuffs, or during our negotiations on a new gas agreement. There is no need for lofty rhetoric. Joint EU actions simply pay off.

Madam Speaker! Members of the House! Bearing in mind that every historical comparison is only partly justified, I would say that the European Union is like the Roman Empire—an entity which, in Western Europe at least, defined the settlement structure, road network and legal *acquis* that is still being used today. Only our Union is better, since it was not created through conquest, but through voluntary membership. We all feel that the question about the frontiers of European integration is a question about our security and might of the Western civilization.

The question about the frontiers of the Continent is as old as the dream of European unity. For some, Europe exists wherever there are Medieval town halls and cathedrals. For many in the West, the mental frontier—solidified by half a century of cold war—extends only as far as the ancient Roman roads. Meaning somewhere between the Rhine and Elbe rivers, and along the Danube—but only in Vienna. In my view, buildings are the result of laws and institutions, so the European border extends to where European laws apply. After German reunification, the borderline moved east to the Oder. In 2004—to the Bug. But is it permanent? Or can it extend further still?

The Roman *limes* would sometimes retract—even during the glory days. In the British Isles, the northern border takes the form of Hadrian's Wall, but for some twenty years the empire tried to move it to the Antonine Wall. By staying

outside the eurozone, we would once again risk being marginalized, thereby self-limiting ourselves to a zone of partial and perhaps even temporary integration. Instead, Poles want to be fully-fledged citizens of the Union—*cives Romani* instead of second-rate *foederati*. We are not in it for the prestige, but for the ability to influence and jointly shape the future of the European Union.

Rome was not just limited to the Western Roman Empire, but also included the Orthodox Byzantine Empire with its constant procession of emperors until 1453. Our great countryman, John Paul II, said that Europe can only fully be itself when it breathes with both lungs—the East and the West. And so, should the Eastern Slavic, Orthodox world one day be willing and able to adopt the legal and institutional *acquis* of our Union, the European horizon would extend not just to the Dnieper river, but far beyond, all the way to the Chinese and Korean borders. Poland would overcome its “periphery syndrome” once and for all and sit safely in the centre. The West expanded as such—complete with Russian resources, the EU’s economic strength and American military might—would stand a chance of retaining influence in a world dominated by rising powers from outside Europe.

Some will ask why we shouldn’t just pursue our own Polish path, why we can’t become an axis of integration ourselves—after all, we had this chance during our Golden Age. My answer is simple: indeed, we had our chance—and we blew it. Today, neither our eastern neighbours nor we are willing to integrate with one another. Doing things alone would require a level of social, financial and military mobilization that is unthinkable in a democratic system. And so the only feasible practical application of the Jagiellonian ideal in today’s world is EU enlargement. There is no alternative. This decade will likely determine whether our democratic European empire will retain its pulling power.

And to those who, in spite of our limited resources, dream of the re-nationalization of European politics and a return to the selfish framework of the nation-state, I say: be careful what you wish for! You might just get it—and faster than you’d expect. The European Union is still in crisis and its survival is by no means guaranteed. Yes, its collapse would restore full powers to us—but also to all the others. Yes, we would thus be self-governing and independent—but also left to our own devices. And once again serve as a bulwark.

Members of the House! A strong Poland in the EU also means a stronger Visegrad Group. This is because Central Europe is no longer—as Milan Kundera once wrote in his famous essay—a land of tragedy. It is more reminiscent of the dream, at last fulfilled, of the free and prosperous region described by the Hungarian writer György Konrád, or of the integrated region of Czechoslovakian Prime Minister Milan Hodža. The potential of our part of Europe is already quite significant—and getting ever stronger. In recent years, the growth rate of Poland,

the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary surpassed the EU average. In the mid-1990s, the GDP of the four Visegrad Group countries amounted to almost USD 270 billion. Today, it is almost four times larger. Together, we are Germany's biggest trading partner—more important than, for example, France.

Pursuant to the still applicable law, in the Council of the European Union our four countries hold 58 weighted votes—as many as Germany and France combined. We want to reinforce these propitious trends. I initiated our Visegrad Group presidency with visits to Bratislava, Prague, and Budapest. I hope that this will start a tradition of visits at the outset of each presidency. Less than two years ago, we opened a gas interconnector pipeline with the Czech Republic. Work has also begun on an analogous interconnector with Slovakia. Similar projects are being developed jointly by Slovakia and Hungary. We are almost done building roads that link Poland with the Czech Republic and Slovakia. We are preparing a joint bid with Slovakia to host the 2022 Winter Olympics.

We have reiterated our decision to launch the Visegrad Battle Group in three years' time. We will continue to pursue the tried-and-tested format of meetings of prime ministers, foreign ministers, and Europe ministers ahead of EU summits. Our joint efforts are producing good results, for example when negotiating the Multiannual Financial Framework. Together, we are supporting the European aspirations of the Eastern Partnership countries. We hold regular political consultations with the Nordic states. We jointly advocate for EU enlargement to include the Western Balkans. We are looking forward to welcoming Croatia to the EU as the 28th Member State.

Members of the House! As I have already said, a key issue both for us and for Europe in the 21st century is what civilisation the nations of Eastern Europe will choose to be part of. We are an active promoter of the EU partnership policy. Nevertheless, we are aware of the fact that it is mainly up to them if they wish to progress on the path to democracy, rule of law, and modernization.

We have high hopes for the Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in Vilnius in November. Full success will come with the signing of association and free trade agreements with Ukraine and the conclusion of negotiations on similar agreements with Moldova, Georgia, and Armenia. We aspire to achieve visa-free travel for the citizens of Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova—as well as Russia.

Although we will welcome the future abolition of visas, since visas still exist we are also glad that our eastern neighbours are mainly applying for the documents at Polish consulates. In 2008 we issued 534,000 such documents, and as many as 1.3 million last year; an increase of 143% over the course of four years. We have abolished national visa fees for Ukrainians, Belarusians, and—most recently—Moldovans.

Thanks to Polish efforts, an EU fund to the tune of EUR 37 million has been set up with the civil societies of the six Eastern Partnership countries in mind. We advocate making the Erasmus for All programme fully available to thousands of students from these countries.

We will also mainly support civil society in Belarus, for example via the European Endowment for Democracy. We are glad that we were successful in our efforts to establish the Endowment, and that a Polish candidate—Jerzy Pomianowski—was chosen as its first director. The Endowment will promote democracy in the entire EU neighbourhood. In Poland it will partner with the Solidarity Fund PL. Such initiatives are evidence of our determination to maintain and develop civil society dialogue—especially in unwelcoming political environments. We are also bolstering the Community of Democracies—we have created a solid legal framework to support the operations of its Permanent Secretariat in Warsaw. We are setting up a generous Solidarity Prize, to be awarded for the first time this year on the anniversary of the 1980 August Agreements.

We see that Ukraine is facing a genuine dilemma, not unlike the ones it saw in the mid-17th and early 20th centuries. From Kiev's perspective, this is a choice between modernity and democracy on the one hand, and a different civilizational model on the other. Should Ukraine create the conditions for signing the association agreement, Poland will endeavour to grant the country a "European perspective" at the upcoming Eastern Partnership summit.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Volhynia massacre in which tens of thousands of our countrymen lost their lives. We welcome the recent address by the bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church to commemorate those tragic events. At the same time we are deeply convinced that reconciliation must occur in a spirit of respect for the historical truth.

Bilateral trade with Russia is growing rapidly, expanding by over 10 percent last year and amounting to almost USD 38 billion.

Exports alone were up by 16 percent, an increase of over 50% on 2007. We are glad to see Polish businesses prosper in Eastern Europe. Our companies are doing construction work on the St. Petersburg underground. PESA, a company from Bydgoszcz, is providing trams to Kaliningrad.

We are interested in cooperation with Russia, in particular between regions and local communities. This project is ably overseen by the Polish-Russian Forum of Regions. Both Poland and Russia have established Centres for Dialogue and Understanding which deal with difficult topics. The Russian national exhibition opened on the occasion of the 68th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp shows that we are ready to speak with one voice on important and uneasy historical issues. We believe that last year's visit to Poland by Patriarch

Kirill I and the joint memorandum of the Polish Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church will help reconcile our two nations.

The local border traffic agreement is working well, which enables the inhabitants of northern Poland and the Kaliningrad Oblast to get to know one another. Increasingly open borders also lead to notable economic benefits. It is also thanks to this agreement with Russia and a similar one with Ukraine, the expenditures of foreigners crossing our border in the north and east reached 6.6 billion zlotys in 2012—an increase of over one-fourth on 2011.

We regret that Russia is inconsistent when it comes to modernizing its institutions and its society, and that it is taking a step back on the path toward democracy. We are unwavering in our demands that Russia return the Katyń crime files and hand over the Tu-154 wreckage, as well as the entire documentation pertaining to the crash. We will continue to support the Polish prosecutors' office in its efforts to enforce legal assistance in this matter. Disappointed with the hitherto impasse, we sought—and received—European Union assistance. But I want to say this to all those who want to boil our entire foreign policy down to the wreckage: when another country fails to fulfil its international obligations towards us—as is the case here—I would expect those who call themselves patriots to join in solidarity with their government and direct their complaints to the right people.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the House! We maintain our closest bilateral ties with our partners in the European Union. With Germany we share a strategic vision of the EU, and we see eye to eye when it comes to finding a way out of the crisis. Together we look after our neighbourhood, in particular in the East. At the same time, we continue to remind our partners that even a country with a potential as big as the Federal Republic of Germany's cannot go it alone in the EU. Such potential should entail a feeling of special responsibility for the future of Europe.

This past year bore key significance with regard to Polish-French relations. The election of new authorities served as the basis to forge closer political ties. The new opening is especially visible on the EU stage, where we fought to maintain an ambitious common agricultural policy and a growth-oriented cohesion policy. Our intergovernmental consultations—provided for under our strategic partnership agreement—are now back on track.

We congratulate Germany and France on the 50th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty. We recall how, 20 years ago, it served as the inspiration for Polish-German reconciliation. We cooperate with both countries in the framework of the Weimar Triangle; indeed, the Triangle itself is becoming more and more equilateral. As a square inscribed within a triangle, the recent Visegrad-Weimar summit in Warsaw was an ambitious exercise in political geometry. I want to say this to

those who criticize our policies: the stronger our ties with France and Germany, the stronger Poland is regionally. And the better our regional cooperation, the greater the ability of Poland to represent regional interests.

The United States remains our most important non-European partner. We are glad to see that, while pursuing its interests in other global regions, the United States is not forgetting about its old friends in Europe. Poland will continue to advocate close cooperation between both halves of the Western civilisation in the area of trade, commerce, security, and fostering democracy.

Polish is the most popular foreign language in England and Wales. We would like the large Polish community in Britain to help bring our two traditionally friendly countries even closer together. We regret the fact that Great Britain is distancing itself from Europe. I have this to say to my British friends: the EU needs you. We need your pragmatism, your competence, and your military might. We can work together for the sake of enlargement policy. We can finish building the EU's common market. We can fight for new methods of extracting oil and gas. You need the EU, too: with it, you yield more clout, especially when it comes to Europe's closest neighbours. Overcoming the debt crisis, meanwhile, is not looking so easy outside the Eurozone, either.

We have traditionally close relations with Sweden: last November we initiated a joint security dialogue at the level of foreign and defence ministers. Relations with other Baltic Sea partners—Denmark, Estonia and Finland, as well as Latvia—are developing very well. Today we are already preparing for Poland's presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. Polish-Norwegian cooperation is dynamically developing in both the energy and defence sectors, as well as in disarmament initiatives. We highly value our political and military cooperation with Romania. We are upholding the tradition of intergovernmental consultations with Spain. We appreciate the efforts taken by the previous Italian government in combating the crisis and we are open to cooperation with the new cabinet.

We thank Benedict XVI for continuing the mission of John Paul the Great, for his memorable pilgrimage to Poland in 2006, and for his kind approach towards our country. We congratulate Pope Francis—the first Pontiff from the New World—on his election. We count on further seminal cooperation with the Holy See, also in the area of protecting Christians' rights around the world.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the January Uprising. Alongside the Polish Eagle and Archangel Michael, banners from the uprising also depict the Lithuanian Pahonia, reminding us of our common history. Mindful of this joint heritage, we count all the more on cooperation with the new government of Lithuania. We hope that resolving the most pressing issues, such as the question of Polish minority rights in the country, will help implement bilateral

projects—including road, rail and energy connections. We wish Lithuania a successful EU presidency in the second half of 2013.

As we discuss the EU future, we must not forget about countries that have the right to be part of the European family. Poland's support for EU enlargement policy is not just about political declarations—we also provide specific assistance, especially for the Western Balkan countries. Relations with Turkey are also high on our agenda—the country is a key NATO ally and one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

Preparations are under way for the celebrations to mark an extraordinary occasion—the 600th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Turkish state. Speaking of countries in Europe's south-east, we are glad that economic indicators seem to be marking the end of the worst phase of the crisis in Greece—the cradle of democracy.

Members of the House! Public diplomacy is becoming an increasingly important tool of Poland's foreign policy. It is the main instrument of soft power, which in today's world is used more often and sometimes more effectively than hard, military power. We want our message to reach a broad spectrum of people. We are showcasing our history and our heroes to the world. On Holocaust Remembrance Day, we opened an exhibition at the United Nations headquarters in New York devoted to the life and work of Jan Karski. Poland remains an advocate of historical truth. We react firmly and effectively whenever we see attempts to distort our history.

Poland's peaceful transformation experiences are the main driver of our development cooperation. They seem most useful in the post-Soviet East, but we are also hosting specialized training courses for civil servants from countries in or on the verge of transition, including Afghanistan, Egypt, Libya, Myanmar or Tunisia. In cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, this year we are setting up a new scholarship programme—the Stefan Banach Scholarship—for top students from the Eastern Partnership countries.

We are seeking to become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in the 2018–2019 rotation, for the sixth time in our history and the first in over twenty years. This year, Poland chairs the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. We view being entrusted with this function as recognition of our hitherto engagement.

In the Arab world, we will continue to focus on supporting democratization, both bilaterally and in the southern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The tenth anniversary of the intervention in Iraq reminds us of the threat posed by extremism. We are watching the civilian situation in Syria with grave concern and sympathy. We warn the government in Damascus against using

chemical weapons in the conflict, which has been burning for almost two years. As a member of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission tasked with monitoring the Korean armistice, we are concerned with yet another North Korean nuclear test.

We see the vast and as yet untapped potential of Africa. We are taking part in implementing EU common policies—including its development policy—vis-à-vis African countries. Together with other government ministries we are reinvigorating intergovernmental ties with the most important actors in Sub-Saharan Africa—the Republic of South Africa and Nigeria.

We note Asia's growing significance. The continent is already responsible for over one-third of global GDP. Aware of this potential, we are expanding our diplomatic presence in Asia. We have opened Polish Institutes in Tokyo and New Delhi, with another one due to open soon in Beijing. We are building up our network of honorary consulates.

We have a strategic partnership with China, as reaffirmed during last year's Warsaw summit that was also attended by leaders from our region. We see the Middle Kingdom as a supra-regional power that should play an increasingly active role in solving global problems. We are ready to share our experiences should China one day opt for a system of political pluralism. We will continue to pursue good cooperation with Japan, an outpost of democracy in the Pacific region.

Polish companies are consistently solidifying their positions on international markets, especially non-European ones. Last year, Polish exports were up by nearly 4%, with sales increasing most in Latin America (17.6%), Africa (over 16%) and Asia (over 12%). Our exports are finally adopting a truly global portfolio.

This rising interest means that we must strengthen ties with faraway and lesser-known markets. We are supporting Polish entrepreneurs by developing a modern database of treaties. We continue to respect the role played by the Ministry of Economy in business promotion, and we call for the adoption of a relevant act of parliament. We are in touch with hundreds of Polish companies active in the energy, defence, transport, food processing, and innovation sectors. We have joined the European Space Agency. Business leaders accompany Foreign Ministry officials on visits outside Europe. Last year we travelled to Brazil, Chile, China, Columbia, Mexico, Myanmar and Saudi Arabia. This year we will visit Australia, India, Mongolia and New Zealand.

We are keeping a close eye on changes in the American energy market and their geopolitical consequences. By 2020, the United States will have become a net exporter of natural gas. The European economy may profit from this. Indeed, over the course of the next decade, a new energy market will open up, making it possible to diversify raw material imports, which we will be able to make use

of once we open our LNG terminal. Poland is also laying the foundation for cooperation in exploring alternative sources of energy and developing innovative technologies. We are also engaged in an intensive dialogue with Canada on these issues. But it will be our continued priority to make full use of Poland's own domestic sources of energy—including, but not limited to, shale gas deposits.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the House! History teaches us that Poland must look to itself to look after its security—also in the military sense—and that this security largely depends on our own defence potential. As Jan Nowak-Jeziorański once wrote, “you must not base your security on your allies alone, even the most formidable ones, if you cannot use your own forces to enable these allies to come to your help. A feeling of security [...] cannot become a myth that leads to mental disarmament and gives rise to laziness of military thought.” The modernization of our armed forces is thus one of the top priorities for the upcoming decade. Over the course of these ten years, we will devote a hefty sum of 140 billion zlotys to this goal. We are creating a deterrent force by acquiring missiles, helicopters, armoured vehicles, submarines and UAVs.

We will have our own air defence system. The Polish missile defence shield, together with the US shield—elements of which will be installed on Polish territory in 2018—will become part of the NATO system. The North Atlantic Alliance is, after all, our most important external guarantor of security. We will endeavour to make sure that collective defence—a key issue from the Polish perspective—remains NATO's supreme task. This autumn we will witness the first ever NATO exercises on Polish territory, nicknamed Steadfast Jazz. We welcome the considerable contribution declared by our NATO partners, first and foremost France and the United States. In line with earlier arrangements, for several months now Poland has been hosting a US Air Force Aviation Detachment, which operates a rotating presence of F-16 fighter aircraft and C-130 transporters.

We are also working with the Americans in Afghanistan. The NATO operation in the country is entering its final phase. The 1,800-strong Polish contingent will be scaled down to 1,000 men in October. Together with our allies, by the end of next year we will have terminated the ISAF stabilization mission—in line with our commitments. We are proud that the Afghan nation highly appreciates the engagement and sacrifice of Polish soldiers and diplomats.

The strong European Union we are building also means developing European defence capabilities. By the end of this year, the European Council will decide on the future directions of the Common Security and Defence Policy. We will consistently advocate the further strengthening of this policy, even though we harbour no illusions about it replacing NATO by the end of this decade. We take part in EU Battle Groups and we do not rule out using them. Our forces are

present on the ground in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Georgia. We are taking part in the EU training mission in Mali, thus supporting our allies in eradicating terrorism from the Sahel. A strong EU is one that possesses an efficient diplomacy. We support Catherine Ashton and the European External Action Service, especially in its tough discussions with Iran.

Members of the House! Last year, this Chamber voted for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to administer funds earmarked for supporting the Polish diaspora. This is the full first year in which the new rules apply. As part of a recent call for proposals, we will allocate over PLN 50 million towards cooperation with the Polish diaspora, even though applications were filed for a total of PLN 224 million. I understand the disappointment of those of you whose requests were turned down. I encourage you to take part in next year's edition. We are especially looking for projects that strengthen economic cooperation between the diaspora and Poland, as well as projects that encourage Poles living abroad to return home. We will also make new types of TV and radio broadcasts available internationally—both in Polish and in foreign languages.

We are changing the philosophy governing our Polish diaspora policy. We want our fellow countrymen living abroad to become an influential subject of Polish foreign policy and to boost Poland's image, standing and economic and political interests through their activities. We remember about our obligations to Poles living in the East. Both in the West and in the East, we ask not only what Poland can do for the diaspora, but primarily what the diaspora can do for Poland.

Members of the House! We continue to modernize our diplomatic corps. We are implementing new forms of Polish diplomatic presence, for example the joint use of diplomatic premises with third countries, or appointing visiting ambassadors, for example in Malta. Such solutions ensure that Polish diplomats are present in new locations, all the while significantly lowering financial outlays.

This is accompanied by a rationalization of the Polish foreign service post network. We are boosting our presence in regions that are home to key Polish interests, especially our economic interests. That is why, for example, we are moving our consulate from Vancouver to Edmonton—the capital of Canada's extraction industry. We have selected the winner of an international design competition for the new embassy building in Berlin—preparation work is now under way to start construction. At the same time we are selling buildings that have fulfilled their role, like the former embassy of the Polish People's Republic in Cologne, or in locations where we no longer have a diplomatic presence.

Our consular service is working effectively. Last year we performed over two million registered consular functions—16% more than in 2011, raking in over 200 million zlotys for the state treasury. We have set up a Consular Assistance

Team, which helps Polish diplomatic missions in dealing with crisis situations within as little as 24 hours from the initial notification. Poles like to travel and are becoming increasingly mobile. We are more open and more comfortable in benefiting from globalization. Last year, Polish consulates issued almost 177,000 passports—almost 65% more than on the eve of our EU accession in 2003.

In order to effectively implement our foreign policy—after all, drawing-room diplomacy is no longer the way we do things—we are providing Polish diplomats with modern tools.

Thanks to satellite imagery we are able to precisely analyse threats and effectively organize assistance for Polish citizens in crisis situations. In what amounts to one of the most ambitious projects the Polish Internet landscape has ever seen, we have launched a user-friendly website which is integrated with the sites of our diplomatic missions. We are implementing an Electronic Workflow System—the most modern such system in the Polish public administration.

With a view to enhancing personal and physical security as well as data protection, we have created the Foreign Service Inspectorate. We are also working to establish the category of ‘diplomatic secret’ which would cover sensitive but unclassified information.

The European External Action Service is currently undergoing a review. We hope that the Service will ensure geographic balance among its staff. We also believe that it should become more engaged in strictly diplomatic measures. I am glad to note the rising number of Polish diplomats serving in the EEAS. The EU diplomatic corps currently employs 66 Poles as core staff—48 in Brussels and 18 in the delegations. Our countryman, Maciej Popowski, is a Deputy Secretary General of the Service. Last year, another two Poles were selected to represent the EU as its ambassadors: Jan Tombiński in Ukraine and Adam Kułach in Saudi Arabia. Every seventh nomination goes to one of our diplomats. They are also assuming important posts in NATO, heading the Alliance’s missions in Ukraine and Russia. A Polish representative will soon take up the position of head of the NATO Budget Committee.

We cooperate closely with Polish research institutes and think tanks, which are fast making a name for themselves in Europe. The Polish Institute of International Affairs and the Centre for Eastern Studies register regular plaudits for their work.

We consult our policies with local government bodies and NGOs. Regional International Debate Centres are being set up in each voivodeship, meaning that the needs of local governments are reflected in national foreign policy priorities.

Members of the House! To conclude, I would like to mention a recent analogy by a European politician who compared the EU to Thomas Mann’s novel

Buddenbrooks: the first generation establishes a promising family company, the second generation does a good job at managing it, and the third generation squanders everything. Continuing the metaphor, the politician added that today's Europe is being governed by members of the third generation, who received the Nobel Prize in honour of the first. The politician meant it as a word of caution not to take our hard-earned achievements for granted and treat them as self-evident. We accept this analogy—and we also try to apply it to our Polish history. After all, there were several occasions in our history where our state edifice—erected with the utmost effort—would first shine with splendour, only to be mismanaged and, with time, allowed to fall into ruin.

Our history is that of greatness and downfall, of heroes and traitors. It is a story of bewildering successes. It is about a country that covered a million square kilometres and extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea, from Greater Poland all the way to Kiev. A multinational, multi-faith, welcoming and hospitable country—but one that remained true to its traditions and roots. That's one side of the story. The other is that of reprehensible omissions. Of the inability to turn military victories into political and diplomatic ones. Of frustrated development chances and of foolhardy optimism that—in the name of the motto that “nothing is impossible to a willing mind”—took on insurmountable tasks, only to lament when the easy-to-predict consequences inevitably led to disasters that were to affect many generations of Poles.

Today we are bolstering Poland's global strength and position faster than ever before. All thanks to the work of millions of Poles, the successes of our businesses, the sound policies of successive governments and local governments—but also thanks to our effective diplomacy. We are doing this with our Polish determination and our Polish persistence. When we joined the European Union, we made an historic choice. If we wish to avoid the sin of omission of our forefathers, we must be consistent in our approach and join the hard core of decision makers. We must conduct our foreign policy like Donald Tusk conducted the EU budget negotiations. Thanks to this negotiating success, we now have the funds we need to make the civilizational leap forward. Let's not squander this historic opportunity!

Madam Speaker, Members of the House—I ask you to accept this information. Thank you for your attention.

Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2014
(presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
Radosław Sikorski at the sitting of the Sejm on 8 May 2014)

Mr President! Madam Speaker! Prime Minister! Government Ministers! Members of the House! Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps!

My foreign policy address this year, the seventh in succession, falls on a special moment. On the one hand, I am proud of Poland's and Poles' achievements, which we are reminded of by three important anniversaries. On the other hand, I see the deteriorating international situation in our neighbourhood. History is shifting to a higher gear before our eyes. We are witnessing a crisis around our borders. Military operations are carried out, the consequences of which can be felt not only in our country and in Europe, but around the world, too. In this context, we are not forgetting about the day we are commemorating today—the sixty-ninth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the bloodiest conflict in the history of mankind.

“What we may be witnessing is not only the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such.” Twenty-five years ago Francis Fukuyama, the US political scientist, made this remark carried by a wave of optimism. He wasn't being naïve. He did not say that this is the end of all armed conflicts as we know them. Observing the West's history, he only drew attention to the evolutionary nature of history and the triumph of democracy over Communism. Unfortunately, democracy has not taken root in all parts of the East, while history—whimsical, uncontrollable, wresting itself free from chains of reason—has prevailed. Its continuation is affirmed by conflicts in the Caucasus, specifically by the partial occupation of Georgia, the uncertain situation in Moldova's Transnistria, and ongoing attempts to destabilise Ukraine, including the annexation of Crimea.

Russian operations in Ukraine evidently violate the principles of peaceful coexistence of nations. The use of armed forces under the pretext of protecting a national minority, which—let's be clear—is not persecuted in Ukraine, is legally unacceptable and politically dangerous.

Poland has been following all this with growing concern. The fundamental principles of the UN Charter and of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe are the cornerstones of diplomacy of a free Poland. And we shall defend peace in Europe for the sake of these principles. For no other country on our continent has learned its value as we have.

Poland's foreign policy follows the classical maxim which the Jagiellonian University embraced as its motto: *Plus ratio quam vis*. Let reason prevail over force. In his first address to the House, Prime Minister Donald Tusk said that Poland would conduct its policy toward Russia "such as it is." This logic remains the only reasonable option. When Russia cooperates with the international community and respects its rules, we welcome this fact and are the first to collaborate. But when Russia annexes its neighbours' territories and threatens them with the use of force, we quickly draw conclusions. I will go further and say that we will be the first to welcome Russia's decision to abandon the path of aggression. But we are not arrogant enough to believe that if a Polish politician angrily stamps his foot or resorts to flowery rhetoric, Russia will change.

Ladies and Gentlemen! Poland has taken good advantage of the period of peace and the end of the two-bloc confrontation. It went from bankruptcy at the end of the 1980s to assuming the role of an anchor of stability in the European Union. Paraphrasing one of our poets, we can say that we are living in a normal country at last—not on entrenchments, a bulwark, but simply in a normal country. Poland's success story is attractive, particularly to countries in the East. Three historic anniversaries remind us of this success. The first—twenty-five years of Poland's sovereignty, the beginnings of our independent foreign policy; the second—Poland's entry into NATO, the world's strongest alliance to which many like Colonel Ryszard Kukliński, had aspired during the Communist era. And the third—ten years of European Union membership which sealed Poland's presence in the West. In just a quarter of a century we have transformed our country that had been politically and economically devastated by Communism into a sovereign and democratic state capable of ensuring a decent quality of life to an increasingly larger group of its citizens.

As Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz put it, "what matters most in politics is where we are heading; 'where we are heading' (...) is more important than 'where we are at this moment.'" Today we cannot enjoy our accomplishments without being concerned about Ukraine. But also about where President Putin's doctrine might lead Russia. For the Ukrainian crisis is a benchmark against which we have to measure the real value of Poland's and Europe's accomplishments.

The outcome of the Polish transformation gives us the right to wish our eastern neighbours similar changes. Our experience makes us confident that these countries will be strong and independent once they go through a similar process of reconstruction. Hence the idea of the Eastern Partnership embedded in the European Union's Neighbourhood Policy. The Eastern Partnership is intended to support reforms and help to transform these countries into modern democracies with sound economies, if they so much as manifest such willingness. The Eastern

Partnership programme, which as a matter of fact Russia has an option to join, cannot possibly threaten anyone.

Ladies and Gentlemen! Members of the House! Let me recall our starting point. Poles were the first to break the monopoly of the Communist party, setting an example for others. The 4 June elections, even though only partially free, triggered great changes. Today they have been raised to a symbol of Poland's regained subjectivity, also in foreign policy.

The patron of foreign policy of a free post-1989 Poland is Jerzy Giedroyc. During the Communist era when Ukraine was just one of many Soviet republics, people grouped around the Paris-based journal *Kultura* rightly argued that once Kyiv declares independence it should be immediately recognised without questioning the line of its borders. This we did, because our Eastern policy is predicated on the existence of not only Ukraine, but also Belarus, and the Baltic States (the latter now finding themselves in a completely different geopolitical reality) as strong and independent countries that live at peace with Poland. Let me recall that Giedroyc also argued in favour of normalising relations with Russia. We have also tried to do just that.

We have modernised Giedroyc's doctrine. We proposed to create the Eastern Partnership and won support for this idea first from the Swedes and later from the whole of the European Union. Its programme now covers countries beyond our immediate neighbourhood. We have offered cooperation to Moldova and the Caucasus countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Not everyone in Poland supported the Eastern Partnership project. It was criticised for being a "German project." An offer of hurried membership of the European Union presented to the Eastern and Central European and Caucasus countries was believed to be an alternative; whereas the real alternative was reinforcing the European limes on the Bug River.

The Eastern Partnership has yielded results. Visa free travel regime was introduced with Moldova just two weeks ago. The majority of European Union Member States, also thanks to the Eastern partnership, speak about the East in a similar tone to Warsaw's. Let the best answer to the claims of Polish critics of the Eastern Partnership be the fact that President Putin considers it—unjustifiably, in my view—to be the main political challenge to his concepts of the post-Soviet order. At the start of the Eastern Partnership I said that it was a project without geopolitical ambitions, but one which could have geopolitical consequences. I did not think that what I said then would turn out to be true in just five years.

The Ukrainian crisis has also laid bare the shortcomings of Community policies. The EU's ability to respond to crisis situations is still limited. This has become apparent both during the Ukrainian crisis, and earlier during the Arab

Spring. The Neighbourhood Policy continues to be inconsistent at times because it lacks the sense of co-responsibility of all Member States for its two dimensions—the Eastern and Southern one. Also, there are no solidarity mechanisms that would protect Member States and EU's partners against such forms of pressure as trade embargoes or energy blackmail. We finally came to realise one thing: when kleptocracies collapse under the weight of their elites' greed, as was the case with Ukraine, European integration of countries covered by the Eastern Partnership will reappear as the only attractive civilisation option.

Ladies and Gentlemen! Despite the crisis in Ukraine, the Partnership continues to develop. At the summit in Vilnius, at the end of last year, we initialled Association Agreements and Free Trade Agreements with Georgia and Moldova. We hope to sign them soon and to implement them consistently. This year will see the implementation of the EU's new multiannual financial framework. The Eastern Partnership countries, especially Ukraine, will receive more funds for reforms. Let me recall that the European Union together with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development committed themselves to allocating, in the form of loans or development assistance, an additional sum of eleven billion euros to Ukraine alone. This is not much less than the entire budget of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy. The existing rules for allocating funds remain unchanged: "more for more, less for less."

Modernisation processes in the Eastern neighbourhood turned out to be more difficult than in Central and Eastern Europe. This is all the more reason to support them. They could yield success when their hosts demonstrate their determination.

We shall continue to support the development of the civil society in the East and to this end we will use, among others, the new EU Erasmus+ programme—tens of thousands of people from the Eastern Partnership countries are already studying in Poland. Poland's priorities when it comes to expert assistance will continue to be: the promotion of democracy and the rule of law, fighting corruption, cooperation of border services, energy coordination and support for the development of rural regions.

We count on improved relations with Belarus, even though it would be easier to believe in the sincerity of declarations of its authorities if prisoners of conscience were not behind bars, the Polish minority could organise itself freely, and each year did not see more Russian military infrastructure in Belarus. Yet, we do look for areas of agreement, as evidenced by the recent telephone conversation between Prime Minister Donald Tusk and President Alexandr Lukashenko. We have been supporting the development of people-to-people contacts, also through grant programmes for Belarusian non-governmental organisations and student

scholarships. We maintain our readiness to open local border traffic and to finalise an education agreement. We support talks on visa facilitation and readmission between Belarus and the European Union.

Members of the House! Today Ukrainians are demanding that their country's territorial integrity be respected. Not long ago they were demanding in the Maidan an association with the EU. Let us recall that tectonic changes in Ukraine were catalysed by the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius. It was there that Ukraine's president, against the will of the majority of his fellow countrymen, dismissed the association agreement with the European Union that had been drafted during the Polish presidency.

The deal brokered between the government and opposition on 21 February put an end to the bloodshed in Kyiv. Ukrainians reached this compromise thanks to mediation by the foreign ministers of France, Germany and Poland. The Weimar Triangle proved that it can be effective.

The deal could not be implemented in full, as the Ukrainian president refused to sign the reinstated constitution and then left the country. This prompted the Verkhovna Rada, in the spirit of the 21 February agreement, to form a new government, which won a parliamentary majority, including the votes of many Party of Regions deputies.

Even as the Ukrainians were making a collective effort to rebuild government structures, their country fell prey to Russian aggression. On the pretext of defending minority rights, Russia annexed Crimea, and is now destabilizing eastern Ukraine. Moscow's actions contravene the fundamental principles of international law. Let me remind the House that the Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States also contains a clause about the inviolability of borders. This leads me to believe that today other post-Soviet countries may feel worried, too.

What happened in Crimea was a war, a strange war. With few shots and explosions, and Russian soldiers wearing uniforms without insignia. But an atmosphere of fear and coercion prevailed. The Russian president belatedly admitted that Russia did intervene militarily in Crimea, something we had been saying all along. Apart from the strange war in Ukraine and around Ukraine, a global information war is being waged. It has a global reach. Poland has been accused of actions and intentions that we find unthinkable. We have been hearing about Polish combatants fighting allegedly in Ukraine, about training camps for the Ukrainian opposition in our country, and even about plans of declaring autonomy by the Polish minority in Ukraine. I must disappoint the editors of newspapers who are circulating such scoops: there is not a grain of truth in your reports. But this goes to show the important role that information plays in today's society. We should give some serious thought to the pan-European project of a

Russian language television broadcaster, an idea advocated by our allies from the Baltic countries. This is also an argument in favour of reforming our foreign language media.

We consider the referendum held by Crimea's self-proclaimed authorities to be illegal both under international and domestic Ukrainian law. We cannot recognize its outcome. In a civilized world you do not hold social consultations under the barrel of a Kalashnikov. Nor do we accept the Kremlin's unilateral decisions to incorporate Crimea. We and the whole West will respond adequately to such conduct by Russia.

We look forward to early presidential elections in Ukraine. Poland will send as many observers as possible—over a hundred. I also encourage members of this House and our Western allies to join in. The democratic nature of elections should also be important to those who call into question the legitimacy of the government in Kyiv.

Members of the House! In view of Russia's actions in Ukraine we should take a broader look not only at Russian foreign policy, but above all at its ideology. For in the centennial year of the outbreak of the First World War Moscow challenges us to an ideological confrontation. A confrontation, I should add, that Russia is in no position to win. In terms of economic potential, the European Union leads eight to one, and when you add the US and Canada, the ratio is eighteen to one. Rather than becoming more democratic and modern, Russia is taking another turn in its tortuous history.

President Putin was right when he said in his address after the annexation of Crimea, "Like a mirror, the situation in Ukraine reflects what is going on and what has been happening in the world over the past several decades." For we have come to realise that Russia does not accept rules which the international community took several decades to develop, mindful of the enormous extent of the tragedy of the two world wars. What is more, the Russian state seems to harbour its own vision of the world. In this vision, the collapse of the Soviet Union was a catastrophe and a humiliation, and the choice of former Soviet republics to become independent nations was an historical injustice. It seems to me that Russia has yet to fully grasp what a defeat Sovietism was for the world and for Russia. Russia is trying to play extra time because it has failed to learn the lesson of its own totalitarian past.

Modern-day Russia views itself as the hub of the Christian Orthodox civilisation, and the sole heir to ancient Rus. It reserves for itself the right to "collect Russian lands," as the grand dukes of Moscow once did in the late Middle Ages. This philosophy is ahistoric, for if any one country can consider itself to be the heir to Kyivan Rus it is Ukraine rather than Russia. But experience tells us that

even if an ideology proves disastrous, and the policy of a leader or a state is based on myths, it does not mean that it will not be carried out.

The consequences of such worldview raise grave concerns. If the Russian viewpoint were to be accepted, international relations in the 21st century would be governed by the law of the strong. The post-Soviet area would be Russia's exclusive sphere of influence. According to this vision, Belarus would be nothing more than Russia's future governorates, whilst Little Russia would take up half of Ukraine. The West is first and foremost a model opponent, and Russia stands as a besieged bastion defending itself against decadent critics and subversive enemies at home. Should defeating the West prove impossible, trying to thwart all its plans will become a foreign policy axiom. It is equally unsettling when you think that every citizen of Russia who does not agree with this philosophy of history becomes a potential dissident.

Let me make one thing clear—contrary to what the Kremlin has been saying the West, including Poland, has never strived to exclude Russia from the international community. On the contrary, for years we have been trying to foster relations with Russia through many institutions and instruments: the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the World Trade Organization and the Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Issues. Given its centuries-old experience, Poland has aimed and will continue to aim for partner-like and good neighbourly relations with Russia.

I once said that it would be in our interest if Russia satisfied NATO membership criteria. As recently as last year, standing here I took the liberty of echoing St. John Paul the Great's dream of Europe breathing with two lungs, the Western and the Eastern. It was not the West that spurned Russia. It was Russia that chose to return to the path of an outdated development model. As Vladimir Putin wrote in his 1999 policy article, "... an ideological approach to the economy resulted in Russia's lagging behind developed countries. Bitter as it may taste, for nearly seven decades we moved along a road to nowhere, a road that was far from the main path of civilisation development." The then Russian prime minister went on to say that "... responsible social and political forces should present to the people a strategy for Russia's renaissance and prosperity, a scheme that would tap into all achievements of democratic and free-market reforms, and would be implemented by evolutionary methods." Unfortunately, Russia has deviated from this path. Hopefully not for good.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the House! The Ukraine crisis may have taken the world by surprise, but we were well prepared for it. This is manifested, for instance, by the network of consulates—the largest one of all EU and NATO countries—that we have established in Ukraine over the past seven years. I am referring specifically to the posts in Sevastopol and Donetsk, which were set up

on my initiative. The last few months have proved their usefulness. It is from them that we get the most reliable news from south-eastern Ukraine. The other day the Polish Consulate in Donetsk issued—despite the crisis—its first visas and a passport. The latter was presented to the Polish Army major and OSCE observer who was abducted in Slavyansk.

In the face of developments that have claimed hundreds of lives and led to the occupation of Ukraine's territory in recent months, we believe that Poland and Europe must react in a strong yet balanced way. The EU has recently imposed sanctions against decision-makers who are responsible for this crisis. On the one hand, you have sanctions. On the other hand, we stand ready to back diplomatic efforts that would calm down the situation in Ukraine under a new constitution which provides for devolution of power. We are canvassing the entire Union, but it is not easy to obtain unanimity among twenty eight Member States promptly and convincingly enough to change the calculations of the other side.

Ukraine needs both political and economic stability. We have also admitted over a hundred people who were injured in the Maidan for medical treatment in Poland. We have been helping with local government reform. Poland is their inspiration.

The EU assistance package I have mentioned is complemented by a deal with the International Monetary Fund worth seventeen billion dollars. The World Bank has pledged another three and a half billion. We hope that this aid—contingent on reforms and fight against corruption—will send a message to foreign investors that Ukraine is determined to make a breakthrough this time round. For this reason we have appealed to the government in Kyiv to lift groundless restrictions imposed on Polish foodstuffs.

We have already signed the political part of the association agreement with Ukraine. No matter how soon its economic component is signed, we are already offering concrete help to Ukrainian businesspeople and Polish entrepreneurs doing business in Ukraine. The European Union has unilaterally abolished customs tariffs on ninety-eight percent of Ukraine's exports. Ukraine will gain almost half a billion euros a year thanks to this measure. Moreover, the European Commission and Member States are also taking steps to enable long-running gas transmissions from Poland, Slovakia and Hungary to Ukraine. We welcome the first deal struck by Slovak and Ukrainian companies.

There is also help for Ukraine coming from across the Atlantic. The US Congress has approved one billion dollars' worth of loan guarantees for the government in Kyiv. Support has been declared by Canada, a country with a sizeable Ukrainian diaspora, as well as Japan, a friend of the Eastern Partnership, which has pledged one and a half billion dollars to Kyiv, too.

Ladies and Gentlemen! In all my previous annual addresses, I have made a reference to the 3 May Constitution, which reads "The nation bears a duty to its own defence from attack and for the safeguarding of its integrity." Only a domestically stable country that continues to rebuild its strength can count on allies.

The North Atlantic Alliance is the best defence treaty Poland has ever had. We want to stress the significance of the 15th anniversary of Poland's accession to NATO. We see how it has improved both Poland's and Allies' security. Today, our army is 18th in the world, according to an international ranking; it is well-trained and very experienced in operations in Iraq, Afghanistan or the Balkans. Cooperation with Allies, primarily with the United States, should give our army access to state-of-the art military equipment.

We appreciate the presence of the armed forces of the United States and other countries in Poland. I would like to recall that US aircrafts were able to land in Lask, Powidz and Krzesiny because our government had successfully negotiated a missile defence agreement. We were compensated for the unfulfilled promise of permanent deployment of Patriot missiles in Poland with an air force subunit that is permanently stationed in our country. It is unfortunate that all this is happening in the heat of the crisis in Ukraine, but today we are implementing a long-term security policy goal: we are increasing the actual presence of NATO units, materiel and infrastructure in our territory. AWACS surveillance aircrafts fly over Poland and Romania. The US has deployed a paratrooper company and Canada, a paratrooper platoon in Poland. A group of anti-mine ships is on permanent standby in the Baltic Sea. NATO naval forces will soon be performing their exercises. We have permanently strengthened the Baltic Air Policing mission; we are now in charge of the current mission, supported by the British, Danes and the French. The number of NATO forces in our region will increase.

In doing so we are dispelling the fears of some people and quashing the hopes of others that Poland will be a second-class member of NATO. And that we will be left to fend off for ourselves in case of real danger. Just when our region is in the midst of one of the most serious crises after the end of the Cold War, Poland's membership of NATO is becoming a real component of our country's security. The EU's military integration would also make Poland more secure.

In our opinion, last year's Exercise Steadfast Jazz was only partially successful. Some of our allies, France specifically, demonstrated their real solidarity with us. However, some other contingents were below their capabilities and smaller than initially declared.

Another NATO summit is due to take place in Wales in September. Decisions taken by its members have to reflect changes in the security situation. NATO's

new Secretary General has assured me that he would make defence capacity building on the eastern flank one of the priorities of his term of office.

Together with our friends from Sweden and the United Kingdom, we have suggested sending an EU police mission to Ukraine under the auspices of the Common Security and Defence Policy. We need an ambitious European defence policy. Such policy would require a separate budget and a mechanism of ongoing structural cooperation.

Poland has also supported the OSCE observation mission in Ukraine, in which many Polish experts are taking part. During its organisation, the mission was headed by a Polish diplomat, Adam Kobieracki. We are also monitoring the military situation in the region by carrying out inspections pursuant to the Vienna Document.

We are reducing our military contingent in Afghanistan. After a decade of Polish presence in this country, we are planning to pull out from the ISAF stabilisation mission by end of the year. The funds thus saved will be used to develop the Polish armed forces and to consolidate the experience we have gained. We will continue to be engaged in Georgia and the Balkans. We are prepared to help our citizens in unstable countries, just like we helped Polish missionaries in Africa.

We are also aware of global challenges. We are engaged in measures to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We are involved in the process of destroying Syria's chemical weapons which is slowly but surely coming to an end.

Last year, the international community entrusted Poland with the chair of the most important United Nations body dedicated to human rights, the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. We want to apply Poland's growing potential also to pursue a global agenda. For this reason we are seeking a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council in 2018-2019.

Members of the House! Despite the adverse political climate, we still want to develop our economic relations with Russia, the fifth largest market for Polish products, in the spirit of pragmatism. Last year, our exports to Russia were worth approximately USD 11 billion, an increase by almost one-tenth. Imports from Russia decreased by a comparable amount, totalling USD 25 billion. We are interested in good cooperation between all services involved in product quality inspections to ensure an undisturbed flow of trade. We stress the high quality of Polish products which is proven by their success on demanding Western markets.

We are optimistic about both the social and the economic success of local border traffic with the Kaliningrad Oblast, which some call the "Eastern Prussia" project. In the first half of last year, inhabitants of this Russian exclave spent at

least PLN 238 million in Poland. Frequent contacts with Russians fuelled tourism and trade.

We will continue to support the Polish prosecutor's office in its efforts to enforce legal assistance concerning the handing over of the TU-154M wreckage and the entire documentation pertaining to the Smolensk crash. We have also requested Russia to hand over to us the diplomatic real estate assets in Poland that it does not use. It is our government that has terminated the relevant agreement on that issue dating back to Communist times.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the House! We must brace ourselves for a continued instability in the East and possible disruptions in oil and gas supplies to Europe resulting from it. That is why Prime Minister Tusk has presented his own proposal to establish an energy union, which has already enlisted the support of many Member States.

Its core lies in the solidarity mechanism—the European Union must be able to utilise its full potential in order to prevent disruptions in oil and gas transmission. The Union should also introduce common purchasing of oil and gas, to make their prices more competitive. Another premise of such an energy union involves the development of domestic energy sources. We want to make better use of opportunities offered by shale gas and effective coal combustion technologies. Finally, we wish to reinforce the energy security of European Union neighbours. We will encourage countries such as Ukraine or Moldova to implement transparent rules of the third energy package. We need more interconnector pipelines, particularly gas pipelines, such as the North-South gas corridor, with our neighbours. The LNG terminal in Świnoujście, which forms a part of the corridor, will soon become a gas window on the world not only for Poland, but also for the whole region.

Members of the House! As the minister for European affairs, I can claim with full responsibility that we have been skilfully taking advantage of our ten years' presence in the Union to pursue our strategic national interests. Poland has noticeably advanced in the European Union's political hierarchy—from a country which looked at the Union from the perspective of financial security only, to becoming a state that is taking on increasingly more responsibility for the future of the entire Union.

At the accession's tenth anniversary, we can attest: Eurosceptics were wrong. The grim visions of seven plagues that were to have struck Poland as a result of its EU accession failed to materialise. We have not seen "the Regained Territories being peacefully taken over"; the Union is neither "Euro-Germany" nor a "godless, Masonic idea." The majority of our businesses have not gone bankrupt, and eight million Poles have not lost their jobs. What is more, the unemployment rate has

fallen, from almost 20 percent in the year of accession to the current 13.5 percent (less than 10 percent according to Eurostat's methodology). The Union has not forced us to amend our abortion law or to legalise civil partnerships. We are free to regulate these issues in our own judgement.

Our Eurosceptics are, on the one hand, criticising the Union for not being enough firm towards Russia, and, on the other, calling for a European Union to be exclusively a free-trade zone. In line with this logic, the Union is supposed to feed and defend us but on condition that it is others—not us—who will agree to “communitize” their sovereignty. Ladies and gentlemen who profess Euroscepticism: make up your minds! No free-trade zone has ever defended anybody against anything or even imposed tough sanctions on anyone. If the European Union is to fulfil the hopes pinned on it, it must be a political union, more closely integrated than today.

Let us remember that this year will bring a new line-up at European Union institutions. Soon we will be electing members of the European Parliament. We will also learn the names of the new President of the European Council and new Commissioners, among them our compatriot who will receive an important portfolio again.

Today the European Union needs a stronger leadership more than ever before. We want to see Europe engage more actively in areas that directly affect the prosperity of its citizens—for instance, by more effectively tackling unemployment or tax havens. We need more Europe where the national state is powerless and less intervention where it is efficient.

I call on my fellow countrymen to take part in the European elections. I ask Polish citizens abroad to go to the polls where you reside. Let the politicians there see your strength.

The European elections will heavily influence the direction in which the European integration, particularly the euro zone, will evolve. Poland cannot afford to stay on the side-lines of this process. The developments in Ukraine should mobilise us into faster integration with the euro zone. The decision whether to adopt the single currency will not only be financial and economic, but most of all political, one that will also affect our security. The euro zone's rule “one for all, all for one” applies unconditionally, because any serious threats to one country automatically mean perturbations in all. In today's complex international situation it is in our interest to establish such interdependencies between Poland and the other European states. For this reason, after our demands were met, we finished negotiations on the banking union.

It is our invariable view that Ukraine should have a membership perspective, which follows directly from the Treaty of the European Union. That is why we

welcomed the conclusions of the extraordinary meeting of EU foreign ministers which, on Poland's motion, provide that the association treaty is not the ultimate goal of co-operation with Ukraine.

Naturally, we are aware of the distance separating Ukraine from the goal of its integration with Europe. However, as Krzysztof Pomian points out, Europe has inherently been a "civilisation of transgression." It goes beyond its own boundaries, also the boundary between what it considered possible and a flight of fancy.

The crisis in Ukraine has shown that we can rely on most of our European partners, also as regards the Eastern policy. We have been developing energy co-operation in the Visegrad Group formula. With the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary we share not only a common history and political goals, but also a growing trade exchange. We are bidding to co-host the 2022 Winter Olympics with the Slovaks. Together with our Visegrad partners, we are opening up to the North—to Scandinavian and Baltic states. As recently as two months ago, I attended another in a series of meetings in this format in Estonia's Narva. Such forums respond well to the creation of a North–South communication axis, in which Poland is playing a leading role. The very good bilateral relations with Latvia and Estonia stem from similar experiences, caring for the growth and security of the region, and from common interests in the European Union.

Germany remains Poland's key political partner in Europe. The visit of Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier to Warsaw in December, just two days after the swearing in of a new government, symbolically acknowledged the closeness of our relations. The chief of German diplomacy will also be a guest of the Polish Ambassadors' Conference in July. After all, our close partnership does not mean we see eye to eye on all issues and that sometimes we do not act to change Berlin's position on matters that are important to us. We are in talks on, among others, ways in which Germany is fulfilling its alliance commitments, and the reliability of NATO's contingency plans.

In our relations with France, we intend to continue the new opening, which has allowed establishing a strategic partnership. This year our troops are serving shoulder to shoulder in Mali and in the Central African Republic, where the religious conflict has claimed thousands of lives and driven close to a million people into exile.

We are going to intensify our dialogue with the United Kingdom. It is our unchanging view that the UK belongs to the European Union. A possible UK exit from the EU would be detrimental to all Member States, including us. We enjoy privileged political relations and economic ties with Italy and Spain. Just a while ago, together with hundreds of thousands of pilgrims in the Vatican, we celebrated the canonisation of John Paul the Great, a teacher of responsibility. We

welcomed the decision to choose the city of Krakow as host of the World Youth Day in 2016. We have also been developing political and military dialogue with Romania. We congratulate our Romanian allies on their successful modernisation of its armed forces and declare our readiness to share experience—for instance as regards the F-16 fighter jets.

Last year, we were happy to welcome Croatia as a new Member State of the European Union. We will be supporting other Western Balkan countries on their path towards the European Union. We note with satisfaction the progress in normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo. This year also marks the six hundredth anniversary of establishing Polish-Turkish diplomatic relations. The official visit of President Bronisław Komorowski to Turkey inaugurated the extensive programme of political, cultural and business events.

Ladies and Gentlemen! We are looking with hope at the opportunities offered by the continent of Asia, without disregarding the political, ethnic and religious tensions in that region. What goes on in Asia affects the Polish trade. The share of exports in our gross domestic product, which stands at around 40 percent, ranks us among economies which are highly integrated with the global system.

China's economy has been growing for more than thirty years at a pace unprecedented in the history of mankind. Beijing has noticed that Poland, and the region of Central and Eastern Europe, is an important area of growth in Europe. We have seen a reinvigoration of Polish-Chinese relations—in the form of a strategic partnership—and the CEE region's relations with China; there was a reason why Poland hosted the first summit of prime ministers from 16 countries of Central and Eastern Europe plus China. We are already seeing its first results—Chinese investments in Poland and increased Polish exports. Łódź stands a chance of becoming a city which handles the trade of companies from across the region with China.

We have been intensifying our relations with other states of Asia and the Pacific, too. We are working more closely with India: this year marks the sixtieth anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between our countries. Our congratulations go to the Afghan people for their effective organisation of their presidential elections.

Australia and New Zealand remain on Poland's list of unvaryingly important partners. We are pleased with the rising trade and the fact that we speak with one voice on many global issues.

The process of Polish diplomacy going global responds well to the development of strategic relations between Asia and the European Union. It is not always worthwhile to act alone. We will co-operate closely with our EU partners whenever possible and financially advisable. This year we are planning to make

available part of the premises in our New Delhi embassy to the EU delegation. It will be a clear message signalling we are open to collaboration outside Europe. We have capabilities to contribute to building Europe's subjectivity and prestige worldwide. After all, the EU is still a heavyweight player in the global economy. Its driving force lies in key projects such as free trade agreements, at various stages of implementation, with South Korea, Canada, India, Japan and the United States. The transatlantic agreement on free trade and investment partnership is an economic offshoot of Europe's alliance with the US.

Latin America and the Caribbean remain a relatively stable region politically. In spite of the global slowdown, last year its economic growth amounted to 2.6 percent and is projected to reach 3.2 percent this year. This inspires the Polish diplomacy to actively engage in a political as well as an economic dialogue with this region's countries.

We welcome the fact that Israelis and Palestinians have made an attempt to negotiate. We hope that—despite the current deadlock—the talks will be resumed. The situation in Syria looks tragic. The war there has already claimed more than 140,000 lives, with more than 2.5 million people being forced into exile. This places even more responsibility on the Geneva conference participants. We call on both parties to cease the hostilities and to continue peace talks. It is with cautious joy that we take note of the detente in relations between the West and Iran, with which Poland is celebrating the 540th anniversary of the first diplomatic contacts. We hope that the interim nuclear agreement will acquire a lasting character. We will continue to appeal to countries of Africa and the Middle East to respect the rights of religious minorities, especially of Christians.

We will be intensifying contacts with select countries of Sub-Saharan Africa focusing on economic co-operation—in line with the Government programme “Go Africa.” This year we also want to host a reunion for African graduates of Polish universities. We wish to get them more involved in actions that promote Poland and Polish-African contacts. In a joint effort with other ministries, we are working to increase the scholarships offered to Africans and other non-Europeans, who already represent over a one-third of all foreign students.

Members of the House! The last year has seen many new developments in international trade. Polish exports to South Korea grew by over thirty percent, while our exports to the United Arab Emirates, for instance, went up by two-thirds.

Some reliable analyses say that Polish exports will expand by more than a half in 2016-20, a trend boosted chiefly by Asian markets. The growth of exports will likely outstrip the growth of GDP. In effect, Poland's interdependence with global markets will continue to grow.

With its network of diplomatic posts spread around the globe, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been advising and helping our investors and economic missions that promote the Polska brand. By the way, let me tell you that last year its value increased five percent, to nearly five hundred billion dollars. We have drawn up Rules for Communicating the POLSKA brand. I sincerely encourage you to check the website of our ministry for more information on the subject. Each and every day Polish diplomatic posts answer over two hundred questions from entrepreneurs. Every month Polish diplomats provide various forms of support to around forty economic missions our entrepreneurs send to all continents. Over the last two years, MFA senior officials have been accompanied on their foreign visits by representatives of more than four hundred Polish companies. To provide more incentives to our diplomats who support Polish companies, I endowed an *Amicus Oeconomiae* prize for the most effective Polish diplomat. I also established an award for a Polish Diaspora Product of the Year that is made abroad by a Pole or a person of Polish extraction. The distinction is bestowed annually on 2 May, which marks the Day of Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad. We also plan to set up a databank that will let us tap into the knowledge and experience of Polish experts on non-European affairs.

The economy is a clear priority in contacts with non-European countries. But we do not forget about the values we cherish. Poles love freedom. Today a number of countries, including Egypt, Myanmar and Tunisia, look up to us as a model of transition from a totalitarian regime to a free-market democracy. We want to use celebrations of 4 June to highlight the achievements of “Solidarity” which are so dear to us. This also applies to the people whose civil courage and imagination during Communism chipped away at walls, before they came down spectacularly.

Yesterday I announced that the first-ever Solidarity Prize, to be presented on 3 June, will go to Mustafa Dzhemilev, the spiritual leader of Crimean Tatars. He earned his reputation as a moral authority already during Soviet times, when he was a dissident. He served almost ten years in labour camps. It was Dzhemilev who triggered the first wave of Tatar returns to Crimea from their forced exile on Stalin’s orders. A deputy to the Verkhovna Rada in Kyiv, he is an advocate of keeping Crimea within Ukraine. Little wonder that he has recently been banned from entering the Russian Federation for five years. Nor is he allowed into Crimea. The cash prize of a million zlotys that will go to the laureate will be supplemented by additional three million zlotys allocated to development programmes chosen by the prize winner.

This year’s anniversaries are more than just an opportunity to reflect on the past. They are also a chance to take stock of and appreciate the importance of historical issues for pursuing a modern foreign policy. This was one of the reasons why

I appointed an MFA Historian and established a Board of Historians to advise the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Board's mission is to support research into the history of Poland's foreign policy, and to promote knowledge of Polish history abroad.

We want our compatriots to return home, but before they do, we want them to get a better understanding of Poland's national interest. To build a positive image of Poland in the world, and friendly ties with their countries of residence. On the other hand, we are aware of our obligations towards Poles in the east—people who found themselves outside Poland against their will. We want them to keep in touch with Polish culture and, if that is their wish, settle in the country of their ancestors.

In the context of the demographic situation, we are supporting legal immigration. We are facilitating the settlement of young foreigners in our country, specifically those who have Polish ancestors. We are encouraging them to apply for Polish citizenship. The new Aliens Act has made it easier to obtain a residence permit by persons of Polish extraction and holders of the Card of the Pole, who can receive citizenship having resided in Poland for just three years. The scope of my address today does not permit me to present Polish diaspora issues with an insight such issues deserve to be discussed. I agreed with the Marshal of the Senate that I will present an in-depth information about our policy toward the Polish diaspora and Poles abroad to the Higher Chamber.

We plan to expand our existing TV offer. In cooperation with Polish Television we want to launch a new channel for viewers abroad. It will be a showcase of contemporary Poland, the Poland audiences at home can watch every day.

For several years now we have been consistently modernizing our foreign service. Our overriding goal is to build a competent, efficient and citizen-friendly staff. We have been developing the network of foreign missions. We are creating the institution of visiting ambassadors—in Malta, Myanmar, Mongolia or the Philippines. We have been seconding our diplomats to EU delegations and posts of other Member States.

We continue to digitize. The other day I approved a six-year IT Strategy for the ministry and foreign service posts.

Our diplomacy receives competent support from the Polish Institute of International Affairs, which has is becoming increasingly recognisable around the world. The Ignacy Jan Paderewski Polish Institute of Diplomacy is also growing in strength, training diplomats also from the Eastern Partnership countries.

We have been improving the working conditions of Polish diplomats. We have launched a new press centre, with an interior décor created by Poland's top designers. We are building an MFA reception centre. We would also like all

MFA bureaus and departments that are now scattered across Warsaw to move into one location.

Despite its limited resources, the ministry has been carrying out important foreign investments: the construction of new embassy seats in Berlin and Minsk. The imagery of these buildings will evoke modern Poland, a country that is ever more prosperous and stands ready to share its culture and scientific accomplishments. At the same time, we have been selling real property that we no longer need, and moving foreign service posts to new locations, thanks to which we have made major savings. In 2014 we will strengthen the existing posts and set up new ones in Asia and Africa, albeit in more economical and unconventional formulas.

Members of the House! The purpose of changes in Poland was not to build up a political and economic power that would be directed against anybody. Addressing this house two years ago, I said that today's Poland is the best Poland we have ever had. To this we can add with total confidence that this is the best Poland our neighbours could wish for. All neighbours without exception.

Looking back over the past years we see that we have sized our opportunities resulting from transformation. As recently as 1992, on the eve of transformation, Poland was at a stage of development comparable to that of Ukraine. We had a similar gross domestic product per capita. Modernization was painful at times, but we kept pushing it. A great lesson that transformation has taught us is that reforms can unlock some of the best features in a society: ingenuity, resourcefulness, industriousness. Today our GDP per capita is nearly three times higher than Ukraine's.

I'm saying this not to brag about the Polish success—Napoleon used to say that "enthusiasm is the mind's delirium"—but to show our friends from Ukraine that change for the better is possible. Poland's road over the past quarter of a century has cut across seemingly relentless geopolitics. The same could be true for Ukraine. Let's hope that nothing is more contagious than an example.

As the foreign minister of a free Poland I have always tried to present to this House issues as they stand. Without illusions or wishful thinking. Today I am making no secret of the fact that Europe is going through its most serious crisis since the collapse of Communism. Poland can make no decisive impact on the course of events, but the impact it does have is growing. Our country will use this impact to create a free and strong Europe, where Poles can feel secure. I count on the Sejm to help us achieve this aim.

Thank you for your attention.

Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2015
(presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
Grzegorz Schetyna at a sitting of the Sejm on 23 April 2015)

Mr. President! Mr. Speaker! Madam Prime Minister! Members of the House! Ambassadors! Ladies and Gentlemen!

Only a few months have passed since my address to the House on foreign policy of the Government of the Republic of Poland last November. For international relations it is not much, but for the turn of 2014 it is. In many respects, this short period has seen Europe arrive at a critical juncture.

Europe's immediate neighbourhood has turned into a great belt of instability, affecting Libya, Iraq and Syria in the south, and Ukraine in the east. The conflicts raging in these countries have different causes, but the results in many respects are the same: the destruction of a political order that ensured peace and stability in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa during the past several decades, thousands of people killed, tens of thousands wounded, millions of refugees. The perpetrators of these disasters, be they terrorists operating under the black Daesh flag, or Russian-backed separatists from the Donbas, have one thing in common—their hatred for the West and the values it embodies in relations between nations.

Poland's foreign policy at these turning points is characterised by a levelheaded and sober assessment of the surrounding reality, the ability to respond quickly to changes in the international environment and a consistent drive to ensure that the Republic of Poland possesses two basic goods that all of its citizens deserve: security and the ability to develop. Polish foreign policy today is not only a national policy, but also a strong and reliable voice shaping the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

At times the idea of a strong Union is presented in opposition to nation states. It is a false alternative. Europe has always drawn its strength from the strength of its nations. It does so today as it did when the European civilisation began its global expansion. Europe will be powerful and respected by the international community only when the nations that create it are bold and farsighted in their policy, will understand history instead of bowing to its fatalism. We must have the courage today to image the EU's blue flag flying at the Dnieper's banks, in the Western Balkans and on the Bosphorus. We must show courage where the interests and wellbeing of the Europeans call for determined action and sensible manoeuvring. Europe cannot be afraid of the world; it has to co-create it as one

of the world's powers. Above all, it must be united politically and as a civilisation. This is the main guarantee of its power.

Members of the House! Ensuring security is a key issue today for the future of Poland and Europe. We are using all the instruments available to us to achieve this. Naturally, the most important of these instruments is NATO. Challenges posed by the war in eastern Ukraine or the savagery of the so-called Islamic State have forced the transatlantic community to rebuild its potential in all aspects. We are now engaged in efforts on two tracks: decisions taken at the Newport Summit are being implemented and, in parallel, preparations for the NATO Summit in Warsaw in 2016 have begun.

Strengthening the Alliance's eastern flank remains our most important objective. To accomplish this goal, we have been fully implementing the Readiness Action Plan agreed on at the NATO Summit in Newport. Tasks currently underway are aimed primarily at improving the effectiveness of command structures, increasing the size of NATO's response forces, and creating rapid reaction forces. These efforts are also intended to improve the capabilities of NATO members' armed forces to cooperate during crises and wars. To this end, we engage in joint exercises and develop the infrastructure necessary to implement plans in the event of a war.

In this spirit, in February this year, member states took the following decisions:

- first, the size of the NATO Response Force (NRF) will be increased to 30,000 personnel;
- second, in 2015, a temporary Very High Readiness Joint Task Force will be established on the basis of contributions by Germany, Norway and the Netherlands;
- third, the forces of the so-called spearhead will number up to 5,000 soldiers and be ready for deployment in 2–3 days;
- fourth and last, Poland, on a rotating basis with Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom, will become a framework state of the future Very High Readiness Joint Task Force.

In 2015, approximately 10,000 soldiers of the Alliance's member states will take part in military exercises in the territory of Poland, including approximately 3,000 members of the US Armed Forces. We will also seek to increase the role of, and internationalise such units as the Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin and the NATO Force Integration Units currently being formed. Poland will be increasing its role in the alliance by engaging in the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force and in reforming the NATO Response Force. Compared with last year, the progress is obvious.

Increasing member states' budgets will be key to enhancing NATO's potential. I would like to recall that Poland is one of the few countries today whose defence spending has already approached the level of commitments stemming from membership in the Alliance, and in 2016 we will achieve the required level of 2 percent of GDP. Under the Armed Forces Modernisation Plan, Poland will have spent over 130 billion zloty on defence by 2022. The modernisation of the Polish armed forces will increase their capability to defend the state by building offensive deterrence systems, among others. We will be consistently encouraging our partners to step up their efforts in this field.

We are confident that the great majority of the planned objectives will be implemented by the time of next year's NATO Summit in Warsaw. From this point of view, the event will have a symbolic as well as a practical dimension. It will be an important step towards scrapping the division into "old" and "new" member states, into states that are fully integrated with the rest of the Alliance and those that remain on the peripheries of its military infrastructure.

Increasingly intense defence cooperation with the United States is becoming part of the process of strengthening the security of the Alliance's eastern flank. It has solid grounds that stem both from a historical context and the shared experience of joint military missions in recent years. We note with satisfaction the start of the European Reassurance Initiative by our US partners which President Barack Obama announced in Warsaw. Since 2012, US F-16 fighter jets have been stationing in Łask. Since last year US land forces have been engaged in exercises in Poland on a rotational basis.

We will continue to engage in political and economic dialogue with Canada in the framework of our transatlantic cooperation. We appreciate Ottawa's commitment to NATO and to enhancing security in our region. We welcome Canadian soldiers who are arriving in Poland for joint exercises. We highly assess our cooperation with Canada on issues relating to the conflict in Ukraine.

Our security policy emphasises cooperation within NATO, but we do see the growing need to enhance the military capabilities of the European Union. The challenges that it has to face, especially in the South, increasingly demand conducting a determined policy. In practice, this means a consistent strengthening of European battle groups so that they become formations capable of responding rapidly. It should also mean the will to actually use them. Poland is prepared to participate in this process together with other countries.

While emphasizing the need to strengthen the Republic of Poland's hard security, we have not lost sight of the need to engage in diplomatic efforts. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, often criticised for its low effectiveness, turned out to be the only instrument which the international

community could use to contain the destructive effects of the war in Ukraine in the hour of trial. It is hard to image a non-confrontational security architecture in Europe without Russia, just like it is difficult to imagine a European political and security order based on foundations other than those enshrined in the 1975 Final Act of the CSCE. Today, a process of reflexion on the future of the OSCE has begun in Europe with Polish diplomacy taking an active part in it.

Mr Speaker! Members of the House! European neighbourhood is seen both as an opportunity and a duty. An opportunity in the sense that the countries bordering on the European Union can acquire its *acquis*, while more and more societies can embrace the European political, economic and social standards. A duty which involves listening to the voice of history and not turning one's back on nations—like Turkey, Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova—that are prepared to follow the European development path. If the European Union wants to be a 21st century global power, it must have something positive to offer its immediate neighbourhood, particularly Eastern Europe. Our way of thinking has found supporters in the European Union. My efforts are and will continue to be subordinated to the goal of making it more and more widespread.

Today's debate on Polish foreign policy is taking place a few weeks before the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga. We hear voices in Europe saying that the Partnership has turned out to be a programme that is too ambitious and too costly in political terms. Instead of ensuring itself a stable and predictable Eastern Europe, the West is now in confrontation with Russia, while the eastern part of the Continent is exposed to a protracted conflict whose consequences are unpredictable. At this point, we ought to ask the question whether indeed Eastern Europe was a model of stability and predictability. Within a decade Ukraine experienced two revolutions, while social protests that erupted in Georgia and Moldova forced their governments to step down. Authorities in other countries resorted to police force and curtailed civic liberties in order not to allow this situation to happen. Is this what we mean by stability and predictability?

East-European social model that is extensive, shuns reforms and is stifled by corruption has exhausted itself. The source of instability is the lack of a European perspective and reforms, not the other way around. The Ukrainian people have demonstrated this by being prepared to pay with their lives for putting an end to corruption, contempt for law and order and inept governments which made no effort to modernize the country in two decades. The Kyiv Maidan witnessed the birth of a modern European identity of the Ukrainian people.

Poland supports efforts by the international community to halt the expansion of Russia-sponsored separatists in eastern Ukraine. These efforts involve both attempts to mediate undertaken by Germany and France, as well as sanctions,

which under the present conditions we consider as painful but necessary instruments used in defence of a sovereign European state against outside aggression. We believe that it would make sense to enhance the presence of international observers in the region of the conflict. At the same time we cannot rule out that in the event of a renewed escalation of military operations, we will be forced, together with other states that share our assessment of the situation, to take a decision to step up our support for the Ukrainian state, including its defence.

We have supported and are prepared to continue to support the authorities in Kyiv in their reform process. We are glad that this issue enjoys a bipartisan and social consensus across-the-board in Poland—almost 80 percent of Poles are in favour of providing economic support to our eastern neighbour. Stabilisation of the political situation, the reform process and creating conditions for the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (AA/DCFTA) starting in January 2016 are our priorities. During the January Polish-Ukrainian intergovernmental consultations held by Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz in Kyiv, Poland reaffirmed its readiness to provide a tied government loan to Ukraine of EUR 100 million, which should become a strong impulse for the development of cooperation between SMEs. An agreement was also signed on traineeships for representatives of Ukrainian state supervision authorities in the Supreme Audit Office in Warsaw. We want to initiate activities by the Polish-Ukrainian Youth Exchange Council. The MFA will also make it possible for Ukrainian nationals to study under scholarship programme schemes. We will also provide support for the development of institutions that fight corruption. A plenipotentiary for supporting reforms in Ukraine has been appointed. A Polish group of experts is participating in work on a decentralisation reform. Moreover in 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs plans to allocate additional resources to aid Ukraine. We have been strengthening Ukraine's armed forces' potential as part of a NATO training programme the aim of which is to provide assistance to reform military education.

The recent visit by President Bronisław Komorowski to Kyiv and his address to Verkhovna Rada resonated with special symbolic meaning for stronger bilateral ties. His words about a hand extended by Poland to Ukraine with an offer of cooperation were both concrete and symbolic. Poland's financial and political assistance to Ukraine has been growing year on year. A sovereign, democratic, pro-European and prosperous Ukraine is an element of the Polish *raison d'état*. It is also worth recalling that in the course of the last 25 years, we have never forced any solutions or choices on our neighbours and will not do so in the future.

We want to continue the process of historical reconciliation with Ukraine that is based on truth. We will not keep silent about our wrongs and Polish victims, including the Massacre in Volhynia, but we will not be indifferent to the sensitivities of our neighbour. Today's Ukraine is building its modern identity, including its historical identity, but it does not relieve it from the duty to demonstrate a critical approach towards its own history, a duty shared by all mature nations. In anticipation of your questions, Honourable Members of the House, I wish to state categorically that we do not see as a threat the four laws on historical policy recently adopted by Verkhovna Rada. I appeal to all parliamentary groups to refrain from using this issue in the current election campaign. It will not agree with the Polish *raison d'état*.

In a month from now, the fourth Eastern Partnership Summit will be held in Riga. It should reaffirm that the EU is ready to continue its ambitious cooperation not only with Ukraine, but also with Moldova and Georgia, and to engage in new initiatives with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus. It will require a positive offer adjusted to the needs of countries seeking closer integration with the West, on the one hand, and a strategy of flexible responses to emerging threats to the stability of this region, on the other. In any case, an important element exists that binds all the six countries together: a drive to strengthen an independent and sovereign statehood. Poland will support this drive. To advance the European aspirations of our eastern partners, I have paid visits to Kyiv and Chisinau together with Denmark's foreign minister. I have engaged in a similar initiative with my Danish and Swedish counterparts in Georgia. During my visit to Tbilisi, I inaugurated the Tbilisi Conference. Its aim is to assist Georgians in European integration. We are sharing with them what we once received from others. The Utrecht Conference created by the Netherlands in the late 1990s helped Poland on its path towards the European Union.

The Riga Summit, let me make it very clear, should reaffirm the right of East European societies to choose their own path of civilizational development just as Poland did 25 years ago.

Members of the House! It saddens me to note a cooling in our relations with the Russian Federation which, however, had its significant reasons. Russia's policy towards Ukraine and other countries oriented towards closer ties with the EU, but also events in Russia—the killing of Boris Nemtsov, a campaign of intimidation directed against those who demand respect for human rights and civil liberties or the media war waged to mask one's own role in the conflict in Ukraine and to caricature Western reaction to Russian aggression raise concern. A gesture that did not serve our bilateral relations well and had a special political meaning was

the refusal by Russia to grant entry to the Speaker of the Senate of the Republic of Poland who planned to attend Boris Nemtsov's funeral.

We are concerned over slander campaigns or actions intended to stir confusion in the Polish information space. I will not list them so as not to play a role in this scenario. I appeal to Polish media outlets to show moderation and common sense when covering topics that are present more in the media than in real life and which present our country in a negative light, trying to provoke violent reactions or deflect our attention away from important issues and draw it to trifles.

The vision of Poles and Russians shaking hands in the spirit of the best traditions of Mickiewicz, Herzen and Sakharov clearly raises concern even today among some circles in Moscow. Notwithstanding the recent developments, we will try to reverse this trend and return to normal, good-neighbourly relations between our states. We appreciate the good aspects of our relations and want to speak about them. We are grateful to Russia for its assistance in evacuating Polish citizens from Yemen, for the possibility of dignified commemoration of the 5th anniversary of the air crash in Smolensk and the 75th anniversary of the Katyn Crime, but we will not accept the lack of progress in the matter of returning the wreckage of the Polish Tu-154 aircraft or in the building of a monument to the victims of the air crash near Smolensk. We regard the closing of these issues as a test of Russia's goodwill in its relations with our country.

Counting on resolving these issues, we are sustaining bilateral channels of cooperation with Russia. We want to hold talks in the framework of the Polish-Russian Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation and Interregional Cooperation. We will develop cross-border cooperation with the Kaliningrad Oblast. We hope that the Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Matters, which now appears needed more than ever, will meet again soon.

Mr Speaker! Members of the House! The situation in the Middle East and the Mediterranean region represents the second, after Ukraine, great challenge to the European Union's security. The scale of last year's illegal migration from the South was unprecedented in modern history. In 2014, almost 275,000 people arrived in Europe by different routes. We can continue saying that this is happening far away from our borders and that it will not affect us. It is not true. We are signatories of the Schengen Agreement and the citizens of the Republic of Poland draw benefits from it. The destabilisation of Europe's common borders not only strikes at the interests of countries in the south of Europe, but also at Poland's. We cannot remain indifferent when hundreds of people die close to our borders like during the latest tragedy on the Mediterranean and when thousands of people wait to be smuggled to Europe.

We believe that an effective European Neighbourhood Policy, better prepared to meet the needs and capabilities of our southern neighbours is the most fitting response to the challenges coming from North Africa. I have repeatedly raised this issue in my talks with foreign ministers of the Weimar Triangle as well as other EU countries. I have recently participated in an informal meeting of the EU foreign ministers with countries of the Southern Neighbourhood in Barcelona. It is a clear sign that Poland is not focused only on the East, but that it attaches equal importance to both dimensions of the EU Neighbourhood.

One of the causes of illegal migration is the development of brutal forms of terrorism based on religious extremism. Daesh, or the so-called Islamic State has been the cause of flight of hundreds of thousands of people from the zone of conflict, which has grown into a humanitarian disaster. Religious minorities, especially Christians, continue to be persecuted. Responding to dramatic appeals to the international community, the MFA organised three transports of humanitarian relief between August 2014 and March 2015. We have also financed the equipment in a school in Erbil for children of refugees and launched a university scholarship scheme in Poland for Iraqi Christians.

Poles and tourists from other countries become targets of Islamic extremists in a recent attack carried out in Tunisia's capital. Our response to the terror directed against the citizens of the Republic of Poland, and Europe, can only assume the form of tough and consistent efforts to punish all those who are responsible for such attacks to put an end to religious terrorism.

The threat posed by Muslim fundamentalists is not only external, as it is increasingly affecting the European Union's internal security. Among the 20,000 foreign volunteers who fight in the ranks of the jihadists in Syria and Iraq, 4,000 come from Western countries. Even though today the extremists' expansion does not pose an immediate danger to Poland, nonetheless our country has joined the forces of the Global Coalition to fight against the so-called Islamic State to defend Western values and Europe's southern frontiers against destabilisation. We are among several countries that participate in the work of all the five working groups created under this initiative.

Members of the House! Last November, in my presentation of the Government's report on foreign policy, I devoted much attention to the need to enhance the non-European dimension of Poland's foreign policy. This need is a natural consequence of the growing importance and potential of our country. The success of the last 25 years of Polish transformation has made Poland an attractive international partner. Poland's role in developing the EU's external policy obligates us to be more active also in the world outside Europe. Let me recall that non-European markets have enormous untapped economic potential.

Poland's economy and business should find a better footing in the global system of cooperation to give it an additional development impulse after 2020, when the current EU financial perspective, probably the last such beneficial financial perspective for our country, runs out.

Not long ago, twenty, thirty years back, it was enough to be a European country to secure a high position in the international community. These times are already gone. The political and economic order created after World War Two, based on Western domination, is increasingly being questioned. Demographic, technological and economic changes have enabled countries that lie outside our civilizational sphere to grow in importance. It is manifested primarily in a higher share of these countries in the global GDP, in the global exchange of trade and investments, as well as in other things. It is also a question of the position of many countries in innovation or the quality of science rankings; it is also a question of their growing political authority.

A multipolar and ideologically differentiated world is taking shape. The centre of its dynamics is pivoting towards the Pacific. China's role as a global power is growing. These changes bring new opportunities, but they can also be a source of rivalry and instability.

As a consequence, Poland is facing a great challenge—either it will become a country that is capable of assuming an important place in the cooperation between Europe and other continents or it will slide into a niche position, focusing on developments in its own back yard with the prospect of being marginalised.

The essence of our political message to our non-European partners should stem from the Polish historical experience and modern-day achievements which in many respects are universal in nature. It could be structured around the following ideas:

- first, emphasis on modernisation and transformation acceleration, also in the field of good governance;
- second, opting for regional integration;
- third, seeking a global order based on the equality of states, their sovereignty and integrity, saying no to external violence and hegemony;
- fourth and final, supporting inter-civilisation dialogue.

The strategy of a non-European dimension of foreign policy has to tap into evident synergies and create premises for mutual enhancement of political relations, trade and investment cooperation and the promotion of Polish culture and national heritage. This will make Poland more recognisable and understood outside Europe. I am strongly confident that our country has all it takes to be successful in this global competition and to become an important and influential

partner in global cooperation. In order for this to happen, coordinated regular efforts have to be undertaken in four key areas:

First, in the area of political dialogue oriented towards building sustainable, multidimensional bilateral relations with our non-European partners.

Second, in the European Union where our ambition is to exert more influence on policy towards the countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania.

Third, with respect to non-European regional organisations with which we want to establish substantial and long-term cooperation.

Fourth, in the area of building a consensus of Polish political, local government, academic and business circles around the global priorities of Poland's foreign policy.

A good illustration of such efforts was my last visit to Turkey, with Agriculture Minister Marek Sawicki. Almost two hundred participants representing ministries, government agencies, parliament, local government and business were members of our delegation. The visit has demonstrated the importance of a coherent and coordinated message and a good comprehensive offer of cooperation for promoting Polish interests. We will continue and further strengthen this approach.

We have intensified our cooperation with local governments, offering them practical assistance in developing a strategy of foreign cooperation. Supporting local government initiatives abroad has key importance for building an international position of cities and regions, especially for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, which are already become the main source of regional growth and new jobs.

Polish diplomacy supports and will continue to support foreign expansion of Polish companies, attracting foreign investments or scientific and technological cooperation. Last year, Polish missions answered almost 40,000 questions from Polish businesspeople. It is 20,000 more than in 2013. Over one thousand Polish companies participated in foreign visits organised by our ministry last year. We have begun a review of our treaty base in cooperation with the ministries of finance and the economy to better cater to Polish economic interests and, more importantly, the expansion of Polish business to new markets. Still this year we plan to sign an agreement on the avoidance of double taxation with Ethiopia and to start negotiations with Senegal on a similar agreement. Polish diplomacy has taken measures to open up new markets for Polish products, especially foodstuffs. These efforts proved successful in the case of Singapore. Talks that have been held with India, Japan, Vietnam and Cambodia are promising.

An effective non-European policy also involves education activities at home. We invite Polish administration as well as Polish parliamentarians, entrepreneurs

and NGOs to participate in these activities. We are also getting Polish entrepreneurs ready to participate in international tenders. Relevant training sessions have been held or are planned to be held in cooperation with UN, UNIDO, FAO, EBRD and European Commission experts. So far over 500 entrepreneurs have taken part in these trainings.

Mr Speaker! Members of the House! Relations with countries in Asia, especially our strategic partners—China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea and with dynamically developing ASEAN countries—Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Myanmar—will have key importance for the success of Polish non-European policy. The President of the Republic of Poland's visit to Japan this February has confirmed this. Asia today accounts for one-third of the world's GDP and half of all Internet users in the world live there. Although today the biggest source of demand on global markets continues to be Europe's middle class, in 2030, the demand generated by the middle class of the Asia and Pacific region will be three times as large as the European demand. We must be ready for this.

We are consistently developing Poland-China dialogue and new forms of Central and Eastern Europe-China cooperation. Established coordination mechanisms not only provide Poland with the opportunity to exert more influence on the development of cooperation with this country, but also facilitate generating investments and business projects with Chinese equity participation. Polish-Chinese consultations of deputy ministers—coordinators of "16+1" cooperation were held last week. Still this year we are planning to hold the first meeting of the Polish-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee chaired by foreign ministers. We are also supporting cooperation between regions and to this end we will hold this year the third Poland-China Regional Forum in Lodz with local business and local government communities. In order to enhance cooperation with China's central regions I have decided to open a consulate general in Chengdu.

India has traditionally been and will continue to be an important partner for Poland. Last year's 60th anniversary of Polish-Indian diplomatic relations was a good opportunity to take stock of our cooperation and to give it fresh impulses—especially in the energy and mining sectors. The numerous bilateral visits that have taken place in recent months, including the participation of a Polish delegation headed by Deputy Prime Minister Janusz Piechociński in the January summit in the state of Gujarat confirmed the great potential existing in our relations. We will be tapping into this opportunity consistently. Before the end of this year we are planning another visit to India with the participation of local government, parliamentarians, businesspeople and NGOs.

We will seek closer cooperation with stable democracies in the Asia Pacific region such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Their attitude towards today's burning problems, including events in Ukraine, demonstrates a spirit of solidarity between states driven by the democratic imperative. Intending to give young people the opportunity to combine study with work and to get to know each other, we signed work and holiday visa arrangements with Australia, Japan, and Taiwan.

We will complement bilateral cooperation in the Asia Pacific region with more intense activity aimed at building relations with organisations and regional forums of cooperation. We intend to participate in multilateral forums of dialogue between Europe and Asia, as evidenced by the participation of Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz in the ASEM Summit in Milan, among others. We plan to participate actively in the European Union-ASEAN dialogue. We will continue to be active in developing the EU's policy towards Asia and the Pacific in line with our Polish interests in the economic sphere, as well as in the area of security, sector cooperation and people-to-people contacts.

The broad Middle East and North Africa is where we strongly hope to develop economic cooperation and political dialogue. This region is a source of great challenges for Europe, such as, political instability, terrorism or illegal migration. On the other hand, it offers positive models of democratic transformation, sense, moderation and compromise. Morocco and Tunisia are both a case in point. There is an expectation, let us note—in Europe and Poland—of an important role to be played in this region by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Algeria. A successful resolution of the issue of Iran's nuclear programme would add credibility to the importance of Iran, a proud ancient civilisation, in resolving the problems of stability and development in the region.

Polish diplomacy is more and more active in Africa and the Middle East. We are working on visits in this region, including joint visits with chiefs of diplomacy of other EU countries. A week ago, Egypt's foreign minister paid a visit to Warsaw. I have decided to accredit a Polish ambassador with the League of Arab States. We are also building strategic economic relations with influential countries of the Persian Gulf: Saudi Arabia and Qatar, from where our economic mission has just returned, and with the United Arab Emirates. We are planning visits to Iran and Oman with a group of Polish entrepreneurs.

Israel remains one of the important addressees of our trade and investment efforts. The country is also a part of Polish historical memory and a major and a very attractive political partner. I will be discussing potential areas of cooperation in different fields, notably the economy, during my visit to Israel in June this year.

We have been rebuilding our good relations with the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. The biggest economies on the continent - the Republic of South Africa and Nigeria and countries that have regional importance - Angola, Ethiopia and Senegal—will become our major cooperation partners. The rapid economic development of many African countries opens up new cooperation opportunities and possibilities. With each year, more and more Polish companies are benefiting from the support provided by Polish diplomacy on African markets, which has contributed to a dynamic growth of trade with this region. Over the next few months visits are planned with the participation of Polish businesspeople to Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and the Republic of South Africa. We have been stepping up Poland's diplomatic presence in Africa. I have recently taken the decision to open our embassy in Dakar, Senegal. We are also looking into other options.

We have also become more engaged in a dialogue with Africa's regional organisations. Last Friday I had the opportunity to talk to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini-Zuma about the possibilities to strengthen Poland's relations with this organisation and its member states. Yesterday I also spoke with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal about enhancing cooperation with the West Africa region.

Increasing Poland's political and economic presence in Latin America and the Caribbean is an important element of the development of our non-European agenda. Still this month we intend to apply for observer status with the Pacific Alliance—a regional group of the so-called likeminded countries that adhere to liberal and democratic values and with which we have very good political and economic relations. The countries of the Alliance account for more than 50 percent of our trade with Latin America, and one of its members, Chile, is home to the biggest Polish foreign investment project. Tomorrow we will host Mexico's foreign minister who is paying a visit to Warsaw. Brazil continues to be an important and strategic partner for Poland in Latin America.

Members of the House! It is important that we make our voice heard loud and clear beyond Europe's borders, not only by developing bilateral relations, but also at the United Nations, the world's most important forum of multilateral cooperation.

Poland has announced its bid for non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council in 2018-2019. We do not want to use our membership of the UN Security Council as a two-year promotional stunt. Our country has built up its international standing following its successful economic transformation. Our consistent efforts to ensure peace and security and respect for human rights can contribute in many substantive ways to the work of this organisation. The inter-cultural dialogue,

which has become a recognisable element of Polish diplomacy, is a case in point. This autumn we are planning a major conference addressed to Muslim political and intellectual elites from the Middle East and Africa. The Republic of Poland, even though it competed against the Ottoman Porte, has shown respect and cared for its Muslim citizens and is the right place to overcome biases and build an understanding between different cultures.

We have actively participated in the drafting of a new post-2015 development agenda which should be adopted in just a few months from now at a Special Summit of the United Nations in September.

Ladies and Gentlemen! While enhancing Poland's presence outside Europe and developing our cooperation with the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, we are not forgetting that Poland is part of the West. It is with the countries across our western border that we share strategic interests. Our membership of the European Union allowed us to be firmly anchored in the world's strongest economic and political group. The future of the Euro-Atlantic order—Poland being its important link—will determine, to a large extent, Poland's future.

In 2015 we will continue to actively participate in the discussion on the EU reform in its present treaty framework, respecting the role of the European Commission and the integral nature of the entire European project.

The financial and economic crisis has shown the need for structural reforms that would enable a return to stable economic growth. We are interested, in particular, in a speedy launch of the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the implementation of an ambitious digital agenda and a better integration of capital markets.

When Poland became a member of the EU, as we recall, it decided to adopt the common currency and is still committed to doing it. Considering this, we have been participating in shaping a new architecture of the euro zone. At the same time, let me assure you that the key criterion we will apply in our considerations will be the interests of Poles and the stability and predictability of this area. We have been enforcing a new principle of openness that ensures that new mechanisms of cooperation are developed with our involvement still before our adoption of the common currency.

The economic crisis that hit Europe has shaken the foundations of the EU's political stability and fuelled different strands of populism, both on the left and right side of the political spectrum which are often tinged with nationalism and isolationism, questioning the foundations of the European order. Poland is against attempts to create new divisions in the EU and to weaken EU institutions. We will not allow short-term financial and economic problems brought by the euro zone crisis to overshadow the political perspective of European integration

and lead to a negation of its fundamental achievements over the course of the last several dozen years. These are the terms in which we regard voices calling for curbing the freedom of movement of persons and workers, as well as services. We will consistently defend Polish nationals and companies against discrimination on labour markets in EU countries and against protectionist practices. We have taken decisive steps in this spirit that are aimed at repealing legislation which is inconsistent with free market principles, such as minimum wage regulations.

We have been consistently seeking to strengthen the energy security of Poland and the whole EU in the Energy Union project. Poland's proposals submitted last spring were designed to implement the idea of solidarity and to strengthen the negotiating positions of Member States vis-à-vis external raw energy suppliers. Today they are one of the European Commission's priority tasks. The task we face is not simple—to translate proposals announced in February into concrete EU legislation that provides for joint measures by Member States in the event of a supply crisis and for greater transparency of the natural gas market. We also advocate further diversification of the directions of import of gas to Europe, especially by cooperating with such suppliers as the Persian Gulf countries, Norway, countries in the Caspian Sea region or the United States. This way, gas supplies will cease to be an instrument for exercising political pressure and will become the object of sound competition.

We are participating actively in climate negotiations, which should be concluded with the signing of a global agreement in Paris this December. For Poland it will be key to obtain similar conditions for all parties to the process, so that the Polish economy is burdened with CO₂ emission commitments to a degree comparable with other greatest world economies such as China, the US, Russia or India.

We strongly hope that the consolidation of ties between the European Union and the United States, which we believe should not be limited to the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance, will strengthen the unity of Western countries. The United States is not only our strategic military partner, but also one of our most important economic partners. Polish-US economic relations are inscribed in the EU-US economic partnership, which we intend to broaden together by signing the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). It will raise US-Europe cooperation to a higher level not only in trade, but also in politics. It will create the second, after NATO, span of the transatlantic bond. The global significance of this agreement will not only be the sum total of the individual potentials of its participants. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs not only supports the idea of TTIP, but also engages in efforts to better capitalise on the potential of Polish-US economic cooperation. Last November we organised the First

Polish-US Innovation Week in California. We intend to use this successful model of operation in Nevada this year and in European countries. In December we also organised an economic mission to Canada. Still this year we are planning additional visits with the participation of Polish entrepreneurs to Canada's west coast and the United States.

Members of the House! On 18 November we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Polish bishops' letter to German bishops. When speaking about relations with our Western neighbours, we are the successors, now more than ever, of the astute political and spiritual vision expressed in this document. Today, Germany is Poland's main European partner. In four days, another round of Polish-German inter-governmental consultations will take place, during which an agreement on cooperation between police forces will be signed. It would be hard to imagine the European Union as we know it today without the Polish-German partnership which was born out of a grand gesture of the Polish Catholic Church. The Catholic bishops' message should serve as a source of inspiration for the Polish thought on Europe in the future as well.

The Weimar Triangle continues to be an important forum of cooperation with Germany and France. We count on the Weimar Triangle Summit to be held in the next few weeks in France with the participation of President Bronisław Komorowski, Chancellor Angela Merkel and President François Hollande. I look forward to the opportunity of meeting the foreign ministers in the Weimar Triangle format; the last such meeting took place in early April in Wrocław. The foreign ministers of the Weimar Triangle adopted a common position on the future of the European Neighbourhood Policy, including in relation to the Eastern Partnership.

The format of inter-governmental consultations is one of the most important instruments of bilateral cooperation with our European partners. In January we held consultations with France and in mid-2015 we plan to organise consultations with Italy and Spain. It will be important to sustain a highly dynamic dialogue with France in the bilateral, European and international dimensions, by implementing the 2014–2019 Cooperation Programme, among others. We will develop intensively our cooperation with the United Kingdom which—we hope—will remain our partner in the EU and a likeminded country on such issues as the Eastern policy, energy policy or trade liberalisation. Naturally, the Benelux countries are Poland's important European partners. In the spirit of close cooperation with the Holy See, we are supporting preparations for the organisation of World Youth Days in Kraków in July 2016.

Central Europe is our primary reference point. This is evidenced by the Polish-Czech intergovernmental consultations last Monday or my visit to Prague right

after taking office and my participation in a meeting of the Visegrad Group and Western Balkans foreign ministers in Bratislava. In February I visited Budapest. Poland also participated in a meeting of foreign ministers of the Visegrad Group and Nordic and Baltic Countries as part of strengthening the North-South axis. We also took part in a Visegrad Group meeting with Germany. Our cooperation with Romania, which stems from a similar assessment of the threats and challenges to today's international community, has been developing dynamically.

Regular consultations between the Visegrad Group prime ministers ahead of European Council meetings contribute to the realisation of interests of the region's countries. At the same time it is no secret that new geopolitical challenges that emerged last year have exposed rifts in the Group. We have been engaged in an intense dialogue on this subject with our partners. Indeed, it is thanks to such dialogue that we are able to preserve unity, by undertaking in solidarity key decisions in the EU. Lest we forget, the Visegrad Group is first and foremost a format of regional sectoral cooperation oriented towards the development of its four member states by solving common problems. A different approach to some international problems does not in any way cross out the positive dynamics of cooperation in other fields, such as, the development of transport infrastructure, environmental protection, tourism, or energy security. In connection with the upcoming Czech Presidency of the V4 and the subsequent Polish Presidency we have been coordinating their priorities. The Visegrad Group is a recognized brand in Europe and beyond.

We seek ever closer cooperation with the Baltic Sea region, where we can count on excellent cooperation with our reliable partners: the Nordic countries, particularly Sweden and Denmark, and with the Baltic Sea countries, especially Estonia and Latvia, although we have also been developing rich sectoral cooperation with Lithuania. Hence, if the Lithuanian side decides to adopt specific measures aimed at upholding the Polish-Lithuanian bilateral treaty of 1994 when it comes to respecting the rights of ethnic minorities, it would contribute to further deepening our contacts. An important impulse for stepping up Poland's engagement in the Baltic Sea region will be Poland's Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, which we will begin to hold in July this year. We want the CBSS Presidency to contribute to enhancing Poland's engagement in regional matters.

We care about sustainable stability and modernisation of the Western Balkans. We will continue to share our experiences stemming from transformation and EU accession with the countries of the region and provide them with our political and expert support. We are glad that our contacts with Turkey continue to develop very dynamically. During a recent official visit to Turkey, we enhanced our

bilateral political dialogue and cooperation between regions. We have expanded our relations to new fields, such as innovation, and reaffirmed our decision to organise economic forums, every three months, to promote business contacts.

Ladies and Gentlemen! Polish diplomacy is providing effective support and protection to a 20-million strong Polish diaspora scattered around the globe. We are finalising work on a government programme that outlines the goals of our cooperation with the Polish diaspora until 2020. We pay special attention to initiatives that enhance the position of our countrymen in the countries of their residence. The power and authority of Polish communities in the world benefits not only such communities, but also us, Poland.

Assistance to Poles in Belarus and Lithuania will remain our priority. We also remember about Poles in Ukraine and do not limit our efforts to one-time efforts, such as the evacuation from Donbas. We are supporting Polish education and have started to build a Polish House in Lviv. We attach particular importance to our compatriots who have gone to European Union Member States. We are working on the recognition of the rights of Poles residing in the Federal Republic of Germany and we have noted some progress in this area, for instance, when it comes to education and the Polish House in Bochum. We are seeking for the Polish diaspora in Germany to receive the same support and be eligible for the same instruments of sustaining their identity as does the German minority in Poland, in line with the spirit and provisions of the Treaty on Good Neighbourhood and Friendly Cooperation. We are not losing sight of the largest Polish community in the world in North America, where we have been supporting an increasing number of projects which they see as important.

Financial instruments, which the MFA has at its disposal, can create favourable conditions for conducting an effective, modern, consistent and active policy vis-à-vis the Polish diaspora. It is at the same time a great challenge for the MFA connected with effective organisation of calls for proposals. The MFA has recently announced the winners of another call for proposals under which 144 projects will receive financing close to PLN 32 million for 2015. The MFA allocates nearly PLN 90 million to projects selected under calls for proposals and other projects that support the Polish diaspora. This accounts for more than one half of all the funds the Polish state budget spends on cooperation with the Polish diaspora.

Support for Poles in the world is inseparably linked with caring for the best possible image of our country. Recent developments have demonstrated that it is not a closed chapter. I assure you that the MFA has been and will continue to be active in this field. We will not stand idly by when attempts are made to distort history, in the face of ignorance or when we are blamed for wrongs we did not commit. Only last year our diplomatic missions intervened more than

150 times to the use of “defective codes of memory” with respect to Poland and Poles. In most cases the interventions were effective and led to corrections of misleading phrases. We have been cooperating with the Institute of National Remembrance on matters of historical policy. We will closely coordinate our efforts on the international stage. We discuss joint plans for an active and effective historical policy with the management of the Institute of National Remembrance. The Year of Jan Karski’s that ended in December was devoted to our struggle for presenting historical truth. It promoted the emissary of the Polish Underground State who informed the world about the Holocaust. Today a movie by Sławomir Grunberg *Karski and the Lords of Humanity* will be screened in the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, which is an element of the narrative about the multicultural history of our country. When Karski’s report on the Holocaust reached the United States during WWII, the *New York Times* wrote about it on the 16th page. On its first page it mentioned that the New York State Governor donated his sports shoes to a rubber warehouse. “The world has heard and did nothing,” comment the witnesses to this event. The history of Jan Karski teaches us that if you find yourself in a tragic situation and you can do something about it, then you must at least try. Polish diplomacy will promote this unique person and his merits. This is the best way to overcome unfair stereotypes about the history of our country. We thank Jewish organisations from the US, especially the American Jewish Committee and its Executive Director David Harris, for their support.

Mr Speaker! Members of the House! For the last twenty-five years, Poland has been a safe and dynamically developing country. We owe this to the enormous effort of the whole society and to a favourable international environment. We were able to take full advantage of the quarter of a century of peace, stability and European prosperity. Yet, Poland’s international environment is changing before our eyes. The challenges facing our country, our continent, call for decisive and far-sighted steps. I am confident that by working together with our NATO and European Union partners, we will effectively confront these challenges by ensuring security to the Republic of Poland. On behalf of the Government, I want to thank the President of the Republic of Poland for our model cooperation in the field of foreign policy. This is a great value, particularly in today’s difficult times, when foreign policy should be common for the whole state, both for the government camp and the opposition. I again appeal for unity and compromise on this issue—also in this House—and declare my readiness for it.

Foreign policy today has become a more comprehensive and open field. Apart from traditional diplomacy, public diplomacy, exerting influence through the media, local government diplomacy, as well as people-to-people contacts,

increasingly widespread as Poles travel more and more each year to distant places, are playing ever more important roles.

At the same, by engaging in a policy of active economic, scientific and cultural cooperation on a global scale, we will guarantee opportunities for dynamic development to the Polish people and secure their due place among the community of nations.

Mr. Speaker! Members of the House! I ask you to accept this information on the goals of Polish foreign policy in 2015. Thank you for your attention.

Polish Security Policy towards the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

JACEK DURKALEC*, ARTUR KACPRZYK**, WOJCIECH LORENZ***

Determinants

In the years 2011–2015, Polish policy in NATO was primarily influenced by the growing tensions in relations with Russia. The challenge for the Alliance was also the change in the form of its mission in Afghanistan and increasing instability in Europe's Southern Neighbourhood. These factors required Poland and other Allies to find a balance among the three core tasks of NATO: collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security.

According to the 2010 NATO strategic concept, the Alliance was to promote cooperative security, through the development of partnerships with selected countries and international organisations, contribution to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament, and keeping the door to potential membership open for countries of Euro-Atlantic area that meet NATO standards.¹ Before Russian aggression against Ukraine, an important activity in this respect was aiming to achieve a “real strategic partnership” with Russia, which was not perceived as a source of threat by the Alliance. The cooperation included, among other things, supporting the stabilisation of Afghanistan, the fight against terrorism and tackling piracy. NATO also offered Russia cooperation on missile defence. The Russian annexation of Crimea in March 2014, the destabilisation of eastern Ukraine and the intensification of provocative actions against NATO led to a dramatic deterioration in mutual relations and a radical change in the security environment in Europe. The Alliance suspended practical cooperation with Russia and intensified military exercises on the Eastern Flank.² The Wales summit in September 2014 approved the Readiness Action Plan (RAP), which

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¹ *Koncepcja strategiczna obrony i bezpieczeństwa członków Organizacji Traktatu Północno-atlantycznego, przyjęta przez szefów państw i rządów w Lizbonie*, working translation BBN, Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego, www.bbn.gov.pl.

² *Statement by NATO Foreign Ministers*, 1 April 2014, www.nato.int.

tasked the Alliance with increasing the number of rapid reaction forces and shortening the time of their transfer to Central and Eastern Europe.³

In the years 2011–2015, the Alliance's involvement in Afghanistan changed. This resulted from a decision taken at the 2010 Lisbon summit, according to which, by the end of 2014, responsibility for the security of that country was to be transferred to the Afghans. In 2011, the number of troops and civilians of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under NATO command was increased to 132,000.⁴ At the same time, in June 2011, U.S. President Barack Obama announced the beginning of the withdrawal of the U.S. forces from Afghanistan.⁵ At the Chicago summit in 2012, the Alliance adopted a detailed plan to delegate responsibility for security to the Afghans. As a result, from the beginning of 2015, ISAF was replaced by the Resolute Support training and advisory mission.

In 2011, large-scale social demonstrations intensified in North Africa and the Middle East. Protests broke out in Tunisia in 2010, followed by Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Jordan, Oman, Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Iraq. Due to the threat to civilians in 2011, NATO, under pressure from France and the United Kingdom, carried out Operation "Unified Protector" in Libya, which led to the overthrow of the Muammar Gaddafi regime.⁶ The total withdrawal of the U.S. forces from Iraq in 2011, the growing civil war in Syria and the lack of involvement of the West in stabilising the situation in Libya created the conditions for Islamic terrorist groups to operate. The most powerful, the one calling itself the Islamic State (ISIS), took control of part of Syria and Iraq and began to strengthen its influence in Libya. To stop the extremists' offensive, Obama announced in September 2014 the establishment of the U.S.-led global coalition to fight ISIS. All NATO states supported it, but only a few became involved in combat operations.⁷

The Alliance also carried out reforms to reduce the negative effects of the financial crisis and cuts in defence spending. In June 2011, details of reform regarding the command structure were agreed, reducing the number of commands from 11 to seven. In the wake of the financial crisis, the European members' defence spending decreased by about 4.5% from 2011–2014, which led to tensions in transatlantic

³ *Wales Summit Declaration issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales*, 5 September 2014, www.nato.int.

⁴ *The Secretary General's Annual Report 2011*, NATO, 26 January 2012, www.nato.int.

⁵ *Remarks by the President on the Way Forward in Afghanistan*, The White House, 22 June 2011, www.whitehouse.gov.

⁶ "Russia accuses NATO of 'expanding' UN Libya resolution," *The Independent*, 5 July 2011, www.independent.co.uk.

⁷ At various times, the following participated in air strikes: Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. Data from: *Coalition Contributions to Countering the Islamic State*, Congressional Research Service, 24 August 2016, www.fas.org.

relations. Although the U.S. alone reduced its military budget by approx. 15% during this period, it still accounted for around 70% of defence spending in the Alliance.⁸ In 2011, American Secretary of Defense Robert Gates criticised European Allies for insufficient, in his opinion, involvement in Libya, which was due to a lack of adequate military resources or political will.⁹ At the Wales summit in 2014, the member states committed themselves to the objective of increasing spending up to the Alliance recommended 2% of GDP by 2024.

Objectives

Statements by representatives of the Polish government and strategic documents indicate that NATO remained the most important external guarantor of Polish security and the most important form of political and military cooperation with the Allies.¹⁰ Until the annexation of Crimea, the main goal of Polish policy in NATO was to convince the Allies of the need to strengthen the collective defence capabilities and avoid actions that could weaken them.¹¹ Poland sought, among other things, to increase the military infrastructure of the Alliance on its territory and in Central and Eastern Europe, pointing to disparities in this respect with comparison to Western Europe. Although it did not publicly identify Russia as a threat during this period, it tried to draw the Allies' attention to the extensive modernisation of its armed forces, increasing its military potential at NATO's borders and conducting large exercises there (especially *West 2009* and *West 2013*), threats against member states (related to, among others, the construction of an Allied missile defence system), and the content of Russian strategic documents defining NATO as a threat.

After Russia's annexation of Crimea, Poland primarily sought to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defence capability by establishing a permanent presence of Alliance forces on the Eastern Flank.¹² It focused on the full implementation

⁸ Calculations based on: *The Secretary General's Annual Report 2016*, NATO, 13 March 2017, p. 109.

⁹ "Transcript of Defense Secretary Gates's Speech on NATO's Future," *The Wall Street Journal*, 10 June 2011, www.wsj.com.

¹⁰ "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2013 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 20 March 2013)," see p. 41 in this volume; *Strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego, 2014, www.bbn.gov.pl.

¹¹ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 16 March 2011)," see p. 11 in this volume.

¹² *Potrzebna stała obecność sił NATO w Polsce*, 18 June 2015, www.prezydent.pl.

of the RAP adopted at the Wales summit.¹³ NATO's decision to convene the next summit in Warsaw in 2016 offered Poland a chance to push forward with the agenda of adapting the Alliance to new threats, including from the east.

The involvement of the Polish armed forces in Afghanistan was used as an instrument of foreign and security policy. It was treated as a way of creating the image of Poland as a reliable Ally, but also helped enforce some modernisation of the armed forces and increased their ability to cooperate with other Allies.¹⁴ However, Polish President Bronisław Komorowski pointed out the need to limit participation in foreign missions, treated by some commanders and advisers as an obstacle to necessary investments in the defence potential of the Republic of Poland. The "Komorowski Doctrine" of 2013 assumed shifting priorities in security policy from participation in out-of-area missions to tasks related to the direct security of the country.¹⁵ At the same time, Poland announced ambitious plans to modernise its armed forces.

In the area of cooperative security, Poland's activities were directed at weakening Russia's ability to negatively impact its neighbourhood. Poland traditionally promoted the continuation of NATO's open-door policy, in particular towards Moldova and the Western Balkan countries.¹⁶ In relation to Ukraine and Georgia, Poland's main goal remained to bring these countries closer to NATO and to increase their chances of future accession.¹⁷ As for the other partners of the Alliance, expanding cooperation with Sweden and Finland was a priority for Poland. In the years 2011–2014, Poland engaged in discussions on arms control, mainly to avoid Alliance actions that could weaken NATO's deterrence and defence potential in relation to Russia.

¹³ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2015 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Grzegorz Schetyna at a sitting of the Sejm on 23 April 2015)," see p. 77 in this volume.

¹⁴ *Response of the Secretary of State in the Ministry of National Defence—under the authority of the minister—to interpellation number 2085 regarding the stationing of the Polish Military Contingent in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*, 19 March 2012, www.sejm.gov.pl.

¹⁵ *Doktryna Komorowskiego – założenia*, Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego, 17 February 2014, www.bbn.gov.pl.

¹⁶ *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, www.msz.gov.pl.

¹⁷ *Wystąpienie Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych RP Pana Radosława Sikorskiego pt. Dzczyt w Chicago: co z NATO po Afganistanie?*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 17 May 2012, www.pism.pl; P. Pacuła, "Przyszłość polityki 'otwartych drzwi' NATO," *Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe*, no. 21, 2012, pp. 100–101.

Collective Defence

The outcome of the Lisbon summit did not settle disputes among members of the Alliance, with some expecting NATO to develop expeditionary capabilities, and others, such as Poland, calling for credible collective defence potential. These differences accompanied the preparations for the Chicago summit on 20 to 21 May 2012 and influenced the work on the Deterrence and Defence Posture Review (DDPR), the results of which were presented at the summit.¹⁸

The Polish priority in Chicago was to strengthen the Alliance's conventional forces. Poland emphasised the need to include in the DDPR, the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) and other documents, references that the Alliance should have the capability to conduct a large scale, high-intensity Art. 5 operation. Continuous updating of plans and regular exercises based on defensive scenarios were also sought. In the light of the ongoing reduction in NATO's command structure, the Polish authorities called for an enhanced role for European national commands, which could be quickly included in the Alliance's chain of command in the event of a crisis.

Poland opposed activities that could weaken the Alliance's nuclear potential, and pointed to the importance of further stationing of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe. In line with Polish expectations, the DDPR maintained the status quo regarding the nuclear deterrent. It confirmed the role of nuclear weapons as a key element of NATO's military potential.¹⁹

An important issue for Poland was the declaration of NATO's interim operational capability of the ballistic missile defence (BMD) system.²⁰ Further development of the system envisioned building, by the end of 2018, a base in Redzikowo, which would host SM3 interceptor missiles to defend Europe against a limited attack from the Middle East. The installation was to be built as part of the third stage of the U.S. contribution to the anti-missile defence system in Europe (the European Phased Adaptive Approach, EPAA), which will be part of the Alliance system. The Polish authorities emphasised the importance of this for

¹⁸ On Poland's priorities before summit in Chicago, see *Speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Mr. Radosław Sikorski ...*, op. cit.; A. Bugajski, "The NATO Summit in Chicago: Poland's Priorities," *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2012, pp. 19–28; P. Pietrzak, "Szczyt NATO w Chicago – determinanty, oczekiwania i rezultaty," *Bezpieczeństwo Międzynarodowe*, no. 22, 2012, pp. 47–64.

¹⁹ J. Durkalec, "Assessment of NATO's Deterrence and Defence Posture Review," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 55 (388), 24 May 2012.

²⁰ *Full record of the proceedings of the meeting of the National Defence Committee (No. 13) of 25 April 2012*, p. 5, www.sejm.gov.pl. See more: P. Durys, "Obrona przeciwrakietowa NATO. Wyzwania multilateralizmu," in: R. Kupiecki (ed.), *Obrona przeciwrakietowa w polskiej perspektywie*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2015, pp. 241–250.

maintaining a U.S. presence in Europe, including in Poland. In September 2011, the protocol amending the 2008 ballistic defence missile agreement between Poland and the U.S. entered into force. The protocol, signed on 3 July 2010, adjusted the agreement in light of changes in the system's architecture introduced by the Obama Administration.

The Smart Defence initiative was approved with Poland's cautious support at the Chicago summit. This assumed closer cooperation between groupings of Alliance members in the development of military capabilities, as well as combining existing resources and sharing them with other Allies. With such an initiative, NATO attempted to enforce more effective defence spending and to mitigate the negative effects of the economic crisis on military capabilities. It also aimed at increasing the share of non-U.S. Allies' contributions to the costs of Alliance operations. Poland was also in favour of closer cooperation and coordination between NATO and the EU, including a similar pooling and sharing initiative. However, it warned that closer defence cooperation would not fully offset the effects of reducing defence budgets and cuts in capabilities.

The summit's resolutions met Poland's main expectations. However, many general statements were adopted, which meant that their implementation and interpretation by individual countries could be questioned. Differences among the Allies regarding priorities were also evident during the NATO Response Force exercise *Steadfast Jazz*, which took place in Poland and the Baltic States on 2-9 November 2013. These were the largest NATO exercises on Polish territory since 2002 and the first, for a long time, to take into account the elements of collective defence. However, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski described it in 2014 as "only a partial success," as greater participation of Allied forces was expected. About 6,000 troops participated in the exercises, about 50% at the training grounds (in Poland and the Baltic Sea) and 50% involved in command structures. Nearly 3,000 troops were provided by Poland and 1,200 by France (the framework nation leading the land component of the NATO Response Force in 2014), with much less input from other countries, including the United States.

U.S. involvement in Polish security was more evident in the bilateral formula. Under the memorandum of cooperation of the air forces signed on 13 June 2011, 10 staff personnel supporting periodic rotations of the U.S. Air Force (Aviation Detachment, AV-DET), including F16 fighters and C-130 Hercules transport aircraft were stationed in Poland on 9 November 2012. Poland also expected the construction of a U.S. missile defence installation despite some modifications in the system. In March 2013, the U.S. decided to withdraw from the implementation of stage IV of the EPAA, which assumed the deployment in

Poland of more advanced SM-3 IIB interceptor missiles capable of combating intercontinental missiles. Even though the decision might be considered as a concession to Russia, it has not adversely affected plans to implement the third stage of EPAA.

Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 confirmed the validity of the Polish position on NATO's deterrence and defence policy. Faced with the annexation of Crimea by Russia, Poland invoked Art. 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, asking for an urgent meeting of the North Atlantic Council (NAC), which took place on 4 March. The Allies approved some coordinated actions to reassure Eastern Flank members. The Alliance began reconnaissance flights (AWACS) over Poland and Romania, and on 16 April NAC decided to increase the presence of naval, air and land forces in Central and Eastern Europe. This included strengthening the mission of patrolling the airspace of the Baltic States by 12 aircraft (from four to 16), and the deployment of four French fighters in Malbork at the end of April. The strengthening of the Eastern Flank was also undertaken by the United States, which, among others, at the request of Poland, expedited another AV-DET rotation in Łask, where 12 (instead of six) F16 fighters were deployed in mid-March. At the end of April, one company of U.S. Army was sent to each of the four states: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia for exercises and training purposes.

Polish political leaders positively assessed the actions taken by NATO and the United States, but from the beginning of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, they emphasised the need for a far-reaching, permanent strengthening of the Eastern Flank. Before the summit in Wales in September 2014, they insisted on establishing a larger and permanent Allied presence in Poland. As Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski said, he would be fully satisfied if two heavy brigades from NATO countries were located on Polish territory.²¹

These efforts met with reserved or even critical response from many Alliance countries, including Germany, who feared that a permanent military presence on the Eastern Flank would escalate tensions with Russia and consolidate negative changes in the European security system.²² In this context, they referred to the 1997 NATO–Russia Founding Act, in which Alliance declared that it would not deploy “significant combat forces” on the territory of its new members.²³ However,

²¹ “Rząd chce na stałe wojsk Paktu w Polsce. ‘Dwie ciężkie brygady krajów NATO,’” *Defence24*, 1 April 2014, www.defence24.pl.

²² B. Waterfield, T. Paterson, “Ukraine crisis: Poland asks Nato to station 10,000 troops on its territory,” *The Telegraph*, 1 April 2014, www.telegraph.co.uk.

²³ “Merkel sceptical of NATO deployments in Eastern Europe,” *EurActiv*, 3 July 2014, www.euractiv.com.

Poland argued that this declaration was no longer binding, as it referred to the “current and foreseeable security environment,” which changed radically as a result of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and other provocative actions.²⁴ In addition, it was pointed out that permanent stationing of NATO forces would be acceptable even if the Act was maintained as long as their level did not exceed that of “significant combat forces.” However, NATO and Russia have never agreed on a common understanding of the term. The southern Allies also feared NATO’s excessive concentration on the Eastern Flank at the expense of their security.

Differences in the approach to strengthening the Eastern Flank were also visible in the Visegrad Group, which until then had spoken with one voice on the issue of collective defence in NATO. The Polish viewpoint was more clearly shared by the Baltic States, Romania and, to a lesser extent, Bulgaria. There was growing consensus of NATO countries from Central and Eastern Europe, whose leaders, at a meeting in Warsaw on 22 July 2014, supported the strengthening of the Eastern Flank.²⁵ However, they did not address the issue of NATO’s permanent presence in the region at the time. Although Poland pointed to such a solution as optimal, its formal position at the Wales summit concerned a general increase of the Allied presence, raising the level of readiness of the Multinational Corps Northeast Headquarters in Szczecin (MNC NE), augmenting NATO Response Force units and equipping them with a very high readiness element (VJTF), and development of infrastructure supporting the deployment of troops.²⁶

Poland’s proposals were largely met by the RAP adopted at the Wales summit, which focused on improving NATO’s ability to respond to crises and conflicts through faster deployment of multinational units. Even though there was no consensus on a permanent Allied presence in the region, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, NATO agreed to substantial strengthening of collective defence against conventional threats. The RAP was supplemented by U.S. bilateral activities. As announced by Obama in Warsaw on 3 June 2014, the U.S. allocated nearly \$1 billion in 2015 for the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), serving primarily to increase the American presence on the Eastern Flank.²⁷

²⁴ J. Palowski, “Wojska NATO w Polsce i siły natychmiastowego reagowania. Szef MON o szczycie w Walii,” *Defence24*, 25 July 2014, www.defence24.pl.

²⁵ See A. Kacprzyk, “Deterring Russia after Ukraine: CEE Divided on the Future of NATO Policy,” *PISM Policy Paper*, no. 13 (96), July 2014, www.pism.pl.

²⁶ J. Palowski, *op. cit.*

²⁷ The ERI mainly covered intensification of exercises and training as well as increasing the rotational land, air and sea presence in the region (with the participation of forces from bases in Europe and the U.S.), suspension of some of the previously planned reductions in U.S. forces in Europe, dislocation of military equipment and improvement of military infrastructure, and support for NATO members and partners in strengthening their security sectors. See A. Kacprzyk, “U.S.

The Readiness Action Plan included strengthening the sense of Allies' security (assurance measures) and long-term adaptation of the Alliance (adaptation measures). NATO significantly increased the number of exercises on the Eastern Flank, and the Allies increased the presence of land, air and naval forces in the region, mainly for training purposes. The largest contribution to these activities was made by the United States which was the only country to maintain a continuous presence of company-size land forces in Poland and in each of the Baltic States. Other Allies made numerous shorter deployments in Poland, with Canada and Germany sending ground troops. In comparison to 4,000 NATO troops present in Poland in 2013, in 2014 the number of troops participating in exercises totalled 6,500 and in 2015 increased to 16,000.²⁸

The flagship initiative in the adaptation of the Alliance was the establishment of a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force VJTF, a "spearhead" based on an army brigade (about 5,000 troops), capable of deploying within five to seven days of a political decision to do so being made. VJTF, along with two other army brigades able to deploy within 30 and 45 days, became part of the reformed NRF, which then numbered 40,000 troops. In Wales, Poland declared it would take the role of the VJTF framework state in 2020, which was associated with the need to provide the largest contribution to the land component. In 2015, Poland participated in the "spearhead" with an armoured battalion, and the first VJTF field exercises (*Noble Jump*, 9 to 19 June) took place in Żagań. Poland took over the command of the NRF special forces component in 2015 and offered a weapons of mass destruction (ABC) protection unit in 2014. It also provided an ABC unit during the *Trident Juncture 2015* exercises in Spain, Portugal and Italy. These were NATO's largest exercises since 2002, with approximately 36,000 troops from over 30 countries testing their ability to conduct crisis response and collective defence missions. A total of 640 Polish troops participated in the exercises.

During the summit in Wales, Poland, Denmark and Germany signed an agreement to raise the level of readiness of the Multinational Corps Northeast Headquarters in Szczecin (MCNE). Within two years (before the summit in Warsaw), its readiness was to be raised from 180 to 90 days and the staff increased two-fold, to 400 officers. One of the new tasks assigned to MCNE was the coordination of NATO Force Integration Units (NFIU), commanding and planning units of about 40 officers supporting the transfer of rapid response forces.

Military Presence in Central and Eastern Europe: Consequences for NATO Strategic Adaptation, Deterrence and Allied Solidarity," *PISM Report*, August 2015, www.pism.pl.

²⁸ See: *Szkolenie priorytetem działalności*, Dowództwo Generalne Rodzajów Sił Zbrojnych, 22 January 2016, www.dgrsz.mon.gov.pl; "MON: w Polsce jest ok. 3,5 tys. żołnierzy z USA," *Onet.pl*, 25 January 2016, www.onet.pl.

The NFIUs, under MNCE operational control, were approved for Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and later also for Slovakia and Hungary (the NFIUs were also established in Bulgaria and Romania but under different command). The Newport arrangements also included updating defence plans, strengthening the regional infrastructure needed to host Allied forces, and establishing stocks with equipment and armaments. In June 2015, the U.S. announced the establishment of equipment stocks in Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Romania in order to support the exercise of an American armoured brigade in the region. On 8 October 2015, Poland and the U.S. concluded an agreement on the location of prepositioned equipment in Łask, Drawsko Pomorskie, Skwierzyna, Ciechanów and Choszczno by mid-2016. As part of ERI, the U.S. spent almost \$10 million in 2015 on investments in Poland, mainly on the training ground in Drawsko Pomorskie.²⁹

From the Polish perspective, it was crucial that NATO members began implementing the defence spending pledge approved at the Wales summit, which should help to increase defence budgets to at least 2% of GDP by 2024. Poland amended a parliamentary bill setting defence spending at 1.95% of GDP of the previous year. The new legislation, which raised the level to at least 2%, was approved by the lower house of the Polish parliament (the Sejm) on 27 May 2015 and signed by Komorowski on 23 July 2015. Poland reached the 2% GDP level, as one of only five NATO states to do so, in 2015, following the inclusion of repayment of a loan tranche for the purchase of F16 fighters.

After the Wales summit, Poland called for the full RAP implementation before the next summit in Warsaw in 2016, and also supported the strengthening of NATO's ability to counter hybrid threats, including through closer NATO–EU cooperation in cyber-defence. An important postulate of Poland concerned the improvement of decision-making processes in NATO, through granting military commanders the power to decide on the deployment of VJTF in the event of a crisis.

Poland appreciated the implementation of RAP but pointed to the need for further long-term efforts to adequately adapt NATO to the threat from Russia, which maintained military superiority over NATO on the Eastern Flank of the Alliance.³⁰ To this end, the Polish authorities proposed the Warsaw Initiative of Strategic Adaptation, which was presented during the visit of Minister of National

²⁹ See: *European Reassurance Initiative: DOD Needs to Prioritize Posture Initiatives and Plan for and Report Their Future Cost*, Government Accountability Office, December 2017, pp. 25–41.

³⁰ *Informacja o posiedzeniu Komisji Obrony Narodowej*, 5 August 2015, www.sejm.gov.pl.

Defence Tomasz Siemoniak to Washington on 20 May 2015.³¹ The project's objective was the strengthening of all NATO troop units, not just the rapid response units, and the expansion of heavier forces. It also recommended the deployment of prepositioned stocks with combat equipment on the Eastern Flank and greater NATO investment in the infrastructure needed to support the deployment of reinforcements. It suggested an increased Allied presence in Poland and the region on a permanent basis. From the Polish perspective, such troops should not be deployed only for exercises and training but should have a combat role and be able to defend territory and deter potential adversaries. Further strengthening of the Eastern Flank under the "Newport Plus" plan, including the establishment of a permanent Allied presence on Polish territory, became a priority for Poland's new President, Andrzej Duda, who was elected in May 2015. This demonstrated the consensus of the main political forces in the major areas of defence policy.³²

Throughout the 2011 to 2015 period, Poland demonstrated its support for NATO's collective defence, contributing to the Baltic Air Policing mission. Although this is a patrol mission not intended for combat, it helps secure the air space over three Baltic States. Poland deployed four MIG-29 fighter aircraft and about 100 people on six-month rotations in 2012, 2014, and 2015.

Crisis Management

In the years 2011–2015, Poland made a significant contribution to NATO's mission in Afghanistan, and thus to crisis management. Since assuming responsibility for the Afghan province of Ghazni in 2008, Poland gradually increased its participation in International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under NATO command. In 2011 The Polish Military Contingent (PMC) Task Force White Eagle consisted of about 2,500 troops and was the seventh-largest among the forces of 46 countries participating in the mission, and the fifth among the forces of European countries.³³ Despite the appeals of Komorowski to start withdrawing troops as early as in 2011, the Polish government argued that, in order to preserve credibility in the Alliance, it was necessary to act in accordance with the NATO agreed schedule.³⁴ In September 2011, The Council of Ministers adopted the strategy "Directions of Poland's involvement in Afghanistan in 2011–2014," which set a calendar for the withdrawal of the Polish forces. Accordingly,

³¹ T. Siemoniak, "Jakich zmian potrzebuje Sojusz," *Polska Zbrojna*, 21 May 2015, www.polskazbrojna.pl.

³² *Prezydent dla "Politico": Potrzebujemy wzmocnienia polskiej armii*, 19 August 2015, www.prezydent.pl.

³³ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011...", *op. cit.*

³⁴ *Prezydent o misji polskich żołnierzy w Afganistanie*, 16 March 2016, www.prezydent.pl.

the reduction in contributions began in 2012, when 1,800 troops were sent to Afghanistan for the 12th rotation. At the same time, the character of the mission began to be modified from more active training—stabilisation to advisory—supportive, which was to lead to the gradual transfer of responsibility for the combat and patrol operations to the Afghan forces.³⁵ From October 2013 to May 2014, as part of the 14th rotation, up to 1,000 Polish troops participated in the mission. In mid-2013, the Polish contingent stopped all reconstruction activities, which covered mainly investments in infrastructure and training for civilians.

In May 2014, Polish troops finished operational activities by withdrawing entirely from Ghazni province. On 19 December 2014, Komorowski signed a decision to participate in the new NATO advisory mission in Afghanistan, “Resolute Support.” About 120 Polish troops participated in its first phase. According to the Polish authorities, participation in this mission strengthened Poland’s position in the Alliance and enabled it to more effectively promote its security interests.³⁶

Poland also maintained a significant contingent in Kosovo (KFOR). In accordance with subsequent resolutions of the Polish president in 2011–2015, up to 300 people could participate in the mission. The actual size of the contingent was usually between 220 and 250 troops, plus civilian army employees. In April 2012, the contingent was visited by Komorowski and Siemoniak, which was to emphasise Poland’s commitment to the stabilisation of the Balkans.³⁷

Poland also participated in the *Active Endeavour* NATO anti-terrorist operation in the Mediterranean. This was conducted on the basis of Article 5 after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, against the United States. The last participating ship in this operation, ORP Kontradmiral Xawery Czernicki, completed the mission in June 2011.³⁸

Polish forces were not dispatched to NATO’s counter-piracy operation code-named *Ocean Shield* off the coast of Somalia since the Polish Navy did not have the appropriate ships. Neither did the government agree to the participation of Polish troops in the operation in Libya in 2011.³⁹ Poland was working towards obtaining operational readiness for its F16 aircraft to cooperate with NATO by the end of 2011, but other types of support were available. The lack of involvement in the

³⁵ *Informacje ogólne o PKW*, PKW Afganistan, isaf.wp.mil.pl.

³⁶ Response of Under-secretary of State in the Ministry of National Defence Maciej Jankowski to statements of senators, October 2014, www.senat.gov.pl.

³⁷ *Prezydent u żołnierzy i policjantów w Kosowie*, 2 April 2012, www.prezydent.pl.

³⁸ *Polski okręt zakończył misję NATO*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 19 June 2011, www.mon.gov.pl.

³⁹ “Tusk: Polska nie zaangażuje się militarnie w działania w Libii,” *Dziennik.pl*, 25 March 2011, wiadomosci.dziennik.pl.

operation, which was mainly driven by France and the United Kingdom, exposed Poland to criticism from some Allies.⁴⁰ At the summit in Wales, Poland joined the NATO-supported Global Coalition to Fight ISIS and was one of the nine states invited by the U.S. to the first meeting of the main participants. In 2014 and 2015, however, Poland did not delegate forces to operate in Syria and Iraq.

Cooperative Security

Continuing activity from previous years, Poland postulated the inclusion of non-strategic nuclear weapons in the arms control regime.⁴¹ This was a result of concerns about the size, diversity and potential locations of the deployment of the Russian tactical arsenal. Also, it was due to efforts to prevent unilateral reductions or withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe, solutions which were favoured by Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium, on whose territory are deployed American B61 gravity bombs.⁴² Looking for consensus within NATO, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway presented a non-paper in April 2011 that contained specific proposals to systematise dialogue with Russia on non-strategic nuclear weapons.⁴³ Just before the NATO summit in 2012, Sikorski and Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre called for meaningful discussions with Russia on nuclear matters.⁴⁴ A joint article in *The New York Times* was an expression of the close cooperation between the two countries, which started in 2010, on non-strategic nuclear weapons.⁴⁵

In line with Polish expectations, the NATO Deterrence and Defence Posture Review (NDDPR) adopted at the Chicago summit connected the reduction of U.S. nuclear forces in Europe with Russian reciprocity. To prepare ground for further NATO reductions, a number of measures were called for: the analysis of possible Russian actions opening the way to further reductions of U.S. weapons

⁴⁰ "Francja apeluje o większy udział w operacji w Libii, m.in. do Polski," *Gazeta.pl*, 31 July 2011, wiadomosci.gazeta.pl.

⁴¹ *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, op. cit., p. 16.

⁴² For more see: J. Durkalec, "Siły nuklearne NATO i nuklearne rozbrojenie—polski punkt widzenia," in: *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 2011*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2012.

⁴³ Support for the initiative was also expressed by Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Luxembourg and Slovenia. See: *Non-paper Submitted by Poland, Norway, Germany and the Netherlands on Increasing Transparency and Confidence with Regard to Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe*, 15 April 2011, www.fas.org.

⁴⁴ R. Sikorski, J.G. Store, "NATO, Russia and Tactical Nuclear Arms," *The New York Times*, 14 May 2012, www.nytimes.com.

⁴⁵ *Wspólne oświadczenie Ministrów Spraw Zagranicznych Polski i Norwegii*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 9 April 2010, www.msz.gov.pl.

in Europe, the Alliance's development of specific transparency and confidence-building measures that could be the subject of dialogue with Russia, and the development of alternative concepts to ensure the widest possible participation of Allies in the nuclear mission.⁴⁶ An expression of Poland's support for these activities was, among others, an international conference called "The Warsaw Workshop: Prospects for information sharing and confidence-building on Non-Strategic Weapons in Europe," which was co-organised by the Polish Institute of International Affairs on 7–8 February 2013, in Warsaw.⁴⁷

Poland was ready for constructive dialogue with Russia on missile defence, in line with the conclusions of the 2010 NATO summit. At the same time, Poland indicated disagreement with Russian proposals that would be in contradiction with basic principles of the Alliance, such as collective defence, indivisibility and equality of security, and the autonomy of decision making by NATO members.⁴⁸ It opposed the Russian proposal of sectoral missile defence, in which Russia would be responsible for defending the north-eastern part of Poland and the Baltic States.⁴⁹ For Poland, U.S. opposition to Russian demands for legally binding quantitative, technical and geographic restrictions of the NATO system was favourable. Consent to such restrictions would call into question U.S. plans to build a ground-based installation of SM-3 missiles in Redzikowo by the end of 2018.⁵⁰ Poland strived for the development of the NATO missile defence system, even despite the lack of progress in talks with Russia on the principles of cooperation and Russian threats of retaliation. The Polish government was cautious about Obama's suggestion, in a letter to President Vladimir Putin of 15 April 2013, on concluding an agreement on transparency regarding missile defence including Russian inspection of NATO installations. Sikorski pointed out that, if the agreement were to concern installations on Polish territory, the condition would be full "reciprocity with the facilities in the Russian Federation," which Poland considers important for its security.⁵¹

⁴⁶ *Przegląd polityki obronnej i odstraszania NATO*, Chicago, 20 May 2012, par. 12, 26–27, working translation of the National Security Bureau, www.bbn.gov.pl.

⁴⁷ For more on the event *Konferencja The Warsaw Workshop: Prospects for information sparing and confidence building on Non-Strategic Weapons in Europe*, www.pism.pl.

⁴⁸ *Tygodnik BBN: Przegląd informacji o bezpieczeństwie narodowym wraz z komentarzem*, no. 40, 1–7 July 2011, p. 5.

⁴⁹ "Nie ma mowy, żeby Rosja odpowiadała za obronę państw NATO," *RMF24*, 8 June 2011, www.rmfm24.pl.

⁵⁰ R. Gottemoeller, *Remarks at the 2013 Multinational BMD Conference and Exhibition*, Warsaw, Poland, 31 October 2013, www.state.gov.

⁵¹ "Sikorski: przejrzystość ws. tarczy z Rosją może być szansą," *depesza PAP*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 3 June 2013, www.msz.gov.pl.

The future of the conventional arms control regime in Europe was also an important issue for Poland. It was concerned with the deterioration of the current system based on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), the Open Sky Treaty, and a number of political agreements such as the Vienna Document, which was a result of Russia suspending the implementation of the CFE Treaty in 2007.⁵² Following the failure of U.S. efforts to agree on a negotiating framework for the modernised CFE Treaty, in November 2011, Poland, together with other NATO countries, decided to stop implementing some provisions in relation to Russia, while maintaining obligations towards other parties to the agreement.⁵³ To demonstrate the commitment to the future of the conventional arms control regime and at the same time avoid discriminative solutions in future negotiations, Poland, Germany and Denmark announced a common position on these issues in November 2013.⁵⁴

The failure of NATO's efforts to achieve a "strategic partnership" with Russia became apparent at the end of 2013. In October, Russia unilaterally suspended discussions on cooperation in the field of missile defence at the NATO–Russia Council, and in November withdrew from a dialogue at that forum on nuclear issues.⁵⁵ In the Polish assessment, chances of partnership and improvement of relations with Russia were ultimately buried by Russian aggression against Ukraine.⁵⁶ In response to Russian actions, on 1 April 2014, NATO suspended practical cooperation with Russia.

From March 2014, Poland's policy towards NATO–Russia relations focused on strengthening deterrence and defence. Although the long-term strengthening of conventional arms control and the system of confidence-building measures in Europe remained a declared goal, in the long run this was seen as unrealistic.⁵⁷ Poland was concerned with the findings of the U.S. Department of State report of 29 July 2014, regarding Russia's failure to comply with the provisions of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) of 1987. Poland indicated that

⁵² *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016, op. cit.*, p. 16. *Biała Księga Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego*, Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego, 2013, p. 113.

⁵³ See more: *NATO's role in conventional arms control*, NATO, www.nato.int.

⁵⁴ R. Sikorski, G. Westerwelle, V. Sovndal, "Let's reshape arms control in Europe," *Financial Times*, 29 November, 2013, www.ft.com.

⁵⁵ K. Hołdak, "Obrona przeciwrakietowa w perspektywie historycznej," in: R. Kupiecki (ed.), *Obrona...*, *op. cit.*, p. 117; K. Kubiak, "NATO and Russia experiences with nuclear transparency and confidence-building measures," Background paper for the workshop entitled *Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons in Europe: Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Practice*, SWP, Berlin, 27 to 28 March 2014, p. 12, www.swp-berlin.org.

⁵⁶ Minister Grzegorz Schetyna's speech at PISM, 10 December, 2014, www.youtube.com.

⁵⁷ *Strategia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, op. cit.*, pars. 46, 72.

it would undertake consultations with NATO Allies on this matter, calling on Russia to comply fully with the Treaty, considered one of the foundations of the arms control and nuclear disarmament regime.⁵⁸

As part of promoting NATO's open-door policy, Poland supported the aspirations of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Macedonia and, in particular, Montenegro, which had the biggest chances for membership.⁵⁹

Poland supported the efforts of Georgia and Ukraine for closer cooperation with NATO and intensified this policy after the annexation of Crimea. In response to Russian aggression, NATO offered Ukraine support for the reform of its defence sector by creating special trust funds. Poland and the Netherlands became the leading countries in the logistics and standardisation programme. Poland expressed support for the Alliance's deep institutional cooperation with Ukraine.⁶⁰ Poland also played a major role in supporting the Defence Education Enhancement Programme Ukraine (DEEP).⁶¹ Among NATO's partners, Poland was especially active in supporting cooperation with Sweden and Finland.

Evaluation

In the years 2011–2015, the Alliance's security guarantees for Poland were strengthened, especially after the 2014 NATO summit in Wales. As a result of Russian aggression against Ukraine and provocative actions against the Alliance, the presence of Allied forces in Central and Eastern Europe increased, with a crucial contribution from the U.S. on a bilateral basis. However, the Allied presence was mainly for exercises and training, and strengthened reassurance rather than deterrence, based on the ability to defend the Eastern Flank members. The NATO defence mechanism in this region still relied primarily on national forces and the ability to transfer Allied troops to a threatened state in the event of a crisis.

The Alliance did not decide to abandon the 1997 NATO Russia Founding Act, which put political constraints on the deployment of "significant combat forces" on the territory of new members.

The Polish goal was to establish the presence of combat forces that would reduce Russian military superiority, shorten the time required to respond to

⁵⁸ *The MFA statement on information regarding Russia's failure to comply with the INF Treaty*, the Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 30 July, 2014, www.msz.gov.pl.

⁵⁹ For more: T. Żornaczuk, "Poland's Policy towards the Western Balkans," see p. 291 in this volume.

⁶⁰ *Minister Grzegorz Schetyna's speech at PISM*, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ P. Gawliczek, "Nowe impulsy w reformie wojskowego szkolnictwa Ukrainy," *Polska Zbrojna*, October 2015, www.polska-zbrojna.pl.

aggression, and increase the likelihood of a collective military response. The implementation of these proposals was hampered by a different assessment of the Russian threat to NATO, and of the steps that could help strengthen European security or which might lead to an escalation of tensions. The long-term and more active efforts of the Alliance were also hindered by financial considerations. Nevertheless, the measures agreed at the Wales summit provided grounds for further adaptation of the Alliance, with new decisions expected at the Warsaw summit in July 2016.

In the years 2011–2015, after the conclusion of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, there was a decrease in Poland's interest in participating in crisis management missions beyond Europe. This was largely the result of a change in security priorities with a focus on strengthening the ability to defend Polish territory. However, Poland's lack of involvement in the operation in Libya, which was met with criticism within the Alliance, caused it to lose some of the political capital it had built in Afghanistan. This created the perception of Poland as a state demanding support from other Allies but insufficiently supporting actions important for other Allies' security. Even if the Komorowski Doctrine was initially correct, it is not clear whether it helped in achieving the objectives of Poland's security policy after Russian aggression against Ukraine. The development of events from 2011–2015, when the security of NATO members was threatened both from the east and the south, proved that Poland should reassess the balance between collective defence and crisis management. The main questions were the extent to which participation in Alliance missions might weaken Polish defence potential, the extent to which it could strengthen the ability to conduct joint operations, and the Polish position in the Alliance, which is crucial for securing a greater NATO military presence on Polish territory.

Until 2014, Poland was able to draw benefits from its active participation in the discussions on the new regime of nuclear and conventional arms control in Europe. This enabled it to influence NATO policy, aimed at building a strategic partnership with Russia. On the one hand, it meant Poland could warn against unilateral concessions by the Alliance, but on the other hand, it could demonstrate a constructive approach. The best examples were Polish initiatives regarding non-strategic nuclear weapons. Poland also clearly declared terms of cooperation with Russia concerning missile defence, ensuring that its proposals to Russia were in line with the basic principles of the Alliance. Poland's voice in discussions on cooperative security and arms control ceased to be heard after Russian aggression against Ukraine when it was primarily seeking to strengthen deterrence and defence. The lack of a proactive attitude in other matters created the risk that the tone of the discourse would be imposed by other Alliance countries, with the risk

of limiting Poland's ability to pursue its interests in the coming years. As in the case of involvement in crisis management operations, Poland should reassess how its activity in arms control can facilitate the strengthening of collective defence, which it considers, after all, as its most important security interest.

European and Regional Dimension of Poland's Security Policy

MARCIN TERLIKOWSKI*

In the years 2011–2015, the environment in which Polish security policy goals were formulated and implemented changed profoundly. Until the end of 2013, Poland benefited from the relatively stable security situation in Europe, and deep reductions in the military capabilities of European NATO members, resulting from the fiscal crisis and cuts in defence budgets, were widely recognised as the biggest challenge. These fears were justified: in 2011, the European NATO members spent over \$20 billion less on defence than in 2009, and in 2013 more than \$40 billion less. Thus, the decline was 12% within four years and led to decommissioning of many weapons systems, staff reductions in armed forces, delaying the purchase of new weapons and limiting exercises.¹

At the same time, Europe was focused on asymmetric and non-military threats: the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular Iran's nuclear programme, international terrorism and cyber-security. Russia was perceived as a difficult but strategic partner with whom dialogue was a value in itself.² This threat perception contributed to a visible reorientation of Poland's strategic attention from being focused almost entirely on NATO, still considered a priority, to involving other dimensions of its security policy, especially to the EU Common Security and Defence Policy and bilateral defence cooperation.

However, after the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014 and the outbreak of the conflict in eastern Ukraine, the European security environment seriously destabilised. Recognising Russian aggression against Ukraine and Russia's increasingly provocative policy towards NATO as a threat to basic Polish interests, Poland again focused its security policy on the North Atlantic Alliance. Cooperation under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in regional groups and in the bilateral dimension with key allies became, in practice, subordinated to Polish goals in NATO, in particular, the establishment of a visible and enduring Allied military presence in the country and in the NATO's Eastern Flank.

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¹ Own calculations based on the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Military Expenditure Database*, www.sipri.org.

² See, for example, *Chicago Summit Declaration*, 20 May 2012, www.nato.int.

Threats from Europe's southern neighbourhood had a much smaller impact on Polish security policy. These included the progress of the terrorist group calling itself the Islamic State (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria in 2014 (whose territorial expansion resulted in an unprecedented increase in the terrorist threat to Europe) and the rapid growth of unregulated migration to the European Union in 2015 from the Middle East and North Africa. First of all, Poland sought to ensure that addressing threats from the south did not adversely affect the formulation of NATO and the EU's response to Russia's actions in Central and Eastern Europe. However, the increasing importance of these threats for Poland's partners from Southern Europe was complicating the Polish efforts.

From Visionary to Pragmatic: Poland and the CSDP

Since accession to the EU, Poland had relied on two basic assumptions in its approach to the CSDP. The first was scepticism about far-reaching defence integration proposals in the Union, arising from a fear of competition with NATO and the prospect of weakening the Alliance. The second was the desire to strengthen its political position in the EU through involvement in military operations and civilian missions within the CSDP (not only in Europe but also in Africa) and in the development of military capabilities (especially the EU battle groups). Briefly, in 2011, Poland quite unexpectedly joined a group of countries, including Germany and France, calling for far-reaching CSDP reforms. However, after the failure of these proposals, Poland returned to pragmatism in this respect and focused on shaping EU initiatives, so that they could bring benefits to the general pool of military capabilities in Europe, thereby also strengthening NATO. However, a significant problem for Poland was the gradual evolution of the industrial and defence policy of the EU, which assumed a serious limitation of the Member States' freedom in selecting instruments to support their defence industry, including offsets (compensation agreements, providing for investments by the foreign vendor of defence material into the client country defence and civilian industry). Therefore, an important goal of Poland, intending to rebuild its national defence industry, was to direct the development of the CSDP in line with Polish priorities.

At the time of preparations for its presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011, Poland surprised European partners by announcing that its flagship initiative would involve strengthening the CSDP by establishing a permanent EU command for military operations (EU OHQ).³ This proposal, which had aroused a

³ Should a decision be taken to launch a military operation, the EU must indicate a national command from among one of the pre-defined five at its disposal, which then takes over responsibility for the operation. These commands are located in France, Germany, the UK, Italy and Greece. For

lot of controversy in the EU even prior to Polish proposal, was put forward in a letter by the foreign and defence ministers of France, Germany and Poland, addressed to the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, on 6 December 2010 (the Weimar letter).⁴ However, strong opposition from the United Kingdom, which criticised any strengthening of CSDP structures, determined the failure of this initiative, undertaken by Council of the EU in June of the following year.⁵ Another letter to the high representative, of 2 September 2011, this time also signed by Spain and Italy (the "Weimar plus" format), again called for the creation of an EU OHQ. Moreover, it suggested the possibility of opening the debate in the EU on launching the Treaty of Lisbon's mechanism of the permanent structured cooperation in the field of security and defence (PESCO).⁶ Nevertheless, Polish proposals received no wide positive response, primarily because of the UK's rigid position. It was only decided that one of the EU cells, the Operations Centre, would be strengthened and temporarily take over coordination functions for EU military training missions in Africa.

However, British opposition to Polish proposals was only a symptom of a deeper problem of a lack of consensus in the Union regarding the future of the CSDP. Already in the debate on the consequences of the Lisbon Treaty for this policy, it became clear that the EU Member States did not want to deepen defence integration, especially by launching an advanced cooperation mechanism, requiring them to make binding commitments, which PESCO was precisely about. For the same reason the proposals of President Bronisław Komorowski regarding the development of the new security strategy as the first step towards a comprehensive reform of the CSDP, presented at the Munich Security Conference in February 2012, did not receive an obvious response from either the EU institutions or the major capitals of the Union.⁷ Since then, Poland has gradually ceased to be interested in defining the CSDP agenda, and subsequent attempts to use the Weimar or Weimar plus formats were of political rather than practical importance.⁸

In the face of further reductions in military capabilities and weakening prospects for the development of the European defence industry, the defence-industrial policy considered an element of the CSDP, became increasingly

more, see: M. Terlikowski (ed.), "System planowania i dowodzenia misjami Unii Europejskiej. Struktura, problemy, możliwości reform," *PISM Report*, June 2011.

⁴ For full text of the letter, see: www.europarl.europa.eu.

⁵ "Britain blocks EU plans for 'operational military headquarters,'" *The Telegraph*, 18 July 2011.

⁶ For full text of the letter, see: www.europarl.europa.eu.

⁷ See: *President Komorowski calls for new security strategy for EU*, 4 February 2012, www.prezydent.pl.

⁸ For example, the defence ministers of Poland, France, Germany, Spain and Italy issued a joint declaration on the future of the CSDP in November 2012. For full text, see: www.diplomatie.gouv.fr.

important in the EU. Throughout the period 2011–2015, the EU made clear progress in creating a set of legal, financial and information instruments of its industrial policy aimed at the defence sector. In 2011, the transposition period of Directive 2009/81/EC, which defines the basic principles for the acquisition of armaments and military equipment by the Member States, came to an end. Pursuant to its provisions, governments may not give preference to domestic defence enterprises or require offsets from foreign vendors. The Directive does not affect the possibility of excluding the application of European Union law on all matters related to arms and military equipment, if, in accordance with Art. 346 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, the state invokes “basic security interests.” However, in the interpretation of the European Commission, partly supported by the largest arms producers in the EU (the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain), the Member States are, in principle, to apply the directive, and only in exceptional cases should they use Art. 346. In this way, free competition would gradually be introduced in the European defence equipment market, as a result of which the companies offering uncompetitive products would be forced to change their business profile to a civilian one, or merge, and thereby the European defence industry would further consolidate, fostering innovation and competitiveness, mostly with competing with the United States in mind.⁹

Poland quickly assessed that the EU’s defence-industrial policy, based on the logic of market liberalisation at all costs, was unacceptable as it meant a gradual decline of the Polish defence industry or its takeover by the largest companies from Western Europe. A symptom of Poland’s resistance to the drive to further consolidate the defence industry in the EU at the expense of weaker countries was the delay in transposing Directive 2009/81/EC by almost two years.¹⁰ Then, during the defence preparations of the European Council scheduled for December 2013, Poland focused on withholding the aspirations of the EC and some EU Member States, especially France, to politically sanction the liberalisation of the European defence market as the flagship goal of the CSDP. The EC’s level of ambition was pointed out by its July 2013 Communication “Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector,” which made direct reference to the need of a “rapid phasing out:” of offsets.¹¹ The Council conclusions of 20 December

⁹ For more, see: M. Terlikowski, “Liberalisation of the EU Defence Equipment Market,” *PISM Research Papers*, no. 15, 2011,.

¹⁰ The directive was transposed by changes in the Public Procurement Law, adopted in its amendment of 12 October, 2012; they entered into force in February 2013. (Dz.U. [Journal of Laws] 2012, item 1271).

¹¹ *Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions* “Towards a more competitive and efficient defence and security sector,” COM(2013) 542, 24 July 2013.

2013, stated the need for a “balanced” and “inclusive” approach to the EU defence industry, which Poland interpreted as recognition of its arguments in favour of leaving states the freedom to not apply Directive 2009/81/EC universally, including the use of offsets when purchasing weapons and military equipment from abroad. However, another Communication of the EC, “A new deal for the European defence sector,” announced in June 2014, put forward a proposal for the EC to develop guidance regarding the interpretation of Directive 2009/81/EC, although it was clear that many EU countries, including Poland, would not feel bound by such advice.¹²

Another element of the EU's defence industrial policy was to be financial incentives and regulatory and legal facilitation for companies in this sector, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). By the end of 2015, however, it was not clear what specific forms these tools would take. In order to stimulate debate on this issue, the European Commission appointed a “group of wise men” in 2015, with the participation of Bogdan Klich, former Polish defence minister (then a senator).¹³ The group's report recommended, above all, the establishment of a special EU fund (at least €3.5 billion) to support research and development projects related to new types of armaments under the next EU framework programme for research and innovation, which would replace “Horizon 2020” in the next financial perspective.¹⁴ Due to the unclear future of the initiative, Poland was not politically involved in discussions on this matter.

However, throughout the period 2011 to 2015, Poland continued its involvement in CSDP missions and operations. It maintained participation in the military operation *Althea* in Bosnia and Herzegovina (about 50 soldiers), EUMM Georgia civil missions (approximately 20 soldiers, police officers and diplomats), EULEX Kosovo (approximately 120 people, including a special police unit of approximately 100 police officers), EUBAM Moldova/Ukraine (approximately 20 personnel of the Border Guard and Customs Service). In addition, from February 2013 to May 2014, it deployed a small contingent of about 20 people for the EUTM Mali military training mission. Its task was to train the Malian armed forces so that there would be no repeat of the 2012 situation which saw the takeover of control over a large part of the country by Islamist militias composed of Tuareg tribes.¹⁵ From May

¹² *Report From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions “A New Deal for European Defence,”* COM(2014) 387, 24 June 2014.

¹³ *High-level Group of Personalities on defence research issues statement*, 18 February 2015, www.eda.europa.eu.

¹⁴ *European Defence Research. The case for an EU-funded defence R&T programme*, EUISS, 2016.

¹⁵ See: M. Terlikowski, K. Rękawek, “EU CSDP in the Light of the Crisis in Mali,” *PISM Bulletin*, no. 22 (475), 5 March 2013.

2014 to February 2015, Poland also deployed a military contingent of 50 troops for the EUFOR RCA operation in the Central African Republic, whose task was to ensure security in Bangui, the capital of this war-torn country.¹⁶

Support for these missions was presented by Poland as a practical demonstration of its commitment to European solidarity, to which it also called other EU countries, with regard to the outcomes of Russia's aggression on Ukraine for the security of Central and Eastern Europe. Acting for the benefit of Ukraine, Poland was also strongly involved in the preparation of the EUAM Ukraine civilian advisory mission, postulating a maximum broad mandate (including support for the administration of regions, not just the central government in Kyiv). Eventually, the EU established this mission in July 2014, although with rather limited tasks. Poland provided one police officer to participate in the mission.

Poland also participated of the EU battle groups system. In 2010, Poland formed a battlegroup with Germany, Slovakia, Lithuania and Latvia, in 2013 with France and Germany, and in 2016 it agreed to put on standby a battlegroup with the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. At the same time, in the Polish approach to the CSDP, the issue of the EU's operational response to the migration crisis, which became the EU's political priority in 2015 when the number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea rapidly increased, did not play an important role. Poland did not join in the EUNAVFOR MED *Sophia* military operation established in October 2015 to stop people smugglers and to help migrants who were in distress at high seas.

Regional Disappointment: Poland in the Visegrad Group

In the years 2011–2015, Poland participated in several formats of European regional defence cooperation, but it was involved the most in the Visegrad Group (V4), although the cooperation in the field of security was not the atop the agenda of this vehicle.¹⁷ For many years, the V4 had mainly political significance for Poland as a mechanism of strengthening its voice in the EU and NATO thanks to the region's support. Although Poland called for practical military cooperation, for example in the field of modernisation of post-Soviet armaments, unfortunately, these ideas, for many reasons, were not implemented.

From 2011 Poland started to promote military cooperation in the V4 again, hoping this time for tangible results. Its goal was to stop the disintegration of the military capabilities of the other V4 countries, who, after the outbreak of

¹⁶ See: M. Radziejowska, M. Terlikowski, "EUFOR RCA and the Future of Polish Engagement in Crisis Management Missions," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 75 (670), 28 May 2014.

¹⁷ This is illustrated by the national presidency programmes of the V4. See: www.visegradgroup.eu.

the financial crisis, introduced large cuts in their defence spending. In 2011, the Czech Republic spent 16% less on defence than in 2008, Hungary almost 20% less, and Slovakia almost 30% less.¹⁸ Given the small defence budgets and the armed forces of these countries, such significant cuts meant they were practically unable to contribute to NATO's basic tasks, thus undermining the security of Alliance's Eastern Flank. Practical V4 military cooperation was also intended to be a regional contribution to NATO and EU capabilities, training and exercise initiatives, and to tie the Czech, Slovak and Hungarian armed forces more with Poland. The growing asymmetry between Poland's military potential (with increasing defence budget) and its V4 partners, however, limited their desire to be more involved in joint projects. They looked at Poland's proposals suspiciously for fear of its dominance in the V4 and were concerned that their ability to pursue their own interests would be limited. At the same time, they wanted to transfer most of the costs and obligations arising from cooperation to Poland.

The first clear signal of a desire to strengthen military cooperation in the V4 appeared in May 2012, in a joint declaration by defence ministers. First of all, it confirmed the plan to create and put on standby a joint EU battle group in 2016.¹⁹ This was Poland's priority, perceiving the joint EU battle group as a basic tool to mobilise the other Visegrad countries to stop cuts in their military capabilities, and at the same time to increase interoperability in the region. Co-operation in projects implemented in NATO was also announced, especially on the basis of NATO Centres of Excellence, established in the V4 countries,²⁰ in the NATO Multinational Military Police Battalion built by Poland, and in the Multinational Logistics Coordination Centre created by the Czech Republic. Moreover, better harmonisation of defence planning among V4 countries was proposed to enable joint procurement of weapons and development of joint military capabilities, especially in the field of air transport, air defence and cyber-defence. After the adoption of the declaration, expert work was initiated on developing a sustained framework for defence cooperation.

The result of these activities came in March 2014 in form of two documents, "Long-Term Vision" and "Framework for enhanced cooperation in defence planning." The first proposed the concentration of V4 defence cooperation in three areas: capability development, procurement of weapons and cooperation

¹⁸ Own calculations based on the SIPRI database, www.sipri.org.

¹⁹ See: "Joint Communiqué of the Ministers of Defence of the Visegrad Group," *Litoměřice*, 4 May 2012, www.visegradgroup.eu.

²⁰ The NATO Military Police Centre Of Excellence (MP CoE) in Bydgoszcz, NATO Explosive Ordnance Disposal Centre of Excellence (EOD CoE) in Trenčín, Slovakia and the NATO Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Centre Of Excellence (JCBRN Defence CoE) in Vyškov, Czech Republic.

of defence industries and the creation of joint military units, joint training and exercises. Announcements included, among other things, consultations in the V4 as a rule when making decisions on the purchase of new weapons by each state, using the EU Visegrad Battle Group as a catalyst for further cooperation in the area of joint military units, the creation of a joint military education programme, and building consortia of defence companies from V4 countries.²¹ The second document established a three-level mechanism for coordinating V4 cooperations in the field of defence planning. A newly established V4 Defence Planning Group, composed of political directors as well as civil and military experts, was subordinated to the regular meetings of secretaries of state from the V4 ministries of defence, responsible for defence cooperation. The Group was allowed to appoint ad hoc, thematic working groups composed of subject matter experts.

Both documents were prepared by the Hungarian presidency of the V4 (July 2013–June 2014). That is why Poland, wishing to have a greater impact on the direction of cooperation development, presented its own document, “A new opening,” which proposed specific cooperation initiatives in all areas covered by “Long-Term Vision.” Although it was received sceptically by Hungary and Slovakia (that took over the 12-month presidency of the V4 in July 2014), in 2015 an “Action Plan” setting out directions for defence cooperation and the V4 “Strategy in the field of training and exercises”²² was adopted. According to the first of these, the EU V4 Battle Group (seen as a seed of the future modular joint military unit) was to be of key importance for the V4 defence cooperation.

These efforts brought limited results. Polish attempts to engage V4 partners in joint capacity development projects and industrial cooperation failed. In the autumn of 2014, the Czech Republic decided to independently purchase mobile radars that had already been proposed by Poland as an industrial cooperation project, in the first stage in bilateral terms and then intended for the entire V4.²³ In 2015, Poland signed a ground-breaking cooperation agreement with Slovakia on a new version of the Rosomak armoured personnel carrier, intended for the Slovak armed forces and for export markets.²⁴ At the end of the year, however, Slovakia suggested withdrawing from this decision (and in 2016 the project failed, mostly due to the ambitions of Slovak defence firms). Work on a joint modern armoured vehicle to replace the post-Soviet BWP-1, used in large quantities in the

²¹ *Long Term Vision of the Visegrad Countries on Deepening their Defence Cooperation; Framework for an Enhanced Visegrad Defence Planning Cooperation*, 14 March 2014, www.visegradgroup.eu.

²² *Joint Communiqué of Visegrad Group Ministers of Defence*, 23 April 2015, www.visegradgroup.eu.

²³ *Acquisition of 3D MADR radars*, Ministry of Defence & Armed Forces of the Czech Republic, 30 September 2014, www.army.cz.

²⁴ J. Sabak, “Rosomaki jadą na Słowację. Nowe otwarcie współpracy państw V4,” *Defence24*, 3 July 2015, www.defence24.pl.

armed forces of the V4, also ground to a halt.²⁵ In this situation, the Visegrad EU Battle Group became the largest practical result of enhanced defence cooperation within the V4, undergoing successful certification in 2015 as part of the exercise *Common Challenge*.²⁶

At the same time, in the years 2011–2015, the Visegrad Group regularly adopted joint statements preceding important NATO and EU meetings. This reflected Poland's desire to build the V4 “brand” as a regional grouping presenting coherent priorities in the field of defence at the forums of the Alliance and the Union. In 2012, before the NATO Summit in Chicago, the V4 countries adopted a declaration in which they announced increased commitment to strengthening the Alliance's military capabilities (the “smart defence” initiative), increasing interoperability through exercises (including significant participation in the *Steadfast Jazz* exercise in 2013, based on the territorial defence scenario, and for that reason being of particular importance for Poland) as well as the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.²⁷ In 2013, the V4 adopted a declaration preceding the December European Council on defence. It supported reforms strengthening the CSDP, although under the condition, that they would be coordinated with NATO operations. The V4 emphasised the importance of contributing to the development of the EU's military capabilities in the form of the Visegrad Battle Group and the strengthening the EU Operations Centre as a result of the activity of the Polish presidency in the EU Council in 2011. Hence, the declaration reflected the Polish policy towards the CSDP at that time.²⁸

In the face of Russian aggression against Ukraine, throughout 2014, the V4 repeatedly adopted declarations condemning the annexation of Crimea²⁹ and emphasising that a peaceful solution to the conflict must be based on respect for Ukrainian independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.³⁰ However, there were differences within the V4 regarding the assessment of the outcomes for European security (and what's more, the form and scope of the Alliance's response). Strengthening NATO's military presence in Central and Eastern Europe became the Polish priority before the NATO summit in Newport in September 2014.

²⁵ J. Sabak, “‘Wielka, polityczna dekoracja... i nic więcej.’ Czeski minister krytycznie o polityce Polski w V4,” *Defence24*, 11 November 2015, www.defence24.pl.

²⁶ *Uroczyste rozpoczęcie działalności grupy bojowej UE—“V4 EU Battlegroup,”* Ambasada Republiki Czeskiej w Warszawie, 3 December 2015, www.mzv.cz.

²⁷ See: *Declaration of the Visegrad Group—Responsibility for a Strong NATO* 18 April 2012, www.visegradgroup.eu.

²⁸ See: *Declaration of the V4 Foreign Ministers “For a More Effective and Stronger Common Security and Defence Policy,”* 18 April 2013, www.visegradgroup.eu.

²⁹ See: *Statement of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Countries on Ukraine*, 4 March 2014, www.visegradgroup.eu.

³⁰ *Joint Statement of the Visegrad Group and Ukraine*, 16 December 2014, www.visegradgroup.eu.

However, it was not shared by partners from the V4, who indicated in various ways that they felt no threat from Russia and were not ready to contribute more to the security of NATO's Eastern Flank. Consequently, there was no strong V4 voice before the Welsh summit, and it was only at the end of 2014 that the prime ministers of the V4 countries called for the full and rapid implementation of the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) agreed there.³¹ In the course of 2015, during the preparation of the NATO summit in Warsaw, the V4 voice did not sound loud or coherent, as the divisions within it became even deeper, mainly due to differences of opinion regarding the rationale for maintaining sanctions imposed on Russia and the migration crisis that hit the EU in middle of the year. In June, before the European Council, the V4 succeeded in adopting a joint declaration on the future of the CSDP. The group supported the idea of a new EU security strategy, which was to be developed by mid-2016. From the perspective of Poland's goals, however, there was a lack of strong V4 involvement in implementing the provisions of the NATO summit in Wales and support for Polish proposals for the upcoming Warsaw summit, which were focused on establishing an enduring presence of NATO troops and infrastructure in the Alliance's Eastern Flank.

Bilateral Cooperation in the Weimar Triangle

In the years 2011–2015 Poland actively developed cooperation in the field of security and defence with France and Germany, in the format of the Weimar Triangle (WT) and bilaterally. Its functional purpose, in addition to strengthening the Polish voice and “coalition capacity” in NATO and the EU by developing and deepening bilateral relations, was to support the transformation of the Polish armed forces, including their technical modernisation. The problem turned out to be the big differences in the perception of threats between Poland and its two Western partners (especially the Russian threat after 2014) and the way of responding to them. This determined the limited results of cooperation at the political level and in NATO initiatives, although some tangible results were achieved at the military level.

Cooperation within the WT in the field of defence was revived in 2011 due to Poland's desire to speak out strongly about the CSDP during its presidency of the EU Council. Notwithstanding the failure of this attempt, the CSDP remained the axis of political cooperation in the WT, gaining the support of Spain and Italy (see above). In 2015, the ministers of defence and foreign affairs adopted joint declarations on the need to reform the CSDP (in March, emphasising the need

³¹ *Bratislava Declaration of the Visegrad Group Heads of Government on the Deepening V4 Defence Cooperation*, 9 December 2014.

to adopt a new security strategy for the EU, but also, in April, to improve EU–NATO cooperation).³² Significantly, the ministers only very briefly referred to the implementation of the provisions of the NATO summit in Wales and preparations for the 2016 summit in Warsaw. This demonstrated the scale of differences in the perception of these issues between the Weimar Triangle countries. The use of the WT format to stabilise the situation in Ukraine in February 2014 was also temporary, when foreign ministers of Poland, France and Germany went to Kyiv on their diplomatic mission. Ultimately, the multilateral political format for solving the Ukraine–Russia conflict became the Normandy Four, including Weimar partners except Poland.

At the same time, only one large military cooperation project was carried out in WT, with the establishment of a “Weimar” EU Battle Group, which was on standby in the first half of 2013. Poland invested most efforts and resources in its creation, although from the military point of view it was the weakest state in the Triangle. This confirmed that Poland saw great political and practical potential in this format of cooperation. However, the group was not used operationally, although there were postulates for its deployment in war-torn Mali. However, due to its willingness to maintain operational freedom, France chose the national path and intervened in this country alone, leaving the EU to play a training role for the Malian armed forces being re-established.³³ This limited the political importance of the Weimar Battle Group for both CSDP reform and military cooperation in the WT.

Bilateral Polish-German and Polish-French cooperation brought much better results in 2011–2015. Notably, cooperation with Germany developed dynamically, regardless of the growing differences in the Polish and German perception of security threats to Central and Eastern Europe. The framework agreement of June 2011 established the formal basis for strengthening existing military cooperation, indicating as many as 24 specific areas of joint activities covering almost all areas of the armed forces’ activity.³⁴ These provisions were both deepened and broadened in subsequent years in letters of intent regarding the land forces (in 2014), navy (in 2013) and air force (in 2015) cooperation.³⁵ This enabled an unprecedented increase in the

³² *Joint Communiqué of the Weimar Triangle Foreign Ministers*, Wrocław, 3 April 2015, www.msz.gov.pl; *Oświadczenie po spotkaniu ministrów obrony*, 3 March 2015, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, www.mon.gov.pl.

³³ A. Rettman, “French colonel: France better off alone in Mali,” *EU Observer*, 25 January 2013, www.euobserver.com.

³⁴ *Ministrowie obrony Polski i Niemiec podpisali umowę o współpracy*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 21 June 2011, www.archiwalny.mon.gov.pl.

³⁵ A. Dąbrowska, “Polska i Niemcy: bliscy sojusznicy w NATO,” *Polska Zbrojna*, 29 October 2014, www.polska-zbrojna.pl; Ł. Zalesiński, “W niemieckim porcie na polskim okręcie,” *Polska Zbrojna*, 27 May 2013, www.polska-zbrojna.pl; “Wzmocnienie współpracy sił powietrznych Polski i Niemiec,” *Defence24*, 27 April 2015, www.defence24.pl.

participation of military units from Germany and Poland in exercises conducted by the other country, the number of mutual visits and services (for example, in the fields of logistics and rescue), consultations, and staff-to-staff talks. In 2015, Poland and Germany decided to cross-subordinate one armoured battalion to brigades of the other country.³⁶ The objective of this project, implemented under the German framework nations concept (FNC), was primarily to strengthen interoperability through active participation in the partner's training cycle (subordination did not involve operational use of force). The foundations for cooperation of defence industries were also laid in December 2015, when, following the 2013 decision to purchase more than 100 used Leopard 2A5 tanks, an agreement was signed on their servicing and further modernisation of the pool of older Leopards 2A4s donated by Germany to Poland in 2002–2003 by the companies of the Polish Armaments Group and the German Rheinmetall.³⁷

By developing bilateral cooperation with Poland, Germany also became involved in the actions of NATO aimed at strengthening the security of the Eastern Flank countries, in particular in the implementation of the Readiness Action Plan. Among other things, Germany deployed relatively large contingents for exercises in Poland. Moreover, the country strongly emphasised its readiness to defend NATO territory, and thus Poland, in the event of Russian aggression.³⁸ This was a response to Polish calls for efforts to strengthen the Eastern Flank should in part be undertaken by the strongest European military countries rather than exclusively the United States. As a result of growing military cooperation with Germany, the Bundeswehr became the closest partner of the Polish army, at least until the development of extensive military cooperation between Poland and the United States, which speed up only in 2016 and following years.

Cooperation with France, unlike Germany, was characterised by the large operational involvement of Poland in French (or French-inspired) military operations in Africa and a strong industrial and defence aspect. Participation in the EU missions in Mali (EUTM Mali, 2013/2014) and the Central African Republic (EUFOR RCA, 2014/2015) was perceived by Poland not only as an expression of the desire to strengthen the CSDP and European solidarity (see above) but also as an investment in strategic relations with France. This is also

³⁶ The brigades, chosen to participate in this cooperative scheme were the 34th Armoured Cavalry Brigade from Żagań and the 41st Armoured Grenadier Brigade from Tollense-Kaserne in Neubrandenburg. For more, see: A. Sokołowski, "Rozwój polsko-niemieckiej współpracy wojskowej w drugiej dekadzie XXI wieku," *Rocznik Bezpieczeństwa Międzynarodowego*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2015, pp. 260–261.

³⁷ "Podpisana umowa na modernizację Leopardów," *Altair*, 28 December 2015, www.altair.com.pl.

³⁸ B.T. Wieliński, "Minister obrony Niemiec: Stoimy po waszej stronie," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 25 April 2015, www.wyborcza.pl.

confirmed by the logistical support provided by Poland to the French national operation *Sangaris* in CAR, even before the EU mission was established in that country in the first half of 2014.³⁹

As in the case of Germany, to strengthen practical Polish–French military cooperation in the field of training, practice and exercises, a letter of intent was signed (in 2013), which emphasised the cooperation of navies, special forces and air force.⁴⁰ As a result, it was possible to organise training for Polish special forces, among others, in French Guiana.⁴¹ However, defence industrial issues were of special importance in relations between Poland and France in 2011–2015. Since Poland's announcement of its “Armed Forces Technical Modernisation Plan for 2013–2022,” France was keenly interested in obtaining Polish contracts (in particular for the “Wisła” air and missile defence system, helicopters, and next generation of submarines). For this purpose, it proposed far-reaching cooperation between French and Polish defence companies. These efforts resulted in Poland's decision of April 2015 to choose the offer of Airbus Helicopters to supply multi-role helicopter for the Polish armed forces.⁴²

The development of Polish-French cooperation resulted in a large increase in France's involvement in the security of Poland and Central and Eastern Europe. In 2013, it contributed the second largest national contingent for the NATO *Steadfast Jazz* exercise in Poland. This met Polish demands for the highest possible participation of Allies in these drills. In 2014, France supported efforts to strengthen NATO's Eastern Flank, deploying four Dassault Rafale aircraft in Poland to strengthen the Polish “Orlik” contingent participating in the Baltic Air Policing mission and to conduct a joint exercise programme.⁴³ In 2015, the largest Polish–French land exercises, *Puma-15*, took place.⁴⁴ At the end of this year, France finally gave up, under the pressure of many NATO and EU countries, finalising an agreement with Russia on the delivery of Mistral-class assault vessels, responding positively to Poland's repeated appeals in this matter.

³⁹ Poland made available one C-130 aircraft and 50 soldiers for the needs of the operation. See: “Polski Herkules już w Orleanie,” *Polska Zbrojna*, 3 February 2014, www.polska-zbrojna.pl.

⁴⁰ Ł. Zalesiński, “Polska bliżej Francji,” *Polska Zbrojna*, 7 May 2013, www.polska-zbrojna.pl.

⁴¹ “Specjalsi ćwiczą w Gujanie Francuskiej,” *Polska Zbrojna*, 29 January 2014, www.polska-zbrojna.pl.

⁴² See: M. Terlikowski, “Multi-purpose Helicopters Programme: Operational Needs, Strategy and Defence Industrial Policy,” *PISM Bulletin*, no. 45 (777), 29 April 2015.

⁴³ “Cztery francuskie myśliwce Rafale trafiają do Polski,” *Defence24*, 24 April 2014., www.defence24.pl.

⁴⁴ J. Sabak, “Puma 15’ – wspólne polsko-francuskie ćwiczenia rozpoczęte,” *Defence24*, 11 May 2015, www.defence24.pl.

Conclusions

Poland managed to achieve its goals only partially in terms of cooperation in the CSDP, the Visegrad Group and the Weimar Triangle. The CSDP did not develop in the years 2011–2015 towards an instrument that could palpably support Polish security. On the contrary, EU operations focused on Africa, and defence industrial defence policy began to develop as the main pillar of the CSDP, the full implementation of which posed a risk of limiting the possibilities of rebuilding and further developing Polish defence industry. Neither were there any ground-breaking results in military cooperation in the V4 and WT formats. Plans for Visegrad joint procurement of armaments and research and development were unsuccessful. Only the EU V4 Battle Group stood a chance to become a seed of a future joint military unit of the region's countries. In the Weimar format, even establishing a battle group has proved, so far, to be a one-off project. To make matters worse, Poland and the V4 and WT partners began to disagree strongly in terms of their assessments of the Russian threat after the aggression against Ukraine and then could find no common ground on ways to respond to the migration crisis.

At the same time, Poland's efforts certainly strengthened its image as an active partner, capable and willing to engage in various initiatives in the field of security policy. Both the V4 and WT began to be perceived in the EU and NATO as important groups, and Poland was seen as a leader in the region of Central and Eastern Europe and an important partner of France and Germany. It is impossible to assess the impact of this perception of Poland's allies on its ability to pursue its interests in the EU and NATO. However, without Poland's active stance, the provisions of the NATO summit in Wales, and of the EU in imposing sanctions on Russia, would have likely taken a different form, not necessarily directly favourable for Polish security interests. In this context, the development of bilateral military cooperation with Germany and France can also be assessed positively. It brought tangible results in, among other things, building the interoperability of the Polish armed forces, increasing their experience and raising their operational capacity.

Poland's Policy towards the European Union

KAROLINA BORONSKA-HRYNIEWIECKA*, PATRYK TOPOROWSKI**

The years 2011–2015 were a time of consolidating Poland's position in the European Union, characterised by a change in the perception of the country from a European debutant to a co-host, actively shaping the EU agenda. During this period, the Polish government was pursuing European policy in accordance with the principle “more, not less Europe.”¹ The most important EU events in which Poland participated were holding the first presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011 and the appointment of Donald Tusk as president of the European Council in December 2014.

Determinants

Polish European policy in the years 2011–2015 was shaped by institutional, economic and geopolitical challenges, both at the EU level and in its close neighbourhood. In 2011, the most important factor affecting Poland's activities in the EU was taking over the presidency of the EU Council in the second half of the year. It was an opportunity to strengthen the Polish position on the EU political scene.

As a relatively new Member State, Poland did not have diplomatic or administrative experience in the field of chairing the EU's works. It was one of the first countries to hold the presidency after limiting its role under the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty (among others, regarding initiatives in the EU external actions, also in the east). The tasks for the Polish presidency were determined by the internal situation in the EU. In 2011, the Union was struggling with the second phase of the financial crisis initiated in 2008 and its outcomes. There was a need for close cooperation in order to stabilise the euro and manage growing debt and unemployment, as well as to create efficient mechanisms to prevent

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¹ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2012 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 29 March 2012),” see p. 27 in this volume; *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, www.msz.gov.pl.

similar phenomena. The economic downturn in Greece and Ireland made these countries apply for financial assistance to the IMF and the EU in 2010.

In 2011, Portugal did the same, and in 2012 Spain and Cyprus followed suit. Poland entered the second phase of the crisis as the only country in the EU that had indicated continuous economic growth since 2008. Although this strengthened the position of the Polish presidency as a reliable moderator of the debate on ways to end the crisis, the obstacle was the fact that Poland remained outside the Eurozone.

The effect of the persistent difficult economic situation in the EU and instability of the banking sector was the acceleration and extension of the scope of economic reforms, mainly concerning the functioning of the Eurozone. Joint activities, previously limited to the financial sector, were extended by creating the banking union. Efforts were also continued to secure the macro-economic dimension by, among others, introduction of the Six-Pack and Two-Pack, and the Fiscal Pact strengthening the Stability and Growth Pact. Based on these solutions, a new process of the EU economic governance coordination was created within the framework of the European semester. In addition, a permanent European Stability Mechanism was created in 2012, replacing temporary solutions to protect the Eurozone countries from insolvency. However, the protracted crisis of the zone did not stop the expansion of the single currency area in the immediate vicinity of Poland. Estonia adopted the euro in 2011, Latvia in 2014 and Lithuania in 2015. Of the countries that joined the EU in 2004, only Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary remained outside the zone.

The financial crisis has also influenced the modes of governance and decision-making in the EU. Although the changes envisaged in the Lisbon Treaty were intended to ensure greater efficiency of the European decision-making process, in practice the community mechanisms were weakened, whereas the importance of the intergovernmental method, including the role of the European Council, increased. At the same time, in the perception of the Polish government, particularism increasingly prevailed over thinking in terms of the common good of the Union.²

Different national attitudes and visions of crisis-related measures also called into question the political integrity of the EU, in particular the Eurozone, in the face of a potential Grexit. Moreover, there was the question of renegotiation of British EU membership and the possible withdrawal of the United Kingdom following the referendum announced by Prime Minister David Cameron.³

² *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016, op. cit.*

³ The promise of the referendum was included in the Tories' election manifesto to the European Parliament in 2014, and then in Cameron's 2015 election programme.

The years 2011–2014 were characterised by the intensification of Eurosceptic sentiment in Western European countries and a decrease in confidence in the EU institutions.⁴ This was confirmed by the lowest ever turnout during elections to the European Parliament (EP) in 2014 (at 42.5%) as well as the largest percentage of seats won by the Eurosceptic parties.⁵ In these circumstances, the positive attitude of the Polish society towards the Union strengthened Warsaw's position in the discussion of European issues.⁶

Polish activity in the EU arena was also determined by the EU political calendar. In May 2014, the EP elections were held, and in November the new European Commission (EC) was appointed, along with a new high representative of the EU for foreign affairs and security policy, and a new president of the European Council. This entailed the possibility of promoting Polish representatives to EU positions. In the years 2009–2014, Janusz Lewandowski was the Commissioner for Budget and Financial Programming, and in the years 2009–2012, Jerzy Buzek was the Chairman of the EP.

The events in the Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods also had an impact on Polish European policy and the policy of the entire Union. Protests by part of Ukrainian society (Euromaidan) related to the failure of President Viktor Yanukovich to sign the association agreement with the European Union, followed by the aggression of Russia (resulting in the annexation of Crimea and the emergence of a separatist Donbas) increased the EU's interest in the Eastern dimension of European security, which was of strategic importance for Poland. At the same time, these events changed Polish postulates presented at the EU forum towards Russia and the EU's Eastern Policy. On the other hand, the outbreak of social revolts in Tunisia in December 2010, which in 2011 covered a significant part of North Africa and the Middle East (the Arab Spring) meant that the Polish presidency had to take into account the Union's actions in these regions.⁷

In 2015, the migration crisis reached its peak, caused by political instability in the Middle East, mainly the war in Syria that had been ongoing since 2011. In 2015, over one million migrants came to the EU through the Mediterranean Sea, of which over 60% were refugees from war-torn Africa and the Middle East.⁸ The

⁴ *Standard Eurobarometer 85*, 2016, <http://ec.europa.eu>.

⁵ The results of the EP elections are available at www.europarl.europa.eu.

⁶ In 2014, Poland belonged, along with Bulgaria and Romania, to the Member States with the highest percentage of citizens positively assessing the EU (52%), *Standard Eurobarometer 81*, spring 2014, <http://ec.europa.eu>.

⁷ More: P. Sasnal, "Poland's policy towards the states of the Near East," see p. 308 in this volume.

⁸ Data from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) of 22 December, 2015, www.iom.int. For more on the migration crisis, see: P. Sasnal (ed.), "Niekontrolowane migracje do Unii Europejskiej – implikacje dla Polski," *Raport PISM*, November 2015, www.pism.pl.

intensification of migratory pressure at the EU borders and the lack of efficient response from EU institutions and Member States weakened the Union's political integrity, including questioning the decision-making process. Actions of the Polish government in the area of combating the undesirable effects of migration were determined, among other things, by the parliamentary elections planned for October 2015 and the preceding campaign, of which the migration crisis was one of the main topics.

The years 2011–2015 included the end of the first (2007–2011) and second (2011–2014) government of Donald Tusk and the government of Ewa Kopacz (2014–2015), formed as a result of the appointment of Tusk as the president of the European Council. The two terms of government of the PO-PSL coalition were characterised by the continuity of Polish European policy. The parliamentary election in October and the establishment of Beata Szydło's PiS government in November 2015 can be considered the end of the analysed period.

Objectives

The main objectives of Polish European policy in the years 2011–2015 were presented in the annual information by ministers of foreign affairs, Radosław Sikorski and, in 2015, Grzegorz Schetyna, in the exposé of Donald Tusk of November 2011, and in *Priorytety polskiej polityki zagranicznej 2012–2016*.⁹ The latter document sets the general goal of Polish European policy, i.e. building a strong Poland in the centre of the EU and deeper integration in the economic and political dimension. Alongside the declaration of willingness to join the Eurozone, the government pointed out three most important aspects of integration for Poland: competitiveness, solidarity and openness.

In the economic dimension, Tusk and Sikorski emphasised that the financial condition of the state determines the position of a strong player in the Union. Therefore, apart from striving to participate in new initiatives at the EU and Eurozone level, the Polish government's goal since 2011 has also been to comply with EU economic governance rules and to emerge from the excessive deficit procedure. A good fiscal situation was to increase Poland's decision-making as regards the reconstruction of the Eurozone.¹⁰ Sikorski argued that the main EU challenge was the need for improvement of the Eurozone's operation and a return to the path of rapid and sustainable economic growth for the entire Union.

⁹ *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016, op. cit.*

¹⁰ *Ibidem.*

In terms of competitiveness, the Polish authorities stressed the importance of completion of the internal market (unrestricted exchange of goods and services and free movement of capital and labour) as a means to implement the “Europe 2020” strategy and to stimulate growth in the EU. For this purpose, the government pointed to the need to strengthen the position of the European Commission as the guardian of treaties, especially with regard to competition protection policy and the fight against tax avoidance. Removing administrative barriers for companies at the EU level, consistently increasing the freedom to provide services, and eliminating protectionist practices were necessary according to the government.

With regard to the principle of solidarity, Poland's main postulate was the reduction of disparities in the development of the EU countries, including support for own development priorities, such as modern transport and energy infrastructure. During the period of finalising details regarding the new financial perspective for the years 2014–2020, the most important Polish goal was a large EU budget and a developed cohesion policy. With regard to the common agricultural policy, Poland sought to equalise direct payments for farmers working in various EU countries, and to increase the importance of the rural development programme. It expected a simpler, more transparent, and yet more flexible budget. This was to serve the elimination of the British rebate and other allowances and exceptions that arose in the previous financial perspective.

The communitarisation of EU energy policy based on building a single energy market and implementing regulations in the field of security of gas supply and the third liberalisation package was also a strategic dimension of solidarity for Poland. This was to minimise the risk of excessive dependence on energy supplies from third countries. Therefore, one of the goals of the Polish presidency was to regulate cooperation with energy exporters and transit countries.

“A strong Poland in a strong political union” was the government's slogan in the political dimension.¹¹ The Polish administration perceived this power not only in a dynamically developing economy, but also in strengthening Poland's image in the EU as a predictable, efficient and constructive partner.¹² What's more, the government's ambition was to breathe new spirit into many EU initiatives in difficult times for the European project.¹³ The Polish presidency of the EU Council was to be one of the instruments for implementing these objectives.

In regard to the principle of openness, the Polish government's aim was to counteract two overlapping trends undermining the community method in

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011 (presented by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 16 March 2011),” see p. 11 in this volume.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

decision-making process in the EU¹⁴ and building the two-speed Europe (the institutionalisation of cooperation only among the Eurozone countries). Seeking to ensure that the countries outside the zone have an impact on its internal dynamics, Poland postulated, among other things, their participation in the Eurogroup meetings attended by finance ministers of Eurozone countries.

In view of the 2014 EP elections, the appointment of the new EC (including the high representative for foreign policy and president of the European Council), the government's ambition was to introduce a Polish citizen to the highest EU positions.

Developing the Eastern Partnership project (EP), including support for the democratisation of Ukraine and support for its efforts to become a member of the Union was invariably among Poland's goals in the European Union in relation to the EU neighbours.¹⁵ As a member of the informal group "friends of enlargement," Poland supported the process of EU enlargement with the Western Balkans, Iceland and Turkey.

Political Relations

Presidency of the EU Council. The most important event from the point of view of Poland's policy in the EU was the presidency of the EU Council in 2011, opening the Polish-Danish-Cypriot trio. By making Poland jointly responsible for the EU programme, the presidency was to help consolidate its political position in the European arena and to counteract trends for creation of a multi-speed Union. The presidency's three priorities, which were part of the objectives of Polish European policy, were economic growth as a pillar in the fight against crisis, food, energy and military security, and the external dimension of EU openness based on deeper cooperation with Eastern European and Mediterranean neighbours, liberalisation of trade agreements with third countries and supporting enlargement including signing the accession treaty with Croatia, granting Serbia the status of official candidate and opening the negotiating chapter with Turkey.¹⁶ These

¹⁴ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2012..." *op. cit.*

¹⁵ More E. Kaca, "Poland's policy towards the Eastern Partnership states," see p. 272 in this volume.

¹⁶ *Program polskiej prezydencji w Radzie Unii Europejskiej, 1 lipca 2011 r. – 31 grudnia 2011 r.*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2011. On the specific objectives of the presidency and their implementation, see: E. Piskorska, "Prezydencja po polsku. Ewolucja priorytetów, realizacja i zaniechania," in: J.M. Fiszer (ed.), *Prezydencja Polski w Radzie Unii Europejskiej*, Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2012. See also: T. Żornaczuk, "Poland's policy towards the Western Balkans," see p. 291 in this volume.

priorities were guided by the government's ambition to restore the enthusiasm and faith of Member States in European policy through presidency.¹⁷

The presidency's major achievements in terms of growth included the adoption in December 2011 of the Six-Pack, a package of six regulations and directives strengthening the coordination of economic policies in the Eurozone. Ensuring a large share of cohesion policy in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014–2020 was also a success. Just before assuming the presidency, Poland managed to extend the Competitiveness Pact to countries outside the Eurozone (the Euro-Plus Pact).

In the area of security, priorities were partially achieved. A technical agreement on the establishment of the Weimar Battle Group was signed as part of the EU defence policy. The British veto over the creation of a joint EU operational command disrupted Polish plans to go a step further. However, the determination of the Polish presidency, supported by Germany and France and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, led to a compromise on the issue of a common security and defence policy at the Council for Foreign Affairs in December 2011.¹⁸

The adoption of the conclusions on strengthening external dimension of the Union energy policy by the EU Council,¹⁹ which set the direction of actions in terms of energy security, can be considered an achievement of the Polish presidency. Another success was the EU's adoption of a joint mandate to negotiate an international agreement with Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan to build the southern corridor and ensure gas supplies to the Union countries.²⁰

In terms of openness, the European Neighbourhood Policy reforms were implemented, aimed at strengthening the Eastern and Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. In 2011, the second EP summit was held in Warsaw, during which the text of the free trade agreement with Ukraine (DCFTA) was approved. The Polish presidency led to creation of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) proposed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²¹ By combining the eastern

¹⁷ D. Tusk, "Zainwestujmy w Europę," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 1 July 2011.

¹⁸ More on this subject in the chapter: M. Terlikowski, "European and regional dimension of Poland's security policy," see p. 115 in this volume.

¹⁹ *Konkluzje RUE z dnia 24 listopada 2011 r. w sprawie wzmocnienia wymiaru zewnętrznego unijnej polityki energetycznej.*

²⁰ The topic of energy security returned to the EU in 2014. After the annexation of Crimea by Russia, Tusk presented the concept of strengthening EU energy cooperation in the gas sector in April 2014. It was included in the strategy for the energy union, presented by the European Commission in February 2015, which opened a new chapter in EU energy policy.

²¹ The opening ceremony of the EED Secretariat, attended by R. Sikorski, was held on 27 May, 2013, in Brussels.

and southern dimensions of EU Neighbourhood Policy, the EED complemented the European offer of instruments for supporting democracy, the rule of law and human rights in the immediate vicinity of the EU. Other presidency achievements in the area of openness include the reform of the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region,²² progress in implementing the enlargement strategy (signing the accession treaty with Croatia and closing six negotiation chapters with Iceland), and working out the programme of the eighth WTO conference, including the conclusion of accession negotiations with Russia.

The greatest setbacks of the Polish presidency include the failure to complete the association agreement with Ukraine²³ during the EP Warsaw summit, and the failure to agree on a common position towards Belarus,²⁴ condemning the authorities for violating human rights and the rule of law. The enlargement of the Schengen area to include Bulgaria and Romania, granting Serbia the status of official candidate, and opening a negotiating chapter with Turkey were also unsuccessful.

The Polish presidency was positively evaluated by the Member States and the EU institutions. Some flattering articles in the foreign press, describing the Polish presidency, were mentioned by Sikorski in his annual speech in 2012.²⁵ In a consultancy study, at the level of the Union commissioners' cabinets, ordered by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland was awarded high marks, praising its good communication, leadership and cooperation with the EU institutions.²⁶ The then President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, appreciated the presidency for combining national and EU interests and the contribution to negotiating reforms within the Eurozone.²⁷ The leader of the Social Democrats in the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, described this presidency as "one of the best in recent years."²⁸ Poland passed the test in terms of the post-Lisbon model of cooperation between the presidency and the newly established EU institutions.

²² More on this subject in the chapter: K. Raś, "Poland's policy towards the Baltic States," see p. 256 in this volume.

²³ More about Poland's relations with Ukraine in the chapter: D. Szeligowski, "Poland's policy towards Ukraine," see p. 209 in this volume.

²⁴ More on this subject in the chapter: A.M. Dynier, "Poland's policy towards Belarus," see p. 224 in this volume.

²⁵ "Polska w awangardzie Europy" (*Libération*), "Oscar dla Polski za prezydenturę" (*Hospodářské noviny*), "Polska powstrzymuje eurosceptycyzm" (*El País*).

²⁶ J.M. Fiszer, "Pozytywne i negatywne przesłanki polskiej prezydentury w Radzie UE oraz jej bilans," in: J.M. Fiszer (ed.), *Prezydentura Polski...*, *op. cit.*

²⁷ "Barroso—it was a great Polish EU presidency," *Radio Poland*, 15 December, 2011, www.thenews.pl.

²⁸ "Polish Presidency without Equality – European Integration," *Heinrich Böll Stiftung*, 3 December, 2013, <https://eu.boell.org>.

While the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, focused on the problems of the Eurozone, Tusk moderated the EU agenda in other areas, such as neighbourhood policy and the common market, and complementarity was also evident in relations between Sikorski and Ashton. During the six months of the presidency, the representatives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs represented Ashton 14 times at the meetings with the third countries, and Sikorski himself repeatedly replaced Ashton in official foreign trips, including to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Libya.

Poland's Influence in the EU. At the end of the presidency, Sikorski delivered a speech in Berlin, entitled "Poland and the Future of the European Union." This was the call on Germany, as the main beneficiary of integration, to take greater responsibility for Europe's fate and to moderate reforms in the Eurozone more efficiently. At the same time, the Sikorski criticised German perception of the crisis, stating that Germany was not an "innocent victim of the extravagance of others," and emphasised that Poland would support German leadership if it is included in the decision-making process.²⁹ Thus, he referred to the French–German attempts to limit the competitiveness pact previously negotiated to the Eurozone countries, which, as a result of Poland's pressure, ended up by opening the agreement to countries outside the Eurozone. Sikorski's speech, and in particular the fact that he was "more afraid of German inaction than German power," was often cited by foreign media.

The opposition of some capitals to the participation of the Polish finance minister in the Eurogroup meetings, as well as the failure to invite Poland to participate in a special summit of the Eurozone states and governments on 21 July, 2011,³⁰ confirmed Polish fears of marginalisation in the debate on the future of economic governance in the EU. In order to prevent the strengthening of intergovernmental decision-making instruments, excluding countries outside the zone, the Polish administration pointed to the need to consolidate the role of Community institutions in this process. Poland appealed for maintaining the role of the EC as a supervisor of economic processes and improving the efficiency of commissioners as representatives of European interests. In the Berlin speech, Sikorski also proposed shared chairmanship of the head of the EC and the president of the European Council, who, for better democratic legitimacy, would be elected in general elections. Poland also proposed strengthening the role of the EP, supporting the selection of some MEPs from the pan-European list.³¹

²⁹ Minister Sikorski's Berlin speech is available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: R. Sikorski, "Polska a przyszłość Unii Europejskiej," Berlin, 28 November, 2011, www.msz.gov.pl.

³⁰ France was the main country opposing Poland's participation.

³¹ R. Sikorski, *op. cit.*

Poland associated the pursuit of strengthening transnational institutions with the search for intergovernmental instruments for participating in the debate on the future of the EU and the Eurozone. One example was the accession to the Fiscal Pact,³² imposing an obligation on states to adopt a balanced budget rule in national law. The compromise assumed that, in matters of change in the functioning of the Eurozone, the meetings of the pact signatories would be open to countries that had adopted it but did not belong to the Eurozone.

The Polish administration also attached ever more importance to the possibility of influencing the situation in the EU by delegating its citizens to the highest EU positions. The prospect was created by establishing a new Commission, including the high representative and president of the European Council. Tusk announced in June 2014 that Poland was interested in the energy, competition and internal market portfolio in the EC, and then the government supported the Luxembourg candidate Jean-Claude Juncker as its chairman.

Considering difficulties in nominating Italian Federica Mogherini as High Representative, the Polish government submitted the nomination of Sikorski. However, succeeding Ashton would require a change of consensus between European parties and national leaders on gender and political affiliation of the high representative and vice-president of the commission. What's more, Sikorski's perception by some EU leaders as too anti-Russian limited his chances.³³

Victory in the EP elections for the European People's Party, which included the groups forming the Polish government, opened the opportunity to submit nomination of Tusk as candidate for the position of president of the European Council. He had strong support from German Chancellor Angela Merkel. In August 2014, he also obtained support from Prime Minister David Cameron, who treated the Polish candidacy as a counterweight to the federalist Jean-Claude Juncker. After simultaneous negotiations of many EU positions, Polish Development Minister Elżbieta Bieńkowska obtained the portfolio of the Commissioner for the Internal Market, and Tusk took the position of president of the European Council. However, Bieńkowska's portfolio was reduced to supervision over the financial sector compared to the portfolios of previous commissioners for the internal market. Sikorski did not obtain any of the EU positions. It can be assumed, however, that promoting him, also for such international functions as NATO Secretary General,

³² Full name: Treaty on stability, coordination and management in the Economic and Currency Union.

³³ Such perceptions of Sikorski by European diplomats were written by, among others, P. Spiegel, H. Carnegy, "Fresh Fight Breaks out Over Top UE Roles," *Financial Times*, 13 July 2014, www.ft.com. Tusk on 31 July 2014, wrote on Twitter: "According to PiS, Sikorski is too soft towards Russia and too hard according to EU politicians. According to Everyone—competent. So just right."

was, in practice, to serve as a bargaining chip in order to strengthen Tusk's candidacy for the position of president of the European Council.

Renegotiating the UK's Membership of the EU. After winning the British parliamentary election in May 2015, providing the Tories with a parliamentary majority, Cameron began implementing a plan to renegotiate UK's membership of the EU, which would culminate in a referendum on this matter. He began his European tour of seeking allies for EU reforms by meeting Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz in Warsaw. Poland shared interest in most of the British EU reform proposals, including open management of the Eurozone, reduction of EU bureaucracy, extending the internal market and strengthening national parliaments in the Union. However, it did not agree with the demand to limit economic immigration from the EU to the United Kingdom by denying immigrants access to labour market-related benefits for the first four years of their stay, and depriving them of the right to benefits for children living abroad.

For Poland, the most important issue in renegotiating UK's membership of the EU was, therefore, securing the rights of Polish citizens (who are the largest group of immigrants in the UK³⁴) in relation to the EU's free movement of people and rules against discriminating citizens of other EU countries, including in the field of social benefits. Most Member States took a similar position. In November 2015, Tusk started negotiations on the Brussels–London line.³⁵

Migration and the Refugee Crisis. In the face of the growing wave of immigration through The Mediterranean into the EU in 2015³⁶ and the deteriorating living conditions of immigrants already present in the Union, in September the EC proposed the relocation of 120,000 asylum seekers in Italy, Greece and Hungary to other countries.³⁷ The Council did this by invoking Article 78 and 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, providing for solidarity and the fair distribution of responsibility between Member States when one of them finds itself in a situation of sudden influx of third-country citizens. Reservations against imposed refugee quotas were expressed by the Visegrad Group countries, including Poland, as well as Latvia and Estonia.

³⁴ According to the estimates of the British Statistical Office, in 2014 there were 853,000 Poles in the United Kingdom, www.ons.gov.uk.

³⁵ K. Borońska-Hryniewiecka, "Skating on Thin Ice: The Problematic 'Renegotiation' of British EU Membership," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 105 (837), 18 November 2015, www.pism.pl.

³⁶ From January to the end of November 2015, over 880,000 immigrants came to the EU via the Mediterranean Sea.

³⁷ This was the second relocation programme. The earlier one was implemented on the basis of the decision of the EU Council (JHA) of July 2015.

In view of the prolonged obstruction among Central and Eastern European countries, the Luxembourg presidency in the Council of the EU reached for the qualified majority mechanism provided for in the treaty in the area of shared competence, which includes asylum and immigration policy. On 22 September, 2015, at a special summit of the EU Council for Internal Affairs, Poland did not vote together with the Visegrad Group countries and Romania, but joined the majority supporting the relocation of refugees.³⁸ The government of Ewa Kopacz argued for the decision to remove terms such as “obligatory” or “automatism” from the document as criteria for the division of refugees. It emphasised the protection of the EU’s external borders and the right of states to refuse relocation for security reasons without the consequences of financial sanctions. It was one of the recent European decisions made by the PO-PSL government, and the new PiS government announced its withdrawal.

Economic Relations

Despite the economic crisis in the Eurozone, Poland’s economic relations expressed in the volume of trade with other EU countries in 2014 began to strengthen again (see Table 1). A gradual improvement was also seen in the clear trend of a trade balance. In 2012, exports to the EU for the first time exceeded imports. Relatively high net transfers of funds from the EU to Poland were maintained. The exception was the moderate amount of transfer in 2015, resulting from slow contracting of infrastructure projects under the Structural Funds in the new financial perspective 2014–2020. The decline of investments in the EU, in response to the economic crisis, translated into a weakening of European investment growth in Poland. At the same time, the continuing recession in the EU increased the uncertainty on the EU market and weakened the inflow of foreign investments from Poland to other EU countries.

Table 1

Selected Economic Data for Poland for the Period 2011–2015

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Exports to EU-27 (% of total exports)	78.0	76.0	74.8	77.2	78.9
Imports from the EU (% of total imports)	70.0	67.7	68.9	69.6	70.3
Trade balance from the EU (in EUR billion)	-0.2	4.8	7.7	10.7	18.1
Direct liabilities of foreign investments from the EU in Poland (% Of GDP)	36.3	40.2	38.8	38.8	35.9

³⁸ 7,082 people should be placed in Poland under relocation and resettlement programmes.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Polish receivables of foreign direct investments in the EU (% of GDP)	8.1	8.6	4.1	4.4	3.8
Net transfers from the EU to Poland (in EUR billion)	10.5	11.9	11.2	12.9	8.8

Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Ministerstwo Finansów, Narodowy Bank Polski, Eurostat.

Although Poland's accession to the monetary union was called into question, the issue of membership remained an important element in the government's European policy. Tusk, in his 2011 exposé, emphasised that Poland should be "at the centre of the Union at the decision-making table,"³⁹ which was to be supported by participation in the single currency project. In the annual information of the minister of foreign affairs, the issue of membership was presented in terms of necessity. After adoption of the "National Strategic Framework Plan for the introduction of the euro" in 2010 by the Council of Ministers,⁴⁰ there was ongoing work on the "National plan for the introduction of the euro," which was adopted by the Committee for European Matters on 4 November 2011. The documents assumed the fastest possible adoption of the common currency, i.e. the fulfilment of convergence criteria in advance (including the criterion of participation in the European exchange rate mechanism, ERM II).⁴¹ The initial period, during which all criteria must be met in accordance with the Strategic Framework, should be around three years. Probably on this basis, in the years 2011–2012, Sikorski aimed to meet the convergence criteria by 2015. Tusk strengthened the message at the beginning of 2013 by saying that the cabinet council meeting on 26 February on the euro was not "whether to join the Eurozone," but "when and under what conditions."⁴²

However, Poland's position on the introduction of the euro could be described as inconsistent. Despite political support, at the end of 2012, the Ministry of Finance suspended work on the implementation of the "National plan of euro introduction" until the consequences of the changes in the institutional order of the zone had been recognised,⁴³ which meant postponing preparations for

³⁹ *Exposé premiera Donalda Tuska*, 18 November 2011, www.premier.gov.pl.

⁴⁰ *Ramy strategiczne Narodowego planu wprowadzenia euro*, Ministerstwo Finansów, www.mf.gov.pl.

⁴¹ Participation in ERMII was associated with the application for admission to the mechanism and keeping exchange rate fluctuations below 15% from the reference level. Poland has not submitted such an application.

⁴² Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, www.premier.gov.pl.

⁴³ Sixth meeting of the National Coordination Committee for Euro, Ministerstwo Finansów, 21 December 2012, www.mf.gov.pl.

adopting the new currency. Moreover, the document on the priorities of Polish foreign policy for the years 2012–2016 emphasised that Poland's accession to the Eurozone would be possible only when its conditions stabilise and Poland is prepared in a macroeconomic and legal sense.⁴⁴ Since 2013, the minister of foreign affairs ceased to provide possible dates for meeting the entry criteria in the annual information, and Poland did not express its will to join ERM II.

Poland's activity in the EU in this respect can also be considered as declining. Apart from promoting non-discrimination of countries outside the Eurozone, the government gradually distanced itself from its commitment to extend integration with the zone after 2012. Although it signed an inter-institutional agreement regarding banking union (a single resolution mechanism for defaulting banks), intended to improve and stabilise the functioning of the Eurozone banking sector, it did not ratify it. This seemed to confirm the lack of plans to join the Eurozone quickly, and to indicate a temporary suspension of Polish preparations.

One of the reasons for this situation was the ongoing crisis in the southern countries of the zone and the threat to break its unity, which required revision of the economic effects of membership. Moreover, the non-Eurozone countries obtained the opportunity to influence its direction of changes by guaranteeing the openness of new initiatives for the group and the possibility (under the Fiscal Pact) of participating in its summits. As a result, these countries could monitor the direction of economic and monetary union reforms (EMU) without bearing the cost of membership. What's more, for each of the governments (both governments of Tusk, that of Kopacz, and, at the end of 2015, the Szydło government), the introduction of the euro was impossible due to the lack of a constitutional majority in parliament.

Despite the weakening of interest in Eurozone membership, Poland aimed to introduce openness in initiatives undertaken by the countries of that zone. The government worked to ensure that the new EMU framework reflected the specificities of all EU countries and enabled their participation in the decision-making process. Examples of this initiative were the aspirations of the Polish presidency of the EU Council to complete the Six-Pack. The finalisation of this package was particularly important for the government, because, in this way, the economic dimension of European integration began to be designed by means of (alongside the intergovernmental method favoured by large states) a community method supported by Poland at the time, ensuring greater inclusivity in decision-making process.⁴⁵ Work on the Six-Pack, however, was prolonged due to France's

⁴⁴ *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, op. cit., p. 8.

⁴⁵ "Poland supports Barroso's fight for 'Community method,'" *EurActiv*, 14 February 2011, www.euractiv.com.

objection to the EC's proposal that the decision in the EU Council to impose sanctions on the state under the excessive deficit procedure was taken by reversed qualified majority.⁴⁶ During the Polish presidency, the Member States agreed to overcome this deadlock by extending the decision-making process on potential sanctions. The agreement confirmed Poland's ability to work out important compromises at the EU level, and was an important corrective element in the architecture of the Eurozone.

Another example of Poland's support for inclusivity of economic management in the EMU was promoting the idea of an "open banking union." This meant a lack of consent for the asymmetry of influence on the banking sector by the Eurozone countries through, among others, the proposed single supervisory mechanism (SSM). For these reasons, the government proposed maintaining balance in the influence of supervision within and outside the SSM on the banking sector, arguing that the Polish supervisor assessed risks in the sector very well in the past and made the right macro-prudential decisions, unlike supervisors in the Eurozone.⁴⁷ Moreover, the government feared that taking over supervisory powers would worsen the foundations of the Polish banking sector due to its specificity. Most banks in Poland were subsidiaries of banks in the Eurozone. The loss of supervisory influence would, therefore, mean an increase in the influence of parent banks leading to destabilisation of the sector in Poland.

One of the important areas of Polish activity during the presidency was the issue of prudential regulations of the financial sector, which became the foundation of the banking union (especially the "single rulebook"). Also, due to Polish supervisory solutions tested during the crisis, the government was interested in introducing similar standards in the EU, to avoid the threat of destabilising the EU financial sector and, as a result, the outflow of capital from Poland. Work on a new directive regarding capital requirements of financial institutions (CRD IV), on increasing the security on the derivatives market and on improving the reporting of financial institutions, was advanced under the Polish presidency.

Another method of obtaining legitimacy to co-decide the future shape of the EMU, mentioned by Sikorski, was Poland's pressure to organise its own economic policy. For this reason, the government was adapting itself to the excessive deficit procedure that the EU Council imposed on Poland in 2010. Although the date of

⁴⁶ The decision is adopted unless it is objected to by a qualified majority in the EU Council.

⁴⁷ T. Profant, P. Toporowski, "Potential for Cooperation: Polish and Czech Standpoint on the Banking Union," *PISM Policy Paper*, no. 16 (99), August 2014, www.pism.pl.

its completion was set at the end of 2012,⁴⁸ Poland finally managed to exit this procedure only in 2015.⁴⁹

The response to the threat of discrimination against countries outside the Eurozone was also the promotion of economic growth in the EU and support for the development of the internal market, which Poland referred to as the most important tool for the development of the European economy.⁵⁰ In the area of four freedoms, Poland supported the EC's proposal to introduce the Single Market Act of April 2011. One of the priorities of the Polish-Danish-Cypriot presidency of the EU Council was to improve the functioning of the four freedoms, in particular the freedom of movement of services. Due to the constant presence of barriers in already liberalised areas of the single market, resulting from the incorrect implementation of legislative acts in the EU, the trio's goal was to "deepen" rather than "expand" of the single market (the exception was the "new" digital market).⁵¹ The Polish presidency of the EU Council also contributed to achieving compromise on the European patent, which had been expected for 30 years, although the system was created after the end of the presidency. Paradoxically, a year later, when the work on the project was completed, the Polish government, considering its provisions as harmful to the state, was the only one not to sign an agreement on this matter. As part of the creation of a pro-growth agenda, the Polish presidency developed "European consensus for growth," a report containing recommendations on how to advance economic development in Europe.⁵² However, it did not have a significant impact in the EU arena and was not a reference point in further reforming the internal market.⁵³

The negotiations of the multiannual financial framework for 2014–2020, initiated during the Polish presidency, were also important.⁵⁴ The trio's goal was to complete work on the future financial perspective by the end of 2012,⁵⁵ and to develop a model of cooperation between the presidency and other EU institutions

⁴⁸ Recommendation of the EU Council, 11400/09, ECOFIN 476, UEM 187, Brussels, 6 June 2009.

⁴⁹ *Malta's and Poland's deficits back below 3% of GDP, Council closes procedures*, Rada UE, Komunikat Prasowy, 473/15, 19 June 2015.

⁵⁰ A. Ambroziak, "Działania polskiej prezydencji na rzecz budowy rynku wewnętrznego Unii Europejskiej," *Studia Europejskie*, no. 1, 2012.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

⁵² *Ibidem*.

⁵³ J.M. Fiszer, *Pozytywne i negatywne przesłanki...*, op. cit., p. 45.

⁵⁴ The EC documents constituting the basis for negotiations were published two days before the end of the Hungarian presidency. Hungary, due to lack of time, left the initiation of the debate to Poland.

⁵⁵ U. Romańska, "The Trio Presidency and The Cohesion Policy," *Yearbook of Polish European Studies*, no. 15, 2012.

regarding the circulation of information. During the MFF negotiations, Poland focused not so much on solidarity as on the problem of economic growth. The EU budget was presented by the government as a growth factor (and even a factor eliminating the economic crisis). What's more, Poland argued that strengthening European integration requires financial expenditure, especially in the EU budget. For Poland, the large budget was in line with its support for the popularisation of the community method, as it strengthened the EU institutions.⁵⁶ For this reason, Poland participated in the friends of cohesion group, whose goal was to maximise the size of the budget and structural funds with current economic and political constraints.⁵⁷ Poland and the whole group of friends of cohesion were confronted with the opposite aspirations of a group of net payers, who adopted the name "friends of better expenditures" during the negotiations. This group argued that common expenses should be maximally effective, expecting to work out similar outcomes of spending the budget proposed by the EC, by reducing it at the same time.

From the viewpoint of Poland, the most important issue in the negotiations of the financial framework, apart from the size of the financial perspective, was to maintain the importance of structural funds. Due to the distribution methodology, they constituted the majority of EU transfers to Poland. According to Poland, cohesion policy was one of the tools for implementing the strategy "Europe 2020." The Poland–Denmark–Cyprus trio separated the MFF negotiations from negotiations on the shape of cohesion policy, enabling its mechanisms to be optimised. Should that not happen, this policy, as part of the negotiating package of the financial framework, could remain at the level of efficiency of the previous financial perspective. Lack of improvement in this respect would translate into a reduction of financing.

The funds allocated to the common agricultural policy remained an important issue. Although the most popular postulate in the media was the issue of equalisation of direct payments for farmers in Poland and other EU countries, it was equally important to strengthen the part of the agricultural policy devoted to rural development (operating similarly to cohesion policy). As a result of negotiations, the flexibility of spending between the common agricultural policy

⁵⁶ S. de Corte, in: *The Next Multiannual Financial Framework: From National Interest to Building a Common Future*, Centre for European Studies, 2012.

⁵⁷ The group included Bulgaria, Croatia (still outside the EU), the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary (see joint declaration of friends of cohesion of 5 October 2012). Friends of cohesion were also joined by Spain, which did not participate in all meetings. The group of friends of better spending included Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, the UK and Italy (although Italy also cooperated with a coalition of friends of cohesion).

and the cohesion policy increased, giving the opportunity to increase spending on rural development from the Structural Funds. As for the operation of the financial framework for 2014 to 2020, the Polish government was in favour of making expenditure more flexible so that, due to the EU regulations, no reimbursement was required (which was important, because of the relatively large amount to be spent). According to the calculations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as a result of the completed MFF negotiations in the EU budget for 2014–2020, Poland was to receive a total of €105.8 billion, of which €72.9 billion was from cohesion policy and €28.5 billion was under the common agricultural policy.⁵⁸ This represented a large amount, despite a smaller budget for the entire EU.

Appraisal

Over the period 2011–2015, Poland's European policy focused on actions aimed at ending the economic crisis, stimulating growth and increasing European integration as well as increasing influence on the decision-making process in the EU. These efforts were accompanied by Polish involvement in reforming the Eurozone, securing the community decision-making mechanisms, MFF negotiations, strengthening of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy, and implementing the common energy policy.

One of the most important instruments for implementing Polish European policy was the presidency in the EU Council. It was to confirm the readiness of the largest state of the "new" Union to treat its interests and integration challenges in responsible manner. It can be concluded that the goal has been achieved with respect to image. The presidency strengthened Poland's position on the European arena as a stable state as well as a meaningful but assertive partner that creates coalitions (as friends of cohesion) and launches pan-European initiatives (such as European Endowment for Democracy or the Energy Union).

However, in strategic terms, measured by the degree of implementation of Poland's purposes and visions, the balance was less favourable. Although some important priorities were achieved, Poland had to modify some goals and change the tactics of achieving them under the influence of negative premises caused by the accumulation of crisis phenomena both within the EU as well as in its environment, such as the crisis in the Eurozone, the Arab Spring and the destabilisation of the Middle East, war in Ukraine and the migration crisis. These unfavourable conditions prevent Poland from implementing strategic interests such as effective implementation of the Eastern Partnership's assumptions, conclusion of the EU's association agreement with Ukraine, strengthening

⁵⁸ *Nowy budżet UE: 441 mld dla Polski*, www.premier.gov.pl.

EU security and defence policy, extending the Schengen area to Romania and Bulgaria, and stepping up negotiations with countries of the Western Balkans.

One of the government's greatest achievements was negotiating a financial framework favourable to Poland through setting a schedule of discussions on this matter during the Polish presidency. Poland managed to maintain the importance of cohesion policy, and the forecasted amount of EU funds was higher than in 2007–2013. However, in the case of the MFF, Poland also suffered defeats. The most important being the first ever real amount reduction of the new financial framework, which may, in the future, translate into a deterioration in Poland's net position as a beneficiary of the EU funds. So, the direct payments of the Member States were also not equalised, as Poland requested.

Polish success (although other countries such as the UK also made a significant contribution) was to achieve greater openness of economic management in the Eurozone despite opposition in some capitals. This was based on the inclusive nature of new intergovernment solutions (the Euro-Plus Pact and the Fiscal Pact) and the use of the community method in designing a new EMU economic architecture. A manifestation of this openness was also the fact that the candidate countries for the Eurozone (and the ones that ratified the Fiscal Pact) could participate in its summits.

It is worth noting that Poland, in a sense, benefited from the crisis of the Eurozone. Partial change in the balance of forces in the Union, primarily due to the "economic degradation" of southern countries most severely affected by the crisis (Spain, Greece and Italy), allowed Poland to approach the circle of the new North, the economically stable countries which included Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark and Sweden. The strengthening of the economic position was accompanied by the improvement of Poland's political image, which was an important resource in European politics and could in the future facilitate the pursuit of Polish interests in the Union. The confirmation of Poland's political role in the EU arena was the appointment of a Polish citizen to the highest position in the EU.

However, the end of the analysed period brought new challenges in the form of a migration crisis and renegotiation of British membership of the EU. Both circumstances, as well as the lack of consensus among Member States regarding the future of EMU, forecasted changes in both the dynamics of European integration and the way in which European policy will be pursued by the next Polish government.

II.

POLAND'S POLICY

TOWARDS SELECTED STATES AND REGIONS

Poland's Policy towards the United States

ANDRZEJ DĄBROWSKI*

Determinants

Over the period 2011–2015, the minister of foreign affairs' annual information on the tasks of Polish foreign policy, just as the document on foreign policy priorities in the years 2012 to 2016, presented the United States as Poland's main non-European partner, especially in the field of security.¹ This positioning of the United States in relation to the government's plans resulted from Poland's interests, manifesting in maintaining good relations with one of the most important entities on the international arena. These relations developed, among other things, as part of the "Declaration on strategic cooperation between the Republic of Poland and the United States of America," signed in 2008. It enabled the establishment of consultative bodies at the intergovernmental level (Strategic Dialogue, Consultative Group on Strategic Cooperation, High Level Group on Defence). At the same time, the main determinants of Poland's policy towards the United States also included the asymmetry of military, political, economic and social potential.

The Polish–American political and economic relations in the years 2011–2015 were influenced by the outcomes of the economic crisis that were still being experienced by both countries. Like the growing economic and political power of China, they partly questioned the current primacy of the U.S. in the global order. Despite this, successive Polish governments strived to sustain and improve relations built after 1989.

Of importance for Polish-American relations was the announcement by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton of a new concept for foreign policy, namely "pivot to Asia." Directing interest to Pacific Ocean markets and countries could bring a reduction in U.S. involvement in Europe. An example of changes was the announcement by President Barack Obama new strategic defence guidelines. According to the document, the U.S. was to withdraw from Europe two of the

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¹ *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, www.msz.gov.pl.

four stationing brigade combat teams, and introduce a rotating presence of armed forces.²

From the security point of view of Poland and Central and Eastern Europe, Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014 became a key determinant. Moscow's confrontational attitude and attempt to build a zone of influence by force in the post-Soviet area brought new meaning to the U.S. alliance guarantees and increased their significance. For the United States, the war in Ukraine proved that the "reset" policy towards Russia had failed, and again brought attention to the importance of Poland as the largest and strategically important ally in the region. For Poland, on the other hand, the increase in assertiveness in Russia's policy and its aggression towards its neighbours became a catalyst for more energetic efforts to strengthen the country's defence capabilities, including with the participation of the United States armed forces.

By initiating the Eastern Partnership programme, Poland, from the U.S. perspective, strengthened its position as a state not only able to exert a positive influence on the countries of the region, but also as a promoter of democratic and free market values.

In the years 2011–2015, legislative initiatives appeared in the American Congress, which were to alleviate the criteria for Poland's admission to the visa-free programme (Visa Waiver Program, VWP), but a high number of visa refusals made it impossible to achieve the desirable status. In addition, the United States did not meet the criteria for mutual visa-free movement with the EU, maintaining visas also for citizens of Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Cyprus, which in 2014 triggered the reciprocity procedure by the European Commission.³

Objectives

The long-term assumptions of Poland's politics towards the United States did not change significantly in the discussed period. It was still about increasing U.S. involvement in strengthening Poland's defence capabilities, for example through military training and the deployment of American contingents with various combat capabilities, due to the multi-dimensionality of contemporary conflicts. Poland's goal was to draw attention to its importance as a border state of NATO and the European Union, justifying the deployment of American forces in accordance with the concepts of the armed forces' command. Poland aimed to attain further

² M.A. Piotrowski, B. Wiśniewski, "Strategic Defence Guidance of the United States: Assumptions, Background, Implications," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 8 (341), 26 January 2012, www.pism.pl.

³ M. Wąsiński, "Perspektywa zniesienia wiz do USA," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 31 (1381), 28 April 2016, www.pism.pl.

political security guarantees, especially after Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the disclosure of its new, confrontational policy towards Alliance countries. Polish negotiation efforts were directed towards the deployment of American elements of missile defence and conventional troops.

In terms of economic cooperation, the government tried not only to encourage other American companies to invest in Poland, but also to increase the interest of Polish companies in expansion and investment in the American market. The ambition of the Polish government was to increase the positive balance in foreign trade with the United States.

The long-term goal in Poland's foreign policy towards the U.S. was to conclude the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement, to create a free trade zone between the EU and the United States. The government got involved in promoting the agreement, which was supported by over 70% of Poles.⁴

Poland was also interested in developing scientific and technological cooperation, and in the promotion of democratic ideas.

However, it was not the government's main priority to include Polish citizens in the U.S. visa-free movement programme, due to the high rate of refusal of their visa applications.

Military Cooperation

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the victory of "Solidarity" in the 1989 elections, Obama visited Warsaw. In a speech on 4 June 2014, at Castle Square in Warsaw, he announced the launch of the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). Under this programme, the United States allocated in 2015 (the first year of its operation) funds of \$1 billion for the implementation of military activities in five areas, such as presence, training and exercises, infrastructure development, storage of equipment, and support for the partner's security sector. The ERI also included funding for operation "Atlantic Resolve" from April 2014. In practice, the ERI was to constitute an ad hoc U.S. response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine by strengthening the forces of Allied states on NATO's Eastern Flank. Of most importance in this initiative was the decision on the constant and rotational presence of American armed forces in Central and Eastern Europe, and therefore in Poland.

Poland and the United States developed cooperation in the field of missile defence (Ballistic Missile Defence, BMD). A base in Redzikowo, as part of the missile defence system, was to enter the U.S. missile defence system (European

⁴ *Standard Eurobarometer 82*, 2014, <http://ec.europa.eu>.

Phased Adaptive Approach, EPAA). The construction of this system was originally to be divided into four stages of locating AEGIS radars and missile installations. AEGIS represents a modification of the naval missile defence system AEGIS ballistic missile defence, intended for operation from land. The implementation of the initiative was made possible by the entry into force of the protocol of 3 July 2010, amending the Polish-American agreement on the deployment of anti-ballistic missiles of 2008. According to the original assumption, Poland was to host stages three and four of the system. However, in 2013, the U.S. Department of Defence announced that the last, fourth stage of the EPAA extension would not be implemented. Therefore, the Allied investment was to be limited to the location in Redzikowo of the SPY-1 radar base and 24 SM-3 rockets, capable of counteracting medium-range ballistic missiles and, to a limited extent of responding to intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM). The withdrawal from the implementation of the fourth stage did not affect the process of building the installation, which was planned to be completed at the end of 2018.

In June 2011, the U.S. and Polish governments signed a memorandum on cooperation between the air forces of both countries. In November 2012, approximately 20 people supporting the rotation of the United States Air Force (Aviation Detachment, Av-Det) began stationing in Poland. The deployed forces included F-16 multi-role fighters and C-130 Hercules transport planes. As part of this initiative, training was also provided for Polish air force officers in the country and in the U.S. The deployment of Av-Det in Poland was proposed by the U.S. in negotiations on the placement of Patriot missiles.⁵ Thanks to this strategic reassurance, which was to provide air defence to strengthen the state, a permanent garrison of ground support for U.S. aircraft in Poland was implemented.⁶ At the same time, it facilitated the improvement of administrative and logistics procedures related to the presence of American troops in Poland.⁷

Over the period 2011–2015, Poland benefited from financial support intended for Allied forces. Under the FMF (Foreign Military Financing) programme, approximately \$100 million was allocated to the purchase of U.S. military

⁵ The Polish-American agreement on the deployment of elements of the missile shield assumed that the U.S. would strengthen Poland's air defence. The deployment of Patriot missile batteries was also one of the objectives of Poland's foreign policy in 2009, "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009 (presented by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 13 February 2009)," Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.ms.gov.pl.

⁶ B. Wiśniewski, "Polska i Stany Zjednoczone: odzyskując stracony czas," *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 2011*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2012, p. 110.

⁷ B. Wiśniewski, "Stosunki polsko-amerykańskie w erze Obamy," in: S. Dębski, G. Kozłowski (ed.), *Dziedzictwo Baracka Obamy. Polityka zagraniczna USA w latach 2009–2016. Wybrane zagadnienia*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2017, p. 35.

equipment.⁸ This put Poland among the leading beneficiaries in Europe. Part of the FMF funding was allocated to the acquisition of AGM-158 JASSM air-to-ground missiles.⁹ Thus, the Polish Air Force became the first user of this advanced technology following the United States. This proved the trust of the American authorities in Poland. Talks with the U.S. about the purchase of JASSM were initiated by the Ministry of National Defence (MON) in 2012, after including JASSM in the “Technical Modernisation Plan for 2013–2020.” The condition for acquisition was, among other things, the consent of the U.S. administration and Congress. Eventually, the conclusion of proceedings was postponed until 2016.

As part of modernising and upgrading the armed forces, the Polish government also began efforts to acquire the Wisła anti-aircraft defence system based on American Patriot missile technology. In September 2014, the analytical and conceptual phase of the programme was completed. On this basis, the Ministry of National Defence handed over a recommendation on the implementation of this initiative to the Council of Ministers, which, on 21 April 2015, adopted a document paving the way to begin negotiations with the United States. The project assumed obtaining eight batteries of the “Wisła” air defence missile system by 2025.¹⁰ Further negotiations of the system's purchase were conducted after the formation of the new government in Poland in the autumn of 2015.

The government's decision to commence the implementation of the PLN 131 billion modernisation programme of the armed forces in 2014–2022 increased Poland's credibility as an Ally of the United States in NATO.¹¹ It was also important for Poland to reach an annual level of 2% of GDP for defence expenditure in 2015, as agreed at the NATO Newport summit in Wales in 2014. Alongside the United States, it became one of the five Alliance countries meeting the obligations contained in the final declaration of the summit.¹²

Poland's participation in missions in Iraq and Afghanistan resulted in strengthening relations with the United States. Obama emphasised this in his speech in Warsaw in 2014. Polish soldiers commanded multinational contingents and served the stabilisation and reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan.

⁸ U.S. State Department Data, <https://2009-2017.state.gov>.

⁹ K. Wilewski, “Wiceszef MON w USA o zakupach dla armii,” *Polska Zbrojna*, 29 October 2014, www.polska-zbrojna.pl.

¹⁰ The Statement of the spokesperson of the Ministry of National Defence of 21 April 2015, www.mon.gov.pl.

¹¹ “Resolution No. 164 of the Council of Ministers of 17 September 2013 on establishing a multi-annual programme ‘Priorytetowe zadania modernizacji technicznej Sił Zbrojnych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w ramach programów operacyjnych,” *Monitor Polski*, 2013, <http://isip.sejm.gov.pl>.

¹² *Deklaracja szczytu NATO w Walii, 2014 r.*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.msz.gov.pl.

In December 2011, the Polish Military Contingent (PMC) ended its participation in the mission in Iraq, which began in 2003 outside NATO structures, on the initiative of the U.S. and with the participation of Poland. Since 2009, Polish soldiers had been part of the Military Advisory and Liaison Team. Their task in the NATO training mission (NTM) was to train soldiers and officers of the Iraqi armed and security forces. In the years 2011 to 2015, the Polish army continued its participation in the NATO mission in Afghanistan, where the U.S. remained the main Allied force. At the end of 2014, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), conducted since December 2001, was replaced by the Resolute Support training and advisory mission. At the turn of 2010 and 2011 (tours of duty VII-IX ISAF), there was the highest number of the Polish Military Contingent with about 2,600 troops. At ISAF, the Polish contingent conducted military operations against rebels, and supported Afghan government forces in the province of Ghazni. After the mission was reduced, the II shift of Resolute Support from mid-2015 consisted of only 200 Polish soldiers and military advisers. Their tasks were limited to logistics and training activities.

Poland continued military cooperation with the United States, including as part of Allied exercises, during which it gained additional knowledge as well as combat and anti-terrorist skills.¹³ What's more, the Polish armed forces gained new equipment, provided by the United States, including \$7.5 million worth MRAP (mine-resistant ambush protected) armoured vehicles.¹⁴

Political Relations

In the years 2011–2015, political relations between Poland and the United States developed without significant controversy or points of contention. Obama visited Poland twice. In 2011, he participated in the Central and Eastern European summit in Warsaw, and in 2014 he visited during the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the 1989 election. President Bronisław Komorowski visited the United States twice, including one trip to the UN General Assembly in 2012. In total, representatives of Poland and the U.S. visited each other eight times. The issues of leadership consultations and talks concerned, among others, political

¹³ The exercises of the American Special Forces under the code name "Emerald Warrior 12" were attended by Commando Military Unit, Aviation Tracking Controllers (JTAC) Special Forces, soldiers of the 7th Special Action Squadron, and GROM and Formoza controllers. Commandos of the American Navy Seals group conducted joint exercises with the Formoza unit in the Gulf of Gdańsk. "Navy Seals ćwiczyli razem z FORMOZA," *Polska Zbrojna*, 27 July 2012, www.polskazbrojna.pl.

¹⁴ *Nowy sprzęt Wojsk Specjalnych*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 25 February 2015, www.mon.gov.pl.

cooperation in strengthening the U.S. presence in the region, joint promotion of democracy and market solutions, guaranteeing security (reassurance) based on NATO structures and bilateral relations, and the possibilities of introducing Poland to the American Visa Waiver Programme. The Polish government supported the Obama Administration's efforts to implement the "New START" agreement as a factor strengthening the security of Poland and Europe and supporting the objectives of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

A turning point in Polish–American political relations was the annexation of Crimea by Russia and its armed aggression against eastern Ukraine. As a result of the threat from Russia, the importance of confirming Allied commitments and the possible strengthening of defence capabilities through the presence of U.S. forces in Poland increased. The readiness announced by Obama in Warsaw in 2014 for the rotational deployment of military units under the European Strengthening Initiative should be understood as confirming Poland's strategic importance for the security of the region and its strong position as an EU Member State and regional leader.

Despite their disproportionate nature, political relations between the United States and Poland were built, in 2011–2015, on the principle of partnership. Consultative meetings of the Polish–American Strategic Dialogue took place regularly, in which the Polish–American Dialogue for Democracy group was established. As part of the Strategic Dialogue, representatives discussed topics in the field of security, combating terrorism, energy and the promotion of democracy in the world. Poland is one of the few countries with which the United States conducts such consultations.¹⁵

During the 114th Congress (2015–2017), the Congressional Caucus on Poland was established, bringing together representatives of the Democratic and Republican Party. Parliamentarians not only entered into dialogue with their counterparts in the Sejm and with the Polish diaspora in the United States, but were also active in their efforts to include Poland in VWP. Senators Barbara Mikulski and Mark Kirk were among the main promoters of these undertakings, which postulated that the regulations to be changed so that they were more convenient to Poles travelling to the United States.¹⁶ The establishment of the caucus was also influenced by the efforts of the Polish diplomatic mission, which saw the possibility of addressing issues important from Poland's point of view with the American authorities.

¹⁵ G. Kozłowski, "Asymetria relacji polsko-amerykańskich a stan i perspektywy ich rozwoju (możliwość ograniczania równowagi)," in: B. Szklarski (ed.), *Niekonfrontacyjna asymetria w relacjach polsko-amerykańskich*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2015, p. 88.

¹⁶ M. Wąsiński, "Perspektywa zniesienia wiz do USA," *op. cit.*

The Polish parliament was also involved in strengthening inter-parliamentary relations. During the Sejm of the 6th and 7th term, and in the Senate of the 7th and 8th term, the Poland–United States Parliamentary Group operated. This was chaired by the Marshal of the Sejm, Małgorzata Kidawa-Błońska, who hosted the Speaker of the American House of Representatives, John Boehner, in 2015.¹⁷

Moreover, in 2012, transatlantic cooperation and strengthening the United States alliance with Poland became an issue in electoral rivalry between Republican party candidate Mitt Romney and Obama, who was at that time seeking re-election. Romney was also campaigning outside the United States, visiting the UK, Israel and Poland. This former Governor of Massachusetts met Prime Minister Donald Tusk in Gdańsk, and Komorowski in Warsaw, where he also gave a lecture at the University of Warsaw.¹⁸ Romney's goal was to win the votes of Catholic voters, including Poles living in the United States. The Republican candidate also indicated his readiness to become more interested in the affairs of the region.

Economic Cooperation

The United States is the largest non-European investor in Poland. These investments fund companies from the U.S. and from third countries, mostly registered in the EU. The presence of American enterprises and capital increased steadily since 1989, and reached a high point in the mid-second decade of the 21st century. By 2014, the total value of direct and indirect investment amounted to over \$90 billion.¹⁹ This makes Poland the largest recipient of investment by American entities in Central and Eastern Europe. At the end of 2013, there were 786 companies in Poland with capital participation from the United States. They employed approximately 180,000 people, 60% being micro companies employing up to nine people each.²⁰ The main areas of operation regarding companies with American capital in Poland were the banking services sector, production of consumer goods, the metal industry, production of computers and electronic components, and the manufacture of cars and spare parts.

The activity of these enterprises contributed to the intensification of trade exchange between the two countries. In the years 2011–2014, the value of exports of products from Poland increased, but in 2015 it fell to a level comparable in

¹⁷ *Marszałek Sejmu z szefem Izby Reprezentantów USA o bezpieczeństwie i relacjach polsko-amerykańskich*, 1 July 2015, <http://marszalek.sejm.pl>.

¹⁸ W. Kristol, "Romney's Warsaw Speech," *The Weekly Standard*, 31 July 2012, www.weeklystandard.com.

¹⁹ *25 lat polsko-amerykańskich relacji gospodarczych*, Raport Amerykańskiej Izby Handlowej w Polsce i KPMG w Polsce, <https://biznes.newseria.pl>.

²⁰ *Charakterystyka wielkości i struktury oraz działalności gospodarczej podmiotów z udziałem kapitału zagranicznego*, Raport Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego, 22 December 2014.

2011. The volume of U.S. imports in 2015 increased only slightly compared to 2011.

Table 1

Polish Trade Balance with the United States (in USD million)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Exports to the U.S.	3,693	3,601	4,842	4,855	3,715
Imports from the U.S.	4,791	5,085	4,885	5,495	5,256
Balance	-1,098	-1,484	-689	-640	-792

Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny.

The structure of Polish exports to the United States was dominated by aviation industry products, telecommunications products, electric cables and wires, spare parts for passenger cars, and furniture. Companies from Poland also sold medical equipment, medical supplies and semi-finished products for further processing in the United States. In the years 2011 to 2014, trends in exports to the U.S. were encouraged by the weakening of the Polish zloty against the dollar. An increasing number of American banks, insurance and financial services companies located their branches in Poland.

Table 2

Foreign Direct Investments (in USD Million)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
U.S. in Poland	9,239	10,723	9,711	7,651	5,357
Polish in the U.S.	2,020	2,020	626	752	714

Source: Narodowy Bank Polski, www.nbp.pl.

Polish companies also increasingly exported their products and services to the U.S. market. Moreover, Polish companies operated there, among others, in the new technologies industry and the mining and furniture industries. KGHM Polska Miedź invested in copper and gold open-cast mines in Arizona and Nevada, and Zortax operated in the design and production of 3D printers. The Inglot company, which deals with the production and sale of cosmetics, found its place on the American market.

In June 2015, the Polish-American FATCA (Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act) came into force. Its purpose is to limit the export of funds abroad and to withhold foreign revenues by U.S. companies and citizens. Under this agreement,

the tax authorities of both countries will exchange information on possible irregularities.

Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

Since 2013, The European Commission and the U.S. government had negotiated the conclusion of Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership agreement. Discussions on the details of the trade agreement began in 2011 with the establishment of a working group of experts to explore possible areas of its validity. The team's work was jointly managed by the EU Trade Commissioner and the U.S. Trade Representative. The result of the work was the conclusion that the contract should be comprehensive and refer to all sectors of trade and services. Its scope was to cover three areas: access to the market of goods, services, investments and public procurement, regulatory issues and tariff barriers, and rules of international trade in raw materials and energy, facilities, competition policy, intellectual property law, investment protection, etc. By the end of 2015, representatives of the U.S. and the EU had conducted 11 negotiation sessions. The entry of the TTIP into force would mean that Poland, together with other EU Member States and the United States, would become part of the world's largest free trade area, and that the Polish economy would benefit from the projected GDP growth for the entire Union of €120 billion.²¹

From the very beginning, the Polish government supported the conclusion of the TTIP agreement. The most important postulates of Poland when negotiating the agreement were the elimination of restrictions on gas exports from the United States, objection to intellectual property regulations to a degree not directly related to the commercial document's aspects nor aimed at liberalising trade, lifting non-tariff barriers resulting from different technical regulations in the U.S. and the EU, and the introduction of a visa-free flow of employees performing ordered services. The Polish government paid particular attention to the issue of allowing genetically modified products and fresh farm products to be sold in Europe. Polish society did not accept, however, the introduction of such goods into the market.²² Moreover, the government wanted to protect the interests of the Polish poultry sector and the chemical industry against competition from the United States. The content of the document, according to the decision of the negotiating parties, was classified, which was met with opposition mainly from NGOs and consumer organisations in the EU, where the provisions of the agreement were controversial

²¹ *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership—The Economic Analysis Explained*, Raport Komisji Europejskiej, <http://trade.ec.europa.eu>.

²² "Polacy są przeciwko GMO," *Rzeczpospolita*, 8 January, 2013, www.rp.pl.

from the very beginning. In 2015, Polish society perceived the potential of TTIP more optimistically than the citizens of Western Europe. In Germany, 41% of residents supported the agreement, and 39% opposed it, whereas in Poland these proportions were 73% to 11%, with the average EU support for TTIP at 58%.²³

Social and Cultural Relations

From the perspective of social ties in Polish–American relations, the most important issue was the obligation for Poles to apply for a visa before entering the United States. Poland remained one of the five EU Member States (along with Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Cyprus), and the only one in the Schengen area, that was subject to such restrictions.

The percentage of rejected visa applications decreased from 10.2% in 2011 to 6.4% in 2015, although the number of non-immigrant visas issued in those years increased from over 78,000 up to over 90,000. A persistent result above the 3% threshold prevented Poland's inclusion to VWP. At the same time, the number of U.S. residents visiting Poland for tourist and business purposes was steadily growing, reaching over 483,000 in 2015.²⁴ Under the EU provisions of Visa Reciprocity Mechanism, as amended in 2013, Poland notified the U.S. in 2014 as a country that does not grant reciprocity in visa-free travel. At the same time, a dialogue on visa waiver was initiated at the EU level and a period began, after which the European Council was to submit the United States for visa waiver suspension.²⁵

Table 3

Visas Granted by the U.S. Consular Offices in Poland

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Non-immigrant visas	78,062	70,039	71,151	84,875	90,697
Immigration visas	4,133	2,703	3,281	2,599	3,179

Source: The Department of State, www.travel.state.gov.

In the years 2011 to 2015, Poland continued its efforts to strengthen cultural cooperation and promote the achievements of Polish artists in the United States. The Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Polish Culture Institute in New York were especially active in this area.

²³ *Standard Eurobarometer 82*, 2014, <http://ec.europa.eu>.

²⁴ Prepared on the basis of tourist reports of the Central Statistical Office for 2011–2015.

²⁵ M. Wąsiński, "Perspektywa zniesienia wiz do USA," *op. cit.*

The achievements of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute deserve special attention. This institution presented works of Polish culture in the U.S. as part of numerous ongoing projects, such as “Campuses,” an initiative addressed to students of the best American universities, “Don’t panic! We’re from Poland,” active in the area of promotion of Polish club music, and “Polska Music,” which supported the performance of Polish classical music by outstanding foreign artists.

The most important event for dissemination of Polish culture in the United States was the 2013 film “*Ida*,” directed by Paweł Pawlikowski. A movie about the Holocaust, the Nazi German occupation of Poland and Polish-Jewish relations, the film was distributed in the U.S. as part of festivals and special presentations. It grew in popularity among critics, receiving, among others, Golden Globe and Critics’ Choice Film nominations and a Spotlight award from the American Society of Cinematographers. In 2015, “*Ida*” was awarded the Oscar in the Best Foreign Language Picture category. The film directed by Agnieszka Holland, “*W ciemności*” [In Darkness], also gained recognition, and received an Oscar nomination in the same category in 2011.

Appraisal

The years 2011–2015 brought about intensification of Polish-American relations. Traditional areas of cooperation within NATO were supplemented by the decision to deploy elements of the anti-missile shield and conventional American armed forces in Poland. Russian aggression in Ukraine and the security threat in Europe intensified Polish diplomatic efforts and caused increased interest of the United States in the region. Polish-American rapprochement took place despite the U.S. pursuing a policy of a “pivot to Asia” and leaving the issue of developing cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe behind. Poland’s position in dialogue with the United States was also strengthened by its increasingly clear role as a predictable and credible Ally in NATO and a EU Member State.

The assessment of the effectiveness of Polish diplomacy in relations with the United States was influenced by the use of cooperation instruments created in the previous period, such as the Polish–American Dialogue for Democracy and Strategic Dialogue. Creation of the circle for Poland in Congress was a success, serving as an additional instrument to communicate Polish interests and strengthen relations between the two countries. It was also important for Poland to achieve an annual level of 2% of GDP for defence expenditure in 2015, as agreed at the 2014 NATO summit. These factors had a positive impact on building trust not only at the highest political levels, but also in the daily contacts between

diplomats and officials of both countries. Obama's political assurances about the strategic importance of the partnership with Poland for European security were supported in subsequent decisions on the deployment of U.S. forces in Poland.

It can be assumed that the Polish authorities efficiently managed the asymmetrical relationship with the United States, including after a change in the security structure resulting from Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The issues of security and military cooperation, which in the years 2014–2015 played a central role in Polish–American relations, were at the same time a factor diverting attention from issues important for the economies and societies of both countries. An unresolved problem was Poland's failure to enter the visa waiver programme despite its membership of the Schengen area. This influenced the perception of the effectiveness of the Polish authorities in relations with American partners.

Investments and trade are issues that can be counted among the successes of the Polish side. Although the value of direct investment with the U.S. had been decreasing since 2012, the Polish companies managed to increase the presence of their products on the American market, although they cannot be compared to American investors in the level of capital involvement. In the ownership relations of enterprises there was a noticeable difference between the amount of American capital invested in Poland and Polish funds located in the United States, due to the asymmetry of the economic potential of both countries. However, taking into account the disproportion in the credit opportunities, and the necessity to gain experience in pursuing interests in the U.S. markets, Polish companies were able to find niches on the American market, take risks and be successful.

Poland's Policy towards Germany

SEBASTIAN PŁÓCIENNIK*

Determinants¹

Among the general determinants of Poland's policy towards Germany in the period 2011–2015 was the crisis of European integration, the most obvious manifestation of which were the problems of the eurozone.² It was accompanied by uncertainty about the future of the European Union, deepened by the growing popularity of Eurosceptic and populist movements in many Member States. Another general circumstance was instability in the global system. It was weakened by both the repercussions of the financial crisis that began in 2007 and the increasingly apparent global multipolarity, in particular, the change in the balance of power associated with the growing importance of China, Russia, and Brazil.

Poland's policy towards Germany was also determined by conditions specific to their relations. Both countries shared many institutional ties: bilateral treaties, the political platform of the Weimar Triangle with the participation of France, and membership in the European Union and NATO. The scope of cooperation could be wider if Poland belonged to the eurozone, which is the centre of European integration.

Both Germany and Poland had the potential to play an important role in European politics. Germany was the strongest EU Member State, not only because it has the largest population and GDP in the EU but also a good economic condition, which allows it to be involved in repairing the situation in the eurozone and EU reforms. The economic factor strengthened Poland's position, being much less affected by the crisis in comparison to its partners in the Union, and after a few years of membership, more and more clearly marked its presence among

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¹ Michał Hetmański, a graduate of the Warsaw School of Economics and an analyst at the InStrat Foundation, participated in the preparation of this text. The author thanks him for his query and cooperation in the editorial work.

² Based on: *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, www.msz.gov.pl, pp. 2–5.

the larger EU players. It was also supported by the Polish presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011.

At the same time, Polish-German relations were characterised by asymmetry and a different approach in many areas of politics. Germany's greater potential in the dimension of GDP was accompanied by investment dominance. This translated into the political dimension of cooperation, because Poland was a beneficiary of EU funds, interested in increasing them, and Germany was a payer, willing to stabilise or even reduce joint expenses. The importance of immigration in both countries also significantly differed.

They also had a different approach to defence policy. Poland traditionally attached importance to strengthening NATO in the east, strengthening the transatlantic partnership, and to an assertive approach to Russia. Germany revealed much greater restraint in increasing both the Alliance's presence in the east and its defence spending.

Poland and Germany differed a lot in the sphere of energy policy. Germany developed extensive cooperation with Russia, as evidenced by the construction of the Nord Stream pipeline in the previous decade. In addition, it advocated a radical energy transformation. After the disaster at Fukushima in March 2011, the determination in pushing this trend strengthened: Germany decided to abandon nuclear energy and accelerate the development of renewable energy. Poland, in which electricity was largely derived from domestic coal resources, strived to become independent of Russia in energy policy.

An important condition for Poland's policy was the large diaspora living in Germany (about 468,500 in 2011).³ On the one hand, this influenced the intensification of social, cultural, and economic cooperation but, on the other hand, there were problems related to learning the Polish language in Germany and the legal status of newcomers from Poland.

It was important that in 2011 the main parties co-forming governments in both countries: Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska, PO) in Poland and Christian Democratic Union (Christlich-Demokratische Union, CDU) in Germany, leaned towards liberal-conservative ideas. This facilitated communication and consensus-building while limiting the likelihood of serious ideological differences. Very good relations between Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Chancellor Angela Merkel, as well as presidents Bronisław Komorowski and Joachim Gauck, were also significant. In August 2015, Andrzej Duda became the president of Poland, and from November 2015 the government formed by Law and Justice party (Prawo

³ *Anzahl der Ausländer aus Polen in Deutschland von 2007 bis 2017*, "Statista.de," <https://de.statista.com>.

i Sprawiedliwość, PiS), announced, among others, strengthening the role of states in European policy.

Objectives

Poland's foreign policy towards Germany focused on European integration, energy, security, economic relations, and social, cultural and educational issues.

The most developed goals were formulated in the area of European integration. In the general vision of the EU's future, the Polish government sought to strengthen cooperation, although without creating strong transnational institutions and negating national identity. This coincided with Germany's priorities of strengthening integration, at the same time being cautious about the rapid implementation of federalist solutions. Germany could have been an ally in the EU's enlargement policy beyond the Western Balkans by including Ukraine and Moldova, in particular.

In terms of ongoing integration processes, Poland, firstly, relied on Germany's involvement in saving the eurozone, the collapse of which could have threatened the entire integration structure.⁴ Secondly, it expected an alliance with Germany for reforms in the EU: to complete the establishment of a common market and eliminate protectionist barriers, for example, in the area of mobility of persons. Thirdly, it sought to negotiate a favourable budget perspective for 2013–2020 and to equalise subsidies in agricultural policy. Germany as the biggest contributor played a major role in this area.

Energy was another important area in policy towards Germany. Poland wanted to convince Germany to more decisively differentiate its sources of supply, increase energy efficiency, and act jointly with suppliers. In practice, this meant attempting to persuade the German partners to limit their cooperation with Russia. Moreover, Poland expressed support for reducing CO₂ but taking into account its costs and the importance of coal-fired energy⁵—and expected Germany to understand these arguments.

In terms of security, the Polish government aimed to obtain explicit support from Germany for NATO's involvement in Central Europe by investing in defence infrastructure, for work on a comprehensive anti-missile defence system and for the proposal to increase military expenditures by the Member States (at least to

⁴ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 16 March 2011)," see p. 11 in this volume.

⁵ *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–11.

a level of 2% of GDP).⁶ The “open door” policy for new members, both in NATO and in the EU, was distinguished in the Polish government’s strategy. It expected a greater interest in this matter from Germany, and above all, stabilisation of the post-Soviet area.

In its policy towards Germany, Poland also relied on developing economic, cultural and social cooperation, of which an important issue was strengthening relations with Poles living in Germany.⁷ This meant an intention to support the learning of the Polish language, as well as striving to improve the status of the Polish diaspora in Germany, which—unlike the German diaspora in Poland—is not considered a national minority. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski emphasized, the goal was that “the rights of both communities should be treated similarly,”⁸ which, however, indicated a distance from formal claims. The next minister, Grzegorz Schetyna (from September 2014) expressed a similar tone: “We strive to ensure that, in accordance with the spirit and provisions of the Treaty on Good Neighbourhood and Friendly Cooperation, the Polish diaspora in Germany receives the same support and can use the same instruments maintaining identity, as is the case with the German minority in Poland.”⁹

Political Relations

European Integration. The years 2011–2015 in European politics were a time of crises that pushed the subject of integration to the background (the only new member country became Croatia). From Poland’s point of view, it was crucial to prevent their escalation, because they could threaten the entire integration structure.

Encouraging Germany to become more involved in vulnerable areas of integration became part of this strategy. This approach was confirmed in a speech by Minister Sikorski in Berlin in November 2011 when he stated that “he is more afraid of German inaction than German strength.”¹⁰ It was the most frequently cited speech of Polish politician since Poland’s accession to the EU. It contained proposals for strengthening integration, for example, by creating a joint position

⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 14–16.

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 25–26.

⁸ *Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the assumptions of Polish foreign policy in 2013*, March 2013, www.sejm.gov.pl.

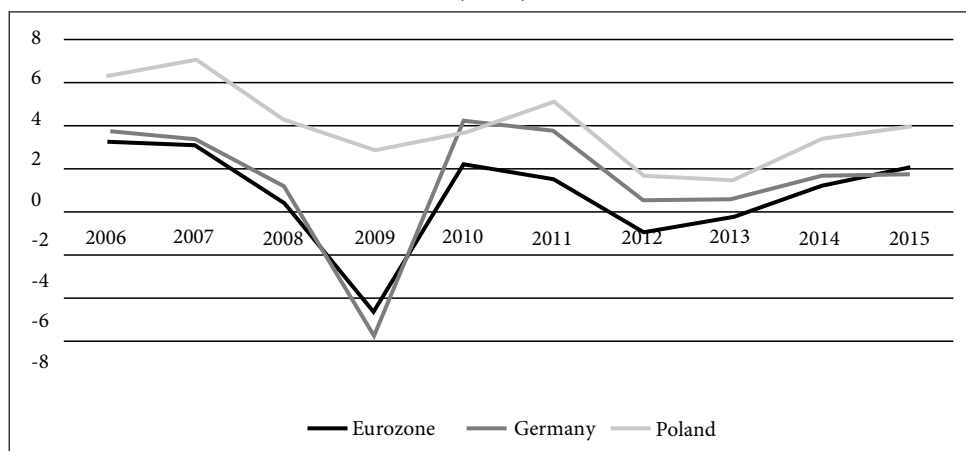
⁹ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2015 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Grzegorz Schetyna at a sitting of the Sejm on 23 April 2015),” see p. 77 in this volume.

¹⁰ R. Sikorski, *Polska a przyszłość Unii Europejskiej*, Berlin, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 28 November 2011, www.msz.gov.pl.

of a finance minister. A practical dimension was the support for German ideas to save the monetary union, including the signing of the fiscal pact that imposed additional restrictions on the signatories—also non-eurozone countries—in the area of public finances.¹¹ The minister's speech took place during the Polish presidency of the EU, during which Poland supported the so-called six-pack—a set of several legal acts strengthening the financial sector.

Figure 1

GDP Growth in the Eurozone, Germany, and Poland in the Years 2006–2015 (in %)



Source: Eurostat.

The potential of strategic Polish-German cooperation for reform of the EU and the eurozone weakened in the crisis related to the influx of refugees and migrants. It revealed the differences between the approach of Germany, which has been a country of immigration for years, and Poland, whose society was reluctant to address this issue. As a result, when migrants from North Africa, the Middle East, and Afghanistan began to arrive in Europe in 2015, Germany responded in accordance with its perception of the problem. This was also compounded by concerns about stability in the Balkans, through which the main migration route passes. In August 2015, the Merkel government decided to open the border for refugees, which led to an influx of about 800,000 people to Germany. The decision was taken unilaterally, bypassing consultations with other EU countries that were

¹¹ Sikorski: *wśród osiągnięć polskiej prezydencji m.in. przyjęcie „sześciopaku”*, PAP, <http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl>; “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2012 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 29 March 2012),” see p. 27 in this volume.

members of the Schengen area. The outcome of this decision was Germany trying to distribute refugees among the Member States. Although the government of Ewa Kopacz accepted this idea,¹² as the 2015 parliamentary election approached, it had more and more doubts.¹³ Eventually, the acceptance of about 7,500 refugees was approved.¹⁴ This decision became a reference point for the opposition's election campaign, which strongly criticized both the consent of the Polish government and Germany's actions in the matter of refugees. After the elections, the PiS government formed by Beata Szydło shared the sceptical position of the other Visegrad Group countries. In Germany, however, there were negative assessments of Central European countries, including Poland, as not only xenophobic but also selectively treating the issue of European solidarity. Thus, at the end of 2015, the refugee crisis was symbolically withdrawn from the ambitious plans of the Polish-German partnership in favour of European integration reforms.

Poland relied on Germany's greater commitment to change in the common market and more liberal economic policy in the EU. Meanwhile, during the second term of Merkel's government (2009-2013), Germany began to implement more social and interventionist proposals, such as the introduction of a minimum wage of €8.50 per hour, imposing significant restrictions on competing with the labour price.¹⁵ At the beginning of 2015, this idea caused difficulties in relations with Poland. For example, this solution struck at Polish transport companies operating on the German market, which have so far won in cost competition.¹⁶ Also, new rules on employee delegation weakened the competitiveness of Polish enterprises.

Poland and Germany promoted the policy of enlarging the EU to the Western Balkans and Iceland (until 2013, when Iceland resigned from applying for membership). However, they differed in the matter of Turkey's accession, which at that time was also covered by this policy. While Poland did not raise any objections, Germany was increasingly inclined not to membership but to "privileged partnership."¹⁷ In addition, it was unwilling to support the extension

¹² *Polska przyjmie dwa tysiące uchodźców. Kto i ile za to zapłaci?*, TVN24, 3 August 2015, www.tvn24.pl.

¹³ "Head of the MND regarding refugees: 'Niemcy nie powinni nas uczyć solidarności'", *Defence24.pl*, 8 September 2015, www.defence24.pl.

¹⁴ "Ewa Kopacz in her address to the nation: Polska przyjmie uchodźców, a nie imigrantów ekonomicznych," *Wirtualna Polska*, 20 September 2015, <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl>.

¹⁵ German belief in liberalisation also weakened due to the political repercussions of the crisis in the eurozone. Germany, increasingly isolated and criticized by France, for example, for pushing the tough and socially costly reform course, decided to reduce pressure on liberalisation at the EU level and focus on the issue of reforming public finances.

¹⁶ *Płaca minimalna w Niemczech: pozew kierowców wpłynął do TK*, Polskie Radio, 11 March 2015, www.polskieradio.pl.

¹⁷ *Merkel verweigert Erdoğan die volle Unterstützung*, "Die Zeit," 4 February 2014, www.zeit.de.

of the policy to the Eastern Partnership countries. Germany shared this position with the vast majority of the EU members, but not with Poland, which indicated its interest in this trend, but did not formally submit such a proposal. Germany indicated that eventual enlargement to countries from the post-Soviet area poses a risk of deterioration of relations with Russia, which is opposed to the expansion of western structures. Although they supported the Eastern Partnership from 2009, they remained distant from the accession project of its members.¹⁸

Poland and Germany differed in the perception of Ukraine's relations with the EU. The consistent involvement of Poland led to the formulation of a proposal to conclude an accession agreement. Viktor Yanukovych's rejection of the agreement resulted in protests in Kyiv and the overthrow of the president. Russia's aggression that resulted in its occupation of Crimea and the expansion of hostilities in Donbas meant a rapid cooling of relations with the West and mutual sanctions. For Poland, the events in Ukraine proved the unequivocal support of its citizens for the idea of joining the EU. Berlin, however, ruled out considering the accession perspective, exposing Ukraine as not ready for membership.¹⁹ However, the conviction remained that the integration proposals towards countries from the post-Soviet area could be dangerous for the stability of the region due to the destructive potential of Russia.

Poland's cooperation with Germany in the field of the EU budget was successful. Germany did not push for ideas to significantly reduce its size, seeing it as a strategic tool for stabilising the EU, which was in line with the position of the Polish government. It is probably for this reason that the negotiations on the financial perspective for 2014–2020 were relatively efficient and led to a compromise between the Member States in June 2013 (approved by the European Parliament in autumn). The budget, despite some restrictions, was very beneficial for Poland.

Energy Policy. The issue of energy caused tensions in Polish-German relations. The most serious ones resulted from plans for further development of the Nord Stream pipeline. The Polish authorities repeatedly warned that the project would be a step towards the EU becoming too dependent on one supplier and also that it would weaken Ukraine's position as a transit country in its relations with Russia. Poland was also concerned that the gas pipeline would impede access to the LNG terminal in Świnoujście and the planned port in Elbląg. In this matter, not only did Poland put pressure on Germany but also it began to look for allies in the EU who would support the blocking of the German-Russian project as contrary

¹⁸ J. Gotkowska, "Germany and the Eastern Partnership," *Komentarz OSW*, 18 June 2010, www.osw.waw.pl.

¹⁹ *Merkel schließt EU-Beitritt der Ukraine aus*, "Spiegel Online," 21 May 2015, www.spiegel.de.

to the planned strengthening of integration in the sphere of energy policy.²⁰ The controversy was not reduced by the so-called energy union that was supposed to increase solidarity in the management and trade of energy resources in the EU. Germany was sceptical of this project. For this reason, it was not possible to agree on joint purchases of gas, which would make it impossible for Russia to differentiate prices for member countries. Disputes also arose regarding the exclusion of the OPAL gas pipeline—the land extension of the Nord Stream pipeline—from the regulation of the Third Energy Package. Poland opposed this by pointing to the risk of distorting competition,²¹ but also it was about political issues, in particular, the risk of excluding Ukraine from the role of a transit country.

In the background of discussions on energy policy, there was also a growing difference on climate policy. Germany sought to switch its economy to renewable energy sources, while Poland defended coal-based energy. There were also specific disputes related to Germany's *Energiewende* (energy transition). An example would be Poland's complaint to the Agency for Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) regarding Germany suddenly transferring surplus RES-generated electricity to Austria via the Polish network, which caused overloads.²²

Security. While Poland wanted to strengthen NATO's position in relations with Russia, Germany in 2011 cautiously approached the increase of its military presence in the east, including the expansion of infrastructure and the increase in the intensity of joint exercises. Although it began to support the installation of an anti-missile shield, assuming that it was intended mainly to reduce the risk of an Iranian attack.²³ The situation was changed by Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014, which forced the EU countries to reconsider their current security policy. Poland increased pressure on expanding NATO's presence on the Eastern Flank, raising this issue also in its relations with Germany. During Chancellor Merkel's visit to Warsaw on 12 March 2014, Prime Minister Tusk stated that "there is no secure Germany and Europe without a secure Poland."²⁴

The culmination of efforts was the NATO summit in Newport in September 2014, of which the final declaration announced, among others, increasing the readiness and capability of the Multinational Corps Northeast's command in

²⁰ *Kopacz: Nord Stream II nie powstanie. Czy nie za wcześniej, pani premier?*, "Money.pl," 21 October 2015, www.money.pl.

²¹ *UE powinna być federacją—Radosław Sikorski*, "Rzeczpospolita," 27 November 2011, www.rp.pl.

²² "Koniec z obciążaniem polskich sieci nadwyżkami energii z Niemiec," *Salon24*, 23 June 2016, www.salon24.pl.

²³ "Deutschland übernimmt Einsatzleitung für Raketenschild," *Focus Online*, 2 February 2012, www.focus.de.

²⁴ "Merkel i Tusk: nie ma bezpiecznych Niemiec bez bezpiecznej Polski," *Polskie Radio*, 12 March 2014, www.radiopik.pl.

Szczecin with the participation of soldiers from Poland, Denmark, and Germany. In addition, it was planned to create the so-called VJTF (Very High Readiness Joint Task Force) with the significant participation of Germany, increasing the scale and number of exercises in the region and establishing command cells in Central Europe for integrating the VJTF with local forces in emergency situations.²⁵

The Newport resolutions indicated that there was some correction of the German position in favour of Poland's arguments. Although the German defence ministry reaffirmed its commitment to increasing the Alliance's presence in the east, including military exercises and the development of rapid response forces,²⁶ Germany opposed a permanent Allied presence in the region. They did it for fear of deterioration of relations with Russia, which was criticised in Poland and remained an area of controversy in bilateral relations.²⁷

In security policy, the Weimar Triangle became a special platform for cooperation between Poland and Germany, which was assumed to be a tool helpful in completing the content of the Common Security and Defence Policy and in creating a coherent EU eastern policy. For many years, it was considered an institution of more symbolic than practical significance, even an untapped opportunity for European policy.²⁸ Numerous meetings of government representatives have not always brought measurable results. However, the triangle turned out to be a very useful platform in extraordinary circumstances. Such appeared in 2014, in connection with the development of the events in Ukraine, which mobilised Poland, Germany, and France to a joint political initiative aimed at developing an agreement between the authorities and the opposition. The ministers of foreign affairs Sikorski, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and Laurent Fabius visited Kyiv and significantly contributed to the agreement.

Sikorski recognised this as the unquestionable success of the Weimar Triangle. Polish diplomacy successfully managed to involve two important EU Member States in Eastern policy. However, the agreement reached was pointless after President Yanukovich's escape to Russia, and Poland's political influence began to weaken when the internal political crisis in Ukraine turned into an armed conflict with Russia.²⁹ Although, there were joint statements and consultations with Germany

²⁵ "Główne postanowienia Szczytu NATO w Newport," *Interia*, 5 September 2014, <http://fakty.interia.pl>.

²⁶ A. Kwiatkowska-Drożdż, K. Frymark, "Niemcy w konflikcie rosyjsko-ukraińskim: misja polityczna czy humanitarna?," *Komentarz OSW*, 18 February 2015, www.osw.waw.pl.

²⁷ *Information of the Council of Ministers on the tasks of Polish foreign policy in the years 2014–2015*, 6 November 2014, www.sejm.gov.pl.

²⁸ *Zapis stenograficzny (770) 57. posiedzenie Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych w dniu 17 marca 2009 r.*, Senat RP, www.senat.gov.pl.

²⁹ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2014 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at the sitting of the Sejm on 8 May 2014), see p. 59 in this volume.

and France³⁰, for example, after the annexation of Crimea and the shooting down of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17, decisions began to be made primarily in the so-called Normandy Format, involving Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine.

From Poland's point of view, the biggest disadvantage of this format was the lack of direct EU involvement. Sikorski believed that Germany "... is strong enough to talk to Putin, but they are not strong enough to influence Putin's behaviour."³¹ The new minister of foreign affairs, Schetyna, indicated Poland's readiness to re-join direct negotiations.³² The main role, however, was taken over by Germany, which focused on cautious actions and excluded more decisive forms of support for Ukraine, for example, through the supply of weapons. The weakening of Poland's influence in Eastern policy was also seen in other areas, even at the end of the so-called "królewiecki" format, within which consultations were held between Germany, Russia, and Poland. The last meeting took place in June 2014 in St. Petersburg and since then, no plan to resume it has appeared.³³

Economic Cooperation

Economic exchanges belonged to the positive aspects of Polish-German relations in the years 2011–2015. It developed despite the unfavourable economic situation in the world economy. In 2015, Poland was ranked seventh on the list of Germany's largest export markets, ahead of Russia, Switzerland, and Belgium. On the other hand, Germany remained Poland's first partner in foreign trade, with a share of 27.1% in imports and 22.9% in exports, respectively.³⁴

Investment connections also increased—the inflow of new direct investments (FDI) from Germany in 2015 amounted to PLN 9.83 billion (PLN 3.82 billion in 2011). Germany was the second-largest direct investor after the Netherlands, and their liabilities on this account increased from PLN 21.5 billion in 2011 to PLN 116.6 billion in 2015.³⁵ The annual survey of the Polish-German Chamber of Commerce confirmed recognition of Poland as a place of investment among

³⁰ "Gemeinsame Erklärung zur Ukraine der drei Außenminister des Weimarer Dreiecks Frank-Walter Steinmeier (Deutschland), Laurent Fabius (Frankreich), und Radosław Sikorski (Polen) in Weimar," *Auswärtiges Amt*, 31 March 2014, www.auswaertiges-amt.de.

³¹ "Sikorski: Formuła normandzka to błąd. Ostrzegalem Poroszenkę," *TVN24*, 19 February 2015, www.tvn24.pl.

³² "Schetyna: Trzeba zrobić wszystko, by Rosja ograniczyła swoje agresywne zachowania," *Deutsche Welle*, 22 November 2014, www.dw.com.

³³ "Sikorski, Steinmeier i Ławrow rozmawiają w 'wąskim gronie' o Ukrainie," *Wirtualna Polska*, 10 June 2014, <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl>.

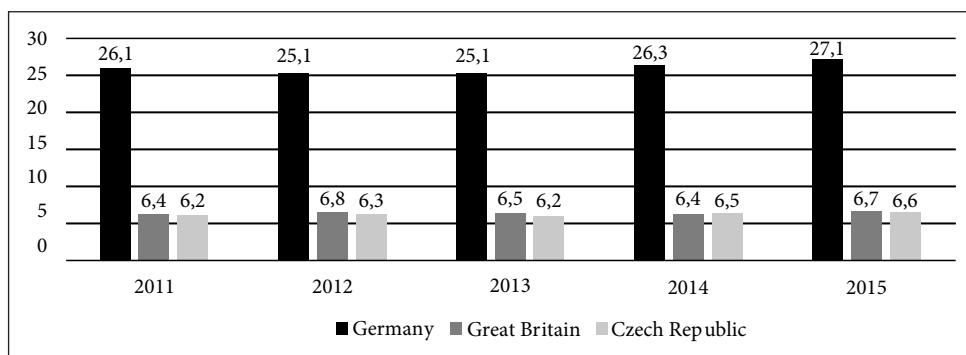
³⁴ "Polski eksport. Rekordowe obroty w handlu z Niemcami w 2015 r.," *Money.pl*, 11 April 2016, www.money.pl.

³⁵ *Zagraniczne inwestycje bezpośrednie w Polsce*, Narodowy Bank Polski, www.nbp.pl.

German companies in 2014, when it surpassed the leader of this ranking for the first time, the Czech Republic.³⁶

Figure 2

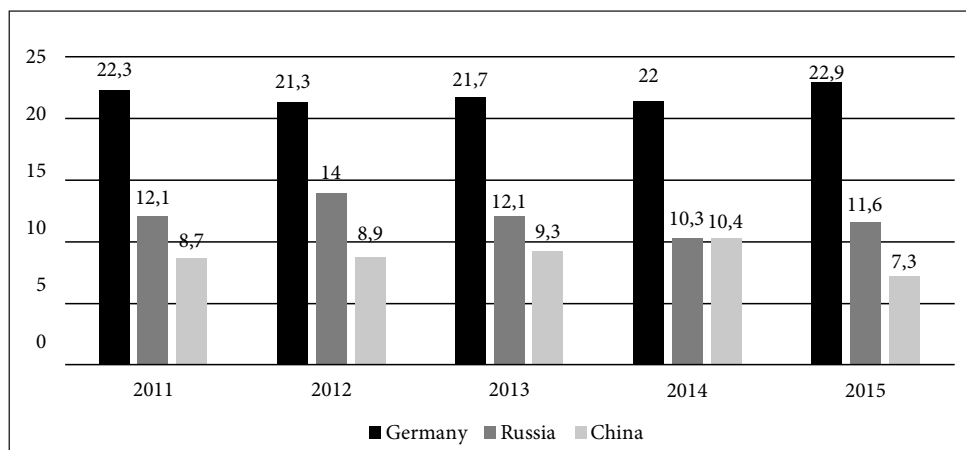
Major Trading Partners in Poland's Exports (share in %)



Source: Central Statistical Office.

Figure 3.

Major Trading Partners in Poland's Imports (share in %)



Source: Central Statistical Office.

A relatively new phenomenon in economic relations turned out to be the increase in investments of Polish companies in Germany. However, they remained

³⁶ *Badanie koniunktury AHK Polska, edycja 2014*, Polsko-Niemiecka Izba Przemysłowo-Handlowa (AHK Polska), www.ahk.pl.

at a fairly low level and did not change the existing asymmetry. The value of Poland's new FDI in Germany in 2015 amounted to PLN 0.57 billion (in 2011, PLN 0.31 billion), which made Germany the fifth-largest direct investment destination for Polish companies.³⁷ Small and medium-sized enterprises operating across borders predominated, in particular in neighbouring Brandenburg. However, there were more and more transactions in which the Polish company took over the German one—most often through the purchase of a bankrupt enterprise. PKN Orlen remained the largest Polish investor in Germany for years. Boryszew and OT Logistics were also very involved.

Nonetheless, there were also weaknesses in the overall positive economic cooperation between Poland and Germany. A frequent reason for criticism from economists and transport experts was the state of transport infrastructure connecting both countries, in particular, rail connections.³⁸ The signing of a cooperation agreement in 2012 regarding rail transport across the Polish-German border was intended to improve the situation.³⁹ An important undertaking in this context was the first Polish-German railway summit, which was held on 11 September 2015 in Potsdam. It announced, among others, the electrification of the Berlin-Szczecin line.⁴⁰

Cultural and Social Relations

One of the important demands of Polish policy towards Germany was to increase the legal status of the Polish diaspora in Germany, which at the end of 2014 increased to about 670,000.⁴¹ On the declaratory level, the best option was to recognise it as a national minority. This was due to the pursuit of symmetry: the Polish-German treaty of 1991 did not grant minority status to Poles living in Germany, but it was obtained by Germans living in Poland. Germany rejected the whole discussion on minority status, fearing that other ethnic groups, such as Turks, might demand it as well, which would upset the status quo. The Polish authorities were aware of this limitation and did not make any formal claims.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ B. Wyżnikiewicz (ed.), "Współpraca gospodarcza Polska-Niemcy," Instytut Badań nad Gospodarką Rynkową, Fundacja Konrada Adenauera w Polsce, 2014, p. 32.

³⁹ *Umowa między Rzeczpospolitą Polską a Republiką Federalną Niemiec o współpracy w dziedzinie komunikacji kolejowej przez polsko-niemiecką granicę państwową*, Berlin, 14 November 2012, Dz.U. [Journal of Laws] 2016, item 1062.

⁴⁰ *Polsko-niemiecki szczyt kolejowy. Ma być lepiej*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Berlinie, September 2015, <https://berlin.msz.gov.pl>.

⁴¹ "Rekord obcokrajowców w Niemczech. Najwięcej Turków i Polaków," *Deutsche Welle*, 16 March 2015, www.dw.com.

Teaching Polish was another contentious issue. In Germany, there were about 80 schools in which Polish language lessons were offered.⁴² Most of them were led by Polish diaspora associations and representative offices of the Polish Catholic Mission. Their activities were co-financed by the Ministry of National Education, some of the schools were also looked after by the Senate of the Republic of Poland. The Polish party constantly insisted on increasing the number of Polish educational institutions in Germany. The federal authorities justified the lack of action by the low interest on the part of the Polish diaspora or the inability to influence *lander* authorities, which made decisions in this respect.

In 2011, the situation of Poles in Germany was dealt with by the Polish-German roundtable (PNOS), which was to review the provisions of the treaty and formulate proposals for changes. It was attended by representatives of the governments and the German minority in Poland and two Polish diaspora organisations: Association of Poles in Germany “Rodło” and the Convention of Polish Organisations. An agreement was signed that assumed the establishment of the Polonia Documentation Centre at the Polish House in Bochum, the Polish Diaspora Office run by the Polish Organisation Convention in Berlin, developing a strategy for teaching Polish in Germany, as well as exploring the possibilities of financial support for Polish organisations and facilitating their access to media.

In October 2014, the Second Congress of Polish Organisations in Germany took place in Düsseldorf, which summarised the activities undertaken after PNOS. The establishment of the Documentation Centre (as the Polonica Portal, it has been operating since 2013, although the headquarters needed renovation) and the strategy of teaching the Polish language in 2013 were appreciated. It was noted, however, that it did not include teaching in the non-public sector and problems at the *lander* level. More critical remarks appeared in the context of such matters as the operation of the Polonia Office in Berlin, the creation of a place commemorating the fate of Poles in Germany, the status of a minority, as well as the return of assets of the Polish diaspora organisations confiscated by the Third Reich.⁴³

The next stage of the Polish-German roundtable in February 2015 was to serve the discussion regarding these problems and “bringing about the implementation of the Polish-German Treaty.”⁴⁴ It points out in the conclusion the lack of progress in implementing the strategy of learning Polish as a mother tongue in

⁴² *Punkty nauczania języka polskiego w Niemczech*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Berlinie, www.berlin.msz.gov.pl.

⁴³ G. Kamień-Söffker, “Co to jest okrągły stół?,” *Polonia Viva*, www.poloniaviva.eu.

⁴⁴ *Polsko-niemieckie oświadczenie po obradach Okrągłego Stołu*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, February 2015, www.msz.gov.pl.

Germany⁴⁵ and preparations for the renovation of the Polish House in Bochum, which was to be the target headquarters of the Centre for Documentation of Culture and History of Poles in Germany. Larger subsidies were provided for the House for Polish-German Cooperation in Gliwice and appointment of regional plenipotentiaries for minorities and displaced persons.⁴⁶

In the years 2011–2015, many other initiatives and projects became available, which had a very positive impact on the quality of relations—especially in the area of education. The list of foundations that support Polish-German relations was extended by the Polish-German Foundation for Science, financing joint research projects of scientific institutions. The work on a Polish-German history teaching handbook was completed, which, after many years of difficult preparations,⁴⁷ resulted in an edition of the first volume entitled *Europa – nasza historia*, covering the period until the end of the middle ages.⁴⁸ It was assumed that by 2018, another three volumes will be published, taking the history up until the political breakthrough in the years 1989–1990.

The Polish Institutes played an important role in the promotion of Poland in Germany. Out of the 25 institutions of this type in the world—financed by the Polish government—three are located in Germany: Berlin, Leipzig (branch), and Düsseldorf. Each of them was involved in organising numerous exhibitions, concerts, biennale, and festivals. Particularly noteworthy were: the film festival “filmPOLSKA” (e.g., during the sixth edition in 2011, more than 100 films were presented), the “polenmARkT” Polish cultural days in Greifswald, or the international art festival “Most/die Brücke” in Frankfurt (on the river Oder) and Ślubice (in 2014, Tomasz Stańko and Jan Klata were guests). In addition, Polish Institutes were involved in public diplomacy activities, the purpose of which was to inform German society about political, social, and economic processes in Poland. In April 2015, the “Deutsch-Polnischer Tag” project began, which involved educational activities in schools in Berlin and Brandenburg.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ *Strategia rozwoju oświaty mniejszości niemieckiej w Polsce*, Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji, www.mswia.gov.pl. Strategic goals of the proposed solutions are: 1) in the long-term creating bilingual schools with Polish and German as a teaching language, 2) increasing the number of students continuing to learn German as a mother tongue in upper secondary schools.

⁴⁶ “Postępy w żółwym tempie. Polsko-niemiecki Okrągły Stół,” *Deutsche Welle*, 27 February 2015, www.dw.com.

⁴⁷ The initiative to write a joint textbook was made by the head of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs F.-W. Steinmeier in 2006.

⁴⁸ *Polsko-niemiecki podręcznik do nauczania historii*, Wspólna Polsko-Niemiecka Komisja Podręcznikowa, www.deutsch-polnische.schulbuchkommission.de.

⁴⁹ See: informacje Polnisches Institut Berlin, <http://berlin.polnischekultur.de>.

In cultural relations, the rock festival Przystanek Woodstock, which takes place every year in Kostrzyn on the river Oder, deserves attention because it also is frequently visited by guests from Germany. The growing importance of the event was noticed by politicians: in 2012, in a discussion with festival participants as part of the so-called Akademia Sztuk Przepięknych, the presidents of Germany and Poland—Gauck and Komorowski—gave a speech.⁵⁰

Broadcasting of the German series *Nasze matki, nasi ojcowie*, resulted in a wide response in cultural relations of Poland and Germany, presenting the wartime fate of young Germans. In Poland, it was transmitted in June 2013 and raised a lot of controversy due to the depiction of AK partisans as anti-Semites. Earlier, the Polish Embassy in Berlin, among others, protested the film.⁵¹

Appraisal

Relations with Germany in the period 2011–2015 were particularly important in terms of the following areas: European policy, energy policy, security, economic cooperation, and social relations, in particular in the field of education.

In European policy, the Polish government sought to conclude a strategic alliance with Germany. Initially, there were indications that this intention would be realised: Poland managed to join the current discussion on the reform of the eurozone by supporting the fiscal pact. The possible Polish-German cooperation in the reconstruction of the EU was, however, weakened by the refugee crisis, and the differences in interests became particularly clear after the change of government in Poland in autumn 2015. Achievements in other areas of European policy were moderate. Although negotiations on the new financial perspective were successful, the hopes for an alliance with Germany regarding liberal economic reforms in the EU and a more active policy towards eastern neighbours were not fulfilled.

In the area of energy policy, achievements are also limited. Germany could not be stopped from supporting the construction of the second branch of the Nord Stream pipeline. However, some progress was made in implementing the energy union in the EU.

In the area of security, Poland and Germany were connected by an alliance, but differed in the perception of the threat from Russia and the need to increase spending and expand NATO's military infrastructure in Eastern Europe. These differences could not be reduced, although the positions came closer after Russia's

⁵⁰ "Prezydenci Polski i Niemiec są już na Woodstocku!" *Gazeta Lubuska*, 2 August 2012, <https://gazetalubuska.pl>.

⁵¹ "Protest przeciw zniesławianiu AK i Polski," *Onet.pl*, 24 March 2013, www.onet.pl.

aggression against Ukraine in 2014, as well as cooperation within the Weimar Triangle.

The development of economic cooperation with Germany should be assessed positively, in particular, the growing volume of trade exchange. However, some problems remain, for example, in the sphere of investment where relations are and will be asymmetrical for a long time. There are also deficits in transport infrastructure. In the sphere of social and cultural relations, the predominant returning problems were: the status of Poles in Germany and teaching of the Polish language. Some progress was achieved in both areas, but it did not meet all the expectations of the Polish party.

Poland's Policy towards France

ŁUKASZ JURCZYSZYN*

Determinants

The years 2011–2015 were a time of particularly intense cooperation between Poland and France. The historical rapprochement between the two countries was possible primarily due to favourable political determinants. During this period (until October 2015), the main political force in Poland was Civic Platform (PO), the lead party in the coalition government with the Polish People's Party (PSL). It was from PO that President Bronisław Komorowski originated. This formation wanted the best possible relations with France and Germany, the states that were the engine of European integration. For seven years (2007 to 2014) Donald Tusk was prime minister and Radosław Sikorski was foreign minister. This favoured the implementation of a consistent and stable European policy both in relations with France and within the framework of the Weimar Triangle.

In France, the presidential election was won by François Hollande, who was more favourable to Poland than his predecessor, Nicolas Sarkozy. Poland and France did sign a strategic partnership agreement under Sarkozy (on 28 May 2008), but it was only under Hollande's rule that this became particularly important. Komorowski, as the only European leader from the centre-right European People's Party, received Hollande in Warsaw during his election campaign. The sympathy of both presidents helped bring the two countries closer. The strategic cooperation agreement signed on 29 November 2013 created new opportunities, which marked a turning point in bilateral relations.¹

The key determinant for Polish policy towards France was the reactivation of the Weimar Triangle, which has been deadlocked since 2006. Especially important for the development of cooperation in this format in 2011–2015 was a visit by Komorowski, on 2 September 2010 to Paris. This was his third foreign trip.² With Sarkozy, he decided to address Germany with the goal of reactivating the Weimar Triangle. The result of the discussions initiated at that time was the organisation

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¹ *Polsko-Francuskie Partnerstwo Strategiczne. Program współpracy*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 29 November 2013, www.msz.gov.pl.

² *Pierwsza oficjalna wizyta we Francji*, 2 September 2010, www.prezydent.pl.

of a breakthrough summit in early 2011. The intensification of the Triangle's work was additionally influenced by the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the war in Donbas in 2014.

The provisions of the NATO summit of 4-5 September 2014 in Newport, Wales, were important for Polish-French relations in response to Russia's aggressive policy. At that time, the Readiness Action Plan was adopted, aimed at increasing and improving the capacity of the Alliance to respond in the event of a threat to the territorial integrity of any of its members. Although it was not decided to permanently deploy tactical combat units on the Eastern Flank, the decisions turned out to be crucial for talks during preparations for the NATO 2016 summit in Warsaw. Conventionally, France was interested mainly in strengthening the Alliance's Southern Flank and in the fight against Islamist terrorism, which increasingly threatened its national security (through, for example, jihadist attacks in the years 2014 and 2015), and did not share Polish fears of a threat from the east. Therefore, support for French troops by Poland in military operations in 2013 in Mali and in 2014 in the Central African Republic was of great importance for negotiations with France.

The factors influencing Poland's policy towards France were the Polish presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011 and the convergence of priorities in the negotiations of the EU budget for 2014–2020. France was a desirable partner for Poland as the countries shared similar interests in attempt achieving a favourable distribution of financial resources.

Objectives

Over the period 2011–2015, one Polish government objective was to develop cooperation with the Franco-German “tandem,” both through the revitalisation of the Weimar Triangle and in bilateral relations. This was reflected in the words of Sikorski of 2011: “Together with Germany and France, we have reactivated the Weimar Triangle at the level of heads of states and government ministers, where we talk about the EU's relations towards Russia or other Eastern European countries as well as about defence cooperation. We have good relations with France, one of the main foreign investors in Poland and a partner in many political and economic projects.”³ The government's assumptions for the following years confirmed the chosen direction: “Poland considers Germany and France as its key political and economic partners on the continent and intends to maintain the

³ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 16 March 2011),” see p. 11 in this volume.

achieved level of dynamics in bilateral relations. One of the most important goals for the years 2012–2016 is to maintain a high level of economic and investment cooperation with these states.⁴ The first priority of regional policy tasks for this period include the need to continue cooperation within the Weimar Triangle in matters such as the future of the EU, the common security and defence policy (CSDP), the EU's Eastern Policy, political and economic management in the Union, and strengthening social and cultural contacts.

According to a statement by Sikorski in 2013, the development of cooperation within the Weimar Triangle was to strengthen Poland's position in Central Europe: "the recent Visegrad-Weimar summit in Warsaw was an ambitious figure in the field of political geometry, a square inscribed in a triangle. The critics of our policy should know that the closer our relations with France and Germany, the stronger is Poland in the region. The better the cooperation in our region, the greater the Polish ability to represent its interests."⁵ The priority direction of cooperation was continued by the new Foreign Minister Grzegorz Schetyna, who chose Paris for his first foreign visit on 2 October 2014.⁶ In his speech on the priorities of foreign policy for the years 2014–2015, the minister devoted a lot of attention to France, in the context of cooperation in terms of bilateral relations and within the Weimar Triangle. He pointed out that "it will be important to maintain a high dynamic of a dialogue with France on a bilateral, European and international level."⁷

At the level of bilateral relations, one of the key goals of Polish policy towards France was to establish an alliance on the EU budget for 2014–2020. Agreement with one of the largest EU countries was particularly important for Poland. It wanted to maintain a substantial share of the cohesion fund and common agricultural policy budgets, both of which were also financial priorities for France.

Political Relations

As a result of Komorowski and Sarkozy's work in 2010, the first Weimar Triangle summit since 2006 was held on 7 February 2011 in Warsaw.⁸ The meeting

⁴ *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, p. 17, www.msz.gov.pl.

⁵ "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2013 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 20 March 2013)," see p. 41 in this volume.

⁶ *Visit of the head of Polish diplomacy Grzegorz Schetyna to Paris*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, October 2014, www.msz.gov.pl.

⁷ *Information of the Council of Ministers on the tasks of Polish foreign policy in the years 2014 to 2015*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 6 November 2014, www.msz.gov.pl.

⁸ *Trójkąt Weimarski funkcjonuje na wielu poziomach*, 7 February 2011, www.prezydent.pl.

was attended by the presidents of Poland and France and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Among the main issues discussed at the meeting were the priorities of the Polish presidency of the EU Council and the common defence policy of the Union. Sarkozy expressed the hope that the Polish-French convergence of positions on the development of European defence policy would be maintained.

Tusk went to Paris on 3 June 2011. He spoke to Sarkozy about the EU's financial perspectives after 2013, the importance of the common agricultural policy, strengthening and implementing the rules of the Schengen Agreement, EU energy policy, and relations with neighbouring countries.⁹ Tusk emphasised that "whenever Poland undertakes major challenges within the EU, it can count on President Sarkozy".¹⁰

After Hollande took office in May 2012, the frequency of meetings between the Polish and French leaders increased even more. The first high-level meeting after the change of government in France occurred on 26 July 2012. New Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius visited Warsaw, where he met Komorowski and Sikorski.¹¹

Cooperation in the revitalised Weimar Triangle format also expanded. This was confirmed by the "Weimar plus" meeting of 15 November 2012 in Paris. This was attended by the foreign and defence ministers of Poland, Germany and France, as well as representatives from Italy and Spain participated.¹² Earlier, thanks to Spanish and Italian support for Polish postulates, it had been possible to adopt provisions strengthening the European defence policy and improving its operation (such as the launch of the Operational Centre in Brussels and the review of the mechanism for financing EU military operations).

The day after discussions between ministers in Paris, on 16 November 2012, Hollande paid his first visit to Warsaw, appearing in parliament before deputies and senators.¹³ Then, he said: "The Triangle could become a melting pot of progress in the future Europe. And, as president of France, I want to make the triangle

⁹ *Wizyta Premiera Donalda Tuska w Paryżu*, Ambassade de France à Varsovie, 3 June 2011, <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

¹⁰ G. Stachowiak, "Przywództwo polityczne Donalda Tuska podczas polskiej prezydencji w Radzie UE," in: A. Kirpsza, G. Stachowiak (eds.), *Podsumowanie polskiej prezydencji w Radzie UE*, Krakowska Oficyna Naukowa "Tekst," 2012.

¹¹ *Minister spraw zagranicznych Laurent Fabius z wizytą w Polsce*, Ambassade de France à Varsovie, July 2012, <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

¹² *Réunion des ministres des Affaires étrangères du Triangle de Weimar*, Ambassade de France à Varsovie, 29 February 2012, <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

¹³ *Wizyta Prezydenta Republiki Francuskiej w Polsce*, Ambassade de France à Varsovie, 16 November 2012, <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

remain not only a statement but also a specific expression of our relations.”¹⁴ The visit, therefore, confirmed the principle that better Polish-French relations could only help Weimar Triangle development. In addition, it strengthened the tactical Polish-French alliance in connection with negotiations on the future EU budget. Hollande emphasised that “Poland and France will jointly defend the same concept of the European budget, i.e., a budget based on the principle of solidarity: common agricultural policy and cohesion policy.”¹⁵ Thus, France rejected the latest proposal for the EU budget for 2014–2020, presented by the head of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, arguing that the proposed limits for agricultural policy are too small. Hollande paid his second visit to Poland on 6 March 2013. He participated in a meeting of heads of state and government of France, Germany, and the Visegrad Group members.¹⁶

The key visit was Komorowski’s two-day trip to France, from 7–8 May 2013.¹⁷ He was Hollande’s guest of honour during the anniversary of the end of the Second World War, which was a manifestation of close relations between the presidents. This special thread of understanding, combined with close relations between Tusk and Merkel, determined Poland’s commitment to cooperation within the Weimar Triangle.

The breakthrough in contemporary Polish-French relations was the signing of an expanded strategic partnership in Warsaw on 29 November 2013 of the relations established between the two countries on 28 May 2008.¹⁸ The document was the culmination of intergovernmental consultations attended by Tusk, Hollande and the ministers of European affairs of Poland and France.¹⁹ This was an updated cooperation programme for the next five years in areas such as political partnership, security and defence, economy, finances, infrastructure, trade, energy, environment, agriculture, work and social policy, justice, education, scientific research and culture. It also involved signing letters of intent by the defence ministries of both countries on enhanced cooperation of naval, air and land forces. The document was signed by ministers of European affairs, who met

¹⁴ *Sprawozdanie stenograficzne z uroczystego zgromadzenia posłów i senatorów w dniu 16 listopada 2012 r.*, www.sejm.gov.pl.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ *Wizyta Prezydenta Francji w Warszawie*, Ambassade de France à Varsovie, 6 March 2013, <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

¹⁷ *Dwudniowa wizyta państwowa Prezydenta RP we Francji (7-8 maja 2013)*, Ambassade de France à Varsovie, 8 May 2013, <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

¹⁸ *Polsko-Francuskie Partnerstwo Strategiczne. Program współpracy*, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ *Spotkanie Tusk-Hollande: polsko-francuskie konsultacje międzyrządowe w Warszawie*, 29 November 2013, www.premier.gov.pl.

as many as 18 times between 9 June 2011 and 4 December 2015, including six times as part of the Weimar Triangle.²⁰

After becoming prime minister on 9 October 2014, Ewa Kopacz continued active Polish-French cooperation when she chose Paris as the destination for her third foreign visit and met Hollande there. Their discussions concerned climate policy, the situation in Ukraine and bilateral cooperation.²¹ Then, on 11 January 2015, Kopacz participated in the Paris march of solidarity in tribute to the victims of the attack on the editors of the weekly "Charlie Hebdo" and in a protest against terrorism.²²

Another important visit indicating the revival of Polish-French relations was the visit of Prime Minister Manuel Valls to Gdańsk (11–12 March 2015).²³ He was accompanied by the minister for European Affairs, Harlem Désir, and a group of presidents of French companies operating in Poland. The visitors participated in the Polish-French Economic Forum organised by the Minister of Economy, Janusz Piechociński.

After winning the presidential election in Poland, Andrzej Duda went to Paris on his eighth visit abroad, on 28 October 2015.²⁴ With Hollande, he discussed, among other things, Polish-French relations including cooperation within the Weimar Triangle, the upcoming climate summit, and the issue of lasting peace in Ukraine. Duda underlined that Poland was applying for the status of a non-permanent member in the UN Security Council in 2018–2019 and expressed hope for France's support in this matter.

Military Cooperation

The revival of Polish-French political relations translated into strengthening military cooperation. French Defence Minister Gerard Longuet visited Warsaw on 17 May 2011.²⁵ He discussed European defence and forms of French-Polish cooperation in the arms industry with the Polish Minister of National Defence, Bogdan Klich, in view of forthcoming Polish presidency in the EU Council.

²⁰ *Wizyty ministrów ds. europejskich*, Ambassade de France à Varsovie, <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

²¹ *Spotkanie premier Kopacz z prezydentem Hollande w Paryżu*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Paryżu, 9 October 2014, www.paryz.msz.gov.pl.

²² *Udział premier Ewy Kopacz w paryskim marszu solidarności*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Paryżu, 12 January 2015, www.paryz.msz.gov.pl.

²³ *Pobył Premiera Francji w Polsce*, 12 March 2015, Ambassade de France à Varsovie, <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

²⁴ *W Paryżu o relacjach polsko-francuskich i Trójkącie Weimarskim*, 28 October 2015, www.prezydent.pl.

²⁵ *Wizyta w Polsce Gerarda Longueta, Ministra Obrony i Spraw Kombatantów*, Ambassade de France à Varsovie, 17 May 2011, <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

After the change of government in France, new Minister of Defence, Jean-Yves Le Drian, visited Warsaw on 23 July 2012 at the invitation of Komorowski.²⁶ The president expressed the hope of strengthening bilateral military cooperation and as well as cooperation within the framework of the Weimar Triangle. During the visit, Le Drian also met the new Minister of National Defence, Tomasz Siemoniak, with whom he discussed plans to strengthen the CSDP and scheduled the NATO summit in Chicago.

In November 2013, NATO's *Steadfast Jazz* military exercises were held in Poland, in which more than 6,000 troops took part. The French contingent of 1,250 troops constituted the most numerous foreign contribution, proving how much importance this country attaches to NATO's rapid response capability. French corps included rapid reaction forces in Lille, a biological and chemical weapons combat unit (NRBC), a communications brigade and a parachute brigade.²⁷

An example of Polish-French military cooperation was mutual inspiration and cooperation in developing security strategies that were prepared in both countries in 2013. In Poland, this document was published under the name "The White Book of National Security of the Republic of Poland."²⁸

The logistics and training support of the French contingent in Mali in February 2013 during the EU-EUTM training mission was evidence of operational cooperation between the armed forces of both countries. Poland sent 20 troops, including instructors. Then, in January 2014, it supported the French forces during the EU military operation in the Central African Republic. The Polish military contingent numbered 50 troops and included a transport aircraft. At that time, both countries became forerunners of stabilisation activities in the Central African Republic, additionally contributing to strengthening cooperation under the EU CSDP.

An important element of Polish-French cooperation, particularly intense in 2013, was Poland taking over the role of Weimar Combat Group commanding state on combat duty from 1 January to 30 June 30.²⁹ The duty is included in the EU rapid response structures, which comprised nearly 2,000 troops from Poland, France and Germany.

Recognising the importance Poland attached to the sale of the French assault vessel *Mistral* to Russia, on 25 November 2014, Le Drian visited Warsaw. He forwarded to Siemoniak the decision of the French president to postpone the transaction until

²⁶ *Tygodnik BBN: Przegląd informacji o bezpieczeństwie narodowym wraz z komentarzem*, no. 95, Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego, 19–25 July 2012, p. 4, www.bbn.gov.pl.

²⁷ *Steadfast Jazz '13: sprawdzian współdziałania*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 5 February 2014, www.mon.gov.pl.

²⁸ *Biała księga bezpieczeństwa narodowego RP*, 2013, www.spbn.gov.pl.

²⁹ *Trójkąt Weimarski*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, www.mon.gov.pl.

further notice. The French party unprecedentedly (as for the fifth largest arms exporter in the world) terminated the contract worth € 1.2 billion, taking into account Russia's military operations in eastern Ukraine.³⁰ For a long time, France postponed this decision, hoping for a de-escalation of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which, however, did not occur; nor, ultimately, did the sale of the ship.

Proof of progressive change in the French assessment of the Russian threat to the NATO's Eastern Flank by was the participation of the French air force in the Polish "Baltic Air Policing" mission. From 1 May 2014, Polish pilots from the 22nd Tactical Air Base in Malbork were responsible for the safety of the airspace of the Baltic States. Due to the need to strengthen the contingent, France sent four Rafale fighters and almost 100 troops to Poland.³¹

An example of operational cooperation was the deployment of a French sub-unit to NATO's *Puma-15* exercises at Drawsko Pomorskie at the end of April 2015. The sub-unit included 15 Leclerc tanks, four infantry armoured fighting vehicles (VBCI type), three armoured reconnaissance vehicles (VAB type), one armoured sapper vehicle (EBG type) and 300 troops.³² It was the first appearance of Leclerc tanks in Poland, which is why joint exercises aroused the interest of the Polish military, civil authorities and media.

One of the key decisions of the Polish government regarding cooperation with the French defence industry was the decision, via a tender procedure, to accept an offer for the supply of 50 H255 Caracal helicopters in April 2015. Italian AW 149 and American Black Hawk were rejected. Multi-task Caracals are produced by the French-German-Spanish arms group Airbus Helicopters. Further negotiations on this, the largest armaments contract in Poland since 1989, were carried out by Law and Justice (PiS), which came to power following the November 2015 election.

Economic Relations

In the years 2011–2015, France was the fourth-largest recipient of Polish goods. Trade exchange in 2015 was worth € 16.6 billion.³³ In 2015, the value of exports from Poland to France reached € 9.95 billion, and in 2011 it stood at

³⁰ *Francuskie gwarancje bezpieczeństwa*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 25 November 2014, www.mon.gov.pl.

³¹ "Francuskie Siły Zbrojne wspierają działania NATO w Europie Środkowej," *Defence24*, 29 January 2015, www.defence24.pl.

³² *Przyjazd do Polski francuskich czołgów Leclerc i żołnierzy*, Ambassade de France à Varsovie, April 2015, <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

³³ *Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski styczeń-grudzień 2015 roku w mln euro*, Ministerstwo Rozwoju, August 2015, www.mr.gov.pl.

€ 8.404 billion.³⁴ Imports from France to Poland in 2015 amounted to over € 6.65 billion, compared with € 6.01 billion in 2011. This meant about € 3.3 billion in surplus in trade turnover in 2015 for Poland, compared with about € 2.4 billion in 2011. Therefore, the trade balance systematically changed in favour of Poland.

The structure of Polish exports to France was dominated by highly processed industrial goods (mechanical devices, vehicles and transport equipment, yachts and boats, measuring instruments, tools, electrical equipment and defence equipment), and agricultural and food products (including organic products), wooden and metallurgical products, automotive industry products, industrial machinery and equipment, electrical and electronic equipment, pharmaceutical and parapharmaceutical products, organic toiletries, plastics and cosmetics. Almost 75% of the value of French exports to Poland were accounted for by electromechanical and chemical products. The remaining part is mainly commodity industries such as metallurgy, fuel and energy, textiles and agricultural-food.³⁵

In 2015 France was fourth (after the Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg) direct foreign investor in Poland.³⁶ This meant a drop from the third position compared to 2011.³⁷ The interest of French companies was constantly aroused by lower production costs in Poland, high level of staff qualifications, investment concessions (in special economic zones), geographical location (with Poland as a bridge for expansion to eastern markets), Poland's accession to the Schengen Area and European funds. At the end of 2015, the cumulative value of French investments in Poland amounted to PLN 76.3 billion. These investments were mainly in information and communication (47.7% of the total French capital), industrial processing (17.4%), and motor vehicle trade and repairs (14.4%). France was also among the largest foreign employers in Poland. More than 1,200 French companies operated on the Polish market, of which 10% were large capital companies. French enterprises provided about 200,000 jobs. According to the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Poland, despite the clear economic slowdown resulting from the financial crisis in 2008, few French companies decided to close their operations on Polish territory.³⁸

³⁴ *Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski styczeń-grudzień 2012 roku w mln euro*, Ministerstwo Rozwoju, August 2012, www.mr.gov.pl.

³⁵ *Republika Francuska. Informacja o stosunkach gospodarczych z Polską*, Ministerstwo Rozwoju, p. 5, www.mr.gov.pl.

³⁶ *Zagraniczne inwestycje bezpośrednie w Polsce w 2015 roku*, Narodowy Bank Polski, 2016, www.nbp.pl.

³⁷ *Zagraniczne inwestycje bezpośrednie w Polsce w 2011 roku*, Narodowy Bank Polski, 2012, www.nbp.pl.

³⁸ M. Constant, "Francuskie firmy stworzyły w Polsce 200 tys. miejsc pracy," *Forsal.pl*, 14 July 2013, <https://forsal.pl>.

As many as 124 French companies were on the list of the largest foreign investors of the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency. They operated in many sectors, including trade and distribution (Auchan, Carrefour, Leroy Merlin and Intermarche), industrial production (Peugeot, L'Oréal and Total Fina Elf), construction (Bouygues and VINCI Construction), financial and insurance services (BGŻ BNP Paribas, Crédit Agricole and Société Générale), hotels and gastronomy (Accor and the Sodexo Group), the food sector (Bonduelle, Danone and Delifrance), telecommunications (Alcatel-Lucent and Orange), media (Canal Plus and Vivendi Universal) and energy (Electricité de France, EDF).³⁹

According to data of the National Bank of Poland, at the end of 2015, the value of Polish direct investment in France amounted to € 102.4 million.⁴⁰ Investments focused especially on construction (Fakro and Oknoplast), industry and industrial processing (Can-Pack, Suempol and Sanok-Rubber, which purchased the French company Colmant Cuvelier in 2015), IT (Comarch and MakoLab) and transport (Solaris Bus & Coach). They also included the activities of joint Polish and foreign enterprises in the financial industry, such as Pekao, UniCredit, BCP and Millennium.⁴¹

In 2015, Polish enterprises made historic acquisitions of two French companies. This revealed that Polish capital was entering the French market more boldly, and the investment initiative ceased to be solely the domain of French companies. First, Amica Wronki, a Polish home appliance manufacturer, took over the French distribution company SIDEM.⁴² Then Wielton, a semi-trailer manufacturer listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange, purchased 63.3% of shares in the French company Fruehauf Expansion. Thanks to the transaction, Wielton became the third-largest semi-trailer manufacturer in Europe, with revenues of PLN 1 billion per year.⁴³

Social and Cultural Relations

About 500,000 Poles and people of Polish descent lived in France during the examined period.⁴⁴ In 2015, out of 15 countries in which the largest number of Polish diaspora projects were implemented, France occupied 10th position (just

³⁹ *Republika Francuska. Informacja...*, op. cit.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ *Zagraniczne inwestycje bezpośrednie w Polsce i polskie inwestycje bezpośrednie za granicą w 2014 roku*, Narodowy Bank Polski, 2015, www.nbp.pl.

⁴² *Polskie inwestycje bezpośrednie za granicą*, Cykliczne materiały analityczne NBP, Narodowy Bank Polski, 2015, www.nbp.pl.

⁴³ "Polska firma kupuje największego francuskiego producenta przyczep," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 22 May 2015, <http://wyborcza.biz>.

⁴⁴ *Stosunki z państwami Europy – Francja*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.msz.gov.pl.

after Belarus). More than PLN 556,000 was spent for this purpose.⁴⁵ France had been in ninth position in 2014, but at that time expenditure on Polish diaspora activities in France was higher (almost PLN 682,000).⁴⁶ According to the Polish Tourist Organisation, about 600,000 French people visited Poland in 2015.⁴⁷ At that time, France was among the top five countries among which a significant increase in arrivals to Poland for tourism purposes was recorded.

The first Polish-French Science Forum was held on 6 May 2015 and was organised by the French Embassy in Poland, the French Institute in Warsaw and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The event was hosted by the Library of Warsaw University.⁴⁸ The beginning of the cyclical meetings of this forum was aimed at presenting the most important French-Polish scientific projects, especially those carried out as part of International Associated Laboratories (LIA) of the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the “Polonium” programme. Poland is the 15th partner country of the CNRS in the field of joint scientific publications. In 2011 to 2014, the number of Polish publications in cooperation with the CNRS (excluding the humanities and social sciences) almost doubled from 12,418 to 22,344.⁴⁹

Cultural relations between Poland and France have traditionally been particularly significant. For example, on 6 March 2012, a Polish-French agreement was signed in Paris on film co-production.⁵⁰ The document replaced the cooperation agreement in the field of cinematography of 1970. It implemented updated regulations, such as in the area of digital techniques. In addition, in the years 2011–2015, numerous events and projects were recorded. These included concerts, presentations of historical heritage, film festivals, Francophone month, ideological debates and intellectual discussions (especially organised by the Centre of French Culture and Francophone Studies at the University of Warsaw), presentations of translations of French books, scholarships and double French-Polish university diplomas, joint research projects and educational activities. Initiatives such as the exchange of experience in the field of sustainable urban

⁴⁵ *Raport Polskiej Służby Konsularnej za 2015 rok*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, April 2016, p. 14.

⁴⁶ *Raport Polskiej Służby Konsularnej za 2014 rok*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, April 2015, p. 46.

⁴⁷ *Charakterystyka przyjazdów cudzoziemców do Polski w 2015 roku*, Ministerstwo Sportu i Turystyki, p. 1, <https://msit.gov.pl>.

⁴⁸ *Pierwsze Polsko-Francuskie Forum Nauki i Innowacji*, Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego, May 2015, www.nauka.gov.pl.

⁴⁹ *Publikacje i wspólne publikacje*, Instytut Francuski, www.institutfrancais.pl.

⁵⁰ *Polsko-francuska umowa o koprodukcji filmowej podpisana*, Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego, 6 March 2012, www.mkidn.gov.pl.

development through the Eco-City project were continued, there was local government cooperation, a presentation of France's tourist and gastronomic assets through the "Goût de France" campaign, joint celebrations of the Polish and French national holidays in Warsaw, autumn "Warsaw Meetings" and "Open days" at the French and German embassies.⁵¹ From 12 September to 13 December 2015, the Napoleon and Art exhibition was hosted at the Royal Castle in Warsaw.⁵² It was the first such extensive presentation of Poland's artistic achievements of the Napoleonic era, showcasing more than 100 works of art. On 28 May 2015, in the hall of the Austerlitz station in Paris, a concert took place ("*Chopin jedzie pociągami*") to inaugurate the festival "Nohant Chopin 2015." The event was organised by the Paris City Office, the Polish Institute in Paris, the Fryderyk Chopin Institute in Warsaw, and Yamaha.⁵³

Appraisal

The main objectives of Polish policy towards France over the period 2011–2015 were implemented at the level of bilateral relations and within the framework of the Weimar Triangle. First, during this period there was a remarkable recovery in Polish-French relations. This was to be confirmed by the words of Tusk in 2013 that "Polish-French relations, if they are not the best in history, are certainly the best in recent decades." This was mainly demonstrated by the high frequency of visits at the highest political level, close military cooperation, and constantly growing economic exchange. During this period, the strategic partnership of 2008 was transformed into specific actions. An example was the tactical alliance of states established during the negotiations on the EU budget. The agreement brought assumed benefits, and Poland became the largest beneficiary of the cohesion fund from the EU budget (23% of the total).

Second, in accordance with the assumptions of Polish foreign policy, the Weimar Triangle was revitalised. This largely contributed to the strengthening of Poland's position in the EU and at the level of regional cooperation, including in the Visegrad Group. The years 2011–2015 were the best period for the Triangle's since its creation in 1991. This format was successful for the second time (earlier success was manifested in the support of Germany and France for Poland's accession to NATO and the EU). In the second case, closer cooperation with the main EU countries allowed Poland to strengthen its position in the structures of these

⁵¹ *List Ambasadora do polskich przyjaciół Francji*, Ambassade de France à Varsovie, 28 September 2016, <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

⁵² *Napoleon i sztuka*, Zamek Królewski w Warszawie - Muzeum, www.zamek-krolewski.pl.

⁵³ *Chopin prend le train*, Institut polonais, www.institutpolonais.fr.

organisations, primarily the EU. Moreover, in the years 2011–2015, the Weimar Triangle Plus concept was developed with the participation of representatives of other countries, including Italy, Spain, and states from the Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership. This provided Poland with an additional instrument of influence on these countries.

Third, the success of Poland's efforts to strengthen NATO's presence on the Eastern Flank largely depended on France's position. It seems that Russia's military operations in the east of Ukraine and Poland's military support for operations in Mali and the Central African Republic may have been an argument that swayed France in support of these efforts. This was demonstrated by the greater involvement of the French army in NATO exercises in this area and by France's unprecedented decision to cancel the sale of Mistral type ships to Russia. If the NATO summit in Newport in 2014 was just an introduction to the military strengthening of the Eastern Flank, constant negotiations with France (related, for example, to preparations for the Warsaw NATO summit) brought Poland closer to this goal.

Despite Polish attempts at many levels, the CSDP of the EU has not been strengthened in line with shared major ambitions of Poland and France. However, thanks to the support for Polish postulates by Weimar partners, along with Spain and Italy, it was possible to establish the EU Operation Centre in Brussels in 2012, whose task was to coordinate planning as part of EU civilian missions in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. Moreover, military operations in Mali and the Central African Republic also contributed to strengthening the EU's CSDP military capabilities.

Poland's Policy towards Russia

ANNA MARIA DYNER*

Determinants

The years 2011–2015 were a very complicated period in Poland's relations with Russia. During the period between 2011 and 2013, the circumstances of Poland's politics towards this country included almost exclusively issues related to bilateral relations. The most important was the failure of Russia to return the wreckage of the Tu-154M aircraft, which crashed on 10 April 2010 near Smolensk. All passengers died in the crash, including the then president of the Republic of Poland, hence the Polish side wanted Russia to end the investigation and deliver the wreckage to Poland. Mutual relations were also conditioned by historical issues. Russia accused Poland of insufficient care, and of the destruction of places of memory dedicated to Red Army soldiers who died in Poland during the Second World War. On the other hand, Poland sought to gain access to Katyń documents.

The change in conditions took place in 2014 due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. This forced the Polish authorities to almost completely revise their policy and de facto suspend political relations. Although contacts at expert and technical level were maintained, it was clear that relations could be improved only after Russia altered its aggressive policy towards Ukraine and returned the occupied territories (Crimea and Donbas).

Politics had a negative impact on Polish-Russian economic relations. They were also affected by the deepening economic crisis in Russia, EU sanctions imposed as a result of Russian aggressive actions against Ukraine, and the Russian embargo on food products from EU countries. In addition, the breakdown of political relations was a factor weakening social and cultural relations.

In March 2011, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Radosław Sikorski, in information about the assumptions of Polish foreign policy, set out priorities for Russia: "Those who think that there is only one way of thinking about Russia are mistaken. Russia is developing and opening up to the world, though according to a different cultural code than ours. ... I am not sure in which direction Russia

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will go. But one thing I know for sure. If it chose the path towards integration with the broadly understood West on a democratic basis, Poland would be the country that benefited perhaps the most in Europe. ... We rejected the logic according to which everything that is bad for Russia must be good for Poland. ... We negotiated a small border traffic agreement providing prospects for the opening of the Königsberg District to Europe. ... We will invariably work for Polish-Russian reconciliation.”¹ Thus, Sikorski indicated the will to conduct a constructive dialogue with Russia, despite a number of unresolved issues in mutual relations. The most important was the return of the presidential plane wreckage, but historical issues were also of great importance.

In the *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*,² one of the most important tasks of Polish diplomacy was “maintaining good, pragmatic relations with Russia,” supporting Russian membership in the OECD and the EU’s Partnership for Modernisation programme. Poland was also to support Russia in concluding a new agreement with the EU. In turn, bilateral relations were planned to develop thanks to more intense contacts with the Kaliningrad Oblast following the entry into force of the Small Border Traffic Agreement (SBT), which was to be part of the visa liberalisation process for Russian citizens. Poland’s goal was also to “build pragmatic political and economic relations with Russia.” Therefore, the document expressed more expectations related to the further development of bilateral relations rather than pointing to possible threats from Russia.

According to this, the Polish goal was also “to provide opportunities to guarantee the maintaining of Polish identity and to respect relevant norms and standards by the states of residence.” This was a partial repetition of the strategic goals of Polish diaspora policy from the “Government’s programme of cooperation with the Polish diaspora and Poles abroad” of 2007, and this issue appeared again in the 2015 programme.³ Both assumed, among other things, “maintaining Polish identity abroad, especially in the countries of diaspora living in high density, by supporting processes serving to strengthen Polish communities, elevating their prestige, supporting education and culture.”⁴

¹ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 16 March 2011);” see p. 11 in this volume.

² *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, www.msz.gov.pl.

³ *Rządowy program współpracy z Polonią i Polakami za granicą*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.msz.gov.pl; *Rządowy program współpracy z Polonią i Polakami za granicą w latach 2015–2020*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.msz.gov.pl.

⁴ *Rządowy program współpracy z Polonią i Polakami za granicą*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.msz.gov.pl, p. 5.

In the policy assumptions towards Russia for 2013, Sikorski drew attention primarily to the need to further develop trade relations, social and interpersonal relations (including those related to the SBT agreement), and cooperation between regions and local communities. He also emphasised the role played by Polish-Russian and Russian-Polish Dialogue and Understanding Centres in bilateral relations, as well as the importance of the Polish-Russian Forum of Regions for local cooperation. In his speech, Sikorski again expressed his expectation that the presidential aircraft wreckage and full documentation of the crash would be returned, as well as his hope for better cooperation in the investigation regarding this case. Regional cooperation was to become one of the most important elements of bilateral relations, making them based more on contacts between local communities and economic entities, and thus much more pragmatic.

The objectives of Poland's policy towards Russia changed radically in 2014 following Russian aggression against Ukraine. This was reflected in the information of the minister of foreign affairs from this year: "Russian actions in Ukraine clearly violate the rules of peaceful coexistence of nations. ... When Russia cooperates with the world and respects its rules, we are happy and we are the first to cooperate. On the other hand, when Russia annexes the territories of neighbours and threatens with violence, we quickly draw conclusions."⁵ Poland did not recognise the referendum held in Crimea, as a result of which the peninsula was annexed by Russia. Sikorski said: "As to Russia acting as it did in Ukraine, we will respond appropriately together with the whole West,"⁶ thus indicating that Poland's goal would be to take action against Russia as part of a broad international coalition.

These assumptions remained in force after the changes in the Polish government.⁷ In 2015, Foreign Minister Grzegorz Schetyna devoted a lot of attention to Russia: "I have to sadly note the downturn of relations with the Russian Federation, but there were important reasons for this. We are worried about slander campaigns or undertakings aimed at creating confusion in the Polish information space. ... Regardless of recent events, we will work to reverse this trend and return to normal, good neighbourly relations between our countries. We appreciate what is good in our relations and we want to talk about it. ..., however, we do not accept the lack of progress regarding the return of

⁵ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2014 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at the sitting of the Sejm on 8 May 2014)", see p. 59 in this volume.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ In September 2014, a reconstruction of the government took place, and Sikorski was replaced by Grzegorz Schetyna.

the Tu-154M aircraft wreckage to Poland, or the construction of a monument to the victims of the Smolensk catastrophe. ... Hoping to resolve these issues, we maintain bilateral cooperation channels with Russia. We want to talk as part of the Polish-Russian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation and Interregional Cooperation. We will develop cross-border cooperation with the Kaliningrad Oblast. We believe that the Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Matters will gather soon, which at the moment seems even more necessary than before.”⁸ Therefore, regional cooperation remained the goal of Polish policy towards Russia, treated pragmatically, though with the awareness that, due to Russian aggression, its effectiveness would be marginal.

Political Relations

Polish-Russian relations over the period 2011–2015 should be divided into two stages. In the years 2011–2013, despite problems related to the outcomes of the Smolensk crash, difficult political and historical matters, relations developed properly. Poland’s attitude towards Russia changed at the turn of February and March 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and supported the “separatists,” engaging in war in eastern Ukraine (Donbas).

In 2011, the greatest problem in Polish-Russian relations was the report of the Interstate Aviation Committee (MAK)⁹ on the Smolensk crash. It implied that the flight to Smolensk did not have the status of a military flight, the crew tried to land as a result of indirect pressure, and Russian controllers did not make a mistake. The government in Warsaw did not recognise the results of the report, which blamed the Polish side for the crash. In addition, it constantly demanded that Russia return the wreckage of the presidential plane. Russia consistently refused, citing the ongoing investigation as justification.

Despite these tensions, in 2011 two institutions started operating as one of the work outcomes regarding the Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Matters. These were the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding and the Centre for Russian-Polish Dialogue and Understanding. These are independent units, supervised by ministries of culture in each country. The main objectives of their activity are to initiate and support undertakings implemented in Poland and Russia for the purpose of dialogue and understanding in mutual relations.¹⁰

⁸ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2015 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Grzegorz Schetyna at a sitting of the Sejm on 23 April 2015),” see p. 77 in this volume.

⁹ The role of the committee, established on 30 December, 1991 is to investigate civil aviation accidents in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

¹⁰ Center for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, www.cprdip.pl.

The most important event in Polish-Russian relations in 2012 was the visit of the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Cyril to Warsaw. During the visit, representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland and the Russian Orthodox Church signed a message urging both nations to reconcile. Due to the content of this document and the close cooperation of the Russian Orthodox Church with state institutions, its significance went beyond the religious sphere and can be considered as the next stage of Polish-Russian dialogue.¹¹

In 2012, the local border traffic agreement entered into force, allowing the inhabitants of Kaliningrad Oblast and selected districts of the Pomorskie and Warmińsko-mazurskie voivodships to cross the border on the basis of permits, allowing for more frequent contacts, from which the tourist and trade industry benefited. Owing to SBT, scientific cooperation, youth exchange and contacts of non-governmental organisations developed. Fears about the intensification of common crime in border regions or violation of the SBT agreement were not confirmed. However, the SBT indicated the challenges facing both countries, primarily related to the development of border infrastructure and the strengthening of interregional and intergovernmental cooperation.¹²

Table 1

**Number of SBT Permits Issued by the Polish Consulate General
in Kaliningrad**

27.07–31.12.2012	12,672
2013	184,295
2014	53,868
2015	88,531
Total:	339,366

Source: CG of the Republic of Poland in Kaliningrad.

Over the period 2012–2015, the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Kaliningrad issued almost 340,000 SBT permits (about 1/3 of all residents of the region received a document). This meant that the possibility of crossing

¹¹ See: A. Turkowski, "Patriarch Kirill's Visit to Poland," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 78 (411), 14 August, 2012, www.pism.pl.

¹² For more, see: K. Dudzińska, A.M. Dyner, "Small Border Traffic with Kaliningrad: Challenges, Opportunities, Threats," *PISM Policy Paper*, no. 29 (77), October 2013, www.pism.pl.

the border without a visa was important for the inhabitants of the region for shopping, cultural and leisure reasons.

On the other hand, the biggest media excitement in 2012 was caused by the battle between Polish and Russian football hooligans before their teams' match during the European Football Championship. The Russian fans organised a city march to celebrate Russia Day, celebrated on match day (12 June), which provoked Polish football hooligans to start fights. As a result of these events, police detained over 100 people, and the Polish and Russian media devoted a lot of attention to the growing mutual dislike between Poles and Russians.

In December 2012, as part of the Strategy Committee for Polish-Russian Cooperation, the ministers of foreign affairs of both countries, Sergei Lavrov and Radosław Sikorski, met in Moscow. The intensification of contacts was the result of pragmatic policy. This allowed improvements to the international image of both countries and the continuation of different assessments of historical issues and issues concerning the presidential plane crash.

The year 2013 was a period of enhanced political dialogue at many levels. On 26–27 January, Poland was visited by the Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Sergei Naryshkin, who met with the Polish president, prime minister and speakers of the Sejm and Senate, and participated in the celebrations on the occasion of the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. On 25 February, a Polish delegation (senators Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Bogdan Klich and Jan Maria Jackowski, as well as MPs Grzegorz Schetyna, Tadeusz Iwiński and Witold Waszczykowski) visited Moscow at the invitation of the Chairman of the Committees for International Affairs of the Federation Council and the State Duma, Mikhail Margielov.¹³ Moreover, in 2013, the Polish and Russian foreign ministers met in Warsaw twice: in May in the formula of the Königsberg Triangle (the head of German diplomacy also participated in the meeting), and in December, during bilateral consultations. At that time, at the meeting of the Polish-Russian Cooperation Strategy Committee, Sikorski and Lavrov signed the "Programme 2020 in Polish-Russian relations,"¹⁴ a declaration containing the priorities and directions of political and economic, modernisation and regional cooperation. In June 2013, the 5th Poland-Russia Regions Forum was held in Nizhny Novgorod.

On 11 November 2013, there was an attack on the Russian embassy in Warsaw by some of the participants of the Independence March. They tried to break into

¹³ *Wizyta delegacji Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych Sejmu i Senatu w Moskwie*, Senat RP, www.senat.gov.pl.

¹⁴ *Wspólna deklaracja ministrów spraw zagranicznych "Program 2020 w relacjach polsko-rosyjskich"*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.ms.gov.pl.

the facility. Two days later, the Polish embassy in Moscow was attacked with firecrackers and smoke flares, which in Poland was almost generally regarded as a response to the events in Warsaw.

The year 2014 was a breakthrough for Polish-Russian relations due to the situation in Ukraine. The annexation of Crimea by Russia and its involvement in military activities in Donbas led to war in eastern Ukraine and establishing the “separatist” Lugansk People's Republic (LRL) and Donetsk People's Republic (DRL). Russia's aggressive policy towards Ukraine provoked strong opposition from Poland and other European Union countries. Therefore, the EU, the United States, Canada and a number of other countries decided to impose economic sanctions on Russia, and personal sanctions on some Russian officials and entrepreneurs. In response, the Russian authorities introduced counter-sanctions on the export of food products from EU countries. These actions caused not only a significant deterioration of Polish-Russian political relations, but also economic problems.

Russian aggression in Ukraine also had a direct impact on the security policy of Poland and NATO.¹⁵ It caused the Alliance countries at the Wales summit in 2014 to decide to strengthen the Eastern Flank and create a rapid reaction force. However, Russia, pointing to NATO activities, decided in 2015 to further strengthen the Western Military District by deploying two divisions (armoured and mechanised).¹⁶

In connection with the annexation of Crimea by Russia, Poland closed its Consulate General in Sevastopol in 2014.¹⁷ In addition, the Polish authorities cancelled Polish Year in Russia, to which Russia responded in kind. In 2014, there was also a deterioration in diplomatic relations: in October, Poland expelled three Russian diplomats, accusing them of engaging in intelligence activities. In response, in November, Russia expelled four Polish diplomats.

The apparent decrease in the frequency of bilateral contacts negatively affected functioning of the Polish-Russian cooperation forums, such as the Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation, the Forum of Regions, the Committee on Russian-Polish Cooperation Strategy chaired by the ministers of foreign affairs, the Russian-Polish Community Forum, and the Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Matters. Some of them suspended cooperation.

¹⁵ For more, see in this volume: J. Durkalec, A. Kacprzyk, W. Lorenz, “Polish security policy in NATO,” see p. 97 in this volume.

¹⁶ For more see: A.M. Dynier, “Russia Beefs Up Military Potential in the Country's Western Areas,” *PISM Bulletin*, no. 35 (835), 13 June 2016, www.pism.pl.

¹⁷ *Szef MSZ odebrał flagi i pieczęcie Konsulatu RP w Sewastopolu*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 18 September 2014, www.msz.gov.pl.

In 2014, when the final bilateral meetings between foreign ministers of Russia and Poland were also held. These took place on 10 June in St. Petersburg (in the format of the Königsberg Triangle with the participation of German minister of foreign affairs)¹⁸ and on 4 December in Basel (during the meeting of the OSCE Council of Foreign Ministers).

In January 2015, there was extensive coverage in the Russian press of the absence of an invitation for President Vladimir Putin to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp. It was emphasised that the prisoners owed their liberation to Russians to a large extent, and the situation in Ukraine should not be an excuse for not inviting the president. In February 2015, Russia refused the Speaker of the Senate, Bogdan Borusewicz, permission to enter the country to attend the funeral of Boris Nemtsov.¹⁹ Despite these tensions, on 23 February 2015, the Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Konrad Pawlik, held working consultations in Warsaw with the First Deputy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Titov.²⁰ However, neither President Bronisław Komorowski nor any of the prominent politicians of other EU countries went to the particularly solemn commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War (Victory Day in Russia, 9 May).²¹

In 2015, the idea of the motorcycle group the Night Wolves to travel through Poland also met with opposition.²² As Russian authorities intended, the undertaking was to provide a graphic response to the expected boycott by European leaders

¹⁸ *Trójkąt Królewiecki o kryzysie na Ukrainie*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 10 June 2014, www.msz.gov.pl.

¹⁹ Boris Nemtsov was a Russian politician (among others, energy minister and deputy prime minister), an oppositionist and a human rights defender. In 2012, he co-organised protests in Moscow after the presidential election. He was an opponent of the annexation of Crimea by Russia. He was shot in Moscow on 25 February 2015.

²⁰ *Konsultacje polsko-rosyjskie w Warszawie*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych RP, www.msz.gov.pl.

²¹ President Aleksander Kwasniewski was present at the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, in 2005.

²² Established in 1989, the Night Wolves motorcycle group brings together more than 5,000 members mainly from Russia, but also from Belarus, Latvia, Serbia, Macedonia, Romania and Germany. About 100 motorcyclists usually take part in the rallies it organises. In the history of the group, there are criminal aspects, and during the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas, the group actively participated in subversive activities, including occupying the buildings of state administration in the Crimea, kidnapping and detaining Ukrainian officers, crossing the border illegally and organising other ventures in occupied Lugansk and Simferopol. For these reasons, in December 2014, the group and its leader Alexander Zaldostanov were subject to sanctions from the U.S. and Canada.

of anniversary celebrations in Moscow.²³ Because of the group's background and its support for Russia's activities in Ukraine, the Polish authorities refused entry to the group. Some motorcyclists were not allowed in, while others crossed the border individually.

In 2015, the Lech Wałęsa Solidarity Award was granted to Zhanna Nemtsova, the daughter of oppositionist Boris Nemtsov, for her efforts to promote democratisation in Russia.²⁴ This decision was part of Poland's policy of supporting Russian opposition activists.

At the same time, in 2015, contacts between local authorities were extensive. In December 2015, the conference entitled "Experience of local government reform in Poland: lessons for Russia," held by the Russian Academy of National Economy and State Service at the President of the Russian Federation (RANEPA) in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Poland. In the same month, the conference "EU-Russia: potential and challenges for regional cooperation," was organised by the Centre for International and Regional Policy (CIRP) with the support of the Polish Embassy in Moscow and the Polish Institute in St. Petersburg.

Due to the deterioration of bilateral relations, matters relating to the protection of places of memory became the subject of increasing disputes. This was especially related to decisions of local authorities regarding the removal of Red Army monuments (or soldiers of this formation). On 31 January 2014, the local authorities of Braniewo decided to remove the monument of Ivan Chernyakhovsky located in Pieniężno, which was constructed in the early 1970s near the place where the Soviet military commander was fatally wounded in February 1945. The monument was to be eliminated as a symbol of communism and totalitarianism, and despite Russian protests, it was removed on 17 September 2015. Russia party emphasised that such actions are in conflict with the treaty between the Republic of Poland and the Russian Federation on friendly and good neighbourly cooperation²⁵ and the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Russian Federation on the graves and memorial sites of victims

²³ "Schetyna: sprawa 'Nocnych wilków' pokazała, że państwo polskie istnieje praktycznie," *PAP*, 29 April 2015, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.msz.gov.pl.

²⁴ *Żanna Niemcowa uhonorowana Nagrodą Solidarności im. Lecha Wałęsy*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.msz.gov.pl.

²⁵ *Traktat między Rzeczpospolitą Polską a Federacją Rosyjską o przyjaznej i dobrosąsiedzkiej współpracy, sporządzony w Moskwie dnia 22 maja 1992 r.*, Dz.U. [Journal of Laws], 1993, no. 61, item 291.

of war and repressions,²⁶ in terms of respect for memorial sites for which Russia recognises, with monuments to the soldiers of the Red Army among them.

In this context, the source of the problem is the lack of a common definition of “places of memory.” Poland interprets this narrowly, indicating that only cemeteries meet this criterion (none of the cemeteries of Russian and Soviet soldiers has been liquidated since 1989),²⁷ Russia indicates that these are also other, separate places, such as monuments or tablets, tombstones, busts and memorial boulders.²⁸

Cooperation with the Polish Diaspora. In the Russian census in 2010, Polish nationality was declared by 47,125 (0.03%) citizens of the Russian Federation. Most Poles lived in Moscow Consular District (4,456 people), in Tyumen oblast (3,427 people) and in Krasnodar Krai (2,958 people). According to Polish estimates, however, the number of Poles and people of Polish origin living in Russia may amount to about 300,000.²⁹

The “Government programme of cooperation with the Polish diaspora and Poles abroad of 2007” includes a detailed catalogue of tasks for Polish diplomacy in the area of cooperation with the Polish diaspora in Russia, including support for Polish diaspora institutions and teaching the Polish language.³⁰ What’s more, in July 2015, the Polish Council of Ministers published the “Government programme of cooperation with Polish diaspora and Poles abroad in the years 2015 to 2020,”³¹ which was intended to be a response to the growing challenges related to providing support to Poles living abroad.

The scale of demand for Poland’s activities in the Polish diaspora communities in Russia was large, as evidenced by the continuing interest in obtaining the Polish Card from 2011 to 2015.

²⁶ *Umowa między Rządem Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej a Rządem Federacji Rosyjskiej o grobach i miejscach pamięci ofiar wojen i represji, sporządzona w Krakowie dnia 22 lutego 1994 r.*, Dz.U. [Journal of Laws], 1994 no. 112, item 543.

²⁷ *Oświadczenie MSZ RP w sprawie rosyjskich upamiętnień w Polsce*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.msz.gov.pl.

²⁸ Dominika Czarnecka, in the book *Pomniki wdzięczności Armii Czerwonej w Polsce Ludowej i III Rzeczypospolitej* indicates that the only list of memorials to date was created by the Council for the Protection of the Remembrance of Struggle and Martyrdom, which presented them in the 1988 *Przewodniku po upamiętnionych miejscach walk i męczeństwa—lata wojny 1939–1945*. However, this list was incomplete and did not contain all objects. The author indicates 476 items, suggesting that this list is also incomplete. For more see: D. Czarnecka, *Pomniki wdzięczności Armii Czerwonej w Polsce Ludowej i w III Rzeczypospolitej*, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2015, pp. 380–498.

²⁹ *Polacy w Rosji*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Moskwie, www.moskwa.msz.gov.pl.

³⁰ For more see: *Rządowy program współpracy z Polonią i Polakami za granicą*, op. cit., pp. 86–87.

³¹ *Rządowy program współpracy z Polonią i Polakami za granicą w latach 2015–2020*, op. cit.

Poland conventionally supported the functioning of almost 40 Polish diaspora organisations operating in Russia, and Polish language courses in many cities. Polish diplomacy also carried out activities to protect Polish memorial sites in Russia, such as cleaning up cemeteries and funding memorial tomb tablets.

Table 2

Number of Applications for a Polish Card Submitted to Polish Consulates in the Russian Federation

	Irkutsk	Kaliningrad	Moscow	St. Petersburg	Smolensk	Total
2011	53	113	213	97	0	476
2012	175	115	187	39	0	516
2013	100	183	242	113	4	642
2014	70	200	217	66	6	559
2015	84	119	248	88	9	548
Total	482	730	1107	403	19	2,741

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs RP

Economic Relations

Over the period 2011–2012, the value of trade between the two countries increased, then fell back in 2013. This was due to the increasingly visible Russian economic crisis and cheaper energy resources, which are the basis of Russian exports to Poland. A clear decrease in trade turnover occurred in the years 2014 to 2015, which was mainly due to sanctions from the EU and other countries.

In 2011, Russia was Poland's sixth trade partner in terms of exports, with a volume of PLN 25.1 billion, and the second trade partner in terms of imports, which amounted to over PLN 75 billion.³² In 2012, it was Poland's fifth export partner (more than PLN 32 billion), and the second in terms of imports (PLN 91 billion).³³

³² *Obroty handlu zagranicznego ogółem i według krajów I–XII 2011 r.*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1 August 2012, <http://stat.gov.pl>.

³³ *Obroty handlu zagranicznego ogółem i według krajów I–XII 2012 r.*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 29 July 2013, <http://stat.gov.pl>.

On 5 November 2012, Polish Oil Mining and Gas Extraction S.A. (PGNiG) signed an annex to the agreement with Gazprom, changing the gas purchasing formula. This lowered the prices of this commodity (estimates indicated that PGNiG was to save PLN 2.5–3 billion within two years). The discussions had been underway since 2011, when PGNiG demanded renegotiation of the “price formula,” according to which gas prices are calculated. Initially, Russia refused to renegotiate the contract, which is why the case went to the Arbitral Tribunal in Stockholm, which, according to the contract was to resolve disputed issues. Poland received the support of the European Commission, but due to the price reduction by Gazprom, the PGNiG dropped the lawsuit.

In 2013, as in the previous year, Russia was the fifth trade partner of Poland, with exports worth PLN 34 billion, and the second in terms of imports, whose volume worth PLN 79.5 billion.³⁴ The object of media debate in 2013 became the construction of the *pieriemyczka*, initially referred to as the second line of the Yamal-Europe gas pipeline.³⁵ The discussion was triggered by the signing of memorandum by Gazprom and EuRoPol Gaz,³⁶ which some journalists considered an attempt to implement the 1993 arrangements included in the agreement on the construction of the Yamal-Europe gas pipeline and assuming the construction of two parallel lines running to Germany, with the possibility of building a branch in a south-west direction.³⁷ However, the document signed by EuRoPol Gaz concerned another pipeline, running to Slovakia. Due to the signing of the memorandum, Treasury Minister Mikołaj Budzanowski was dismissed and the PGNiG Supervisory Board, due to a loss of trust, dismissed the president of the company, Grażyna Piotrowska-Oliwa, and her deputy, Radosław Dudziński, who knew about the planned memorandum but did not warn the treasury minister.

³⁴ *Obroty handlu zagranicznego ogółem i według krajów I–XII 2013 r.*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 10 July 2014, <http://stat.gov.pl>.

³⁵ According to text *Porozumienia między Rządem RP i Rządem FR o budowie systemu gazociągów tranzytowych dla tranzytu gazu rosyjskiego przez terytorium RP i dostawach gazu rosyjskiego do RP* of 1993, both countries initially assumed the construction of a transmission system with an annual capacity of up to 67 billion m³. It was to consist of two lines, of which the first (with a capacity of 32.9 billion m³ of gas) was to be handled by five compressor stations, the second (with a capacity of 32.8 billion m³ of gas) by seven. Construction of the system was to begin in 1996 and end in 2002. In 1998, the last three compressor stations of the first line were to be built and construction of the second line started. Finally, the first line was put into service with a delay in September 1999, and construction of the second line never started.

³⁶ EuRoPol Gaz is a limited liability company, the owner of the Polish section of the Yamal-Europe gas pipeline with a length of 684 km.

³⁷ “Porozumienie między Rządem RP i Rządem FR o budowie systemu gazociągów tranzytowych dla tranzytu gazu rosyjskiego przez terytorium RP i dostawach gazu rosyjskiego do RP,” *Monitor Polski*, 2011, no. 46, item 512.

In 2014, Russia was Poland's sixth trade partner regarding exports (slightly over PLN 29 billion) and the third in terms of imports (PLN 72.7 billion).³⁸ In 2015, Russia was Poland's seventh trading partner. Exports to Russia amounted to almost PLN 21.5 billion, which meant a decrease by almost 27% compared to 2014, and 37% compared to 2013. Imports from Russia to Poland amounted to PLN 72.7 billion in 2015, representing a decrease of over 26% compared to 2014, and 32.5% compared to 2013. Russia's share in Polish exports was only 2.9% (in 2013 it stood at 5.3%). In imports to Poland, Russia maintained its third position, but the share dropped in 2015 to 7.4%, from 12.3% in 2013.³⁹

Table 3

Trade with Russia from 2011 to 2015 (in PLN billions)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Import	72.5	91	79.6	72.7	53.7
Export	25.1	32.3	34	29.3	21.4

Source: author's compilation based on CSO data.

Over the period 2011 to 2015, imports from Russia amounted to PLN 371.9 billion, and exports to Russia were worth PLN 141.5 billion. During these five years, the trade deficit amounted to PLN 230.4 billion. Machines and devices, electrical and electro-technical equipment, and chemical products played the most important role in exports. The largest change concerned farm and food products, which was associated with recurring legal restrictions.⁴⁰ Among the goods imported from Russia, almost 75% were energy resources.⁴¹

The EU's sanctions policy also had a significant impact on Polish-Russian economic relations. In 2014, the European Union, based on three Council Regulations (Nos. 269/2014, 476/2014 and 833/2014), along with the United States, Canada, and Japan, introduced sectoral sanctions against Russia. They were a response to aggression against Ukraine. The first package of restrictions was introduced in March 2014, due to the annexation of Crimea, and the next came in July after pro-Russia separatists shot down the Malaysia Airlines plane flying

³⁸ *Obroty handlu zagranicznego ogółem i według krajów I–XII 2014 r.*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 30 July 2015, <http://stat.gov.pl>.

³⁹ *Stosunki dwustronne z państwami regionu*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.msz.gov.pl.

⁴⁰ *Powiązania gospodarki polskiej z Rosją, Ukrainą i Białorusią—wybrane aspekty*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 29 January, 2015, <http://stat.gov.pl>, p. 14, see: *Informator Ekonomiczny Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych: Rosja*, www.informatorekonomiczny.msz.gov.pl.

⁴¹ See: "Import i eksport według ważniejszych krajów," in: *Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zagranicznego 2015*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, <http://stat.gov.pl>, p. 139.

from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur over the territory of Donbas. The sanctions were extended in 2015, and their lifting was made conditional primarily on the implementation of the Minsk Agreements regarding Donbas.⁴²

In response, by decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 560 of 6 August 2014 ("On the application of some special economic measures to ensure the security of the Russian Federation and by Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 778 of 7 August 2014"), Russia introduced a ban on imports of certain farm and food products, agricultural raw materials and food among them, from European Union countries, the United States and Canada. Initially, the ban was introduced for a period of one year but was extended in response to the actions of the European Union.

The EU sanctions were designed to defend international law and were to be a sign to Russia that EU countries would not agree to violation of its standards. Importantly, in conjunction with the crisis of the Russian economy and falling energy prices (the foundation of Russian exports), sanctions proved to be a tangible instrument of pressure on the Russian authorities. Despite assurances that the country coped with the replacement of previously imported goods (ranging from food products to military technologies), Russian diplomacy made efforts to lift the restrictions. It can only be assumed that the unanimous policy of the EU, the United States, Canada and other countries was the reason why Russia did not increase the territorial scope of military operations against Ukraine.

However, EU sanctions and the Russian embargo on EU food caused a number of political tensions between Russia and the EU Member States, and have adversely affected trade relations. Russia pursued a particularly restrictive policy towards countries that it considered the most anti-Russian and which had contributed most to imposing restrictions, including Poland. This was important not only for the decline in trade, but also damaged investment relations and regional cooperation.

Cultural Relations

In the years 2011–2015, Poland carried out activities aimed at promoting its culture in Russia. These were undertaken through diplomatic missions and Polish Institutes as well as through the activities of non-governmental organisations.

⁴² Also see: J. Ćwiek-Karpowicz, S. Secieru (eds.), *Sanctions and Russia*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2015, www.pism.pl; S. Secieru, *Russia under sanctions*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2015, www.pism.pl; M. Domańska, S. Kardaś, "The consequences of the Western financial sanctions on the Russian economy," *OSW Commentary*, 24 March, 2016, www.osw.waw.pl.

However, just as with political and social relations, Russian aggression in Ukraine affected cultural relations. In 2014, the Polish authorities decided to cancel Polish Year in Russia, arranged for 2015. Russia reacted by cancelling its own event.

There are two active Polish Institutes in Russia, one in Moscow, with the status of a diplomatic mission, and one in St. Petersburg, which functions formally as a special department for culture at the Polish Consulate General. Tasks include promoting Polish contemporary culture, educational activities, and mediation between Polish and Russian cultural institutions. Both institutions organised culture days and reviews of Polish theatre and films. Most projects were implemented in cooperation with Russian cultural institutions. The Polish Consulate General in Kaliningrad, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, and non-governmental organisations also conducted very intensive activities in this respect. The Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding also joined the activities related to the promotion of Polish culture. These institutions used the popularity of Polish culture in Russia, especially cinema and theatre.

The best-known initiative, those which is most appreciated by Russian audiences is the Polish Film Festival "Wisła." This is organised in, among other places, Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad, and creates the opportunity to learn about the latest works of Polish cinematography. Similarly, the "Sputnik nad Polską" Festival of Russian Films is very popular in Poland.

Other significant cultural events include the presentation of Polish theatrical achievements that took place as part of the Golden Mask ("Złota Mask") festival in Moscow in 2011. Poland was the special guest of the event. The authors of the spectacle "(A)Polonia" were awarded the main prize (the Golden Mask), for the best foreign performance staged in Russia in 2011. Polish theatres often participated in Russian festivals, such as "Bałtycki Dom."⁴³

Many activities were undertaken outside Moscow and St. Petersburg, which increased the influence of Polish culture. Such initiatives resulted from the assumption that, in smaller centres, the Polish cultural offer is much more apparent.

Cultural diplomacy became one of the basic activities of Polish diplomacy in Russia in the years 2014 to 2015. It provided an opportunity to reach Russian society with a social and political message. Thus, it was one of the instruments for challenging the negative image of Poland created by Russian propaganda.

⁴³ For more see: N. Woroszyńska, "Rosja – długi marsz," in: *Polska obecność na Wschodzie. Raport na temat polskiej polityki kulturalnej wobec Białorusi, Rosji i Ukrainy*, KEW, 2017, pp. 89–127.

Appraisal

Over the period 2011–2015, most of Poland's goals regarding Russia were not fulfilled. There was no cooperation in the investigation on the Smolensk crash, the transfer of the wreckage of the aircraft and full documentation on the accident, or the construction of a monument at the crash site.

Important political and historical problems were still unresolved in Polish-Russian relations. There was still no will on the Russian side to fully clarify all the circumstances of the Katyń massacre and the persecution of Poles under Stalinist repression. Russia did not provide Poland with any Katyń documents.

Due to the deterioration of political relations, the development of social and cultural relations was inhibited. In this light, the establishment of small border traffic with the Kaliningrad region was particularly positive, marking the greatest success in Polish-Russian relations in the years 2011–2015.

The development of economic relations should be given a negative evaluation. Their deterioration was influenced not only by political issues but also by the EU sanctions policy, a consequence of which was the Russian embargo.

The tools available to Poland and the EU turned out to be insufficient to change Russia's policy towards Ukraine, although the decision on sanctions most likely contributed to reducing the extent of Russian military operations.

Russia, thereby, remained the biggest challenge for Polish Eastern Policy. Due to the actions of this country, as well as a number of problems in bilateral relations, it can hardly be expected that the catalogue of unresolved issues will decrease in the coming years.

Poland's Policy towards Ukraine

DANIEL SZELIGOWSKI*

Determinants

The starting points for Poland's policy towards Ukraine in 2011–2015 were the development of the internal political situation in that country and, more broadly, the EU-Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Russian relations. After taking office as president of Ukraine in 2010, Viktor Yanukovych concentrated full power in his hands in a short time and marginalised the opposition. The authoritarian policy of the new president, who was considered a supporter of rapprochement with Russia, quickly led to the deterioration of Ukraine's relations with EU countries. The turning point was the temporary arrest and subsequent conviction of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who was sentenced to seven years imprisonment in October 2011 for alleged fraud when signing a contract for gas supplies from Russia in 2009. In this way, Yanukovych crossed a "red line" and found himself in international isolation.

The Tymoshenko case soon dominated relations with the EU, which made the signing of the Association Agreement with Ukraine during the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius conditional on the release of the former prime minister. A special European Parliament mission that included Pat Cox and Aleksander Kwaśniewski tried to persuade Yanukovych to compromise and allow Tymoshenko to receive treatment at a clinic in Germany. However, the discussions were unsuccessful (Tymoshenko did not go to Berlin for treatment until March 2014). Eventually, in November 2013, the Ukrainian government announced the suspension of preparations for signing the agreement. This was the result of pressure from Russia, which a few months earlier introduced an embargo upon Ukrainian goods, trying to force Ukraine to join the customs union that was being created at the time with Belarus and Kazakhstan.

The decision of the Ukrainian government initiated three months of protests on Independence Square in Kyiv (these protests were called Euromaidan or the Revolution of Dignity), during which more than 100 people were killed as a result of clashes with militia and internal troops. On the initiative of the foreign

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ministers of Poland, Germany and France in February 2014, an agreement was signed between Yanukovych and the leaders of the opposition parties. It assumed constitutional changes increasing parliamentary powers, establishing a new coalition government and holding an early presidential election. However, several hours later Yanukovych unexpectedly fled the country and took refuge in Russia. Then, Ukraine was left by other leading politicians of the ruling Party of Regions, including Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, dismissed earlier during the protests.

In March 2014, taking advantage of disorganisation of the Ukrainian state, Russia illegally annexed the Crimean Peninsula, and followed this with aggression in eastern Ukraine, which resulted in the Russian occupation of some parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in the form of “self-proclaimed people’s republics.” The intervention of the Russian army in Donbas in mid-2014 caused failure of Ukraine’s anti-terrorist operation (ATO), which attempted to regain full control over the lost territories, and ended in the signing of a ceasefire agreement (called Minsk 2), in February 2015 in Minsk, under the auspices of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.¹ The ceasefire provided for, among other things, withdrawal of troops and restoration of control over the Ukrainian-Russian border by the Ukrainian government, as well as the amendment of the Ukrainian constitution by granting special status to Donbas.² However, the issue of control of Crimea was left open. Although the agreement contributed to a significant reduction of military operations in Donbas, it did not lead to the end of the conflict.

After Yanukovych’s escape, Oleksandr Turchynov acted as president until oligarch Petro Poroshenko, a former minister in the governments of Tymoshenko and Azarov, took office. He won in the first round of the May election, getting almost 55% of the votes. Subsequently, the Poroshenko Bloc won the largest number of seats in the early election to the Verkhovna Rada, and in November 2014 formed a parliamentary coalition with Arseniy Yatsenyuk’s People’s Front, Andriy Sadovyi’s Self-Help, Oleh Lyashko’s Radical Party, and Tymoshenko’s Batkivshchyna. Yatsenyuk, who led the temporary Cabinet of Ministers from the end of February 2014, became the prime minister in the new government.

The new Ukrainian authorities had to manage an economic crisis caused by the unfavourable economic situation on international markets and the populist policy of their predecessors from the Party of Regions. Economic problems were further aggravated by Russian aggression and the loss of Crimea and significant industrial potential in Donbas. According to World Bank data, Ukraine’s GDP

¹ The first ceasefire agreement was signed in Minsk in September 2014.

² *Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements*, www.elysee.fr.

decreased by 6.6% and 9.9% in 2014 and 2015.³ The Yatsenyuk government asked for support from the International Monetary Fund and renegotiated the repayment of external debt.

Euromaidan, followed by Russian aggression, led to a turn in Ukraine's foreign policy and a departure from a multi-vector policy in favour of Euro-Atlantic integration. In June 2014, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was signed. In December, the Supreme Council abolished the neutral status of the state, allowing for membership of military alliances. Accession to the EU and NATO became a priority for the new Ukrainian government, supported respectively by 57% and 48% of Ukrainians in 2015.⁴

The government of Civic Platform (PO) and the Polish People's Party (PSL) did not regard the development of bilateral relations with Ukraine as a priority in its foreign policy.⁵ For a long time, one could see "disappointment and weariness with this partner and [...] disbelief in the ability of the Ukrainian elites to understand the requirements related to the modernisation of the state."⁶ Cooperation with Ukraine was seen mainly in the context of the EU's Eastern Policy. However, preparations for Poland's presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011, one of whose goals was to conclude negotiations of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Warsaw (29 to 30 September 2011), favoured intensification of bilateral contacts.

Objectives

The main goal of Polish policy towards Ukraine in 2011–2015 was to support that country's stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity in the face of growing political and economic pressure, and subsequent military aggression, from Russia.

Poland intended to achieve this goal by seeking to bring Ukraine closer to the EU and NATO. Including Ukraine in the processes of political and economic modernisation under the auspices of both structures would contribute to the

³ *Ukraine Economic Update*, September 2016, www.worldbank.org.

⁴ For comparison, in November 2011, 42% of Ukrainians supported accession to the EU, and 34% were in favour of joining NATO in March 2014, i.e., at the beginning of Russian aggression against Ukraine. See: *Public Opinion Survey, Residents of Ukraine*, International Republican Institute, 19 to 30 November 2015, www.iri.org.

⁵ This is evidenced by the fact that, at the turn of 2010 to 2011, Poland did not have an ambassador in Kyiv for more than six months. Jacek Kluczkowski, who completed his duty in October 2010, was replaced only at the end of May 2011 by Henryk Litwin.

⁶ Ł. Adamski, A. Dyner, T. Sikorski, "Praca u podstaw na Wschodzie," *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 2011*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2012.

expansion of the stability zone in Europe and increase Poland's security.⁷ The priorities in this respect were to sign the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, liberalise visa regime, and provide the Ukrainian armed forces with practical support from NATO.

Cooperation of Ukraine with the EU and NATO was to be fostered by strengthening Polish-Ukrainian relations, especially through the joint organisation of the 2012 European Football Championship (Euro 2012), which was to provide a stimulus to intensify economic and social contacts between both parties. Poland considered Ukraine its most important non-Atlantic strategic partner and was ready to support its efforts to obtain a chance of membership of Euro-Atlantic structures.⁸ This, however, was conditional on the consistent implementation of internal reforms and compliance with democratic standards by Ukraine.

In 2011 to 2013, Ukraine did not play a significant role in the annual statement on Polish Foreign Policy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski. Some records appeared mainly in the context of Polish European policy (such as the Polish-Swedish initiative of the Eastern Partnership). However, the situation changed after Russian aggression against Ukraine. In 2014, the war in Ukraine was the main point of the statement about the tasks regarding Polish foreign policy. In the following year, Grzegorz Schetyna, Poland's new foreign minister, stressed the importance of the bilateral dimension of Polish-Ukrainian relations.

Political Relations

The beginning of 2011 brought an intensification of Polish-Ukrainian political dialogue. A new impetus to Polish-Ukrainian relations was given by the first official visit of President Yanukovich to Poland, from 3 to 4 February, only a year after his swearing-in. During the visit, a roadmap for cooperation between Poland and Ukraine for 2011–2013 was signed, as was a cooperation agreement between the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency, the State Agency for Investment and Management of National Projects of Ukraine and the Polish-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce.

Two months later, on 13 April 2011, Prime Minister Donald Tusk went to Kyiv for a meeting of the Polish-Ukrainian Committee for Preparation and Conducting

⁷ *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, www.ms.gov.pl.

⁸ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2012 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 29 March 2012)," see p. 27 in this volume.

of EURO 2012. There, he met Azarov and Yanukovych. The discussions concerned trade and energy security.

Subsequently, on 22 June 2011, Sikorski paid a working visit to Ukraine. Discussions with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Regional Development and Trade Andriy Klyuyev, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Kostyantyn Hryshchenko, focused on negotiations of the free trade agreement between the EU and Ukraine. Sikorski also received the Order of Prince Yaroslav the Wise from Yanukovych for his contribution to the implementation of international humanitarian programmes and many years of social activity. This visit was preceded by reviving, after a year-long break, the Polish-Ukrainian consultations between heads of ministries of foreign affairs. The meeting was held on 25 February 2011, in Warsaw. The activity of the Polish-Ukrainian Partnership Forum was also inaugurated at that time.

Mainly due to Tymoshenko's trial, the intensity of bilateral contacts decreased at the end of 2011. Poland condemned her arrest and imprisonment, pointing to the use of Ukrainian justice for political purposes and its negative impact on Ukraine's image as a state during the pro-European transformation process.⁹ Poland also took action to free the former prime minister. The main role was played by President Bronisław Komorowski, who proposed a change in Ukrainian law so that it would be impossible to try a person for political activity under the provisions of the criminal code.¹⁰ Tymoshenko's case was, among others, the subject of presidential discussions during Yanukovych's private visit to Jurata on 30 August 2011, and then during Komorowski's visit to Ukraine on 28 November, on the occasion of laying the foundations for the construction of the Polish War Cemetery in Bykownia.

The Tymoshenko case also negatively affected the course of the Eastern Partnership summit in Warsaw. At that time, it was not possible to obtain EU consent to conclude negotiations on the Association Agreement with Ukraine, which was one of the main objectives of the Polish presidency of the EU Council. The agreement was initialled only at the end of March 2012 in Brussels.

Despite the increasing isolation of Ukrainian authorities on the international arena, the Polish government tried to maintain open communication channels. The next bilateral consultations of heads of ministries of foreign affairs took place on 8 February 2012, in Kyiv. Afterwards, the meeting of the Polish-Ukrainian Committee for Preparation and Conduct of EURO 2012 in Poland

⁹ *Oświadczenie MSZ w sprawie wyroku skazującego Julię Tymoszenko*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 12 October 2011, www.msz.gov.pl.

¹⁰ *Prezydent zaapelował o zmianę prawa na Ukrainie*, 9 May 2012, www.prezydent.pl.

was attended by Azarov (21–22 March). Apart from Tymoshenko's case, the discussions with Komorowski, Tusk and Speaker of the lower house (the Sejm) Ewa Kopacz concerned a free trade agreement between the EU and Ukraine, and energy cooperation. The presidents of both countries also met regularly during the subsequent sessions of the UN General Assembly and the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Poland did not join the boycott of the Ukrainian part of Euro 2012 and the summit of Central European countries in Crimea (eventually cancelled).¹¹ Yanukovych arrived in Warsaw on 8 June 2012, for the championship opening match, and Komorowski (as the only EU leader) went to Kyiv on 1 July 2012, for the final match of the tournament between Spain and Italy.

At the same time, the Polish authorities increasingly emphasised dissatisfaction with Yanukovych's authoritarian policy. In February 2012, the Polish MFA expressed concern over the conviction of the former Ukrainian Interior Minister Yuriy Lutsenko, who was sentenced to four years imprisonment.¹² Less than a week later, an article was published by the International Herald Tribune, written by the foreign ministers of Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic and Germany, calling on Ukraine to comply with European standards and to guarantee the participation of the opposition in the parliamentary election scheduled for October 2012.¹³ As a result, after the end of Euro 2012, Polish-Ukrainian contacts were significantly limited.

During this period, Polish policy towards Ukraine became almost the exclusive domain of Komorowski, who tried to maintain personal ties with Yanukovych. And so, from 20 to 21 September 2012, he paid an official visit to Ukraine, aiming to "maintain the dialogue and bring rapprochement between Kyiv and European structures."¹⁴ At that time, Komorowski met Yanukovych, Azarov, and the Chairman of the Ukrainian parliament, Volodymyr Lytvyn. The presidents officially opened the Polish War Cemetery in Bykownia. Komorowski avoided making a declaration of support for Yanukovych in connection with the upcoming parliamentary election in Ukraine. He did, however, have several meetings with the leaders of the Ukrainian opposition. What's more, on Komorowski's initiative, Tadeusz Mazowiecki talked to Tymoshenko.

¹¹ Due to the conviction of Yulia Tymoshenko, the decision to boycott Euro 2012 matches played in Ukraine was made, among others, by politicians from the United Kingdom and Germany, and by representatives of the European Commission.

¹² *Oświadczenie MSZ w sprawie skazania Jurija Łucenki*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 28 February 2012, www.msz.gov.pl.

¹³ The election was won by the Party of Regions.

¹⁴ *Polska wspiera aspiracje europejskie Ukrainy*, 20 September 2012, www.prezydent.pl.

At the beginning of 2013, Poland intensified its efforts to sign the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine. This was connected with the Eastern Partnership summit scheduled for 28–29 November 2013, in Vilnius. This issue was raised, among others, on 27 February 2013, during consultations in the format of heads of ministries of foreign affairs. Earlier, from 20 to 21 February, Komorowski met Yanukovych and had tripartite discussions with Slovak President Ivan Gašparovič. Komorowski then wrote to Tusk and the speakers of the Polish upper and lower houses, requesting they provide Ukraine with expert support necessary to meet the requirements of signing the Association Agreement.

Komorowski continued his diplomatic mission in this respect throughout 2013. On 27 February he met the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy. Then, on 6 March, together with Tusk, he participated in a meeting with the president of France, the chancellor of Germany, and the prime ministers of Slovakia and the Czech Republic. On 25 March, he held discussions with the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada, Volodymyr Rybak. These activities culminated in consultations of the presidents of the Visegrad Group countries with Yanukovych in Wisła on 3 July, as well as in discussions between Poland, Ukraine, Germany and France on 7 October in Kraków, where the Polish-Ukrainian cooperation programme for 2013–2015 was signed.

At the same time, Poland continued its efforts to free Tymoshenko. During his visit to Kyiv on 25 April 2013, Sikorski was accompanied by foreign ministers of the Netherlands and Lithuania and the minister for European affairs of Denmark. Their goal was to learn about the situation in Ukraine before the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius. During the visit, however, it became clear that Yanukovych did not intend to release Tymoshenko, which was the main condition for signing the Association Agreement with the EU. Sikorski visited Ukraine again on 22 October, this time with the Swedish foreign minister, once again calling for the release of the former prime minister. However, this failed to achieve the desired results.

The political crisis, which was a consequence of the Ukrainian government's withdrawal from signing the Association Agreement with the EU, caused an increase in Polish involvement in the international arena. In December 2013, Poland offered help as a mediator in reaching an agreement between the Ukrainian government and the opposition. However, the proposal was not accepted. The agreement was negotiated only on 21 February 2014, following bloody clashes at Independence Square in Kyiv, under pressure from the foreign ministers of Poland, Germany and France.

Poland also pursued development of a common EU position on the situation in Ukraine. To this end, Komorowski and Tusk met several times with heads of

European institutions and leaders of the Member States at the turn of January and February 2014. The meetings resulted in a special European Council summit on 6 March 2014, during which a decision was taken to sign the political part of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement with the new government of Yatsenyuk immediately. The ceremony took place on 21 March in Brussels, and the trade part of the agreement was signed on 27 June.

The change of government in Ukraine in February 2014 brought new dynamics to bilateral relations. On 26 March, Sikorski paid a working visit to Ukraine. Discussions with Yatsenyuk and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Andriy Deshchytsia concerned Polish support for Ukrainian reforms and the security situation in the face of the annexation of Crimea carried out a few days earlier by Russia. Sikorski also met the International Monetary Fund's mission, supporting Ukrainian efforts to obtain a stabilisation loan. Less than two months later, from 15 to 16 May, Sikorski paid another visit to Kyiv to take part in consultations between heads of the ministries of foreign affairs. He visited Ukraine again on 15 July, to discuss the situation in Donbas and prospects for the development of bilateral cooperation with Poroshenko, Yatsenyuk, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Regional Development, Construction and Housing, Volodymyr Hroysman, and the new foreign minister, Pavlo Klimkin.

Polish support for reforms in Ukraine was also the subject of discussions between Poroshenko and new Foreign Minister Grzegorz Schetyna, who visited Kyiv on 16 December 2014, in the company of the foreign ministers of the Czech Republic and Slovakia and the deputy foreign minister of Hungary. Schetyna continued dialogue on this issue with Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk during his visit to Kyiv on 2 March 2015, which he made with the Danish foreign minister.

Ukraine was mainly interested in Polish experiences in the area of decentralisation. Hroysman asked for help in this matter during his first visit to Warsaw from 19 to 21 March 2014. A special working group was established on the initiative of the Chancellery of the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose task was to develop the concept of local government reform in Ukraine. In December 2014, both countries signed a cooperation memorandum in this regard.

The first official visit of Poroshenko to Poland (17 to 18 December 2014) was an impetus for strengthening Polish-Ukrainian relations. He met Komorowski, new Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz, Sikorski (then-Speaker of the Sejm), and Speaker of the upper house (the *Senat*), Bogdan Borusewicz. He also gave a speech during the solemn assembly of deputies and senators in the Sejm. During Poroshenko's visit, Komorowski signed the Act on the Ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. What's more, in the presence of both presidents,

an investment agreement was concluded between the companies Gaz-System S.A. and Ukrtransgaz, regarding the connection of the gas systems of Poland and Ukraine.

Komorowski visited Ukraine from 8 to 9 April 2015. This was his last foreign trip before the presidential election. Discussions with Poroshenko, Yatseniuk and Hrojsman concerned bilateral cooperation and EU-Ukraine relations. During the visit, Komorowski gave a speech in the Verkhovna Rada. Together with Poroshenko, he also took part in the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Katyń massacre, at the cemetery in Bykownia. Earlier, the presidents met during the celebration of the first anniversary of Euromaidan in Kyiv. Komorowski was also present during the ceremony inaugurating Poroshenko's presidency.

The dialogue on cooperation continued during intergovernmental consultations in Kyiv on 19 January 2015. At that time, Kopacz presented a proposal for an aid package for Ukraine. It included granting a preferential loan, support in the EU forum, intensifying political dialogue, establishing an institution for youth exchange and a scholarship programme for Ukrainians, and sharing experiences of Polish reforms. Poland also committed itself to appoint a special government plenipotentiary for coordination of support for Ukraine (in March, it was Deputy Finance Minister Artur Radziwiłł, who was replaced by Leszek Skiba in November). During the visit, several bilateral agreements were signed, including cooperation agreements between the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, and between the ministries of finance. Details of Polish support were agreed during Yatsenyuk's return visit to Poland on 9 September. Intergovernmental agreements were signed, at that time, to grant €100 million of tied aid credit to Ukraine, and the Polish-Ukrainian Youth Exchange Council was established.

At the same time, Poland's policy towards Ukraine toughened in 2015. First, this resulted from the presidential and parliamentary campaigns in Poland, in which the vision of the main candidates and political forces regarding future relations with Ukraine played an important role. Second, it was due to dissatisfaction with the adoption by the Verkhovna Rada in April 2015 of "de-communisation laws," which recognised the Ukrainian Insurgent Army as a formation fighting for Ukraine's independence. During the consultations between heads of ministries of foreign affairs on 11 June 2015, Poland stressed the need to solve problems in bilateral relations. At the same time, Poland pointed out that they resulted from a lack of goodwill of the Ukrainian side. It also appealed to Ukraine for the activation of cooperation and an appropriate approach to the issue of the Volhynian Massacre.

Poland's new president, Andrzej Duda (who won the election in May 2015), and the new Law and Justice government (elected in October 2015) were proponents of a more assertive policy towards Ukraine. Despite strong requests from Ukraine, there was no meeting between Duda and Poroshenko during the Europa League final match between Dnipro Dnepropetrovsk and Sevilla FC in Warsaw at the end of May 2015, immediately after the second round of the presidential election in Poland (the presidents met three months later at a meeting of the UN General Assembly). On the orders of Duda, his adviser Krzysztof Szczerski went to Kyiv in early September 2015, tasked with developing a plan for contacts between the presidents of both countries.

Duda went on his first official visit to Ukraine between 14 and 15 December 2015. The purpose of the trip was to "re-establish Polish-Ukrainian cooperation vectors."¹⁵ Discussions with Poroshenko, Yatsenyuk and Hroysman concerned regional security and attempts to resolve the situation in Donbas, EU-Ukraine cooperation, and general Polish-Ukrainian relations. Duda emphasised, among other things, the need to solve the problems of Polish companies on the Ukrainian market, the development of cross-border infrastructure, and dialogue on historical issues, including the Volhynian massacre. He also declared the continuation of Polish support for reforms in Ukraine and efforts to invite it to the NATO summit in Warsaw in 2016.

Immediately after being sworn in in August 2015, Duda also made an unsuccessful attempt to re-include Poland in talks about the situation in Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression. The initial significant role of Poland (in the first half of 2014, Sikorski held discussions on this subject in Paris and St. Petersburg, among other places) was greatly reduced in the second half of this year due to the establishment of the "Normandy format." The Polish authorities were unable to bring Putin and Poroshenko together for a meeting with Kopacz in October 2014. Moreover, a statement by Schetyna in November, about the need for Poland's participation in settling the situation in Ukraine,¹⁶ met with indignation from the Ukrainian media, which accused him of treating Ukraine as a Polish colony.

The limitation of Poland's political activity in Ukrainian matters was compensated by activities in other fields, such as training for Ukrainian military officers, the delivery of humanitarian aid to Ukrainian soldiers and internally

¹⁵ *Minister Szczerski o głównych celach wizyty Prezydenta w Kijowie*, 14 December 2015, www.prezydent.pl.

¹⁶ "... Any serious discussion about the future of Ukraine and search for an answer as to how to end the conflict must take place with our presence. To talk without Poland about Ukraine is like talking about Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, or Morocco without Italy, France, or Spain". See: "Schetyna: Nie jest bezpiecznie," *Polityka Ekstra*, 4 November 2014, www.wyborcza.pl/politykaekstra.

displaced persons, medical support, and the contribution to NATO trust funds for Ukraine. An agreement on the establishment of the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian brigade LITPOLUKRBRIG was also signed in Warsaw on 19 September 2014. The brigade was formed in the autumn of 2015.

Economic Relations

There were two factors that mainly influenced Polish-Ukrainian economic cooperation in 2011–2015. The first was the economic crisis in Ukraine, resulting from the expansive fiscal policy of the Azarov's government, maintaining a fixed and inflated exchange rate of the hryvnia, combined with falling prices on international markets for goods that dominated the structure of Ukrainian exports (such as unprocessed raw materials). The second was the war with Russia and the subsequent collapse of Ukrainian foreign trade, combined with the loss of significant industrial potential in Donbas.

As a result, trade between Poland and Ukraine, after a dynamic period of growth in 2011 to 2012 (by 28% and 16% per year, respectively), began to decline gradually, and in 2015 reached PLN 19.1 billion, the lowest level since 2011. Polish exports in particular decreased. In 2015, Ukraine occupied only 16th position on the list of the largest recipients of Polish goods. This represented a fall in six positions compared to 2011.

Table 1

Poland's Trade Exchange with Ukraine (PLN billions)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total	22.2	25.6	25.1	20.2	19.1
Exports	13.9	17.2	18.0	13.1	12.4
Imports	8.3	8.5	7.0	7.0	6.6
Balance	5.5	8.7	11.0	6.1	5.8

Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny. (The table does not include trade in services. Value of goods' imported is given by the country of dispatch. Figures may vary slightly due to rounding).

Polish exports to Ukraine in 2011–2015 were dominated by machines and mechanical devices, mineral products, plastics, chemical industrial products, base metals and vehicles. Poland imported from Ukraine mainly base metals, mineral and plant products, processed food, and wood and wooden products.

Political and economic instability, as well as the Russian military aggression, further conditioned the activities of Polish enterprises in Ukraine. The result

was a regular withdrawal of Polish investors from the Ukrainian economy (the exception was a single increase in Polish investments by less than 8% in 2012). According to data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, Polish direct investments at the end of 2015 were worth \$758.3 million, more than 15% below the value at the beginning of 2011. This represented just over 2% of total foreign direct investment in Ukraine.¹⁷ Polish investments were concentrated primarily in the financial and insurance sectors, as well as in the manufacturing industry.

Despite limited political contacts, Poland sought to strengthen economic cooperation with Ukraine. Beata Stelmach, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in charge of the economic portfolio, met Ukraine's First Deputy Prime Minister Valeriy Khoroshkovskiy, the president of the National Bank of Ukraine, Serhiy Arbuzov, Deputy Foreign Minister Klimkin, and Deputy Minister of Energy and Coal Industry Volodymyr Makucha between 21 and 23 February 2012, in Kyiv. The dialogue concerned, among other things, trade and problems encountered by Polish companies on the Ukrainian market. Stelmach also took part in a meeting with representatives of Ukrainian companies listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange.

Following this visit, intergovernmental consultations were held as part of the Polish-Ukrainian Economic Cooperation Committee. They were held from 17 to 18 May 2012, in Kyiv. During the meeting, the participants discussed problems with VAT refunds for Polish enterprises and the reform of the Ukrainian customs code. In addition, the parties agreed on the principles of cooperation in the fields of transport and the development of border infrastructure.

In the discussed period, two new road border crossings between Poland and Ukraine were opened, in Budomierz (December 2013) and Dołhobyczów (June 2014). In July 2015, the border crossing in Dołhobyczów was expanded to include walking and cycling. At the same time, Poland granted Ukraine a loan worth € 100 million, mainly for projects related to the modernisation of road infrastructure on the common border.

Poland also offered Ukraine significant support to stabilise its financial system. On 22 December 2015, an agreement was signed between the National Bank of Poland and the National Bank of Ukraine, which concluded the "currency swap" (currency exchange at a specified exchange rate) of PLN 4 billion. The funds were to be used to finance Ukrainian currency reserves.

¹⁷ The data do not include areas not controlled by the government in Kyiv, i.e., the Crimean Peninsula, annexed by Russia along with the city of Sevastopol, and the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, occupied by irregular Russian armed units.

Ukraine was also one of the priority directions for supporting Polish development assistance. In 2011-2015, Poland allocated more than PLN 150 million for this purpose. Activities were undertaken mainly in three areas: public security and border management, regional development and building the capacity of public and local government administration, and support for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Social and Cultural Relations

In the analysed period, Poland's displayed a noticeable desire to deepen Polish-Ukrainian interpersonal contacts. On 15 September 2012, under an intergovernmental agreement, Poland abolished fees for issuing national visas (long-term, type D) for Ukrainian citizens. In 2014, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education inaugurated the Polish Erasmus programme for Ukraine, enabling several hundred Ukrainian students to study at Polish universities free of charge. Initiated earlier and managed by the government and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the scholarship programmes for Ukrainian students and scientists were continued. The culmination was an agreement on the establishment of the Polish-Ukrainian Youth Exchange Council. During this period, Poland issued the greatest number of visas for citizens of Ukraine among all the EU Member States, over 920,000 in 2015 alone (an increase of 60% compared to 2011).

The war with Russia and the economic crisis in Ukraine, as well as relatively easy access to the Polish labour market, contributed to a significant increase in economic immigration. According to NBP estimates, in 2015 almost one million Ukrainian residents came to Poland for economic purposes.

At the same time, Poland was developing its network of diplomatic missions in Ukraine. In April 2011, the Consulate General was officially opened in Sevastopol. Three years later, the Consulate General in Donetsk was also opened. However, following the annexation of Crimea by Russia and armed aggression in Donbas, both consulates were closed (in September 2014 and February 2015, respectively).

On 17 December 2014, Poland and Ukraine signed a protocol amending the provisions of the local border traffic agreement of 2008. The period of stay in the border area was extended from 60 to 90 days. Receiving a Small Border Traffic (SBT) card was also facilitated by lifting the health insurance obligation and granting exemption from the fee for issuing second and subsequent permits. In addition, another four Ukrainian towns (three in Volyn Oblast and one in Lviv Oblast) were included in the SBT scheme.

After a seven-year break, the Institute of National Remembrance and the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance resumed meetings of the Polish-Ukrainian Forum of Historians. Earlier, in July 2013, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland adopted a resolution on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Volhynian massacre, recognising it as ethnic cleansing with elements of genocide.

Cultural cooperation also developed intensely. The Polish Institute in Kyiv played the main role by regularly awarding Joseph Conrad Prizes (in the field of literature) and Kazimierz Malewicz Prizes (in the field of contemporary art). The Bruno Schulz Festival in Drokhobych and the jazz festival “Jazz Bez” [Jazz Without] earned a reputation in Ukraine. The festival “Odkrywamy Pendereckiego” [Discover Penderecki], organised since 2012 in Lviv, also gained significance. The opening of the Centre for Polish Culture and European Dialogue in Ivano-Frankivsk in 2013, acting for the benefit of the local Polish minority, became an important event. Among numerous initiatives implemented by Polish entities in cooperation with Ukrainian partners was the “Wschód Kultury” [Eastern Culture] festival, organised in Białystok, Lublin and Rzeszów.

However, attempts to create a Polish-Ukrainian University failed. Established in 2001 in Lublin, the European College of Polish and Ukrainian Universities, which was to constitute the first stage, was closed in 2011 due to lack of interest of the then Ukrainian authorities.

Assessment

Poland only partially achieved its goals in its relations with Ukraine. On the one hand, Ukraine remains a sovereign state that rejected the corrupt Yanukovych regime and chose the path of integration with Euro-Atlantic structures. The gradual implementation of the Association Agreement with the EU and further cooperation with NATO will contribute to strengthening these relations. On the other hand, as a result of Russian aggression, Ukrainian territorial integrity and stability were violated. This will negatively affect the political and economic modernisation of Ukraine and pose a long-term threat to the security of Poland.

Due to its limited potential, Poland rightly lobbied for support for Ukraine from EU and NATO partners. However, the impact of the Polish government on their activities was relatively small. Confirmation of this was the elimination of Poland from discussions on stabilising the situation in Ukraine. The EU provided macro-financial and technical assistance to Ukraine. In response to the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas, it also imposed sanctions on Russia. However, the financial resources allocated were not significant and sanctions were introduced too late. Negotiations regarding the inclusion of Ukraine in visa-free

travel were not concluded either. However, the reason for this was the negligence of the Ukrainian side, which didn't meet all related requirements until the end of 2015.

At the same time, Ukraine received measurable support from NATO, among others, in the form of training for the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and in the scope of special trust funds. Poland made a significant contribution to the functioning of both instruments. However, it was not possible to obtain agreement from Alliance countries to sell "lethal weapons" to Ukraine.

Neither was Poland able to influence political decisions taken by Yanukovych, which had a negative impact on Ukraine's international position and limited its prospects of closer rapprochement with Euro-Atlantic structures. Efforts made by Polish politicians to free Tymoshenko were a good example of this. The Polish authorities, maintaining contacts with their Ukrainian counterparts at that time, including with Yanukovych personally, cannot be subject to unambiguous assessment in this respect. However, it seems that they were justified at the time because of the pressure exerted on Ukraine by Russia.

The shift in power to forces in favour of integration with the EU and NATO opened up new possibilities for strengthening Polish-Ukrainian cooperation. In particular, contacts at the official level were enhanced. A number of new bilateral agreements were also completed. However, their implementation is only in the early stages. What's more, some initiatives, including the promising idea of establishing a Polish-Ukrainian entrepreneurship fund, were abandoned. The growing importance of historical issues will have a negative impact on the development of Polish-Ukrainian relations as a result of the more determined position of the Polish authorities in this respect, which is often misunderstood by the majority of Ukrainian politicians. Consequently, a qualitative change in relations between Poland and Ukraine in the near future seems to be infeasible.

Poland's Policy Towards Belarus

ANNA MARIA DYNER*

Determinants

Belarus is Poland's neighbour, sharing historical, cultural, and linguistic ties and with minority communities living in both countries. The most important determinants of bilateral relations in the years 2011–2015 included the internal policy of the Belarusian authorities, including violations of human rights (especially repressions that affected independent circles after the presidential election of 19 December 2010), the drastic deterioration of the European Union's relations with Belarus, including the imposition of sanctions by the European Commission in 2011, issues of regional security that became crucial after the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014, and EU-Russian relations.

After the presidential election in Belarus in 2010, the actions of the Polish government towards this country changed radically. This was particularly apparent against the background of the politics of 2009 to 2010 when Poland was an advocate of the policy of openness and dialogue towards Belarus, which resulted in, among other things, including Belarus in the EU Eastern Partnership project (EaP). From the turn of 2010 and 2011, Polish diplomacy began to promote a new approach on the EU forum, one of tightening sanctions against Belarus, while increasing support for civil society. Thus, Poland became one of the countries most criticised by the Belarusian authorities and the official media. This had an adverse impact on the situation of the unregistered Union of Poles in Belarus (UPB),¹ whose activists were subjected to repression.

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¹ The Union of Poles in Belarus was founded in 1990 as the first Belarusian Polish diaspora organisation. It originates from the Polish Cultural and Educational Association in Grodno region named after Adam Mickiewicz since 1988. In 2000, Tadeusz Kruczkowski became the president of the UPB, whose activities (including cooperation with Belarusian security services) aroused the Union's opposition. In March 2005, despite the suggestion of the Belarusian authorities that Kruczkowski should be elected for the next term, Andżelika Borys won the vote. Regardless of the election results, the Belarusian authorities decided, in May, to entrust the function of the Union's president to Kruczkowski. He convened fourth congress of UPB, at which Józef Łuczniak became president with the help of the authorities, which prevented many activists from participation. These actions raised opposition of most UPB activists and led to a split, which resulted in the creation of

Political relations began to change in 2014 as a result of events in Eastern Europe. The Ukrainian revolution of dignity, the annexation of Crimea by Russia, the war in eastern Ukraine and the subsequent involvement of Belarus in the peace process for Donbas changed the perception of the country's authorities in both the EU and Poland.

Poor political relations between Poland and Belarus did not adversely affect bilateral trade, but did have a negative influence on the level of Polish investments. Economic cooperation was also hampered as a result of Belarus' internal problems, such as the devaluation of the rouble and high inflation. The state of relations between the EU and Russia after 2014 was also of particular importance (due to Russian policy towards Ukraine, the EU imposed a number of sanctions²), as these are Belarus' two main trading partners.

Objectives

Over the period 2011–2015, Poland had various policy objectives towards Belarus. In the years 2011 to 2013, the Polish government supported the EU sanctions policy, the expected result of which was the release of political prisoners by the Belarusian authorities and enabling the free functioning of civil society institutions and the independent media. On the other hand, in the years 2014–2015, the goal of Polish actions at the EU forum was to lift sanctions (among others, due to the release of all political prisoners in 2015) and to support the stability of Belarus, which was of particular importance in the context of the destabilisation of the situation in Ukraine due to Russian aggression.

In bilateral relations, the conventional goal of Polish diplomacy was to settle the situation of the Union of Poles in Belarus, to allow the free operation of Polish diaspora organisations, to normalise consular relations (among other things, by increasing the number of consulate personnel as a means of addressing problems related to issuing visas to Belarusian citizens), to supplement the bilateral legal and treaty base, to improve the functioning of border infrastructure, and to bring into force of the small border traffic agreement.

In accordance with the *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, the task of the Polish authorities was also to “provide opportunities to guarantee the preservation of Polish identity and respect relevant norms and standards by the states of residence as well as to promote stimulation of civic activity and new forms

two structures, one recognised only by the authorities in Minsk and the other recognised only by Poland.

² For more see: J. Ćwiek-Karpowicz, S. Secieru (eds.), *Sanctions and Russia*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2015, www.pism.pl.

of conducting social activity among Poles in the East.”³ Partly, these were the same strategic objectives of Polish diaspora policy from the government programme of cooperation with the Polish diaspora and Poles abroad from 2007 (also mentioned in the document from 2015),⁴ which assumed, among other things, “maintaining Polish identity abroad, especially in the countries of dense clusters of diaspora, by, among other things, supporting processes to strengthen Polish environments, increasing their reputation, supporting education and culture.”⁵

In March 2011, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, said Poland’s priority regarding Belarus was to support change, assist civil society, and condemn human rights violations.⁶ The issue of support for democratic changes in Belarus also appeared in Sikorski’s speech at the donors’ conference organised in February 2011.⁷ Both speeches showed that almost all efforts in bilateral relations were focused on development support and democratisation. Also in 2012, the situation in Belarus was assessed unfavourably and Sikorski again condemned the violation of human rights.⁸ At the same time, Poland offered Belarus a cooperation plan for modernisation, which, however, was rejected by the Belarusian authorities. Also in 2013, the objectives of cooperation with Belarus were limited to helping independent communities. These activities were carried out mainly through the Solidarity Fund PL and the European Fund for Democracy.⁹

³ *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, www.msz.gov.pl, p. 27.

⁴ *Rządowy program współpracy z Polonią i Polakami za granicą*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, October 2017, www.msz.gov.pl; *Rządowy program współpracy z Polonią i Polakami za granicą w latach 2015–2020*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, July 2015, www.msz.gov.pl.

⁵ *Rządowy program współpracy...*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁶ “Policy towards Belarus is determined by the principle of conditionality. The fate of the fellow Belarusian and European nation is particularly close to us. I said many times that Poland can especially help Belarus if it goes through a path of change. However, we must react in an equally decisive way when Belarus turns back from this path, while violating elementary human and civil rights. I believe that the time will come when we will be able to show support for Belarus reformer and cooperating with Europe,” in: “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 16 March 2011),” see p. 11 in this volume.

⁷ *Przemówienie ministra spraw zagranicznych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej pana Radosława Sikorskiego*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 1 February, 2011, www.msz.gov.pl.

⁸ “Unfortunately, Belarus insists on implementing the ‘less for less’ principle in its relations with Europe. As proposed by Donald Tusk at the Eastern Partnership summit forum, we have prepared an offer of cooperation that awaits the day when repression ceases and the political opposition can play its rightful role,” in: “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2012 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 29 March 2012),” see p. 27 in this volume.

⁹ “Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2013 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 20 March 2013),” see p. 41 in this volume.

The Ukrainian revolution of dignity and the annexation of Crimea were reflected in Poland's policy towards Belarus. In 2014, the head of MFA declared the need for rapprochement with this country.¹⁰ Thus, the Belarusian readiness to engage in a peaceful solution to the situation in Ukraine was noticed and appreciated. In 2015, in information about the tasks for Polish foreign policy, Minister Grzegorz Schetyna only mentioned relations with Belarus in the context of Polish diaspora.¹¹

The assumptions of Poland's policy towards Belarus were also included in *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*. Among the most important tasks of Poland's diplomacy, the document indicated "support for Belarusian society in its activities for freedom and political pluralism," and opposition to "all kinds of repression, to which Poles in Belarus are also subjected."¹²

Political Relations

Bilateral and Multilateral Political Dialogue. At the turn of 2010 and 2011, there was a sharp deterioration in relations. On the day of the presidential election in Belarus, the authorities ordered the break-up of a march of protest against fraudulent elections in Minsk. In response to the mass arrests of Alexander Lukashenka's opponents, activists of independent organisations and participants of demonstrations, the EU countries decided to introduce sanctions against Belarus. On 31 January 2011, 158 representatives of Belarusian authorities were banned from entering the EU, including Lukashenka, his two older sons performing state functions, officers of security forces and judicial authorities, chairmen of the district electoral commissions and selected journalists of state media. In March 2012, the EU introduced restrictions on 29 companies associated with Lukashenka's family.¹³

¹⁰ "We hope to improve relations with Belarus, although it would be easier to believe in the sincerity of the declarations of these authorities if prisoners of conscience were not still behind bars, the Polish minority could freely organise themselves, and in Belarus the Russian military infrastructure would not increase every year. Nevertheless, we are looking for areas of understanding, as evidenced by the recent telephone conversation between Prime Minister Donald Tusk and President Alexander Lukashenka. We support the development of interpersonal relations, also through grants for Belarusian non-governmental organisations and scholarships for students. We remain ready to initiate local border traffic and finalise the educational agreement. We support discussions between Belarus and the European Union on visa facilitation and readmission" in: "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2014 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at the sitting of the Sejm on 8 May 2014), see p. 59 in this volume.

¹¹ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2015 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Grzegorz Schetyna at a sitting of the Sejm on 23 April 2015)," see p. 77 in this volume.

¹² *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, op. cit., p. 17.

¹³ For more see: J. Hyndle-Hussein, K. Kłysiński, *Limited EU economic sanctions on Belarus*, Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, 28 March 2012, www.osw.waw.pl.

Poland, along with Germany, one of the main supporters of dialogue with Belarus, criticised the conduct of the Belarusian authorities after the election (arresting opposition activists, and restricting freedom of speech and assembly). For this reason, Belarusian propaganda attacked the Polish government, criticising, among other things, interference in a neighbour's internal affairs, intending to destabilise the internal situation, and in extreme cases even striving to incorporate the western territories of the state to the Republic of Poland.¹⁴ This adversely affected bilateral relations and the functioning of the independent (not recognised by Belarus) ZPB. In 2011, the prosecutor's office of the Grodno district arrested Andrzej Poczobut, chairman of the UPB General Council, on charges of insulting Lukashenka. The insult was allegedly committed via his writing in *Gazeta Wyborcza* and on the Belarusian websites Belorusskij Partizan and Charter '97. The journalist was to be tried under Art. 367 Part 2 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus, which is punishable by imprisonment of up to five years. However, in March 2013, the Investigating Committee of the Grodno district announced the termination of the investigation.

Tensions in Polish-Belarusian relations were also reflected in the Eastern Partnership forum, and caused diplomatic disturbances during the Warsaw summit in September 2011.¹⁵ Poland aimed to include the situation in Belarus in the joint declaration of the EP countries. Other EP countries did not agree and eventually, a separate document was prepared solely to address the situation in Belarus.

During the summit, Prime Minister Donald Tusk presented a modernisation package for Belarus worth \$9 billion. Draft reforms were to be prepared as part of the "Dialogue for modernisation," in which representatives of the Belarusian third sector organisations were to be the EU partner.¹⁶ The Belarusian authorities rejected this initiative, mainly due to the tense political relations and the failure to agree on the modernisation package. It was also significant that the proposed reforms, although advisable, could lead to changes in the political and economic system of the state, and subsequently to a change of power.

¹⁴ In 2014, in Grodno, Lukashenka said that Poland still claims territorial rights to Belarus, and he himself saw maps where the Polish border runs near Minsk. Due to this statement, the then Belarusian ambassador Viktor Hajsionak was summoned to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See: "Łukaszenko: Polska i drugie strony 'pristalno prismatriwajutsia k Biełorussii'", *Regnum Informacyonnoje Agientstwo*, 14 November, 2014, <https://regnum.ru>.

¹⁵ The Belarusian delegation did not participate in most of the proceedings. Although the Belarusian minister of foreign affairs was invited to the summit, the delegation was headed by the Belarusian ambassador in Warsaw. However, he was withdrawn from participation, because, according to the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the representatives of this country were treated worse than others.

¹⁶ For more see: L. Szerepka, *Oblicza Białorusi. Zapiski ambasadora*, Fundacja Sąsiedzi, 2016, p. 192.

Tensions in bilateral diplomatic relations were also apparent in 2012. In February, there was a diplomatic scandal on the Belarus-Poland and Belarus-EU line. The Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked the Polish ambassador Leszek Szerepka and the EU permanent representative in Minsk, Maira Mora, to consult with their capitals. Immediately afterwards, other EU countries dismissed their ambassadors from Minsk as a gesture of solidarity. Representatives of EU countries returned to the Belarusian capital in the last week of April when Szerepka and Mora were allowed to return.¹⁷

In the years 2012–2013, a campaign in the Belarusian government media was directed against Poland. Polish consular services were accused of negligence in relation to visa procedures, and even of corrupt practices. Belarusian television broadcast material about intermediary companies that allegedly shared the profit with Polish consuls (which was not true). The reports did not mention that for years Poland had requested permission to increase its consular staff and to open visa centres, which would significantly improve the issuing of visas.

In 2013, military matters also joined the list of mutual prejudices. Poland was concerned about the scenario of the *Zapad 2013* exercise conducted jointly by Russia and Belarus. It assumed that “external forces” (implicitly Poland and other NATO countries) wanted to destabilise the situation in Belarus, and that Belarusian and Russian armed forces would fight back. Anxiety was also raised by information about the Russian air forces taking over combat duty over Belarus, plans to build a base of Russian fighters (Lida was initially indicated as its location) and announcements of the deployment of four S-400 missile squadrons in Belarus. At the same time, Lukashenka criticised the *Steadfast Jazz* exercises conducted in November 2013 in Poland and the announcement of the transfer to Poland some of the American F-16 fighters stationed at the Italian base in Aviano.

The approach to Belarus began to change at the end of 2013, after the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius. The Belarusian delegation was headed by Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makei, who proposed the start of talks with the EU on visa liberalisation. After the summit, meetings of representatives of Belarus and the EU became more frequent, and their subject matter concerned, in addition to visa liberalisation, the mobility partnership programme, trade cooperation and high technologies. Despite the improvement of EU-Belarus relations, the Belarusian side once again refused to participate in the “Dialogue for modernisation” proposed at the Warsaw EP summit.

The year 2014, due to events in Ukraine, was a breakthrough for relations in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. The EU imposed a number of sanctions

¹⁷ For more see: *ibidem*, p. 193.

on Russia after the aggression against Ukraine, to which Moscow responded by introducing an embargo on food products from EU countries. In the political dimension, however, this situation did not have negative consequences for Belarus' relations with EU Member States, including Poland. On the contrary, in Minsk, which turned out to be a good location for negotiations between Ukraine and Russia, agreements to introduce a ceasefire in Donbas were signed in September 2014.¹⁸ In this respect, for some EU Member States, such as Germany, France and the Baltic States, Belarus gained a reputation as a stable and cooperative neighbour. Ukrainian issues were also the most important topic of the Belarusian foreign minister's visit to Warsaw in August.

In 2014, for the first time in many years, significant tensions in Polish-Belarusian relations were avoided. The number of meetings at the operational level also increased significantly. One of the priorities for Poland was historical and educational dialogue, treated not only in the context of the academic debate on a common history, but also the protection of Polish memorials in Belarus. This especially concerned Kuropaty, where it is likely that the remains of Polish citizens murdered by the NKVD (from the so-called Belarusian Katyn list) are buried. Poland intensified efforts to enable the carrying out of exhumation works in this location. On the occasion of bilateral contacts devoted to historical issues, 2014 saw the emergence of the idea to establish a Polish-Belarusian group for historical policy, partly reminiscent of the Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Matters.¹⁹

In 2015, the development of technical relations picked up, consisting mainly of joint work in various committees, the aim of which was, among other things, to update the legal and treaty base. Meetings at the level of deputy ministers were also held at that time. In May and November, Belarus was visited by Konrad Pawlik, Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Both countries continued cooperation regarding common heritage. In 2015, a decision was made that the Council for the Protection of the Memory of Struggle and Martyrdom (ROPWiM) would finance the renovation of the military cemetery in Brest, where Polish soldiers were buried in 1920 to 1939. The start of work was scheduled for 2016. As announced, this is not the only cemetery to be

¹⁸ It was the first Minsk agreement, i.e., *Protocol on the results of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group*, an international agreement resulting from the work of a tripartite contact group consisting of Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE. The protocol was signed in Minsk on 5 September, 2014 and assumed a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine. Text from the document *Protocol on the results of consultations of the Trilateral Contact Group (Minsk, 05/09/2014)*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, 8 September, 2014, <http://mfa.gov.ua>.

¹⁹ The Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Matters was established in 2002 as a team of Polish and Russian experts and scientists appointed to discuss the most difficult issues in bilateral relations, mainly related to historical matters.

under Polish protection. At the same time, however, Belarus, like Russia, Armenia and Kazakhstan expressed concern over reports of the desecration of burial sites of Soviet soldiers in Poland.

In July 2015, the first meeting of the permanent Polish-Belarusian group on historical policy was held. "The very composition of this group showed, however, that both sides understood the meaning of its establishment differently. While the Polish side delegated representatives of the Council for the Protection of Remembrance of Struggle and Martyrdom or the Institute of National Remembrance to the committee, i.e., the state bodies with specific competences in the field of historical policy, the Belarusian side, on the other hand, proposed only academic professors. ... The professors did not hide the fact that they represented, at most, their own universities and were not authorised to speak on behalf of Belarus."²⁰ The lack of clear political legitimacy of Belarusian experts meant that the group's work may not have an impact on the decisions of the authorities.

At the same time, the authorities in Minsk skilfully used their commitment to the peace process related to the situation in Ukraine to present Belarus as a stable and friendly state for international negotiations. Visits by politicians such as the EU high representative for foreign and security policy in August 2014, and the chancellor of Germany and president of France in February 2015, caused a change in the perception of the Belarusian regime among EU countries. This influenced, among other things, the course of the Eastern Partnership summit in Riga in 2015. As part of its support for the EP initiative, Poland was in favour of liberalising (or abolishing) visa regimes for countries covered by this programme, including Belarus.²¹ Contrary to expectations, the agreement on visa facilitation and readmission could not be concluded. After this meeting, Belarus began to openly formulate postulates regarding the idea of the Eastern Partnership, including abandoning the "more for more" principle²² and focusing on economic cooperation beneficial for both parties. On 12 October 2015, after the presidential election in a calm atmosphere, the EU decided to suspend sanctions against Belarus for four months.

Bilateral Agreements. In the years 2011–2015, it was possible to make only a little progress on the Polish-Belarusian legal and treaty base. In 2014, an education agreement was initialled, and the Polish Ministry of National Education made efforts to reactivate the work of the Polish-Belarusian textbook commission, whose tasks include agreeing on the content of teaching in the field of history and

²⁰ L. Szarepka, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

²¹ For more: E. Kaca, "Poland's Policy towards the Eastern Partnership," see p. 272 in this volume.

²² More money for cooperation in exchange for reforms.

geography. Contacts in the field of education were particularly important because of the changes in the Belarusian educational law. It was necessary to settle the status of two Polish schools in Belarus.

In April 2015, Belarus and Poland signed an agreement on cooperation in warning against natural disasters and extraordinary situations and eliminating their effects. The agreement was, among other things, the result of work by the Polish-Belarusian Intergovernmental Commission for Cross-border Cooperation. As part of further regulation of bilateral issues, Belarus indicated its willingness to sign an agreement with Poland (as well as the Czech Republic and Estonia) on the payment of pensions and joint retirement settlements.

After years of effort, Belarus agreed to create visa centres in seven Belarusian cities in 2015 (Minsk, Brest, Grodno, Gomel, Mogilev, Baranavichy and Lida). They were supposed to receive up to 290,000 visa applications a year and thus relieve the Polish consular offices, which in 2015 issued almost 400,000 visas for citizens of Belarus (the refusal rate was approximately 1%). This was also to improve the functioning of the online visa application system that hackers regularly attacked.

At the same time, despite the signing and ratification of the small border traffic agreement in 2010, Poland did not receive the ratification note until 2015 and was unable to inaugurate it.

Cooperation with the Polish Minority. According to the census of 2009, Polish nationality was declared by 294,500 people in Belarus, amounting 3.2% of the population. The Polish minority suffered from bad political relations, especially in terms of the activists of the unrecognised Union of Poles in Belarus.²³ They were subjected to constant checks by the *milicja* (police) and tax authorities, and their activities risked criminal sanction. At the same time, the Polish authorities did not carry out activities aimed at supporting the pro-regime UPB, considering that it did not have democratic legitimacy. This situation also meant that the Polish minority had very limited possibilities to learn the Polish language and maintain contact with their homeland, as the cultural and educational activities of the minority were systemically limited by the authorities and faced numerous administrative difficulties.²⁴ In the “second decade of the 21st century [...], the Polish language was learnt by approximately 12,000 people in Belarus, of which only a few hundred [...] were] in two schools, in Grodno and Vawkavysk.”²⁵ Moreover, Poles in Belarus did not have access to Polish TV channels, because cable networks that are the source of the TV signal for about 80% of households

²³ See footnote 1.

²⁴ *Rządowy program współpracy...*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

²⁵ L. Szarepka, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

are prohibited from offering them. Neither were there any paper editions of the Polish press (*Głos znad Niemna* exists only online).²⁶

Political relations were also hampered by the decision of the Belarusian Constitutional Court, on 7 April 2011, that the “Polish Card,” issued by Polish consulates to qualifying citizens of Belarus, was inconsistent with the law, including in relation to international conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination of 1965, the Convention on discrimination in employment and occupation of 1958, and the Treaty between the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Belarus on good Neighbourhood and friendly cooperation of 1992.²⁷ Holders of the “Polish Card” working in state offices were obliged to deposit the document with their superiors.²⁸ The range of the impact was limited, as some holders decided to return it.

Development Aid. In the years 2011–2015, Poland allocated €74 million to development aid for Belarus.²⁹ These funds co-financed, among other things, programmes supporting the activities of Belarusian organisations and social initiatives at the local level, legal assistance for victims of repression, support for independent media in Belarus and Belarusian media in Poland (Belsat TV and Radio Racyja), support for small and medium-sized enterprises, and assistance to socially disadvantaged groups. The beneficiaries were also the grant-receivers of the Kalinowski programme.³⁰ Initially, these were the students expelled from Belarusian universities for political reasons, but later they included Belarusians intending to study in Poland. As part of the International Solidarity grants,³¹ PLN 2.6 million supported 27 projects dedicated to transformation and democratisation. The European Endowment for Democracy, which was founded on the initiative of Polish diplomacy, supported two Belarusian media projects

²⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 176–177.

²⁷ For more see: *Rieszenije Konstitucyonnogo Suda Rjespubliki Bielarus’ No P-258/2011*, Konstitucyonnyj Sud Rjespubliki Bielarus’, 7 April, 2011, www.kc.gov.by.

²⁸ *Raport konsularny 2011*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, April 2012, www.mfa.gov.pl, p. 34.

²⁹ “Białoruś,” *Polska Pomoc*, www.polskapomoc.gov.pl.

³⁰ The Konstanty Kalinowski Scholarship Programme of the Government of the Republic of Poland under the auspices of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland.

³¹ In 2011, due to Poland’s growing involvement in aid programmes and democratisation, the minister of foreign affairs undertook the initiative to reconstruct the Foundation “Wiedzieć Jak,” which in 2013 changed its name to Fundacja Solidarności Międzynarodowej [International Solidarity Foundation]. The minister may commission the foundation to carry out tasks in countries with special political conditions. The main areas of activity are the Eastern Partnership countries, as well as Tunisia, Myanmar, and the countries of Central Asia. See: *Fundacja Solidarności Międzynarodowej*, <http://solidarityfund.pl>.

operating outside of Belarus (European Radio for Belarus and the Solidarity Office with Democratic Belarus).³²

Regional Cooperation

The years 2011–2015 were a time of strengthening regional contacts between Poland and Belarus. Relationships developed between regions (including using the potential of Euro-regions) and between cities.

As part of the Bug Euro-region, an information portal dedicated to tourism, culture, entrepreneurship and the labour market of individual regions was established. A project worth €330,000 was financed from the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Cross-border Cooperation Programme. In turn, joint tourist and cultural activities were mainly developed in the Niemen Euro-region.

In 2013, despite bad political relations with Belarus, the EU started funding projects under the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007–2013 Cross-border Cooperation Programme. The project “Extension of the waste-water treatment system in the West Bug basin,” worth about €2 million, was implemented. In 2015, the construction of a sewage treatment plant in Belarusian Kamyanyets was completed, and the Belarusian side additionally applied for a loan of €16 million from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to build a sewage treatment plant for Brest.

EU funds also aided the operation of two hospitals in Brest and Grodno. The vehicle-scanning system was also expanded at the Kuźnica Białostocka-Bruzgi border crossing, and the Połowce-Peschatka border crossing was modernised. Thanks to this programme, firefighters from Brest received four fire pumper trucks in 2015. Border cooperation also included monitoring of the functioning of the Kozłowicze-Koroszczyn border crossing, which was to increase its capacity.

Both countries also announced a declaration of cooperation in the creation of a waterway between the Baltic and Black seas, which would require restoring the possibility of navigation on about 2,000 km of waterways, including the E-40 from Brest to Warsaw. This project received funding under the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007–13 Cross-border Cooperation Programme.

Direct cooperation also developed between the regions of both countries (Mogilev Oblast and Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship), as well as cities including partner cities (such as Vitebsk and Łódź). Joint activities were reflected, among other things, in culture days, festivals, markets, and fairs intended for local entrepreneurs. In 2015, the third meeting of partner cities from Poland and

³² See: *We support*, European Endowment for Democracy, www.democracyendowment.eu.

Belarus was also held in Grodno (the first two took place in 2002 in Brest, and in 2014 in Białystok).

Economic Cooperation

Tensions in Polish-Belarusian political relations were not a significant obstacle to increasing trade exchange. The Belarusian authorities favoured its development as part of the economisation of foreign policy observed for several years.³³ Many Polish companies exporting and investing in the former USSR began to see the possibility of cooperation with Belarus as part of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space (and, since 1 January 2015, as part of the Eurasian Economic Community), which was to translate into facilitating cooperation with all the countries that make up these structures. This was met with a benevolent reaction from the Belarusian authorities since the country, struggling with the economic crisis, was looking not only for sales markets but also for foreign investment sources other than Russia. Thus, despite bad political relations, Polish exports to Belarus grew in 2011–2013, reaching PLN 5.4 billion, PLN 6.5 billion and PLN 7.6 billion, respectively. The main export goods were food products and other plant and animal products.

The collapse of Polish exports in 2014 had a broader context and was associated with EU and Russian sanctions policy. The embargo introduced by Russia on food products from EU countries was significant to other countries of the Eurasian Economic Union and made them reduce imports as well. Part of the food formally bought by Belarus (and Kazakhstan) went to the Russian market, which significantly reduced the embargo. Thus, in 2014 there was a decrease in the volume of Polish exports to the markets of the eastern neighbours of the CIS,³⁴ including Belarus.

At the same time, the search for new forms of economic cooperation by Poland and Belarus translated into an increase in the number of bilateral meetings and forums. In October 2014, in Brest, the 18th Belarusian-Polish Economic Forum “Good Neighbourliness took place with the participation of Deputy Prime Ministers Janusz Piechociński and Michail Rusy. In December 2014, the third meeting of the Joint Polish-Belarusian Commission for Economic Cooperation was held in Warsaw with the participation of the same politicians. The Belarusian-Polish working group on trade and investment resumed operation in December 2014 in Warsaw.

³³ See: A.M. Dwyer, “Nieudana próba znalezienia trzeciej drogi w polityce zagranicznej Białorusi,” *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, no. 3, 2012, pp. 62–80.

³⁴ *Handel zagraniczny Polski po 10 miesiącach 2014 r.*, Ministerstwo Gospodarki, www.mg.gov.pl.

Cooperation in the field of agriculture also increased, one example of which was the visit of the Polish Minister Marek Sawicki to Minsk in August 2014. Belarus began to be considered as a potentially important target of Polish investments in this sector.

Belarus became increasingly involved in cooperation in the area of transport, energy and environmental protection. This was evidenced not only by further rounds of modernisation consultations between the EU and Belarusian authorities but also by meetings of the Polish-Belarusian working groups. In 2014, a transport group, tourism group and energy cooperation group held meetings. This was important because the Polish-Belarusian working groups were resuming work after several years (it had been 12 years since the Forum of Polish-Belarusian Partner Cities last met). These were the first indications of intensified development in terms of economic cooperation between the two countries.

As for energy matters, issues concerning the extension of the transmission capacity of the Roś-Narew connection, and cooperation in the extraction of peat, re-emerged. In the field of transport, there were discussions on the need to develop the border infrastructure and road network connecting the two countries, and on the possibilities for Belarus to use Polish ports to export its products. There were also increasing demands to develop historical tourism, for which, however, it is necessary to increase the number of pedestrian border crossings.

In 2015, as in previous years, there were also conferences and business meetings about investment opportunities in Belarus, and a business forum for representatives of the wood and furniture industry. In addition, Belarus proposed the establishment of a furniture cluster in Smarhon', which will bring together Belarusian, Polish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Russian companies. Sometimes, sectoral cooperation was forced by international agreements with other countries, as in the case of the rail connection between the Chinese city of Chengdu and Łódź. This led to the conclusion of additional agreements between Polish and Belarusian railways with regard to freight services.

At the same time, Belarus was struggling with economic problems. Although the 2014 GDP had increased year by year by 1.6%, it decreased by 3.9% in 2015.³⁵ This was reflected in Polish exports to Belarus, which in 2015 amounted to PLN 5 billion, with imports standing at PLN 3.1 billion.³⁶ In the period 2011 to 2015, the volume of Belarusian exports to Poland also fluctuated. However,

³⁵ *Ważowy wwnutriennyj produkt w 2000–2015 gg.*, <https://myfin.by>.

³⁶ *Handel zagraniczny I–IX 2015 r.*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 30 December 2015, <http://stat.gov.pl>. Compare: *Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski za 2014 r.*, Ministerstwo Gospodarki, August 2015, www.me.gov.pl, p. 9.

Poland became one of Belarus' 10 largest trade partners in 2015, mainly on the basis of exported petroleum products and machines.

Table 1

Trade Exchange between Poland and Belarus from 2011–2015
(in PLN billions)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Imports from Belarus	3.9	3.2	2.4	2.6	3.1
Exports to Belarus	5.4	6.5	7.6	6.7	5

Source: author's compilation based on Główny Urząd Statystyczny data³⁷

Cultural Relations

In the years 2011–2015, Poland continued to promote its own culture in Belarus and support Belarusian culture and national movements. One of the most important institutions responsible for cultural relations with Belarus was the Polish Institute (PI) in Minsk. Polish music was promoted in the Belarusian capital (especially jazz and classical), and concerts organised by the PI played a major role in the cultural offer for the inhabitants of Minsk. In Polish town Gródek in Podlasie district, the Belarusian Student Association organised the “Basóvišča” (Music Festival of Young Belarus).

Polish cinematography was much less apparent, although Polish films were shown during the autumn “Listapad” festivals. The Polish Institute organised shows in Minsk as part of the “Polski Kinoklub” project. Poland was also involved in independent Belarusian cinematography, with the Polish Film Institute and the Ministry of Culture supporting, for example, the production of the film *Żywie Bielarus*, which had its premiere in 2012. Although in Poland it did not enjoy recognition, about 300,000 Belarusians watched it on the Internet.

Since 2011, The Polish Institute, the Polish Embassy, and the Logvinau bookstore have organised annual events called Month of Polish Literature, during which Polish publications are promoted. In 2011, the Jerzy Giedroyc literary prize was awarded by the PI and the embassy in cooperation with the Belarusian

³⁷ *Handel zagraniczny styczeń–grudzień 2011*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2012, <http://stat.gov.pl>, p. 57; *Handel zagraniczny styczeń–grudzień 2012*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2013, p. 63, <http://stat.gov.pl>; *Handel zagraniczny styczeń–grudzień 2013*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2014, p. 56, <http://stat.gov.pl>; *Mały rocznik statystyczny 2016*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, p. 333, <https://danepubliczne.gov.pl>.

PEN-Centre and the independent Association of Belarusian Writers for the best prose book in Belarusian from the previous year.

Polish diplomatic missions in Minsk, Grodno and Brest, in cooperation with local partners, also organised a number of exhibitions and events devoted to Polish culture. Some of them raised the subject of shared history.

In the years 2011 to 2015, the Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs awarded grants³⁸ allowing a number of study visits to be undertaken by Belarusian museum professionals, journalists and music workshop organisers.

Polish cultural diplomacy recognised the metropolitan intelligentsia as well as people identifying with the culture of Belarus as the target group. However, it should be noted that actions for other social groups were difficult due to the domination of Russian culture. The activities of the UPB, which coordinated many actions (such as the collection of books) for the benefit of local Poles, supplemented the activities of diplomatic missions.³⁹

Assessment

In the years 2011–2015, policy towards Belarus was a significant challenge for Polish diplomacy. On the one hand, it was difficult to maintain relations with a state in which human rights were violated and which rejected all forms of modernisation and democratisation assistance. On the other hand, the neighbourhood determined bilateral contacts at the level of countries, regions and trade. It should also be emphasised that policy towards Belarus requires consistency and clear rules. In the optimal version, these should be rules accepted by both parties.

In the situation of difficult political relations, a special task of maintaining bilateral contacts was imposed on Polish and Belarusian regions. It is worth mentioning that both countries increasingly developed this form of cooperation, which in the future should also translate into economic and interpersonal contacts.

Due to the specifics of the period 2011–2015 in Polish-Belarusian relations and the forced change in the objectives of Polish policy towards Belarus, the government probably took into account the fact that it would be difficult to achieve all the objectives. The biggest failure was the lack of entry into force

³⁸ “Wspólne działania polsko-białoruskie” was one of the most important grant programmes. It was implemented in the years 2011–2014, and 70 projects were co-financed in four editions.

³⁹ For more see: Ł. Grajewski, “Polska dyplomacja publiczna na Białorusi,” in: P. Kowal (ed.), *Raport na temat polskiej polityki kulturalnej na Wschodzie*, Kolegium Europy Wschodniej im. J. Nowaka-Jeziorańskiego we Wrocławiu, 2017, pp. 47–87.

of the small border traffic agreement, which would create a chance to improve mutual relations. The settlement of the situation regarding the Polish diaspora organisations in Belarus and historical matters also remained an important and unrealised task of Polish diplomacy. A number of issues related to the legal and treaty base still await the solution, such as the agreement on the maintenance of road bridge facilities at the border, and on navigation in the border section of the Augustów Canal, which would have a positive impact on the development of tourism cooperation and more.

At the same time, Poland did not have the tools of influence on Belarus that Russia does (energy resources, investments and loans), which additionally hampered its policy towards this country. Taking into account the experience of 2011–2015, however, it is clear that, in the case of Belarus, the concept of two-way actions worked out well. On the one hand, there were contacts with the authorities and engagement in initiatives that will benefit both parties (cross-border cooperation, infrastructure and energy projects), and on the other hand, support of civil society institutions was apparent. What's more, contacts with the authorities provided greater opportunities for cooperation with independent NGOs and the media, as they were not perceived as Poland's only activities in Belarus. Both the situation in this country and the relatively small funds allocated for support caused difficulties for Poland conducting clear and consistent policy that would help it achieve its objectives.

Poland's Policy in the Visegrad Group

VERONIKA JÓŹWIAK*, ŁUKASZ OGRODNIK**

Determinants

Membership of the European Union remained the basic factor influencing the cooperation of the Visegrad Group countries over the period 2011–2015. The Polish authorities assumed that the greater involvement of the V4 in developing Community solutions in the EU forum would best serve the interests of the region. At the same time, strengthening European integration became part of the strategy of Polish foreign policy. At that time, the economic crisis in the EU and the refugee crisis turned out to be the biggest challenges requiring coordinated actions of the V4.

The programme of the Polish presidency held directly after the Hungarian one in the EU Council (July to December 2011) reflected the idea “More Europe” and of maintaining the integrity of the Union.¹ This was also the main assumption of the fourth Polish presidency in the Visegrad Group (June 2012–July 2013).

The years 2011 to 2015 were a period of good economic results for Poland (in comparison to other European countries), and the strengthening of its political position in the EU.² Close cooperation with the government in Warsaw also increased the political importance of the V4 partners. In this situation, it was easier for Poland to convince the other Visegrad countries of the value of its own vision of V4. With this in mind, they continued the closer coordination of positions on EU affairs, initiated by Poland in 2010.³ At that time, the group operated mainly as a negotiating alliance, building broader coalitions to pursue national and

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¹ *Przewodnictwo Polski w Radzie Unii Europejskiej. Raport końcowy z przygotowania i sprawowania prezydencji*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2012, p. 162, <http://oide.sejm.gov.pl>.

² *Sytuacja makroekonomiczna w Polsce w 2011 r. na tle procesów w gospodarce światowej*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, October 2012, pp. 22–24, <http://stat.gov.pl>; S. Faris, “How Poland became Europe’s most dynamic economy,” 28 November 2013, *Bloomberg*, www.bloomberg.com; see also: K. Borońska-Hryniewiecka, P. Toporowski, “Poland’s policy towards the EU,” see p. 129 in this volume.

³ M. Gniazdowski, “*Polityka Polski w Grupie Wyszehradzkiej*,” *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 2011*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2012, p. 151.

regional interests. The need to unite around the forthcoming negotiations on the EU budget also encouraged closer cooperation.

The coherence of the Visegrad Group was preserved despite previous bilateral disputes (for example, about the rights of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia) and the launching of several EU infringement proceedings against Hungary by the European Commission (2011). Although Hungary's actions raised concerns in Poland, especially because of their possible consequences for the region's reputation, the conviction that the V4 is still a proven formula for pursuing EU interests prevailed.⁴

Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and differences in the approach to this conflict, highlighted internal divisions within the V4. The Polish government was uncompromising in assessing the situation in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood. Disagreements over these events, including the imposition of sanctions on Russia, disturbed the political coherence of the V4 in the main external areas of action towards the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership.

An important factor affecting the real possibilities of the V4 at the EU forum was the change in the qualified majority voting system in the European Union Council in autumn 2014. Until then, V4 states had a total of 58 weighted votes, which is the same as France and Germany together. This was sufficient to create a blocking minority. In the new system, looking for compromises with larger Member States became a necessity.

Poland's best ever relations with the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary—as Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski described them in 2011 and in 2012⁵—were at the beginning of 2015 related to regional sectoral cooperation focused on infrastructure development, environmental protection, tourism, and energy security.⁶

In September 2014, Ewa Kopacz succeeded Donald Tusk as prime minister, and Grzegorz Schetyna followed Radosław Sikorski as minister of foreign affairs,

⁴ “On the other hand, Poland has reasons to be cautious, in some respects, in relation to the Visegrad partners. [...] Hungary has some difficult issues to discuss with Brussels—how much should Poland stand up for one side or the other?” *Grupa Wyszehradzka—budowanie marki*, wystąpienie ministra spraw zagranicznych RP Radosława Sikorskiego w Budapeszcie, 5 July 2012, p. 6, www.msz.gov.pl.

⁵ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 16 March 2011),” see p. 11 in this volume. “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2012 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 29 March 2012),” see p. 27. in this volume.

⁶ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2015 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Grzegorz Schetyna at a sitting of the Sejm on 23 April 2015),” see p. 77 in this volume.

but this did not translate into a change in Polish activities in the V4. However, after the victory of Law and Justice in the parliamentary election in October 2015, regional political cooperation became one of Poland's priorities.

Objectives

In the years 2011–2015, Poland's goal was multilateral sectoral cooperation in the Visegrad Group. Outside this forum, but with its use, it was in Poland's interests to conduct efficient European policy. The objectives at the EU level included negotiating the most favourable EU budget for Poland for 2014–2020, with the largest possible share of funds for cohesion policy and the common agricultural policy. The V4 countries, as beneficiaries of the EU funds, were potential allies of the government in Warsaw. Poland also aimed to consolidate its international position by strengthening the V4's significance at the European forum. This was demonstrated by the assumptions of the Polish presidency in the years 2012 to 2013, which was carried out under the slogan "integration and coherence."⁷ The presidency allowed the region to continue its cooperation in strengthening European integration and emphasising the role of the V4 in overcoming the economic crisis.⁸ At the same time, Poland's goal was to ensure that the objectives of regional policy implemented within the V4 would not interfere with the interests of the entire EU. Sectoral cooperation mainly concerned such areas as security, energy policy, infrastructure development, culture and science.

The Polish government and its Visegrad partners wanted to show that the North-South policy line could complement the dominant political direction running East-West.⁹ Among the preferred partners in the implementation of regional projects in the V4+ format, Sikorski included Romania and Bulgaria.¹⁰ Poland's intention was to use the V4 to support the activities of some non-EU countries aiming at rapprochement with the EU and NATO. In this area, the Polish government was more interested in building relations with the Eastern Partnership states than the other V4 members, who were more oriented towards the Western Balkans.

Two dimensions of Visegrad cooperation, EU-related and sectoral, were confirmed in the annual statement of the minister of foreign affairs regarding

⁷ *Program Polskiej Prezydencji w Grupie Wyszehradzkiej, July 2012 to June 2013*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych 2012, p. 2.

⁸ *Raport polskiego przewodnictwa w Grupie Wyszehradzkiej*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2013, p. 13, www.msz.gov.pl.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

¹⁰ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2012...", *op. cit.*

foreign policy. In 2011, Sikorski pointed to the necessity of agreeing common positions in the V4 before the meetings of the European Council.¹¹ A year later, he put particular emphasis on cooperation with other V4 countries in negotiations on the EU budget, including planning security spending (plans to establish the Visegrad Battle Group).¹² A broader picture of the objectives of Visegrad cooperation, mainly due to the V4 presidency at the time, was presented by Sikorski in 2013, which was confirmed by the joint summit of the Visegrad Group and Weimar Triangle members. Other goals included work on further gas interconnectors and the development of transport infrastructure among V4 countries, and organising the Winter Olympic Games with Slovakia in 2022.¹³ When Schetyna replaced Sikorski, he more clearly emphasised sectoral cooperation at the expense of building a possible political alliance.¹⁴

The laconic nature of statements by foreign ministers on Visegrad cooperation and foreign policy assumptions indicated that the V4 was treated in the EU as one of many intergovernmental cooperation platforms, and one of several instruments of influence within the bloc. However, Poland used its presidency to make its voice heard more clearly within the V4, giving it an opportunity to more efficiently promote its own interests. The V4+ formula served broader cooperation in specific areas with key partners from the point of view of the Visegrad Group.

Multilateral Relations

The presidencies of Hungary and Poland in the Council of the European Union significantly influenced the regional dimension of European policy. Their programmes and priorities were agreed upon in the Visegrad group and bilaterally among members (as had been the case since 2008). The consultations primarily concerned economic policy, in particular, the methodology of work on the multiannual financial framework for 2014–2020.

Poland completed the first stage of work on the EU budget in line with its priorities. Poland's achievement was the adoption of the EC compromise proposal as a basis for further negotiations, while also agreeing upon a regulatory package (the Six-Pack, also negotiated during the Hungarian presidency) to increase the financial transparency of EU Member States.

¹¹ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011...", *op. cit.*

¹² "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2012...", *op. cit.*

¹³ "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2013 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 20 March 2013)," see p. 41 in this volume.

¹⁴ *Information of the Council of Ministers on the tasks of Polish foreign policy in the years 2014 to 2015*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.msz.gov.pl.

From the point of view of the priorities of Polish foreign policy, the most important event in 2011 was the Eastern Partnership summit. Poland, in consultation with EU Council presidency holder Hungary, managed to postpone the summit from May to September. As a consequence, the meeting was organised by Poland, for which strengthening the eastern dimension of the neighbourhood policy was the most important EU external activity. Approval of the text of the association agreement with Ukraine and the commencement of negotiations of trade agreements with Georgia and Moldova were the main achievements of the Polish presidency in its activities towards the Eastern Partnership states.

Poland also supported EU enlargement policy, directed mainly towards the countries of the Western Balkans, whose partners in these efforts were the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. During the Polish presidency of the EU Council, an accession treaty with Croatia was signed. However, the remaining two goals of the presidency in this area were not achieved. These were starting accession negotiations with Montenegro and granting Serbia the status of official candidate for EU membership.¹⁵

After the presidency of the EU Council from 2012 to 2013, Poland took the lead in the Visegrad Group. Sikorski began this by visiting Bratislava, Prague and Budapest.

During the Polish presidency, consultations were held in the V4+ formula. At the initiative of Poland, the first joint meeting with the Weimar Triangle states was held in March 2013, with the participation of the French president and the German chancellor, and heads of government of the Visegrad Group. The discussions were to indicate Poland's commitment to Central Europe and the importance of the region in the context of the future of European integration, its economic situation and security. The defence ministers of the six countries issued a joint declaration supporting strengthening cooperation in the field of security and efforts to improve the competitiveness of the European defence industry. During the Polish presidency, the meetings in the extended group with the Baltic and Nordic countries as well as the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership states were continued.

The presidency of the EU Council, followed by the chairmanship of the Visegrad Group, motivated Poland to take more ambitious actions towards the Western Balkans, traditionally one of the priority foreign policy areas of the other Visegrad partners. In 2012, for the first time, the V4 foreign ministers of Western Balkans states, as well as Romania and Bulgaria, attended a meeting on this matter.

¹⁵ T. Żornaczuk, "Chorwacja—prymus integracji europejskiej na Bałkanach Zachodnich," in: M. Filipowicz (ed.), "Konflikty narodowe i europejskie aspiracje państw bałkańskich," *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* 2011, no. 2, p. 51, www.iesw.lublin.pl.

On this occasion, a network of experts for the rule of law and fundamental rights was inaugurated.

V4 support for the Eastern Partnership states was maintained until the annexation of Crimea and the start of Russian aggression against Ukraine in February 2014. In the same year, it became clear that, after the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union (which included Belarus and Armenia), the countries covered by the programme had split. The possibility of real V4 cooperation in relation to the Eastern Partnership was limited to work with Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Poland initiated actions for Ukraine after the outbreak of a conflict between its authorities and the opposition at the end of 2013. The following year, the heads of governments of the V4 states adopted joint statements at an extraordinary summit in January and at the summit in Budapest in February. They emphasised support for maintaining the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. All political forces were called upon to enter into dialogue and agree to form a new government and respect the rights of minorities (including linguistic rights) in accordance with the standards of the European Council.

Developing similar V4 declarations became more difficult after Russia's military intervention in Ukraine. The assessment of the conflict and the level of commitment in supporting Ukraine were conditioned by the bilateral relations of individual V4 states with Russia. Although they all supported the imposition of EU sanctions, Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán questioned the legitimacy of continuing them. This position, in direct opposition to Poland's stance, is the main dividing line in V4 policy towards the EU's eastern neighbours.

Among non-European partners, the Visegrad Group cooperated in the V4+ formula with Japan and South Korea. The idea was to strengthen the relationship between the V4 and distant partners, mainly in the fields of science, technology and innovation. On the initiative of Poland, in June 2013, the first meeting of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe with the heads of government of the V4 took place. This event was not a one-off, as discussions in this format were also held at the level of foreign ministers in November 2013, in New Delhi, during the summit of heads of diplomacy of the ASEM states. Relations with South Korea were strengthened in December 2015, when a meeting between V4 prime ministers with President Park Geun-hye took place in Prague.

However, the V4+ formula was not launched for China, the group's most important economic partner in Asia. The main reasons were the insufficient overall economic potential of the four countries from the perspective of the Far East partner, and competition for Chinese investments and increasing

exports.¹⁶ Bilateral and EU approaches to maintaining relations with China were supplemented by Chinese concepts of cooperation with the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe in the years 2012–2013 (the 16+1 format and the Silk Road). All V4 countries treated relations with China as important, but Poland was the only one to sign a strategic partnership (2011).

Plans to create more “Visegrad Houses,” as part of V4 activities towards non-European countries, failed. They were to be created, among others, in Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam and in Chongqing in China with a Polish-Hungarian initiative and serve as joint consular representations and promote investment opportunities in the V4 countries. The only such facility has operated in Cape Town since 2010.

In 2015, the migration crisis connected the Visegrad Group countries. Hungary, which is situated on one of the main migration routes, definitely rejected the mandatory admission of refugees. The Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland participated in the discourse, which is largely in opposition to the solutions proposed by the European Commission.

The Visegrad Group, including Poland, was in favour of voluntary admission of refugees. The joint statement of the Prague summit in September 2015 listed the actions that will be taken, including strengthening the external borders of the EU and the Schengen area, financial and material assistance for countries with large refugee populations, and intensifying the prosecution and combating of traffickers and smugglers.¹⁷ The V4 supported the conclusions of the European Council in solving the migration crisis, such as the introduction of hotspots.¹⁸

During the vote at the EU Justice and Internal Affairs Council meeting on 22 September 2015, the Polish government agreed to accept 5,082 people, thus distancing itself from the position of other Visegrad countries. Poland's decision to vote in accordance with most EU countries was criticised by V4 partners, especially the Czech Republic. It also resonated across the internal political scene. The parliamentary opposition criticised the government of Ewa Kopacz, among others, for lack of solidarity with the Visegrad partners.

Work on creating a Visegrad Battle Group under the auspices of the European Union was supposed to contribute to strengthening defence cooperation and increasing interoperability of the armed forces. After a meeting in Levoča, Slovakia, on 12 May 2011, the V4 representatives expressed their intention to

¹⁶ P. Kugiel (ed.), “V4 Goes Global: Exploring Opportunities and Obstacles in the Visegrad Countries’ Cooperation with Brazil, India, China and South Africa,” *PISM Report*, March 2016, pp. 74–77, www.pism.pl.

¹⁷ *Wspólne oświadczenie szefów rządów państw Grupy Wyszehradzkiej Praga 4 September 2015*, www.premier.gov.pl.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

establish this force under Polish command, and an agreement on this matter was signed in March 2014. The group was to be composed of 3,000 troops and be fully operational by 2016. This became one of the priorities of the Polish presidency in the V4.

An expression of strategic thinking about energy security was the roadmap "Towards a Joint V4 Regional Gas Market," announced in Warsaw for 2013 to 2018. In this document, the Visegrad countries adopted a concept of further integration of the gas market and expressed readiness to extend cooperation in this respect of other countries.¹⁹ Irrespective of this, they developed international energy infrastructure. In 2011, a Polish-Czech gas connection with a capacity of 0.5 billion m³ was opened near Cieszyn. A Slovak-Hungarian gas connector started operating in 2014. The construction of key connections between national gas networks and establishing an energy solidarity mechanism were the issues raised by Poland in the V4 forum, and the implementation of these objectives was to serve to further gas access diversification by the countries of the region.²⁰ The construction of interconnectors and the commissioning of the LNG terminal in Świnoujście in autumn 2015 strengthened the importance of Poland, including the national gas infrastructure in the regional plans for the expansion of the North-South Gas Corridor.

The expansion of gas infrastructure did not translate into a joint V4 position regarding the debate initiated by Prime Minister Tusk in 2014, on the creation of an energy union based on joint negotiation of the conditions of gas supply to Europe. This was mainly due to the fact that, despite a consistent position on the need to diversify gas supply sources, Hungary and Slovakia did not question Russia's main role in supplying the region with energy. Furthermore, Hungary commissioned the construction and operation of two new reactors at the Paks nuclear power plant, with the contract going to the Russian company Rosatom. Nevertheless, Poland, with the help of V4, tried to defend its energy interests in the EU. During the Polish presidency of the Visegrad Group, V4 economy ministers issued a letter to the European Commission and the Cypriot presidency of the EU Council, calling for consideration of the energy security of Member States when implementing climate policy.

Energy cooperation also included mutual support of the V4 countries for shale gas extraction, to which Poland attached particular hope, and the use

¹⁹ *Mapa drogowa w kierunku wspólnego regionalnego rynku gazu V4*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Tokio, 16 June 2013, www.tokio.msz.gov.pl.

²⁰ Minister of National Defence Tomasz Siemonek, participating in the V4 meeting in Bratislava in June 2015 with Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz, emphasised that energy security has a fundamental impact on the stability of states and should be stimulated by diversifying supplies of raw materials.

of nuclear energy. In 2013, four nuclear research institutes from V4 countries signed an agreement to establish the V4G4 Competence Centre. This was to support research and development of fourth-generation nuclear reactors. Poland, however, could not make full use of this cooperation, including in terms of gaining experience, because it is the only V4 country which does not own nuclear power plants or have plans for their construction.

In the field of road infrastructure, a section connecting Poland with the Czech Republic (A1-D1 highway) was put into operation. However, the project to build the Danube-Oder-Elbe channel, which was to stimulate the development of enterprises in the regions of western Poland located near the Oder and the Gliwice Canal, was not implemented. The project connecting the three main Central European rivers was discontinued by the Czech Republic for financial reasons in March 2014.

Bilateral Relations

Political Relations. Strengthening traditionally good Polish-Hungarian relations took place after the Fidesz-KDNP coalition took power in Hungary in 2010. Although it differed from Poland's PO-PSL government ideologically and in the approach to further European integration, both sides expressed the political will to maintain closer contacts. For Poland, V4 cohesion had value in terms of building intra-EU coalitions.²¹ On the other hand, Hungary found more understanding in Poland in the face of disputes with the EU institutions.²² PO and Fidesz were also connected by their membership of the European People's Party.

The presidency of the EU Council in 2011 and the chairmanship of the Visegrad Group in the years 2012 to 2014 of Poland and Hungary in subsequent periods required coordination of priorities and programmes. Polish-Hungarian relations in 2013 (announced in Hungary as the year of Central Europe) were expressed by several meetings of presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers and heads of other ministries. The chairman of the Hungarian parliament also visited Poland. The celebrations of Polish-Hungarian Friendship Day, initiated in 2008, were continued on 23 March each year with the participation of the presidents of both countries, alternately in Poland and Hungary. Diplomatic relations were strengthened by the appointment of the Honorary Consul of the

²¹ "However, the greatest strength of the [Visegrad] group is that it can build coalitions ad hoc: we have 73 votes together with the Baltic States [in the EU Council]. If we add Romania and Bulgaria, there are 97 votes," *Grupa Wyszehradzka – budowanie marki*, wystąpienie ministra spraw zagranicznych RP Radosława Sikorskiego w Budapeszcie, 5 July 2012, p. 7, www.msz.gov.pl.

²² Resolution of the Hungarian Parliament No. 11/2012 on the position of representatives of Polish civil society and politicians, including Prime Minister Donald Tusk, towards international criticisms of the changes taking place in Hungary, 3 March 2012, www.parlament.hu.

Republic of Poland in Szeged in 2012 and the reopening of the General Consulate of Hungary in Kraków in 2014.

To emphasise the importance of bilateral relations, Orbán paid his first foreign visit to Warsaw after the election victory in 2010, and then another in 2014. Despite the political support Poland gave Hungary several times in the EU forum, Tusk did not pay any official visits to Budapest until January 2014, when the next victory of Orbán's party in the upcoming parliamentary elections was certain. The meeting was accompanied by consultations at the ministerial level. However, Tusk was not given a declaration of cooperation for Ukraine or unequivocal support for the idea of the energy union he initiated. In a joint communiqué, the prime ministers only confirmed their support for the development of selected energy sources, including shale gas exploration and the use of nuclear energy.²³

Tension in bilateral relations arose after the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2014. Particularly problematic, from Poland's point of view, was Hungary's further strengthening of political and economic relations with Russia, despite the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine. Kopacz emphasised the fundamental importance of the unity of the EU and V4 countries in the face of the situation in Ukraine, during a meeting with Orbán in February 2015 in Warsaw. However, Poland assumed that a different approach to some international problems did not preclude the positive dynamics of V4 cooperation in other areas.²⁴ After the change of the Polish government in November 2015, differences in the perception of geopolitical challenges were ignored in favour of strengthening bilateral relations.

Polish-Czech relations, in addition to meetings at the level of heads of state, governmental and ministerial, were characterised by increasingly intense contacts between parliaments and local governments of both countries. Tusk's first foreign visit during the Polish presidency of the EU Council was to Prague. Relations gained new dynamics, especially in the EU forum, after the change of government in the Czech Republic at the beginning of 2014, despite the lack of affinity between the PO-PSL coalition and the cabinet led by Social Democratic Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka. Previous cooperation with the right-wing conservative government of Petr Nečas was primarily focused on sectoral issues. The change of government meant a reorientation of Czech foreign policy and a desire to build closer relations with partners from the EU, which was also important for the Polish government.

The confirmation of good bilateral relations and that the Czech Republic is an important partner for Poland (in Visegrad and EU terms) was underlined when Sobotka represented Poland at the extraordinary European Council meeting in Valletta at the end of 2015. Due to the overlapping deadlines of the summit and

²³ *Wspólny komunikat. Polsko-węgierskie rozmowy premierów w Budapeszcie*, www.premier.gov.pl.

²⁴ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011...", *op. cit.*

the first sitting of the new Sejm as well as the inability of the Chancellery of Prime Minister Kopacz to communicate with the office of President Andrzej Duda regarding the trip to Malta,²⁵ Poland requested the Czech Republic to present its position at the EU summit.

A negative media campaign took place in the Czech Republic in the first half of 2013 regarding Polish food, followed by a decision of the Czech State Agricultural and Food Inspectorate to subject meat, vegetables, fruit, dairy products and fish imported from Poland to special control. Reducing supplies to the Czech food market, which is a manifestation of the Czech Republic's internal economic policy, was to strengthen the position of domestic producers. This attitude met with Polish diplomatic interventions at various levels, including meetings with Czech senators, which ultimately contributed to the abandonment of controls.

Poland maintained good relations with Slovakia in various fields, thanks to economic, cross-border and cultural cooperation. This was confirmed by bilateral meetings, including at the highest level, such as the "Tatra Meetings" in March 2015, attended by Polish President Bronisław Komorowski and the President of Slovakia Andrej Kiska.

In February 2012, an intergovernmental agreement on mutual visa representation was signed in Bratislava. In November 2013 an agreement defining the scope of support for the preparatory and design activities of the gas connection between the two countries followed. The subjects of discussions during intergovernmental consultations were bilateral cooperation and European issues including the financial and refugee crisis. Among others, there were discussions regarding joint actions to solve the Russia-Ukraine crisis. However, Poland and Slovakia represented different positions on the extension of sanctions imposed on Russia.

In a symbolic gesture of recognition, Slovakia's former Prime Minister Ján Čarnogurský was awarded the Saint Wojciech Prize by President Komorowski in June 2011. During the Economic Forum in Krynica in 2012, the Slovak Prime Minister Fico was named the Man of the Year.

Economic Relations. After a temporary drop in trade in the year 2008 caused by the economic crisis, the value of Poland's turnover with the V4 countries gradually began to increase in 2009. The dynamic growth of the Polish economy in the years 2011–2015 also had a positive impact on the balance of exchange with Visegrad countries. In relation to all V4 countries, Poland maintained a positive turnover balance. Exports increased successively, while the increase in

²⁵ "Polska będzie reprezentowana na Malcie przez inne państwo. Wiadomo już, jakie...", *Dziennik.pl*, 10 November 2015, <http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl>.

imports was slight. There was even a slight decline in imports from Hungary and the Czech Republic in 2012, and from Slovakia in 2013.

The Czech Republic has remained Poland's most important trading partner in V4. Exchange between these countries in 2015 exceeded €18 billion and was about €5 billion higher compared to 2010. The exports to the Czech Republic in 2015 accounted for 6.6% of Polish exports, and imports from the Czech Republic for 3.4% of Polish imports. Machines and means of transport, industrial goods, food, animals, chemicals and related products played the most important role in exports from Poland to the Czech Republic.²⁶

The turnover with Slovakia in 2015 amounted to approximately €7.83 billion. Thus, Slovakia ranked 13th place among trading partners with a 2.2% share in the total foreign trade turnover of Poland. In trade with Slovakia, Poland recorded a positive balance of €1.4 billion. Slovakia ranked 11th place in terms of Polish exports, which mainly included electromechanical industry products, agricultural and food products and chemical products.

Table 1

Poland's Trade Exchange with Visegrad Group Countries in 2010-2015
(in EUR billions)

	Trade flow	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total (V4)	Export	13.85	15.38	16.24	17.62	19.27	21.29
	Import	10.16	11.51	11.38	11.44	11.84	12.27
	Balance	3.69	3.87	4.86	6.18	7.43	9.02
The Czech Republic	Export	7.2	8.53	9.06	9.59	10.71	11.91
	Import	5.07	5.68	5.65	5.75	6.06	6.17
	Balance	2.13	2.85	3.41	3.84	4.65	5.74
Slovakia	Export	3.25	3.35	3.72	4.09	4.20	4.61
	Import	2.76	3.15	3.22	3.11	3.12	3.22
	Balance	0.49	0.2	0.53	0.98	1.08	1.39
Hungary	Export	2.40	3.50	3.46	3.94	4.36	4.77
	Import	2.33	2.68	2.51	2.58	2.66	2.88
	Balance	1.07	0.82	0.95	1.36	1.7	1.89

Source: authors' compilation based on the Statistical Yearbook of Foreign Trade, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, www.stat.gov.pl.

²⁶ *Polsko-czeska wymiana handlowa w 2015 r.*, Portal Promocji Eksportu, <https://czechrepublic.trade.gov.pl>.

The value of trade with Hungary has been steadily increasing since 2012. In 2015, it reached a record level of €7.65 billion. In 2015, Poland was the third-largest exporter to Hungary (following Germany and Austria).²⁷ Mechanical and electrical equipment, rubber products, plastics, organic chemistry and food products dominated among exports for a long time.²⁸

Social and Cultural Relations. Strengthening cultural relations among the V4 countries is mainly bilateral. The reason for this is treating cultural heritage as a carrier of national identity, and thus a very specific matter. The joint achievement was only the Year of Exchange the V4-Japan (2014), assuming the activation of economic and cultural cooperation. The Japanese Festival in Warsaw was then held. The countries of the V4 are not willing to undertake joint cultural projects in European capitals

On the other hand, regional scientific, cultural and social enterprises are successful. The Visegrad Group included the Eastern Partnership countries and the Western Balkans in the exchange of academic staff and the cultural sector, as well as in supporting civil society. In 2012, the Visegrad for Eastern Partnership (V4EaP) programme was established as part of the International Visegrad Fund. The Visegrad+ Western Balkans grants were also launched, giving the opportunity to cooperate with civil society organisations from the V4 and the Western Balkans.

On the initiative of Sikorski, to emphasise the Polish presidency of the V4 and to popularise the idea of cooperation between the Visegrad countries, the First Visegrad Cycling Race was held. The race has been organised every year since then. Over the period 2011 to 2015, there were number of bottom-up cultural initiatives, such as the cyclical project of the Kraków Association Willa Decjusza “Visegrad Literary Residences” addressed to writers and journalists from the V4 countries, and the Festival of Many Cultures and Nations Visegrad Wave in Czeremcha, with the participation of folk groups from all over the world.

In June 2013, the Polish and Hungarian culture departments signed the “Cooperation Programme in the field of Culture for 2013–2016.” In addition to promoting joint cultural projects, the programme aims to support direct contacts between Polish and Hungarian artists and to provide comprehensive assistance to the Polish national minority in Hungary and their Hungarian counterparts in Poland. Both countries declared exchange of experience in the use of EU funds,

²⁷ *A külkereskedelmi termékforgalom értéke euróban és értékindexei a fontosabb országok szerint, 2015. January to December*, Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 5 November 2016, www.ksh.hu.

²⁸ *Wymiana handlowa z Węgrami w 2015 r.*, Portal Promocji Eksportu, 13 October 2016, <https://hungary.trade.gov.pl>.

V4 programmes, the Central European initiatives and UNESCO.²⁹ What's more, in 2014, the ministries of foreign affairs of both countries signed an agreement on non-government cooperation regarding financial support for joint youth projects. The programme, from which funds can be obtained on a competitive basis, was launched in the same year and is being continued.

Polish diplomacy was also visible in Hungary through projects preserving Polish historical memory. Because of these projects, the level of knowledge in Hungarian society about the Katyń massacre and Henryk Sławik (who rescued Polish refugees in Hungary including Polish Jews during the Second World War, has risen. An important event was the unveiling of the monument for the Katyń martyrs in Budapest in 2011, and the presentation of the IPN exhibition "Katyń. Crime. Politics. Ethics" and "Executed cities. Poznań-Budapest 1956" in all major Hungarian cities. An element of the promotion of knowledge about the Warsaw Uprising was the unveiling of several monuments to Polish pilots shot down over Hungary in 1944. The Polish Institute in Budapest, which celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2014, is a well-known and popular institution on the cultural scene of the Hungarian capital.

The signing of the cooperation programme between the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic strengthened the cultural relations between Poland and the Czech Republic. The 2014–2016 programme standardised issues such as the exchange of artists and specialists, support for the organisation of theatre, music and dance festivals, and the development of cooperation between museums and galleries. Cultural relations traditionally included festivals taking place in Cieszyn and in Český Těšín: "Without Borders" (theatrical) and "Cinema on the Border" (film), which was additionally recognised in 2013 with the Polish Film Institute Award in the category "International Film Event." Also, in the Kłodzko Valley, Polish-Czech Christian Culture Days were organised cyclically by the Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity association.

The Polish Institute in Prague remained an active institution promoting Polish culture in the Czech Republic, running its own library, offering language courses and co-organising initiatives such as Polish Days. Polish culture was noticed and appreciated in the Czech Republic. During the International Film Festival in Karlovy Vary in 2013, the film *Papusza* enjoyed particular popularity, and the Polish drama *Floating Skyscrapers* (*Płynące Wieżowce*) was awarded special prize. At One World, a Prague documentary film festival, Lidia Duda received the main award for directing the film *Entangled* (*Uwikłanie*).

²⁹ *Spotkanie ministrów kultury państw Grupy Wyszehradzkiej*, Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego, 14 June 2013, <http://mkidn.gov.pl>.

The exhibitions of works of Polish artists, such as Jakub Woynarowski in Prague and Piotr Bosacki in Brno, served to popularise Polish culture. In cooperation with the Polish Institute, TV Prima ZOOM made short documentaries presenting Polish fortifications and natural wonders in Poland. On the other hand, Poles could familiarise themselves with Czech culture at the Kraków International Cultural Centre, where, in the spring of 2014, photographs devoted to Václav Havel were shown, and where there was also an exhibition of paintings by the Czech symbolists (“Lords of Dreams: Symbolism in the Czech Lands 1880-1914”).

The signing of a cooperation programme between the ministries of culture of both countries in Prague in 2012 contributed to the strengthening of Polish-Slovak cultural cooperation.³⁰ The exhibition “300 Years Since the Death of the Outlaw Janosik” opened in the Janek Krá Museum in Liptovský Mikuláš in 2013, serving to remind of common historical heritage. As part of the New Drama 2012 theatre festival in Bratislava, the project “Focus Polsko” was implemented to promote Polish theatre. Polish films and series appeared on TV in Slovakia. Slovak public television purchased, among others, broadcasting rights for the TV series *Medics (Lekarze)*, the Andrzej Wajda films *The Birch Wood (Brzezina)*, *Sweet Rush (Tatarak)*, and *Holy Week (Wielki tydzień)*. As part of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme, the Republic of Poland-Slovak Republic 2007 to 2013 in the spring of 2011, the Orava Culture Centre in Jablonka was opened, combining Orava’s cultural environments and operating in various areas of culture. The Polish Institute in Bratislava was still a propagator of Polish culture in Slovakia. The Slovak Institute in Warsaw conducted similar activities on the Slovak side. Partner museums on both sides of the Tatra Mountains (the Slovak National Museum, the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw and the Castle Museum in Łańcut) entered a network of connections in the field of culture.

The category of unrealised projects includes the Winter Olympic Games in Poland and Slovakia in 2022. In October 2012, the heads of the Olympic committees of these countries and the Mayor of Kraków signed a letter of intent. The venture was abandoned when the inhabitants of Kraków decided against it in a referendum.

Assessment

Cooperation between the Visegrad Group countries over the period 2011–2015 was an example of efficient use of the group’s potential at the EU forum. The collaboration of the V4 proved that this format can achieve significant success by

³⁰ *Grupa Wyszehradzka – spotkanie ministrów kultury*, Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego, 31 May 2012, www.mkidn.gov.pl.

initiating activities in line with the interests of a large number of the EU countries. The greatest mutual achievement in this respect was negotiating, in an extended group of cohesion friends, a favourable EU budget for the region for 2014–2020. Poland played an important role in this process. This success demonstrated the adaptation of V4 activities to the basic, unchanging condition of membership of the V4 countries in the EU. The International Visegrad Fund was of particular importance in building links between societies.

International challenges that emerged in 2014 in the EU's eastern and southern neighbourhoods influenced the programme of the Visegrad meetings. V4 coherence within the EU was in most cases replaced by individual actions by particular members (apparent in the case of policy towards Ukraine) or a regional coalition created by the V4, making proposals not supported by other Member States (such as those regarding the migration crisis). Therefore, emerging new circumstances reduced the V4's unity in response to external challenges.

Over the period 2011–2015, the Visegrad countries progressively intensified cooperation in the areas of energy policy, security and defence, economy and culture. The successes include work on the Visegrad Battle Group, that eventually fulfilled its mission in the first half of 2016. Although sectoral cooperation produced results, no plans for significant infrastructure development were made. The implementation of several important investments (including the gas connector between the Polish and Slovak systems) was missing from plans to complete the gas network connection from the Baltic to the Adriatic. This also concerned the joint vision of the V4's energy independence from Russia.

Poland consistently tried to increase the presence of the V4 on the international arena. Over the period 2011–2015, importance was attached to openness to external partners, including countries from the Far East. However, experience shows that the Visegrad Group did not consider this scope of activities one in which it could bring added value compared to the broader formats of economic cooperation (EU and 16+1) with emerging powers.

Announcing initiatives in the presence of third countries served to emphasise the group's openness and transparency. During the Warsaw summit in 2013, which was attended by representatives of Germany and France, a letter of intent was signed regarding the creation of the EU Visegrad Battle Group. The V4 countries showed their ability to learn from good cooperation patterns of other regions, an example of which would be the establishment of the Visegrad Patent Institute that followed the model of the Nordic Patent Institute.

Poland's Policy towards the Baltic States

KINGA RAŚ*

Determinants

Poland's actions towards Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia in the years 2011–2015 were primarily determined by the proximity of the Baltic States, often perceived in Polish politics as a region.¹ The geographical proximity caused strong historical attachment, which was also the source of disputes over the situation of approximately 200,000 indigenous Poles living in Lithuania. In 2010, the Lithuanian parliament rejected a new law liberalising the rules for spelling first and last names. This and subsequent changes in Lithuanian legislation negatively affected the position of the Polish minority and caused a deterioration of relations between Warsaw and Vilnius. At the same time, cooperation with the Polish diaspora was an important factor shaping Poland's social and cultural relations with the other Baltic States. According to the 2011 censuses, about 45,000 Poles lived in Latvia, and approximately 1,600 in Estonia.

An important forum influencing Poland's actions towards Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia was the European Union, which at that time had to meet the challenges of economic stability, especially in the Eurozone. The EU's political calendar turned out to be significant, with the six-month presidency of the EU Council being held by Poland in the second half of 2011, Lithuania in 2013, and Latvia in 2015.

In 2011 to 2015, Estonia (2011), Latvia (2014) and Lithuania (2015) introduced the euro. Preparations by these countries, wishing to meet the convergence criteria, were associated with adopting a perspective other than Poland's. The introduction of the single currency was important for trade cooperation with Poland. This cooperation was also influenced by the asymmetry in economic relations, which resulted mainly from the different potentials of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

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¹ For example, *The Council of Ministers' Information about the tasks of Polish foreign policy in the years 2014 to 2015*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.msz.gov.pl.

Cooperation with the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the most important forum for multilateral activities in the Baltic Sea area, remained important to Poland. This formula of intergovernmental cooperation focused on sustainable development and building synergies in the region. Poland's activity was additionally determined by preparations for the presidency of the CBSS and taking over the annual presidency in the second half of 2015.

The situation of Poland and the Baltic States on the Eastern Flank of NATO and on the external borders of the EU was also strongly influenced by events in the region, in particular, the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine. A common sense of threat translated into efforts to strengthen the Alliance's presence in this part of Europe, particularly apparent before the Newport summit in 2014.

From the point of view of Poland's cooperation with the Baltic States, Russia's efforts to strengthen its position as a gas exporter, primarily through the launch of Nord Stream, were important. Nuclear energy, including plans to launch a nuclear power plant in the Kaliningrad district, was also a tool of Russian influence. As a result, energy security became an area of great importance in Poland's policy towards the Baltic States.

The factors determining Poland's actions towards Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in the years 2011 to 2015 meant that the intention to strengthen the format of four-party cooperation was clear. They included primarily, deteriorating relations between Poland and Lithuania, which motivated stronger cooperation with Estonia and Latvia. The change in the security situation in the region, including Russia's increased activity after the annexation of Crimea, raised Poland's interest in the northern dimension of foreign policy and increased its role in the Baltic Sea basin.

Poland's relations with the Baltic States also conditioned national political calendars. The PO-PSL coalition ruled in Poland at this time. After the election in November 2011, Donald Tusk remained the prime minister (from 2007 to September 2014), and then Ewa Kopacz took over this function (until November 2015).

In each of the Baltic States there was a change of power at least once. In Lithuania, in 2012, as a result of the parliamentary election, the Social Democrats took over from the conservative government, but in 2014 Dalia Grybauskaitė was elected for another term as president, which guaranteed that foreign policy would continue unchanged. In Latvia, as a result of a referendum in 2011, an early parliamentary election was held. The government was formed by the centre-right Unity and the Reform Party and the conservative National Union. After the election in 2014, this coalition was expanded to include the central Union of

Greens and Farmers. In Estonia, after the elections in 2011 and 2015, the liberal Reform Party maintained power.

Aims and Objectives

Over the period 2011–2015, the main objectives of Poland's policy at the EU level towards all three Baltic States were to enhance cooperation in areas such as strengthening Eastern Policy, security, shaping the budget and, partly, reforming the EU especially in times of economic crisis. At the regional and bilateral level, Poland's goal was to intensify sectoral cooperation, particularly in energy and transport, with infrastructure and economic development. Over time, efforts to strengthen NATO's Eastern Flank gained importance.

The Priorities of Polish foreign policy 2012–2016 were indicated as a community of interests with the Baltic States in many areas. This document emphasised, among other things, that “in the political sphere, Poland faces similar challenges as its northern neighbours. Poland has many common views and interests with Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, especially on Eastern affairs, Euro-Atlantic security and EU development.”²

The goals in bilateral policy towards individual countries were modified, which was particularly apparent in relation to Lithuania. In 2011, Minister Radosław Sikorski assumed that “Lithuania and Poland should go hand in hand in international policy,” and expressed hope for respect for minority rights in the neighbouring country. However, in subsequent years the objective in relations with Lithuania was “to build a partnership based on pragmatism, mutual respect and observe international agreements, including the area of treatment of national minorities.”³ In 2013, Sikorski emphasised: “we hope that the solution of the most pressing issues, including the rights of the Polish minority in Lithuania, will contribute to easier implementation of bilateral undertakings, including new road, rail and energy connections,” and suggested the dependence of success in this respect on the situation of Lithuanian Poles.⁴ This issue was raised every year, including in 2015 by Minister Grzegorz Schetyna, who, among others, made it a priority to support Poles in Lithuania.⁵ It is important that, in 2014, Lithuania

² *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, www.msz.gov.pl.

³ *Information of the minister of foreign affairs on the foreign policy of the RP in 2011*, www.msz.gov.pl.

⁴ “Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2013 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 20 March 2013),” see p. 41 in this volume.

⁵ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2015 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Grzegorz Schetyna at a sitting of the Sejm on 23 April 2015),” see p. 77 in this volume.

was not mentioned in the minister's information on foreign policy, while the other two countries were mentioned as important directions of cooperation. Cooperation with Latvia and Estonia reverberated just strongly as in the speech of Schetyna in 2015. Poland's goal was to provide "Poles and Polish diaspora with the opportunity of existence within a legal framework that guarantees the preservation of Polish identity and respects relevant norms and standards by the countries of residence,"⁶ which also concerned policy towards the Baltic States.

Political Relations

Security. Poland's cooperation with the Baltic States in the field of security gained in importance, and since 2014 it has become a priority. Nevertheless, bilateral disputes between Poland and Lithuania had a multilateral dimension. This was apparent in 2012 when only Estonian President Toomas Ilves and Latvian President Andris Bērziņš came to Warsaw at the invitation of President Bronisław Komorowski. The politicians discussed the preparation of a joint position for the May NATO summit in Chicago. The meeting was not attended by the Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė.

Meanwhile, regional security cooperation at the working level developed very well, with the participation of representatives of all countries. In 2013, the first meeting in the format of defence ministers was held in Warsaw, attended by Poland's Tomasz Siemoniak, Juozas Oleksas from Lithuania, Artis Pabriks from Latvia, and Urmas Reinsalu from Estonia. The *Steadfast Jazz* exercises were summarised, the cooperation of special forces was announced, and closer work on NATO and the European Union forum was confirmed. It was agreed that similar meetings would be organised every year. The heads of defence ministries also agreed that bilateral cooperation was equally important. In the case of Poland and Latvia, this would concern aviation guidance navigator training.

Poland and the Baltic States also held consultations prior to the NATO summit in 2014. The president of Estonia participated in security consultations conducted by the Visegrad Group, Bulgaria and Romania. In addition, Poland's cooperation with the Baltic States concerned the arms industry. Lithuania decided to purchase Polish Grom mobile anti-aircraft systems worth over €34 million.⁷

Poland engaged in the protection of the airspace of the Baltic States as part of the Air Policing mission conducted by NATO. From January to April 2015, the Polish military contingent "Orlik 6" was on duty, among others, in the 37th

⁶ *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016, op. cit.*

⁷ K. Dudzińska, "The Security Policy of the Baltic States vis-à-vis Russia," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 83 (678), 12 June 2014, www.pism.pl.

rotation of this mission, strengthening the Italian component at the Lithuanian airport in Šiauliai (Poland sent its MiG-29 fighters). During this rotation, Poland also made available the airport in Malbork, for use by Belgian F-16 aircraft, co-creating a multinational contingent in the Baltic States. What's more, together with the Baltic States, it took part in the *Noble Jump* manoeuvres. These exercises were to enable the assessment of the preparation of NATO rapid response forces. In addition, efforts were made to strengthen security in the Baltic Sea region. This was served, among others, by the *Baltops* cyclic sea manoeuvres under the auspices of NATO. At the same time, the states participated in the 2014 initiative *SUCBAS* (Sea Surveillance Cooperation Baltic Sea), which aimed to exchange information between armed forces.⁸

The efforts to establish a Polish-Lithuanian-Ukrainian brigade were intensified at that time. During the visit to the Land Forces Academy in Lviv in July 2015, the defence ministers of the states concerned signed a technical agreement on detailed aspects related to functioning of the joint military unit and its command (LITPOLUKRBRIG). The brigade's priority was to be support for the Ukrainian army in reforms adapting it to Allied standards, and it was to be used in stabilisation missions, for example in Kosovo.

Baltic Cooperation. Poland cooperated with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in regional initiatives bringing together countries in the Baltic Sea basin. Its interest in these projects increased as the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea proceeded.⁹ Polish involvement included organising the Second Forum of the EU Strategy in Gdańsk on 24–26 October 2011, combined with the 13th Baltic Summit.¹⁰ The purpose of the meeting was, among others, to review this sub-regional initiative and to determine further steps to strengthen cooperation on the Baltic Sea. The review of the “Action Plan,” an attempt to adapt the Strategy's assumptions to contemporary challenges, initiated during the Polish presidency of the EU Council in 2011, was to be useful. This was related to nearly one year of work regarding the functioning assessment of the EUSBSR.¹¹

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ Its initiator was the European Parliament, which, in November 2006, adopted a resolution calling for the development of the EUSBSR, the first macro-regional EU strategy finally approved by the European Council in October 2009. However, in order not to expand the EU institutions, no new organisational forms were established for the strategy, and a separate budget was not guaranteed.

¹⁰ The organisers were the Baltic Development Forum, the European Council, the Marshal's Office of the Pomeranian Voivodeship, the city of Gdańsk and the Polish presidency of the EU Council, <http://uniaieuropejska.org>.

¹¹ *Conference Report. New Ambitions for the Baltic Sea Region*, 13th Baltic Development Forum Summit, 2nd Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Gdańsk, 24–26 October 2011, <https://ec.europa.eu>.

Cooperation in the Council of the Baltic Sea States, including with Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, was complicated by Russia's aggression against Ukraine resulting in limited cooperation. This hindered the implementation of regional and cross-border initiatives, as the CBSS format gained importance as an effective tool for the cooperation of the countries of the region with Russia, and from the Polish perspective, in particular with the Kaliningrad Oblast.

Energy Industry. Poland's actions towards the three Baltic States in the field of the energy industry were seen in the context of security, which resulted from Russia's dominance in this sector. Therefore, meetings at the working level were regular, and Poland's cooperation with the Baltic States to increase energy security strengthened after the annexation of Crimea. In practice, this meant the implementation of bilateral projects with Lithuania. In 2012, the Lithuanian Deputy Energy Minister Žygimantas Vaičiūnas met the Polish Minister of Treasury Mikołaj Budzanowski in Warsaw. The discussions focused on investments in energy infrastructure, including the LNG terminal in the port of Klaipėda, the connection of gas transmission networks of both countries, and the energy bridge between Poland and Lithuania.

During this period, decisions were also made regarding the gas interconnection GIPL (Gas Interconnection Poland-Lithuania), the implementation of which was considered crucial by the EU, which included it on the list of priority projects of Community importance (Projects of Common Interest, or PCI). The new cross-border gas pipeline would connect the natural gas transmission systems of Poland and Lithuania. The parties to the project were GAZ-SYSTEM S.A. and Amber Grid AB (the operator of the Lithuanian transmission system). The EC perceived the Poland-Lithuania interconnection as an infrastructure contributing to the integration of the European gas system and shaping the liberalised gas market in north-eastern Europe. At the same time, this project helped remove barriers of the emerging market by eliminating "energy islands" created by the Baltic States. In May 2015, the interconnector construction plan obtained EU financial support worth €10.6 million under the instrument Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for planning and design works and obtaining necessary permits.

Over this period, the Polish-Lithuanian LitPolLink power connection project was finalised. The first auction on the "Day-Ahead Market" took place on 8 December 2015.¹² However, the joint project between Poland and the Baltic States, to construct a nuclear power plant in Visaginas, Lithuania, was not implemented.

¹² The Day-Ahead Market (DAM) has been in operation since 30 June 2000 and is a physical spot market for electric energy.

Poland's participation was to guarantee an additional source of energy, especially for power shortages in the north-eastern regions of the country. The plans proved difficult to implement due to prolonged business discussions on the investment package of shareholders. Ultimately, implementation was blocked at the political level following a referendum in Lithuania, in which 60% of voters opposed the construction of a nuclear power plant.¹³

In the years 2011–2015, the Polish-Lithuanian dispute regarding the Możejki refinery, purchased by Orlen from the Lithuanian government and the Russian company Yukos in 2006, could not be resolved. In the following years, the profitability of the Polish company was affected by problems of cooperation between Orlen Lietuva and the Lithuanian Railways, and the dispute was ultimately to be resolved in court.¹⁴ The subject of the dispute was, among other things, the method of calculating fees for Orlen in transporting oil by railways. The Polish company believed that the fees of the Lithuanian carrier are too high. What's more, the Lithuanian Railways still did not complete the renovation of a several-kilometre section of the Możejki-Rengė route, which meant that the Polish company had to transport products on a much longer and more costly route.

Transport. Poland and the Baltic States continued their logistics and transport enterprises. On the Polish side, it mainly included the modernisation of the international E75 railway. This is part of Rail Baltica, in the trans-European corridor designed to connect Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland.¹⁵ In 2012, it was decided that the reconstruction and renovation of this line, on the Białystok-Suwałki section up to the Lithuanian border in Trakiszki, would be implemented in the new EU financial perspective. At that time, the Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Białystok issued an environmental decision for this investment.¹⁶

In addition, the works continued on the construction of the Via Baltica road connection from Warsaw to Tallinn, which is part of the international route E67. Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz announced in 2015 that the EC and the Member

¹³ "Naujos AE statybos priešininkai triumfuoja: referendumas įvyko," *Delfi*, 15 October 2012, www.delfi.lt.

¹⁴ A. Merkytė, "Už monopolinę veiklą „Lietuvos geležinkeliai" gresia kelių milijonų bauda," *Transportas*, no. 5–6 (53), 2015, www.zurnalastransportas.lt.

¹⁵ *Annual Activity Report 2012–2013 for Priority Project 27 "Rail Baltica/Rail Baltic" axis: Warsaw-Kaunas-Riga-Tallinn-Helsinki*, European Commission, October 2013, <https://ec.europa.eu>.

¹⁶ According to the environmental decision in north-eastern Poland, Rail Baltica is to run from Białystok via Elk and Olecko to Suwałki and the border with Lithuania in Trakiszki. "Modernizacja Rail Baltica po 2013 roku," *Forbes*, 27 June 2012, www.forbes.pl.

States, under the CEF, approved financing for the construction of the road on the Szczuczyn-Budzisko section. This meant that the entire section of this route running through the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship would receive funding.¹⁷

Bilateral Relations. Polish-Estonian cooperation in the years 2011–2015 picked up the pace. During an official visit to Tallinn in March 2011, Komorowski met Ilves and participated in the Polish-Estonian Economic Forum. Ilves took part in the Warsaw ambassadors' meeting in July 2013.¹⁸ In a previous year, Sikorski spoke about the modernisation of foreign service during a conference of Estonian ambassadors in Tallinn. Moreover, he represented Poland as a minister and speaker of the Sejm during the Tallinn Conference of Lennart Meri.¹⁹ In June 2014, Ilves took part in the Wrocław Global Forum, where he received the Atlantic Council Freedom Award.

Poland also intensified relations with Latvia. In February 2012, Bērziņš talked in Warsaw with Komorowski about economic cooperation, especially in the field of energy and European politics. A business forum with the participation of the Latvian president was organised in Kraków, and the honorary consulate of Latvia began its activity.²⁰ Poland was represented at the annual conference in Riga.²¹ In 2011, Tusk met there with the prime ministers of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland, to discuss security and cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.

The EU policy played an important role in Polish-Latvian relations, in particular, the fact that in 2015 Latvia took the presidency of the EU Council. The frequency of bilateral consultations increased because Latvia wanted to take advantage of the Polish experience. Importantly, during the Polish presidency, Lithuania and Latvia, cooperation concerning the Eastern Partnership was a constant priority of the EU agenda. All three countries organised an Eastern Partnership summit in their capitals, which in fact strengthened the possibilities of cooperation in creating the eastern dimension of the EU policy.

¹⁷ Ultimately, the S61 expressway will be approximately 235 km long. Diverging off the S8 expressway in Ostrów Mazowiecka, it will lead to the border with Lithuania in Budzisko through Łomża, Elk and Suwałki, through the Mazowieckie, Podlaskie and partly Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeships. It is part of the international European road E67 and the Via Baltica route, connecting Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, via Poland, with Western Europe. *Budowa krajowej 16 na liście priorytetowych inwestycji. Via Baltica z dofinansowaniem z UE*, 11 July 2015, www.premier.gov.pl.

¹⁸ During President Ilves's working visit to Poland, on 22 to 23 July 2013, a plaque commemorating Gen. J. Laidoner was unveiled at the J. Piłsudski Museum in Sulejówkę, www.tallinn.msz.gov.pl.

¹⁹ *Lenart Meri Conference 2013: "The North-South Split—Managing a New World Order"*, RKK ICDS, <https://lmc.icds.ee>.

²⁰ The honorary consul of Latvia in Kraków was Rafał Brzoska, president and co-owner of companies from Integer.pl Group (including InPost, InMobile). "Prezydent Łotwy otworzył konsulat w Krakowie," *Wyborcza.pl*, 17 February 2012, <http://krakow.wyborcza.pl>.

²¹ Riga Conference, www.rigaconference.lv.

Relations with Lithuania were not improved, and neither were disputes settled. What's more, bilateral meetings at a high level were gradually reduced, even though Komorowski was on his first trip abroad to Lithuania in 2010. In the following year, he participated in the Lithuanian Independence Day celebrations and met, among others, Grybauskaitė. Although participation in such celebrations was a tradition in Polish-Lithuanian contacts, it was not upheld by Grybauskaitė, who did visit Poland in 2012 or 2014. This was a manifestation of deteriorating bilateral relations. Over time, during visits of Lithuanian representatives to Warsaw, including Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius and Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius, Poland directly indicated that the improvement of relations depended on the resolution of the Polish minority issue in Lithuania.²²

The Polish Minority in Lithuania. The main Polish-Lithuanian disputes concerned historical memory, assessment of cultural heritage, the spelling of names, bilingual inscriptions and minority schools. The Polish position was hardened when, in March 2011, Grybauskaitė signed an act thoroughly transforming the current teaching system in Lithuania, including the education of national minorities. The greatest controversies arose from unification of the secondary school-leaving examination in Lithuanian, including in Polish language classes.²³ The initiative to establish a Polish-Lithuanian education committee did not help to resolve the dispute. After a meeting of Tusk and Kubilius, bilateral talks between representatives of education ministries were announced.²⁴ Finally, the new regulations were implemented, despite the opposition of Poles, who accused the Lithuanian authorities of, among others, failing to conduct a public consultation.

The problem got worse. In September 2015, Polish schools in Lithuania joined a general strike. Its organisers, Strike Committees of Polish Schools in Lithuania, the Forum of Parents of Polish Schools and School Defence Committees, said: "We are forced to take such radical moves due to the fact that so far our requests and demands have not been heard and implemented."²⁵ Tusk visited Vilnius and undertook to help the Polish minority (including support for teaching the Polish language). At the same time, a rally of several thousand participants was held in

²² S. Tarasiewicz, "Polsko-litewskie napięcie przed wizytą Butkevičiausa w Warszawie," *Kurier Wileński*, February 2013, www.kurierwilenski.lt.

²³ "Grybauskaitė pasirašė lenkų kritikuojamą Švietimo įstatymą," *Alfa*, 30 March 2011, www.alfa.lt.

²⁴ W. Wojniłło, "Oświatą zajmie się komisja polsko-litewska," *Wilnoteka*, 4 September 2011, www.wilnoteka.lt. Zob. I. Gasperavičiūtė, "Švietimo ekspertų komisijos darbo rezultatas—politikų užsakytas," *Aušra*, 2011, no. 23, www.alkas.lt.

²⁵ "Litwa: 2 września bezterminowy strajk powszechny w polskich szkołach," *Polskie Radio*, 28 August 2015, www.polskieradio.pl.

front of the Presidential Palace in the capital of Lithuania in defence of Polish education. The Polish government constantly emphasised that the real and formal problems of Poles in Lithuania are the responsibility of the Lithuanian authorities, because they concern citizens of this country.²⁶ Meanwhile, the Lithuanian side criticised the strike and Butkevičius rejected the possibility of fulfilling the demands of the protesters.²⁷

According to European standards, it is not controversial that Poles in Lithuania demanded the possibility of using the original spelling of names and surnames as well as bilingual inscriptions in public space. The Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities recognises this possibility in areas where the minority represents at least 20% of the total population.²⁸ Although Lithuania is a party to this convention, it denies Poles the right to use Polish spelling (similar restrictions apply to other minorities), relying on internal regulations. In the opinion of most Lithuanian elites, the Lithuanian constitution categorically states that Lithuanian is the only official language in the country. Allowing any other spelling would therefore be a breach of the basic rules. The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language repeatedly spoke in the same tone.²⁹

The Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (EAPL), by joining the government in 2012, as a result of crossing the election threshold of 5% and winning seven seats, did not contribute to improve the situation.³⁰ Despite the previous declarations of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (the main coalition force) that it would meet the demands of the Polish minority, no real results were achieved. This was mainly due to the lack of a sufficient majority in the Lithuanian parliament willing to support the change.³¹

²⁶ In 2013, the act came into force and students of Polish schools, with a different Lithuanian language curriculum than those in Lithuanian schools, had to take the school-leaving examination that did not take into account these differences. This constituted a fundamental charge against the actions of Lithuanian authorities, which, among others, in the teachers' opinion introduced the reform too hastily.

²⁷ According to the EAPL leader, about 20 schools have closed in recent years and there is a chance that more will follow, www.polskieradio.pl, Por. G. Kazėnas, and in: *Lenkų tautinės mažumos Lietuvoje identiteto Tyrimas*, Mykolas Romeris Universitetas, Vilnius, 2014, www.mruni.eu.

²⁸ *Konwencja ramowa o ochronie mniejszości narodowych*, sporządzona w Strasburgu 1 February 1995, (Dz.U. [Journal of Laws] 2002, item 209, no. 22).

²⁹ Valstybinė lietuvių kalbos komisja, www.vlkk.lt.

³⁰ P. Kępiński, "Majdany i bolszewizm są największym złem – rozmowa z szefem AWP na Litwie," *Rzeczpospolita*, 14 November 2014, www.rp.pl.

³¹ M. Jackevicius, "Prisiekė A. Butkevičiaus vadovaujamas ministrų kabinetas," *Delfi*, 13 December 2012, www.delfi.lt.

The EAPL's activity aroused controversy due to cooperation with the Russian Alliance, representing the Russian 5% minority in Lithuania. This problem grew primarily after the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of the Ukraine-Russia war. The controversy concerned, among others, pro-Russian content of public oratory by EAPL's head Waldemar Tomaszewski. Pinning the Gyorgijewska Ribbon, symbolising support for Ukrainian separatists during the Victory Day celebrations on 9 May 2014, was poorly received.

Economic Relations

Over the years 2011–2015, Poland's economic cooperation with the three Baltic States increased. The largest volume of trade concerned Lithuania, averaging almost 1.5% in Polish exports and slightly above 0.5% in imports.

Table 1

Poland's Trade Exchange with the Baltic States in 2011–2015 (EUR millions)

EXPORTS					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Lithuania	1,927.5	2,284.5	2,357.3	2,377.1	2,523.7
Latvia	843.2	981.4	1,309.8	1,635.1	1,462.7
Estonia	766.7	885.5	839.0	1,097.4	1,031.7
IMPORTS					
Lithuania	1,047.3	885.6	1,062.1	1,115.0	996.0
Latvia	244.3	228.5	243.7	393.6	356.2
Estonia	153.7	126.0	134.3	160.3	180.6

Source: Author's compilation based on data from the Główny Urząd Statystyczny.

Despite the problems in relations between Poland and Lithuania, economic cooperation did not deteriorate. In September 2012, a meeting of the Polish-Lithuanian Government Commission for Economic Cooperation was just one of its kind to take place between the ministries of economy of both countries within three years.³² What's more, since 2012, the Polish Business Awards promotional campaign was held annually in Vilnius under the auspices of the Ministry of Economy. Polish and Lithuanian companies that contributed to the development of bilateral cooperation were awarded. The establishment of a Polish-Lithuanian

³² The Polish delegation was headed by Deputy Minister of Economy Andrzej Dycha. "Polska i Litwa: będzie ścisła współpraca gospodarcza?" *Wprost*, 20 September 2012, www.wprost.pl.

Chamber of Commerce, which then had 27 members in March 2015, also indicated cooperation.³³

Asymmetries in Poland's relations with individual Baltic States also occurred in the sphere of investments, which, at the same time, focused mainly on Lithuania. It should be noted that, in 2014, there was a 42% reduction in Polish capital there, mainly due to a decrease in the valuation of shares of Polish companies, including Orlen Lietuva.³⁴ The sectors in which Poland invested in the Lithuanian market were primarily finance and insurance. The largest Polish investments were made by, among others, PKN Orlen, Lotos Group, PZU and Warta Glass.

Polish investments in Latvia increased. On the other hand, Latvian investments in Poland had not shown upward trends since 2008. The greatest potential for cooperation was recognised in the energy and transport sectors. The Polish-Latvian Business Forum, during the visit by Komorowski organised in Latvia in 2012, was devoted to these sectors.³⁵ This was an opportunity to start cooperation at the regional level of the Małopolskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodships with the Latgale region.

In Estonia, the largest Polish investments concerned the manufacturing sector, construction and the commercial and real estate industries. The level of direct Estonian investments in Poland included primarily trade, the financial and insurance sector, and industrial production.³⁶ Two Estonian companies were listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange (Olympic Entertainment Group AS (OEG) and AS Silvano Fashion Group). In March 2014, the Polish-Estonian Economic Forum was held in Warsaw with the participation of the presidents of both countries.

Table 2

Polish Direct Investments in the Baltic States (NBP, EUR millions)

Country/year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Estonia	1.5	2.9	-2.7	-0.9	53.3
Lithuania	-26.8	82.2	-14.3	-913	-101.0
Latvia	1.9	1.3	-1.9	7.9	8.6
Total	-23.4	864	-18.9	83.4	-39.1

Source: NBP cyclical analytical materials, *Direct investments-Polish*, www.nbp.pl.

³³ "Polsko-litewskie ożywienie gospodarcze," *Rzeczpospolita*, 1 September 2015, www.rp.pl.

³⁴ In Lithuania, 226 companies with Polish capital were registered (as at the end of 2014).

³⁵ During the forum, an agreement was signed on Polish-Latvian cooperation in the gas sector and an agreement on cooperation between the Polish Information Agency and Foreign Investments (PIAIFI).

³⁶ *Economic cooperation of Poland and Estonia*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych www.msz.gov.pl.

Table 3

Foreign Investments in Poland by the Baltic States (NBP, EUR millions)

Baltic States	2011	2012	2013	2104	2015
Estonia	-0.2	18.3	-2.7	-69.3	5.9
Lithuania	-13.5	3.6	-14.3	41.5	14.1
Latvia	-24.5	7.1	-1.9	29.1	11.8
Total	-38.2	35.5	-18.9	1.3	31.8

Source: NBP cyclical analytical materials, *Direct investments-foreign*, www.nbp.pl.

Social and Cultural Relations

In terms of social and cultural relations with the Baltic States, Poland focused primarily on cooperation with the communities of Poles living there. The situation of the population of Polish descent in each of these countries was different, as communities were more or less numerous. At the same time, significant changes occurred regarding the support of Poles abroad, as the budget funds for cooperation with the Polish diaspora since 2012 were taken over by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the Senate. The involvement of Polish diplomatic and consular posts also increased.³⁷

Lithuania could be clearly distinguished in comparison to the rest of the Baltic States due to the activities of the Polish Institute (PI) in Vilnius. It had a positive impact on the promotion of Polish culture, the more so that its activity gradually increased. It was involved, among other things, in organising the celebration of the Year of Czesław Miłosz in 2011. At that time, the International Centre for Dialogue in Krasnogruda, operating as part of the Borderland Centre in Sejny, also initiated its activity.³⁸

The review of Polish cinematography became a tradition in Lithuania and included Polish Film Week, during which film classics and the latest productions were presented with screenings of works by Jan Komasa, Jerzy Kawalerowicz, Wojciech Smarzowski and Michał Otłowski. The Polish-Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund showed great support for the development of Polish-Lithuanian

³⁷ *Rządowy program współpracy z Polonią i Polakami za granicą w latach 2015–2020*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, July 2015, www.msz.pl.

³⁸ The center “Borderland—of arts, cultures, nations” with headquarters in Sejny was established in January 1991 by the Voivode of Suwałki, Franciszek Wasik. Since 2000, it has been jointly financed by the Podlasie Voivodship and the Ministry of Culture. See: www.pogranicze.sejny.pl.

relations in the social dimension was, coordinating projects implemented jointly by entities from Poland and Lithuania.³⁹

In Latvia, the largest Polish populations are located in Daugavpils and Riga, and in the eastern part of the country, in Latgale. Due to the poor knowledge of the Polish language among this community, an important initiative proved to be the support of Polish educational institutions, which was undertaken by, among others, The Polish Education Foundation abroad. In 2015, it implemented the project “support for revived Polish education in Latgale, on the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the first Polish missions.”⁴⁰

In 2012, the ceremonial handing over of Latvian cultural goods lost during the Second World War was held at the Royal Castle in Warsaw. Research into the history of Poles in Latvia was also intensified. Since 2013, unique photos depicting the lives of the inhabitants of Latvia of Polish origin (from the beginning of the 20th century until 1940), documents and histories of places related to the Polish diaspora were placed on a new website *Polonika.lv*. This was created by the Polish embassy in Riga and financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁴¹ In 2014, The Chancellery of the Senate co-organised, with the Polish-Latvian Parliamentary Group, and the Latvian embassy in Poland presented the exhibition “Polish-Latvian Relations 1919 to 1991 in the Archive of New Files.”⁴² The smallest community of Polish origin lives in Estonia. Some of them operate in the Union of Poles. The organisation “Polonia” was supported by the “Polish Community Association,” the “Poles Help in the East Foundation” and the Polish embassy in Tallinn.⁴³

An important contribution to the popularisation of the region in Poland was editing the “History of the Baltic States” of the Estonian professor Andres Kasekamp, by the Polish Institute of International Affairs, in 2013. The Wrocław College of Eastern Europe also popularised literature and journalism of the Baltic States. An opportunity for discussion of Polish-Lithuanian relations was the cyclical International Congress of Lithuanians in Wrocław.⁴⁴

³⁹ Archives of the Polish Institute in Vilnius, www.lenkukultura.lt.

⁴⁰ The Union of Poles in Latvia, www.polonialv.lv.

⁴¹ *Internet history of Latvian Polonia*, www.msz.gov.pl.

⁴² K. Kleina, P. Świątecki (eds.), *Polska, Łotwa razem*, Kancelaria Senatu, 2014.

⁴³ K. Rytko, “Pokoleniowa układanka, czyli o Polakach w Estonii,” *Eesti.pl*, 20 June 2011, www.eesti.pl.

⁴⁴ Lithuanian Congress, www.labaswroclaw.wordpress.com.

Appraisal

In the years 2011–2015, Poland's relations with the Baltic States enjoyed the favour of the government, among others, due to greater interest in initiatives in the Baltic Sea basin. These relations were developed through work on the review of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea, and preparations for Poland's presidency of the Council of Baltic Sea States, followed by the presidency itself. Russia's aggressive policy in the region strongly determined this cooperation, especially in the security dimension, which brought measurable effects. The involvement in the Air Policing mission made Poland credible as a member of NATO. Poland, together with the Baltic States, also successfully sought to strengthen the Eastern Flank.

At the same time, thanks to cooperation with the Baltic States, which were at the time hosts of the Eastern Partnership summits, Poland could influence the shaping of the EU's Eastern Policy. The format developed in these years proved to be efficient.

However, Poland only partially managed to achieve its goals in the energy sector. The Baltic States, despite real interest and numerous declarations of cooperation, did not undertake the most important project, which was the construction of a joint nuclear power plant in Lithuania. What's more, the dispute between the refinery of the Polish concern in Możejki and the Lithuanian Railways was not yet resolved. The completion of construction and commissioning of the Polish-Lithuanian power bridge, which increased the level of energy security in the region, should be assessed positively. EU support for regional projects should also be considered a success in relation to the Polish-Lithuanian gas pipeline and transport connections. According to the assumptions, this accelerated work on such projects.

Trade relations were most dynamically developed with Lithuania. Despite this, the effectiveness of economic cooperation with the Baltic States did not significantly increase. The niches created, among others, by the digital industry, still remain unused. It could result from insufficient diversification of activities on the Polish side. The initiative to cooperate with these countries at the regional level should be assessed positively and may prove effective cooperation with Latvia.

While in 2011–2015 political cooperation with Latvia and Estonia was intensified, Poland failed to improve or even normalise relations with Lithuania. Despite the use of various strategies, from diplomatic restraint by waiting for Lithuania to act on its declarations regarding the Polish minority, to directly making bilateral cooperation conditional on solving these problems, the dispute

remained unresolved. Due to the strong influence of historical factors and the lack of political will on the part of the Lithuanian authorities, compromise proved impossible. This confirmed the need for more assistance to the Polish minority in Lithuania, especially when it comes to the possibility of education in Polish. An attractive offer of Polish language media could play an important role in promoting a good image of Poland in Lithuania.

Poland's Policy towards the Eastern Partnership¹

ELŻBIETA KACA*

Determinants

Poland's policy towards Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan (Eastern Partnership countries, EaP) over the period 2011–2015 was primarily determined by external factors. Russia's activities in the region and the limited possibilities of the European Union to respond to them were crucial. As the EaP developed, primarily in terms of the progress of negotiations on association agreements and visa liberalisation, Russia tried to increase its sphere of influence and to discourage EaP countries from rapprochement with the EU. It used economic and security blackmail, propaganda and new territorial conflicts.² The embargo on Moldovan and Ukrainian goods, taking advantage of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to influence relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan with the EU, and the annexation of Crimea and the start of the war in Donbas in 2014, are examples. Importantly, before the outbreak of the trade war with Ukraine in 2013, Russia had not formally raised any reservations regarding association agreement in Ukraine's relations with the EU.³

The EU could respond to Russia's policy in the region to only a limited extent. Due to low level of communitarisation of external relations and the required unanimity in foreign policy, the Union's response time was extended and the spectrum of possible actions narrowed mainly to financial assistance, trade (such as economic sanctions), energy and civil security. Its capabilities were additionally limited by its focus on current challenges, including the Arab Spring (2011–2012), the debt crisis (2011–2013) and migration (2014–2015), as well as the failure to include EaP countries in enlargement policy. On the other hand, the development

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² C. Bildt, "Russia, the European Union, and the Eastern Partnership," *ECFR Commentary*, 19 May 2015, www.ecfr.eu.

³ G. Wiegand, E. Schulz, "The EU and its Eastern Partnership: Political Association and Economic Integration in a Rough Neighbourhood," in: Ch. Herrmann, B. Simma, R. Streinz (eds.), *Trade Policy between Law, Diplomacy and Scholarship*, Springer, 2015.

of the Partnership was positively influenced by the involvement of Germany, including Chancellor Angela Merkel and the German-French consensus on the EU's Eastern Policy.

Another important factor was the divergent degree of involvement of the countries of the region in the EaP, dependent primarily on foreign policy orientation. Armenia's, Azerbaijan's and Belarus' extensive relations with Russia limited their interest in reforms promoted by the Union. The pro-European governments in Moldova and Georgia, involved in cooperation with the EU, were not interested, however, in undertaking significant structural reforms. Ukraine during Viktor Yanukovych's presidency conducted an ambiguous policy towards the EU and Russia. An event of key political significance for the entire EaP was Ukraine's withdrawal from signing the Association Agreement, containing the part on the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), at the end of 2013. This led to the "revolution of dignity," change of power, and an excuse for Russian aggression against Ukraine. As a result of these events, Ukraine focused on rapprochement with the EU.

An important condition was also that EaP summits were held at that time in Warsaw (2011), Vilnius (2013) and Riga (2015). Poland and the Baltic States were among the greatest proponents of strengthening relations between Eastern European and Southern Caucasus countries with the EU. Poland's presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011 was important for EU policy towards the EaP.

Internal determinants in Poland were conducive to the development of cooperation within the EaP due to the continuity of the Polish government's activities in this respect. From 2011, as in the previous term, until November 2015, a coalition of *Platforma Obywatelska* (PO) and *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe* (PSL) ruled.

Objectives

Poland's objectives towards the Eastern Partnership countries in the years 2011–2015 were a continuation of the policy pursued by the PO-PSL government since taking power in 2007.⁴ The main task was to support independence, strong statehood and the rule of law in these countries, and to promote good relations with Poland. The government believed that Eastern Policy should be implemented mainly at the EU level, due to the availability of its resources and the greater potential impact than action by individual Member States on both the EaP

⁴ Analysis of Poland's objectives towards the EaP was developed based on annual information on tasks of Polish foreign policy by the minister of foreign affairs in the years 2011 to 2015, strategy *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, www.msz.gov.pl and speeches and statements of the minister of foreign affairs.

countries and on Russia's actions. The EU's goal was to support the processes of political, economic and social modernisation of the EaP region. Such a policy was intended to lead to stability beyond the eastern border, and to build a peaceful pan-European order, thus ensuring Poland's security.

As a result, Poland promoted the EU's recognition of the pro-European aspirations of the EaP countries and confirmation of the possibility of their membership in the future. The partnership was supposed to pragmatically prepare the eastern neighbours for membership and was based on supporting transformation processes and moving closer to EU standards. The signing of association agreements and DCFTA, the introduction of visa-free travel, EU assistance in carrying out reforms, financing for infrastructure and energy projects, programmes supporting democracy, and the development of cultural and educational exchange were to serve this purpose.

The Polish government assumed an increase in its influence on the shaping of Eastern Policy in the EU and the development of the Eastern Partnership by its alliance with Germany and cooperation in the Visegrad Group and with the Baltic States. To continually expand the EU partnership activities and reduce the scale of potential conflicts with southern countries interested in developing EU relations with North Africa and the Middle East, Poland supported the development of the southern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Union for the Mediterranean. It asserted, however, that this direction of EU action could not be developed at the expense of cooperation with Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus. The Polish presidency of the EU Council, in particular, was to promote the EaP.

The EaP was also to help develop bilateral relations with eastern neighbours, protect the rights of the Polish minority in this region, promote Polish transformation experience, and build a positive image of Poland. The most important were actions towards direct neighbours: developing relations with Ukraine and pursuing a democratisation policy towards Belarus. Bilateral relations with other EaP countries were less important, although Moldova, having the most pro-European government among all EaP states, gained importance in the region.

Polish Actions at EU Level

Polish Vision of the Eastern Partnership. The Polish government tried to convince its EU partners to be more open to the European aspirations of the EaP countries. This was to be achieved by gaining support for strengthening their integration with the Union and, in the long run, including enlargement policy.

Until the Ukrainian crisis, the Polish government emphasised that, despite the resistance of some Member States to the enlargement of the Union, the EaP's

programme did not exclude membership, but provided for it in the long term. The condition was the progress of reforms in the EaP countries as well as a change in the EU's attitude towards enlargement. This position resulted from a critical assessment of the progress of reforms and limited opportunities to promote the EaP in the light of other EU priorities, including reaction to the Arab Spring or economic crisis. The exception was the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis when Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski was in favour of granting Ukraine membership prospects to encourage its integration with the EU. However, as the situation evolved, the Polish government withdrew from such declarations, arguing that accession would not be possible without implementing an association agreement.⁵

To encourage openness to the EP, Poland emphasised the economic benefits of the EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007 and the much better chance of implementing EU standards in eastern rather than southern neighbours. The government sought inclusion of references, in legal documents of the EaP, to Art. 49 TEU regarding the possibility of submitting an application for membership by any European country once the relevant conditions are met (conclusions of the Council for Foreign Affairs, summit declarations and association agreements). Such actions, however, met with opposition from some EU countries. Although such a reference was made in the 2011 European Commission review of the ENP,⁶ this phrase was not adopted by the European Council. In the case of an association agreement with Ukraine, Poland's efforts to include a reference to Art. 49 was vetoed by the Netherlands. Despite Polish ambitions, a reference to the membership prospects in the declaration of the Warsaw summit was not been introduced. As a result, the recognition of European aspirations and choice of certain EaP countries was the compromise and formula adopted in EU documents in 2011–2015, which did not imply, however, any obligations on the part of the Union.

In the absence of the EU's consent to include the EaP in the enlargement policy, Poland tried to obtain approval for a gradual tightening of integration, reaching further than the free trade area. In 2011, the government opted for a new plan for the EaP, which led to the determination at the Warsaw summit that the goal would be further integration within the common market, leading to the creation of a common economic area.⁷ No expertise was provided by the EU

⁵ A. Reichardt, "Eastern Partnership: From Association to Mobility. Interview with Konrad Pawlik, Undersecretary of State for Eastern Policy, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs," *New Eastern Europe*, 19 May 2015, www.neweasterneurope.eu.

⁶ *A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood. A Review of European Neighbourhood Policy*, Joint Communication by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission, Brussels, 25 May 2011, p. 14, <https://eeas.europa.eu>.

⁷ *Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit*, Council of the European Union, Warsaw, 30 September 2011, p. 3.

institutions to facilitate the Member States' discussions, which was probably due to the EU's reluctance to have stronger ties with neighbours.

In view of preparing for the Vilnius summit, Poland reiterated its postulate for the establishment of a European economic area for associated countries. However, due to the unstable situation in Ukraine and the aggression of Russia, the EaP met with criticism from some EU Member States (such as France and Italy) and some expert circles, which blocked the development of this concept. The partnership was accused of insufficient consideration of Russia's role in the region and underestimating the potential of its negative actions, formulation of too ambitious goals without offering partners security measures for the implementation of contracts, and too little diversification of policy. The EU institutions, newly elected in 2014, were also against the development of the EaP, although they declared a review of the ENP to revise its assumptions.⁸ Poland did not make far-reaching proposals regarding this situation. It mainly demanded greater funding and political support for the reforming states and increased pressure on security issues. However, the 2015 ENP review did not bring any specific changes in this respect.⁹

Association Agreements. For Poland, Association Agreements and DCFTAs were the main instruments for supporting the transformation processes in the region. With a view of advancing their signing and implementation, the government tried to initiate discussions about the Partnership in the Council for Foreign Affairs and Gymnich format (informal meetings of foreign ministers), especially during the Polish presidency of the EU Council.¹⁰ Over the period 2011–2013 and in 2015, the issue regarding the EaP and the political situation in the region was discussed at least three or four times a year in various configurations of the Council for Foreign Affairs and during the crisis intensification in Ukraine at most government meetings.¹¹

With regard to Moldova and Georgia, the negotiations of the association agreements were quick due to the strong commitment of both countries. The start of negotiations on part of DCFTA was agreed at the summit in Warsaw, and the whole agreements were initialled in Vilnius. In view of the Ukraine crisis, Poland sought to sign the agreements as soon as possible to minimise the

⁸ E. Kaca, "Is the Eastern Partnership Weakening? The Consequences of the EU Institutions' Power Shift to Neighbourhood Policy," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 133 (728), 25 November 2014, www.pism.pl.

⁹ E. Kaca, "Revision of European Neighbourhood Policy: Half-Hearted Reform," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 111 (843), 2 December 2015, www.pism.pl.

¹⁰ *Przewodnictwo Polski w Radzie Unii Europejskiej. Raport końcowy z przygotowania i sprawowania prezydencji*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, Warsaw, April 2012, pp. 179–180, www.msz.gov.pl.

¹¹ Analysis based on information available at European Council/Council of the EU, www.consilium.europa.eu.

possibility of Russia's influence on the countries being associated. At the request of the Polish government, the European Council decided to sign the DCFTA with Moldova and Georgia in summer of 2014, although initially the deadline was set for autumn.¹² The Union also negotiated an association agreement with Armenia, but, due to Russia's pressure, this country broke off the dialogue in 2013 and joined the Eurasian Economic Union.

The issue of concluding an association agreement with Ukraine remained problematic due to the ambiguous attitude of its authorities. This complicated Poland's aim to conclude negotiations of the agreement before the Warsaw summit and to ensure it would be signed in Vilnius.¹³ During the presidency of Yanukovych, the dialogue on this topic lasted too long, mainly due to the release of Yulia Tymoshenko as a condition imposed by the EU before it would sign the document. Despite criticism of Yanukovych's actions, Polish diplomacy tried to resolve the conflict between Ukraine and the EU. On the one hand, the Polish government believed that pressure on Ukraine to stimulate reforms and to resolve Tymoshenko's case should continue to the last moment before the Vilnius summit and that efforts should be made to convince the EU to sign the agreement because of Russia's policy in the region. Poland sought to organise an informal European Council meeting on the eve of the Vilnius summit, to obtain consent for a private placement of EU assistance to Ukraine, and to sign the agreement without additional conditions, which was realised.

In this view, Ukraine's resignation from association with the EU after Russia's pressure and the offer of a significant loan and reduction of gas prices was a big surprise for the EU. This meant a failure of diplomatic activities for the Polish government, caused partly by the EU's increasing demands towards Ukraine and its overestimation of the attractiveness of its offer. What's more, the EU was blamed for underestimating (despite Polish warnings) the scale of difficulties Ukraine faced in connection with Russian pressure. Ukraine was blamed for not indicating trade problems with Russia, and for failing to make an official complaint to the World Trade Organisation. However, Poland alone underestimated the possible effects of the loan agreement and reduction of gas prices between Ukraine and Russia in exchange for withdrawing from the agreement with the EU.

After the outbreak of the revolution of dignity, Poland successfully sought to uphold the offer to conclude an association agreement with Ukraine. After establishing a new government in February 2014, Poland attempted to have the

¹² *Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit*, Council of the European Union, Vilnius, 29 November 2013, p. 4, www.consilium.europa.eu.

¹³ C. Michalski, "Sikorski: Partnerstwo Wschodnie? To naprawdę działa," *Newsweek*, 28 September 2011, www.newsweek.pl.

document signed as soon as possible, which was agreed at the European Council in March.¹⁴ The political part of the agreement was signed in the same month, and the other extent in June. At the request of Ukraine, however, the economic part was to be implemented only from 1 January 2016, to avoid economic pressure from Russia.

The Crisis in Ukraine. Although the Polish government reasoned that Russia treats the EaP project as competition for its own policy in the region, it was quite cautious about this issue before the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis. It emphasised that the objectives of the EU and Russia are reconcilable. At the same time, it supported the EC's efforts to reduce Russian pressure on EaP countries, such as removing quotas for Moldovan wines due to their boycott by Russia or speeding up the decision to lift visa requirements for Moldova. Before the Vilnius summit, Polish diplomacy, taking into account the possibility of Ukraine signing the association agreement, did not assume Russian armed intervention there, but only economic sanctions, increased propaganda activities and influence on Ukrainian migrations to Russia, the stability of Crimea and Ukrainian public finances.

Since the beginning of the revolution of dignity, Poland actively worked to solve the crisis in Ukraine. Although, like the EU as a whole, Poland condemned the violence and called for a peaceful resolution of the dispute, it tried to keep diplomatic channels open between the EU and the Ukrainian authorities. At the turn of January and February 2014, Prime Minister Donald Tusk held a number of meetings, including with representatives of EU institutions and the president of France, the chancellor of Germany, and the prime ministers of the United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary to establish a common EU position on the Ukraine crisis.¹⁵ During Weimar Triangle meetings, Sikorski engaged in mediation between the Ukrainian government and the opposition on 20 and 21 February, leading to an agreement and a change of power in Ukraine.

Poland's involvement declined significantly after the outbreak of the war in Donbas, as it was not included in discussions on the peace agreement in the Normandy format. Although the Polish government did not clarify the reasons for this situation, the United States and Ukraine probably had a decisive influence on the format of these discussions, which involved only Germany and France from the EU countries.¹⁶ Perceiving Poland in the EU as a state too confrontational

¹⁴ *Rada Europejska w Brukseli: efekty dyskusji zgodne z postulatami Polski*, 6 March 2013, www.premier.gov.pl.

¹⁵ *Europejska trasa Donalda Tuska ws. Ukrainy: 5 dni, 9 wizyt, 13 spotkań*, 5 February 2014, www.premier.gov.pl.

¹⁶ "Prawy do lewego, lewy do prawego—zapomniany konflikt. Wywiad z byłym ambasadorem Ukrainy Andrijem Deszczycą," *Polsat News*, 15 June 2015.

towards Russia might be significant. The 2014 promotion of Tusk and Sikorski to high-ranking EU positions might also have played a significant role, as they were required to present a neutral position on the issue of policy towards Russia.

In this situation, the Polish government focused on helping Ukraine and shaping EU policy towards Russia. It promoted the imposition of sanctions on Russia, introduced by the EU in 2014, and then argued for their extension. It also joined the intergovernmental initiative of the Baltic and Scandinavian countries regarding the fight against Russian propaganda. In 2015, Poland organised a donor conference with the Netherlands, and €1 million from the Polish contribution was allocated to counter Russian propaganda as part of the European Endowment for Democracy projects (EED).¹⁷ The Polish government was an advocate for launching EU assistance for Ukraine while maintaining conditionality for such assistance. It supported all EC activities aimed at strengthening the country's energy independence and assisted in bilateral relations.

Support for Democracy. For Poland, supporting democracy was an important aspect of the transformation process in the Eastern Partnership region. In Belarus, it pursued an active democratisation policy, mainly due to the difficult situation after the 2010 elections, when the authorities decided to repress their own citizens. Therefore, in 2011, the Polish government led calls for sanctions against the Belarusian authorities by the EU, and actively supported the development of the EU's offer of assistance to the public and possible cooperation with the authorities should the political situation improve.

For all EaP countries, the key was to develop people-to-people contacts enabling them to gain direct experience of functioning democracy. Although the objective was speeding up visa liberalisation, its pace depended not only on the progress of the EaP countries in meeting EU conditions but also on the political decisions of the Member States. Poland tried to initiate discussions in the Council for Foreign Affairs on the state of negotiations. Due to the high involvement of most EaP countries, the results in this regard in 2011–2015 were satisfactory. The EU lifted visas for Moldova in 2014, and Georgia and Ukraine in December 2015 met the requirements of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan.¹⁸ Armenia and Azerbaijan signed mobility partnerships as well as visa facilitation and readmission agreements, and Belarus started negotiating agreements in this area in 2014.¹⁹

¹⁷ E. Kaca (ed.), "EU Communication Policy in Its Neighbourhood in Light of Third-Party Propaganda," *PISM Report*, 15 December 2015, pp. 17–18, www.pism.pl.

¹⁸ *Visa liberalisation with Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia*, DG Migration and Home Affairs, <http://ec.europa.eu>.

¹⁹ *Mobility partnerships, visa facilitation and readmission agreements*, DG Migration and Home Affairs, <http://ec.europa.eu>.

The Polish government also demanded an increase in funding of student exchanges with the EaP countries under the Erasmus programme and its application in this region on the terms applicable to the Member States. Because of the aid priority given to non-government circles after the experiences of the Arab Spring, the EC increased the Erasmus budget for the EaP countries by €30.5 million over the period 2011–2013.²⁰ The EC planned a further €210–217 million for 2014–2020 (an increase of 40% compared to the previous financial perspective). However, no rules for the functioning of the programme applicable to the Member States were introduced for EaP countries, probably due to their insufficient institutional capacity.

Poland also promoted increasing funding for NGO projects. It aided the instrument for supporting the development of civil society launched in 2011 and the EaP Civil Society Forum (the Polish government co-financed the participation of the Polish delegation in the 2011 meeting). In the same year, Poland proposed the establishment of the *European Endowment for Democracy*, EED, a foundation operating mainly in the EU neighbourhood and supported by the EU, but remaining outside the structures of EU funds. The initiative was adopted in 2011,²¹ but the foundation started operations in June 2013. Jerzy Pomianowski, a Pole, became its director, and soon stepped down as deputy foreign minister. According to Polish assumptions, the advantages of the EED were to be its flexibility and speed of operation, because it was planned as a structure with a low level of red tape and a wide catalogue of beneficiaries.²² The disadvantage, with a limited budget of €24.7 million in 2013 to 2015 (of which approximately 20% was Poland's contribution), was the fragmentation of funds among many countries.

Eastern Partnership Budget. The Polish government was in favour of increasing the budget for the EaP by increasing funds for the ENP. In the negotiations on the new financial perspective for 2014 to 2020, as a result of which the ENP budget was increased by nearly 40% (to €15.4 billion),²³ Poland was in favour of maintaining the current distribution of funds: 1/3 for the east and 2/3 for the south. Revising this solution might lead to a reduction in funding to the east due to the challenges of the Arab Spring. The Polish government sought to introduce a permanent budget solution that would enable the EU's "more (financial aid) for more (reform)" principle, announced in 2011, to be enforced. In 2012, after the Arab Spring, the EU increased one-off funding for the southern neighbourhood by €350 million, and

²⁰ *Erasmus Mundus in Eastern Partnership countries*, European Commission, September 2013, p. 19, <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu>.

²¹ *Declaration on the Establishment of a European Endowment for Democracy*, 18764/11, Council of the European Union, Brussels, 20 December 2011, www.consilium.europa.eu.

²² *Statutes: European Endowment for Democracy*, EED, www.democracyendowment.eu.

²³ *Financing the ENP*, European External Action Service, 18 August 2015, <https://eeas.europa.eu>.

for the eastern neighbourhood by €130 million.²⁴ As part of negotiations on the new EU budget for 2014 to 2020, despite resistance from Member States from the southern EU,²⁵ the EU institutions created a special financial reserve for reforming countries, amounting to 10% of the funds of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (approximately €1.5 billion) and introduced the possibility of adjusting the funds allocated to specific beneficiaries.²⁶

However, the application of the “more for more” principle brought mixed results in terms of impact on the implementation of reforms. The downside was that the additional funds were too low to encourage structural change in larger countries.²⁷ What's more, EU decisions on additional funding were of a political nature, and the EU institutions did not base them on a reliable system of monitoring changes.²⁸ Moldova was an example of receiving significant financial assistance (approximately 4–5% of the national annual budget in 2011–2013) despite little progress in reforms. On the other hand, there was some advantage in the “less for less” approach, for example by freezing part of the funds in the event of suspected failure to meet reform requirements for which the funds were allocated. This happened in Ukraine in 2013²⁹ and in Moldova in 2015,³⁰ and it served as a sign to them for the future.

Bilateral Relations³¹

Most Important Political Issues. Over the period 2011–2015, bilateral relations between Poland and the EaP countries were dominated by promoting the objectives of this initiative. In the countries negotiating association agreements, Poland encouraged the acceleration of reforms, and in the others, it sought sectoral cooperation with the Union. It also tried to handle bilateral issues, for example improving the situation of the Polish minorities, expanding consular

²⁴ E. Kaca, “Neighbourhood Policy: “More for More” Requires Stronger Union Diplomacy,” *PISM Bulletin*, no. 107 (440), 16 November 2012, www.pism.pl.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ “Regulation (EU) no 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014, establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument,” *Official Journal of the European Union*, p. 7.

²⁷ E. Kaca, *Przyszłość zasady...*, *op. cit.*

²⁸ E. Kaca (ed.), A. Sobjak, K. Zasztowt, “Learning from Past Experiences Ways to Improve EU Aid on Reforms in the Eastern Partnership,” *PISM Report*, April 2014, pp. 9–13, www.pism.pl.

²⁹ *Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Ukraine Progress in 2012 and recommendations for action*, Brussels, SWD (2013) 84 final, 15 March 2013, p. 2.

³⁰ “EU freezes Moldova financing until new government is formed—head of EU delegation,” *Interfax*, 8 July 2015, www.interfax.com.

³¹ Poland's politics towards Belarus and Ukraine are described in separate chapters of this volume.

contacts, deepening economic cooperation and promoting the Polish experience of transformation.

In relations with Ukraine in 2011–2012, the most important thing was to introduce visa facilitation in connection with the organisation of Euro 2012. The fees for issuing national visas were abolished, and new headquarters of the Polish Consulate in Lviv and several visa application posts were opened. In the years 2013–2015, efforts were made to improve the situation of the Polish minority. The Centre of Polish Culture and European Dialogue (the Polish House in Ivano-Frankivsk) was opened and the construction of a similar centre began in Lviv, the Polish-Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre in Kharkiv was opened and assistance was provided to Poles living in conflict areas (such as the evacuation of some Poles from Donbas). In solving problematic economic issues (such as late VAT refunds, difficulties with customs clearance, and an embargo on Polish meat), a partially lifted embargo on Polish pork was considered progress. Poland provided Ukraine with expert advice on the transformation process, in terms of local government reform and tackling corruption. Despite attempts at historical dialogue on the interpretation of the Volhynia crime, this issue was not resolved.

Relations with Belarus in the years 2011–2012 remained frozen due to EU sanctions. In the second half of 2013, in connection with the gradual release of political prisoners by the Belarusian authorities and the forthcoming EaP summit in Vilnius, Polish diplomacy began consultations on the normalisation of bilateral and EU relations. The discussions lasted until 2015 and concerned consular matters, trade and investment cooperation (such as the detention of Polish trucks at the border and the operation of the Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation), education, as well as the introduction of the small-border-traffic rules. A measurable result was the initialling of an agreement on cooperation in the field of education, regulating, for example, the rules of sending Polish teachers to Belarus, and the permission of the Belarusian authorities to launch Polish visa outsourcing centres. The rights of the Polish minority in Belarus remained a contentious issue.

In bilateral contacts with Moldova, the Polish government promoted mainly good practices in implementing reforms, for example, the decentralisation of the state. Poland took part in the work of the Task Force for Moldova under the protectorate of the Community of Democracies. In 2012, an Information Centre for Local Authorities was launched with Polish assistance and USAID (the U.S. Agency for International Development). Following the signing of Moldova's association agreement with the EU, the main issue was the development of economic cooperation. In February 2014, Undersecretary of State Katarzyna Kacperczyk visited the Moldavian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a group of

over 20 entrepreneurs from the financial, agricultural-food, municipal and energy sectors. In the same year, a protocol on cooperation in the field of economic diplomacy was signed, and an agreement on the protection of social security rights of citizens of both countries entered into force. Poland also granted a government loan of €100 million for the purchase of Polish capital goods, which was promoted among Moldovan entrepreneurs from the agricultural-food industry. In 2015, the topics of legal and treaty relations were discussed and a protocol was signed regulating the status of agreements between Poland and the former USSR, the first document of this type to be concluded.

Georgia was the most important partner in Poland's relations with the countries of the South Caucasus. The most important issue of bilateral discussions in the years 2013–2015 during association agreement negotiations was the Polish transformation experience, mainly self-government reform. In 2015, a memorandum was signed on the establishment of the Tbilisi Conference, a series of training sessions and conferences related to Polish support for Georgia in rapprochement with the EU. The signing of the association agreement provided the impetus for the development of economic contacts. In 2014, the Polish-Georgian Investment Forum and a meeting of the Polish-Georgian Commission for Economic Cooperation were held in Warsaw. The issue of energy cooperation including possible contracts for Polish companies, such as Grupa Lotos, dominated in relations with Azerbaijan, and there were discussions on prospects for economic, scientific and educational cooperation and visa problems for representatives of Polish businesses. The legal and treaty base of bilateral relations was also reviewed and regular consultations between the departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were established. In Armenia, in 2013, the Polish Language Centre was opened at the Linguistic University in Yerevan. In 2015, a declaration of intent was signed regarding the intensification of cultural and educational cooperation.

The State of Poland's Economic Relations with EaP Countries. In the years 2011–2015, Ukraine and Belarus occupied a special place in Poland's trade exchange with the EaP countries (Tables 1 and 2). Polish exports of goods to these countries had the highest value in 2013: over PLN 18 billion in the case of Ukraine and about PLN 7.6 billion with Belarus. In subsequent years, these values dropped. This was mainly due to the significant economic slowdown of these countries, the war in Ukraine, and the improvement of the economic situation in the EU, Poland's main trading partner.³² Exchange with other EaP countries remained negligible, mainly due to the lower economic potentials and long distances.

³² Based on ministerial reports on state of foreign trade over the period 2011–2015.

Table 1

Exports of Goods from Poland to EaP Countries in 2011–2015
(PLN millions)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Armenia	67.6	103.8	123.5	154.1	208.1
Azerbaijan	377.9	400.9	407.5	437.5	453.3
Belarus	5,470.0	6,561.2	7,619.6	6,706.5	5,025.3
Georgia	190.7	283.3	321.3	321.1	333.5
Moldova	561.9	691.4	1,132.7	1,031.2	578.3
Ukraine	13,854.1	17,189.9	18,019.8	13,137.0	12,452.9

Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, author's own compilation, 2016.

Table 2

Imports of Goods to Poland from EaP Countries in 2011–2015
(PLN millions)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Armenia	3.1	2.4	7.7	25.8	67.1
Azerbaijan	13.2	14.0	63.2	97.7	54.1
Belarus	3,963.3	3,235.6	2,453.9	2,653.1	3,132.5
Georgia	32.4	31.5	62.2	67.1	159.3
Moldova	258.3	253.9	306.0	413.9	247.0
Ukraine	8,225.8	8,319.9	6,981.0	7,098.5	6,405.2

Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny, author's own compilation, 2016.

Poland exported to the EaP countries mainly highly processed goods (in the area of electromechanical and chemical industries) and agricultural food products. It mainly imported unprocessed goods and raw materials, such as metallurgical products, mineral raw materials and agricultural-food produce.³³

Although in the years 2000–2014 Poland had a significant foreign trade deficit,³⁴ the balance of its trade in goods with all EaP countries was positive.

³³ Based on *Economic Handbook of the MFA*, www.informatorekonomiczny.msz.gov.pl.

³⁴ D. Słomski, "Handel zagraniczny. GUS podsumował 2014 rok," *Money.pl*, 30 July 2015, www.money.pl.

The largest surplus was recorded in 2013 in relations with Ukraine (approx. PLN 11 billion, 0.7% of GDP) and Belarus (approx. PLN 5.2 billion, 0.3% of GDP). Fluctuations in the amount of the surplus depended mainly on the level of exports of electromechanical and agricultural-food produce, as well as the prices of imported mineral resources.³⁵

The percentage share of trade exchange with EaP countries in the total Polish trade was not significant. In the years 2011 to 2015, exports to Ukraine oscillated around 1.7-2.8% of all Poland's exports, while to Belarus accounted for 0.7-1.2%. In the same period, imports from Ukraine accounted for 0.9-1.3% of all Polish imports, and from Belarus for 0.4-0.6%. In terms of export volume, Ukraine was between eighth and 16th among Polish partners and Belarus was 21st-25th. In imports, Ukraine was 19th-22nd, and Belarus 28th-35th.³⁶

Trade in services with EaP countries remained at a much lower level than trade in goods. In 2013, most services exported from Poland went to Ukraine (worth PLN 6.3 billion) and Belarus (PLN 4.1 billion). The balance in trade in services with EaP countries in the years 2011-2015 was most often positive for Poland, except for trade with Georgia and Moldova. The largest surpluses were recorded in 2013, in trade in services with Ukraine (PLN 5.1 billion) and Belarus (PLN 3.5 billion).

The level of Poland's foreign investment in the EaP region was relatively low. At the end of 2014, FDI receivables in relations with Ukraine amounted to PLN 199.3 million, with Belarus to PLN 722.5 million, with Moldova to PLN 25.3 million, with Armenia to PLN 5 million, with Azerbaijan to nothing, and 0 and with Georgia to minus PLN 1.3 million. In total, investments in these countries accounted for only approx. 1% of all Polish FDI.

In the years 2011-2014, receivables from Polish direct investment in Ukraine decreased drastically after the destabilisation of the political and economic situation. During the same period, they gradually increased in Belarus. Other countries of the region were of little importance to Polish investors. In 2014, just over 50 companies with Polish capital operated in Moldova,³⁷ and individual Polish companies invested in the Southern Caucasus.³⁸

³⁵ Based on ministerial reports on state of foreign trade over the period 2011-2015.

³⁶ Based on the ministerial report *Syntetycznej informacji o eksporcie i imporcie Polski* for the years 2011-2015.

³⁷ "Premier i polski biznes z wizytą w Mołdawii," PAIZ, www.paiz.gov.pl; *Informacje o Mołdawii – dostęp do rynku*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Chisinau, www.kiszyniow.msz.gov.pl.

³⁸ "Information on the economic relations of Armenia and Georgia with Poland based on ministerial reports: Azerbaijan," *Informator Ekonomiczny Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych*, www.informatorekonomiczny.msz.gov.pl.

Among the EaP countries, the only major investor in Poland in 2011 was Ukraine. However, the level of Poland's undertakings in this country had been falling significantly since 2012. Over the period 2013–2014, all EaP countries recorded a negative or zero value of FDI receivables.

Partnership Countries, especially Ukraine, were a source of significant migration to Poland. According to official data, at the end of 2015, there were about 83,000 inhabitants of EaP living in Poland with permanent residence cards (39% of all cards issued), of which approximately 4/5 were Ukrainians (Tables 3 and 4). In 2011–2015, the number of cards issued to Ukrainians more than doubled.

Table 3

**Number of Residence Cards for Citizens of EaP Countries
(Excluding Ukraine) in 2010–2015**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Armenia	3,964	4,587	4,842	3,586	3,817
Azerbaijan	230	277	325	356	404
Belarus	9,249	10,310	11,160	9,924	11,172
Georgia	451	539	635	651	892
Moldova	776	840	876	782	729

Source: Office for Foreigners, author's own compilation, 2016.

Table 4

**Number of Residence Cards, Work Permits, and Work Declarations
for Ukrainian Citizens in 2011–2015**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Residence cards	29,746	34,303	37,679	40,979	65,866
Work permits	18,669	20,295	20,416	26,315	50,465
Work declarations	239,646	223,671	217,571	372,946	762,700

Source: Office for Foreigners, author's own compilation, 2016.

Citizens of the EaP countries had a significant share in labour migrations to Poland. In 2015, work permits for them accounted for 80% of the total issued in Poland, while in 2011 this figure stood at 54%. In 2015, permits for Ukrainians accounted for nearly 77% of all those issued.

In the years 2011–2014, the pattern of migrants from EaP countries taking up work in Poland based on permits changed (Tables 4 and 5). Despite the constant significant participation of Ukrainians in this type of migration, it has been significantly higher since 2013. In the years 2011 to 2015, the number of permits for citizens of Belarus and Moldova also increased, but not as much. The participation of citizens of the South Caucasus countries in these migrations was low.

Table 5

**Number of Work Permits for Citizens of EaP Countries
(Excluding Ukraine) in 2011–2015**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Armenia	457	457	448	363	140
Azerbaijan	55	78	96	103	116
Belarus	1,725	1,949	2,004	1,834	2,037
Georgia	157	174	203	225	88
Moldova	1,017	616	699	1,027	1,488

Source: Office for Foreigners, own compilation, 2016.

A significant number of migrants from the EaP region, mainly from Ukraine, undertook seasonal work in Poland (based on declarations of entrusting work to a foreigner for up to six months, not requiring a permit). Such Polish facilities concerned Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Armenia as well as Russia (since 2014). In 2015, approximately 762,700 Ukrainians started work of this type, along with 9,600 from Moldova, 5,600 from Belarus, 1,400 from Georgia, and 1,000 from Armenia (Tables 4 and 6).

Table 6

**Number of Declarations Entrusting Work to Citizens of EaP Countries
in 2010–2015**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Armenia	0	0	0	774	1,043
Belarus	4,370	7,636	5,194	4,017	5,599
Georgia	1,774	1,384	2,343	2,103	1,366
Moldova	13,024	9,421	9,248	6,331	9,575

Source: Office for Foreigners, author's own compilation, 2016.

Social and Cultural Relations. The attitude of Poles towards Belarusians, Ukrainians and Armenians in the years 2011–2015 was characterised by a slight advantage of sympathy over reluctance, while for Georgians this advantage was slightly higher. In this view, social-cultural cooperation was of great importance. In 2012, Poland adopted the “Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme 2012–2015,” with the provision of spending 60% of the budget on the EaP.³⁹ As a result, a total of approximately PLN 654 million was spent on assistance in the competition mode, small grants, scholarship programmes, government administration projects, multilateral assistance, humanitarian aid, and support for specific media in the years 2011 to 2015, with 44% of this amount in Belarus and 42% in Ukraine. These funds accounted for over 48% of Polish bilateral assistance in this period.

As part of development cooperation, numerous scholarship programmes were adopted partly or exclusively for students and doctoral students from the EaP countries. These included the Stefan Banach scholarship programme for students of specialist eastern studies at the University of Warsaw. In the years 2011–2012, around 2,000 such scholarships were allocated, most of them to Belarusian citizens (45%).⁴⁰ The attractiveness of Poland as an academic centre among students from Ukraine increased. In 2015, they constituted half of the approximately 57,000 foreign students in Poland.⁴¹

The Polish government implemented many programmes in the field of culture, science and education. Although cooperation agreements were signed with all EaP countries, the most apparent actions were conducted towards Belarus and Ukraine. Only in these two countries did Polish Institutes operate (out of 24 existing) by organising exhibitions, concerts and meetings. Over the period 2012–2015, the government’s support for the Polish minority in the EaP region gained importance. In 2012, the budget for assistance for the diaspora on a global scale increased threefold compared to 2011 (from approximately PLN 36 million to approx. PLN 100 million per year).

Appraisal of Poland’s Policy Towards the EaP Countries

Poland’s policy towards the Eastern Partnership countries has brought mixed results. The greatest progress was recorded in bringing its members closer

³⁹ *Wieloletni program współpracy rozwojowej na lata 2012-2015*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2012, www.polskapomoc.gov.pl.

⁴⁰ Own calculations based on annual reports of the Polish Development cooperation, polskapomoc.gov.pl.

⁴¹ Higher education, as of 30 November 2015, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, <http://stat.gov.pl>.

to EU standards. The signing of association agreements with the EU legally obliged Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia to introduce many provisions, mainly EU economic law. However, the success of the agreements will be determined by the quality of their implementation, which remains a challenge for these countries. Taking into account the EU's past experience with reform financing agreements (budget support), it is doubtful that progress will be rapid. Since the formation of the Eastern Partnership, the problem was not so much the adoption of the relevant provisions as the assurance of their correct implementation.⁴² The exception was the implementation of reforms related to visa liberalisation due to the high interest of the EaP countries. In the meantime, Polish diplomacy did not address the problem of low effectiveness of EU assistance, as it would require a change in the EU approach to financing reforms in third countries. Not being a significant donor of development assistance, Poland had no political arguments in this regard.

Progress was recorded in developing bilateral sectoral cooperation between EaP countries and the EU. The process of visa liberalisation and the introduction of visa facilitation developed rapidly. Many EU programmes in the field of education, science and culture were opened for the EaP countries. Financing of the European Investment Bank for infrastructure projects was increased. Even if their budget did not cover the development needs of the EaP countries, it was a step in the right direction. The results of these projects were apparent to citizens. Reforming the EaP's multilateral cooperation system, which in the years 2011–2015 was characterised by fragmentation of initiatives with a small budget, remained a challenge.

Increasing aid for non-government circles was also efficient. As part of the Civil Society Forum, NGOs from regime countries such as Belarus and Azerbaijan were active and had the chance to present their positions to the EU institutions. In addition, the establishment of the EED, despite a small budget, enabled flexible financing of the activity of non-governmental organisations in crisis situations. The problem remains highly bureaucratic as the EU aid programmes finance large grants and do not reach local organizations.

Poland failed to encourage other EU countries to confirm the long-term membership prospects of the EaP countries. Also, attempts to work out partnership development at the Union level towards the creation of a European economic area unfortunately failed. Taking into consideration the poor progress of the EaP countries in implementing reforms, however, it was difficult to argue for possible membership. Therefore, better targeted sectoral cooperation and

⁴² For more see: E. Kaca (ed.), A. Sobjak, K. Zasztowt, *Learning from Past Experiences Ways..., op. cit.*

increased funding for projects in areas such as business, transport or digitisation, that will actually link these countries with the Union, remains the challenge.

The EaP did not ensure stability in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood. The programme was not prepared to face Russia's aggressive policy and did not have instruments that would prevent it from increasing its pressure, which resulted from the limitations of EU actions in external relations in general. The Union, however, managed to achieve unity in the matter of adopting economic sanctions against Russia and coordinate actions with the United States, which was in line with Poland's position. Despite the lack of a lasting solution to the conflict in Donbas, the dialogue in the Normandy format brought relative stability providing Ukraine with time to normalise the economic situation. However, the absence of the EU's representatives in discussions deprived Poland of influence the course of events.

It is difficult to assess whether the Eastern Partnership programme improved Poland's political relations with the included countries, promoted the Polish transformation experience and created a positive image of Poland. It is clear that the Polish government subordinated development and sectoral cooperation, for example in education and culture, to the objectives of the EaP. However, assessing the effectiveness of these programmes requires a detailed analysis from the perspective of several years of operation. Based on the review of the meetings' results with EaP countries and government visits, it can be concluded that the EaP served only a minor role in solving bilateral issues. What's more, looking at the indicators of economic cooperation, it did not contribute to strengthening bilateral relations, although this was one of the declared objectives of Poland's policy.

Poland's Policy towards the Western Balkans

TOMASZ ŻORNACZUK*

Determinants

The Western Balkans¹ have not occupied a prominent position in Polish foreign policy. After achieving the strategic goals of membership of NATO and the European Union, Poland, in its activities towards regions outside the EU, focused on neighbours in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, covered by the Eastern Partnership from 2009. The Balkans are not in the immediate vicinity of Poland, and the wars in former Yugoslavia and the resulting political and economic destabilisation of the region did not have a direct impact on Poland's security. Despite the linguistic and cultural proximity to the Slavic countries of the Western Balkans, geographical distance and poorly developed political contacts also translated into poor economic ties.

Despite the declared goals of improving security and supporting democratisation as two pillars of Poland's policy towards the EU's neighbourhood, Poland's interests in relation to the Balkans, for many years after joining the Union, were limited to the first component. Poland continuously participated in almost all stabilisation missions in the Balkans from the mid-1990s, which was then justified by its efforts to join NATO. The purpose of achieving the security goals in the Balkans was also to support, often only declarative, the integration of the region with NATO and the EU.

In the first decade of the 21st century, Polish involvement in the Western Balkans, mainly through the lens of stabilisation missions, was a continuation of the approach from the 1990s.² The policy of many other European countries of the region was then primarily conducted in the context of EU enlargement.

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¹ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia (since July 2013 it has been a member of the EU, which excludes it from the Western Balkans group in the sense of countries aspiring to membership), Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo (in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and the opinion of International Court of Justice on the declaration of independence of Kosovo), and Serbia.

² T. Żornaczuk, *Poland*, in: R. Balfour, C. Stratulat (eds.), "EU member states and enlargement towards the Balkans," *Issue Paper*, no. 79, European Policy Centre, July 2015, p. 64.

A common objection towards Polish policy was the failure to turn military and police presence into greater political commitment. For example, the first working visit to the Balkans by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, in November 2010, came three years after he took office. Prime Minister Donald Tusk visited the region for the first time in May 2011, three and a half years after taking office. This fuelled the conviction that Poland had not developed a policy towards the Balkans, and the actions resulting mainly from the involvement of the EU and NATO “were not of a strategic nature to strengthen Poland’s interest in this region.”³ Analysts in their work⁴ and in media⁵ called on Poland to supplement security efforts with specific support for democratisation and European integration regarding countries of the region.

With only limited interest in bilateral relations with the countries of the Western Balkans, Poland’s policy towards the region at the turn of the second decade of the 21st century was conditioned by membership of NATO and the EU. On the one hand, this translated into a commitment to increasing security, and on the other hand, into support for the accession of the Balkan States to two organisations for which this was the only real direction of enlargement. An important factor determining the policy towards the Balkans was also Poland’s membership of the Visegrad Group (V4). Its other members, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary, put the Balkan countries high in the hierarchy of foreign policy goals.

The most important new circumstance affecting the policy towards the Western Balkans was the Polish presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011. In this role, Poland had to undertake or coordinate EU policy. At that time, enlargement was the most important Union policy for developing countries in Europe, and the Western Balkans became a priority direction. Additional impetus for this process was given on the eve of Poland’s taking over the presidency of the EU Council, when Croatia became the first country in the region to complete accession negotiations, after almost six years. Increased engagement in the Balkans was also necessary in connection with Poland’s presidency of the V4 from July 2012 to June 2013.

The factor determining Polish foreign policy in the years 2011 to 2015, including towards the Balkans, was the two-term coalition government (from 2007 to 2015) of Civic Platform (PO) and the Polish People’s Party (PSL) in Poland. President Bronisław Komorowski, elected in 2010 as the PO candidate, contributed to the

³ T. Żornaczuk, “Poland’s Policy towards the Western Balkans,” *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2010*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2012, p. 224.

⁴ See, for example: L. Jesień (ed.), “The prospects of the EU enlargement to Western Balkans, AD 2011,” *PISM Report*, November 2011, www.pism.pl.

⁵ See, for example: A. Balcer, G. Gromadzki, “Docenimy wreszcie Bałkany,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 27 October 2010, www.wyborcza.pl.

coherence of this policy. He was replaced in August 2015 by Andrzej Duda from the largest opposition party, Law and Justice (PiS). From November 2007 to September 2014, Donald Tusk was Prime Minister, with Sikorski as Foreign Minister. Ewa Kopacz replaced Tusk until November 2015, and Grzegorz Schetyna took over Sikorski's role. During the PO-PSL coalition, Polish foreign policy was based on the slogan "A strong Poland in a strong European Union". Poland's strategic thinking was defined by deeper political and economic integration, among other things by strengthening the EU institutions, an efficient and uniform market, and an ambitious budget with a satisfactory share of cohesion policy and common agricultural policy funds.⁶ The end of the coalition's rule in mid-November 2015 marks the end of the period analysed in this article.

Poland's European policy facilitated the transfer of democratisation and transformation experiences to the Balkan States on their path to the EU. Poland was perceived in the Balkans as an exemplary country undergoing these processes and making use of EU structural funds.⁷ This belief was strengthened by, among other things, Poland's uninterrupted economic growth, despite the second wave of the EU crisis in 2011,⁸ and by its increasingly improved positions in international rankings of press freedom and the fight against corruption, both persistent problems in the Balkans.

The enlargement of the EU to the Balkans enjoyed greater public support in Poland than in other EU countries. Poland topped the list for support in the spring of 2011, with 69% of respondents in favour of enlargement (the EU average was 42%).⁹ In the autumn of 2015, Polish support stood at 56% (three countries ranked higher), compared to an EU average of 38%.¹⁰

Objectives

Security and democratisation of the EU's direct neighbourhood, including the Western Balkans, are among the priorities of the Polish foreign policy. That

⁶ *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, www.msz.gov.pl.

⁷ In the Balkan media, articles appeared with titles such as: "Zašto su poljske regije najbolje iskoristile sredstva iz EU fondova," *Večernji list*, 11 September, 2013, www.vecernji.hr. The perception of Poland is illustrated by reportage of Serbian public television RTS1: "Solidarnost. Tranzicija. Poljska. Kako je sovjetski satelit postao najrazvijenija ekonomija na istoku Starog kontinenta?," RTS, 30 January, 2015, www.rts.rs.

⁸ "Učimo na primjeru Poljske: Zahvaljujući EU fondovima Poljska nikada nije osjetila pravi teret krize i recesije!," *Index*, 17 April 2013, www.index.hr.

⁹ *Standard Eurobarometer 75*, Spring 2011, www.ec.europa.eu.

¹⁰ *Standard Eurobarometer 84*, Autumn 2015, www.ec.europa.eu.

is why Poland consistently advocated an open-door policy for NATO and the EU. In addition to security issues, support for the aspirations of the Balkan States was linked to the priorities of Polish Eastern Policy. There was a conviction that the sooner the Western Balkans acceded to the EU, the sooner the Union would cooperate with the Eastern Partnership states in a manner that, in the future, would be transformed into dialogue on membership.¹¹

Over the period 2011–2015, in each of the five government statements on Polish foreign policy, the Western Balkans remained on the fringe. The government limited itself to expressing support for EU enlargement to include the countries of the region, and in 2013 welcomed Croatia as an EU Member State. In the 2014 statement, progress in the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo was recorded for the first time. In 2015, a commitment to lasting stabilisation and modernisation of the Western Balkans states was expressed.¹²

Political Relations

Security and NATO Enlargement. In the years 2011–2015, Polish participation in each of the three international stabilisation missions in the region continued. In Kosovo, the EULEX police mission was significantly based on the Polish contingent at that time. In 2013, in a mission of about 1,200 police officers from 30 countries, the Polish contingent numbered about 145. The KFOR force in Kosovo consisted of a contingent of 200 to 250 Polish soldiers, and the EUFOR mission “Althea” in Bosnia and Herzegovina consisted of approximately 20 soldiers.¹³

Poland supported the Balkan countries’ efforts to join NATO. In the past, it supported Albania and Croatia, which joined the Alliance in 2009, and Macedonia, whose accession was blocked by Greece due to bilateral conflict over the name of the Republic of Macedonia. However, Poland most actively supported Montenegro’s accession. There were several reasons for this.

¹¹ T. Żornaczuk, “Poland’s Policy...,” *op. cit.*

¹² The annual information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the priorities of Polish foreign policy for the years 2011–2015 is available at www.msz.gov.pl.

¹³ Every year, the President of the Republic of Poland extended the mandate of the Polish military contingent in the Balkans, numbering up to 300 soldiers and civilian army employees. “Prezydent RP przedłużył obecność PKW w Kosowie,” 28 December 2011, www.prezydent.pl. The size of the Polish contingent in Kosovo has been maintained at almost constant levels for years, despite the reduction of the KFOR mission from around 10,000 in 2010 to around 4,700 in 2015, e.g., in May 2012, the Polish contingent numbered 229 soldiers, in December 2013 there were 216 soldiers, and October 2015 there were 238. Temporarily, in November 2012, there were 117 Polish soldiers in Kosovo, and 155 in June 2013. *Kosovo Force (KFOR) Key Facts and Figures*, www.nato.int.

First, Montenegro was the only aspiring country with real prospects of membership, and it was in Poland's interests to maintain the dynamics of NATO enlargement. That is why it supported Montenegro's efforts at an early stage. In May 2011, during his only official visit to Podgorica, Tusk confirmed support for Montenegro's Euro-Atlantic integration. Earlier, in February 2011, Minister of National Defence Bogdan Klich signed a bilateral agreement on cooperation in the field of defence.

Second, progress in Montenegro's Euro-Atlantic integration meant a partial synchronisation of its policy with EU and NATO actions towards Russia, which was of great importance for Poland. In May 2014, just after the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Prime Minister Milo Đukanović assured Tusk in Warsaw of his similar perception of the threat from Russia.¹⁴ Such statements were presented when Montenegro joined Western countries' in sanctioning Russia.

Third, Montenegro's membership invitation was to be extended during the Alliance summit in Poland in July 2016, or in the preceding months. Therefore, the future accession of Montenegro was the main reason for the visit of Schetyna (together with the foreign ministers of Croatia, Romania and Hungary) to Podgorica in July 2015. During the visit, the Polish press reported that Schetyna would persuade Alliance partners to submit an invitation to Montenegro in 2015.¹⁵ A month later, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Tomasz Siemoniak informed the Montenegrin Defence Minister Milica Pejanović-Đurišić in Podgorica that the invitation could be issued during the October meeting of NATO defence ministers. He also gave assurances of Poland's readiness to become an advocate for such a solution. Poland was perceived by Montenegro as a country showing unconditional support for its accession to the Alliance, which was expressed by the reception of Siemoniak by President Filip Vujanović.¹⁶ Montenegro was invited to join the alliance in December 2015.

Enlargement of the EU. Poland supported the accession of the Balkan countries to the EU, including from the position of the informal group "Friends of Enlargement."¹⁷ Strengthening activities for the enlargement of the Union,

¹⁴ "Polskie wsparcie dla Czarnogóry w drodze do UE i NATO," *TVP Parlament*, 13 May 2014, www.tvpparlament.pl.

¹⁵ "Schetyna: zaprosimy Czarnogórę do NATO," *Wprost*, 23 July 2015, www.wprost.pl.

¹⁶ "Wicepremier Tomasz Siemoniak w Czarnogórze," *Polska Zbrojna*, 19 August 2015, www.polskazbrojna.pl.

¹⁷ Apart from Poland, the group consisted of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Spain, Lithuania, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Italy. The meetings at working level were held at the time twice a year. They served the exchange of information on bilateral relations with countries aspiring to membership of the Union and general observations regarding enlargement policy.

previously often limited to declarative support, was demanded by the Polish presidency of the EU Council in 2011. As part of the preparations, Sikorski visited Serbia and Macedonia in November 2010, and then Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina in May 2011. Also in May, Tusk visited Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. The first Polish visits to the Western Balkans at such a level for the past several years were aimed at ensuring the EU's attachment to the priorities in the region.

The Polish presidency's programme included EU enlargement under the third and last priority: "Europe benefiting from openness," the main point of which was the Eastern Partnership summit in Warsaw. In the enlargement policy, the programme's objective was the signing of the accession treaty with Croatia, and support for the European aspirations of the Western Balkan countries was mentioned after the readiness to continue accession negotiations with Turkey and Iceland.¹⁸

Among the goals of the Polish presidency in relation to the Balkans—apart from signing the accession treaty with Croatia—were starting accession negotiations with Montenegro, and granting Serbia candidate of membership status.¹⁹ Eventually, only the objective regarding Croatia was achieved. Reaching this goal did not require actions from the presidency and resulted from the calendar of the accession procedure. In September 2011, Tusk went to Zagreb with a draft of the accession treaty. It was signed in December in Brussels, not in Warsaw, as initially assumed by the Polish government.

Polish interest in the Balkans at a high political level decreased again after the end of the presidency of the EU Council. Poland ratified the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Serbia as the 22nd of the 27 Member States in January 2012 (the first countries did this 18 months earlier).²⁰ What's more,

¹⁸ *Program polskiej prezydencji w Radzie Unii Europejskiej*, www.mf.gov.pl. Some Polish candidates perceived EU enlargement similarly in the 2014 European elections. In a *Rzeczpospolita* survey, one of 12 questions asked: "Are you in favour of enlargement of the EU to new countries (if so, which ones? for example, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Turkey), even at the expense of reducing structural funds for Poland in the future?" The Western Balkans often did not appear in the responses or were mentioned only after the countries stated in the question. Compare, e.g., "Ankieta 'Rzeczpospolitej': Krzysztof Iszkowski (Europa + Twój Ruch, Miejsce 3, Okręg nr 4, Warszawa)," *Rzeczpospolita*, 23 March 2014, www.rp.pl.

¹⁹ These goals were presented by the Secretary of State for European Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mikołaj Dowgielewicz on 29 June, 2011 during a conference at the College of Europe in Natolin.

²⁰ Inertia in this case was associated with a dispute with Serbia over the building of its embassy in Warsaw. Shortly after ratifying the agreement, the media reported an attempt to transfer the private dispute to an international level. An Italian politician of Polish origin, Jas Gawronski, claimed hereditary rights to the building. See, for example: W. Ferfecki, "Włoski polityk lobbował u Tuska i Komorowskiego," *TVP Info*, 15 March 2012, www.tvp.info.

some subsequent government actions were in opposition to the previously formulated objectives. In February 2012, Poland was among three countries to express reservations about granting Serbia candidate status, which was noted in both Belgrade and Brussels.²¹ The foreign press reported that the basis for Polish doubts were Serbia's close relations with Russia.

Poland ratified the accession treaty with Croatia in September 2012, eight months after the membership referendum, as the 14th EU country to do so. A year earlier, during the Polish presidency of the EU Council, Sikorski informed Croatian Foreign Minister Gordan Jadrankovic that Poland would be among the first to ratify the treaty.²² While the government showed no consistency in this matter, the opposition party PiS tried to hinder the ratification. PiS, though, declared support for EU enlargement, despite unflattering comments about Poland's membership of the Union itself.²³ However, in July 2012, at a meeting of the Polish lower house (Sejm) committees of foreign affairs and the European Union, PiS proposed ratification of Croatia's accession treaty based on Art. 90 of the Polish constitution (a majority of two-thirds of votes in the Sejm and the upper house, the Senate, thus requiring opposition support), and not pursuant to Art. 89, which would require only a simple majority—the government's recommendation. Other parties accused PiS of using the EU enlargement process for internal party purposes, indicating that the government co-created by this group in 2005 to 2007 proceeded with an analogous treaty on the accession of Bulgaria and Romania by applying Art. 89.²⁴ Ultimately, all MPs save one abstention voted in favour of ratification. Earlier, PiS declared that it would not associate the EU enlargement with internal policy, in response to the proposal of the Solidary Poland (SP) MP Ludwik Dorn (formerly PiS) to make this ratification, among other things, dependent on amendment to the Constitution or a referendum on Poland's accession to the Eurozone.²⁵ Croatian media reported that "the Polish opposition is blocking Croatia's path to the EU because of its own interests", which is, among others, "to slander Tusk in the eyes of the Union and Germany."²⁶

²¹ "Rumunija, Litvanija, Poljska Imaju Ograde Prema Kandidaturi Srbije," *Vesti*, 27 February 2012, www.vesti.rs; "EU Diplomats: Serbia to get Candidate Status," *EU Observer*, 28 February, 2012, www.euobserver.com.

²² "Poljska će među prvima ratificirati hrvatski ugovor," *Dnevnik*, 3 October 2011, www.dnevnik.hr.

²³ See, for example: E. Olczyk, "Modlę się, żeby UE się sama rozwalila," *Rzeczpospolita*, 1 June 2013.

²⁴ For more, see: T. Żornaczuk, "Potrzebne głośne 'tak'," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 8 August, 2012.

²⁵ "PiS odrzuca ofertę Ludwika Dorna związaną z głosowaniem nad traktatem akcesyjnym Chorwacji do UE," *Wpolityce.pl*, 31 May 2012.

²⁶ See, for example: "Poljska oporba zbog svojih interesa blokira nam put u EU?," *Večernji list*, 24 May 2012, www.vecernji.hr.

Coordination of activities related to EU enlargement at the regional level was also required by the Polish presidency of the Visegrad Group. The main event was the meeting of foreign ministers of the V4 countries, the Western Balkans, Romania and Bulgaria in Warsaw in October 2012. It was the first meeting during the Polish presidency in this format, initiated by Hungary in 2009. The multilateral initiative, called V4—a network of experts on the rule of law and fundamental rights for the Western Balkans, was presented at the meeting. Its purpose was to share Visegrad experiences of adapting EU standards in the indicated areas. As part of this platform, a meeting of the ombudsmen of the V4 countries and the Western Balkans was held in Warsaw, in March 2013.²⁷

Bilateral Relations. Poland has embassies in all Balkan countries with the exception of Kosovo. It is also the only EU country to recognise Kosovo's independence without establishing diplomatic relations. Despite the widespread diplomatic presence in the Balkans, bilateral meetings at a high political level were rare in the period in question. From 2011 to 2015, apart from the visits of Tusk and Sikorski (May 2011) and Schetyna (July 2015) to Montenegro, Tusk chaired the Polish delegation to Serbia during a working visit in June 2013.²⁸ Komorowski also showed little activity in the field of bilateral visits. He paid his only official visit to the Balkans in September 2013, when he went to Croatia and Macedonia.²⁹ Moreover, Tusk and Komorowski visited Polish soldiers and police officers in Kosovo.

The forthcoming presidency of the EU Council prompted Poland to establish the first bilateral, long-term tool for the Western Balkans. The Skopje Conference has been held annually since the autumn of 2010, as an institutionalised forum for cooperation at the expert level between Poland and Macedonia.³⁰ The objective is to share Polish pre-accession experiences with the Macedonian public administration. What's more, since 2014, Poland has been part of a twinning project in cooperation with Croatia and Germany, helping to strengthen the capacity of Macedonia's institutions involved in EU integration.

The strengthening of Poland's relations with Montenegro gained momentum after opening negotiations of its accession to the EU in June 2012. In October,

²⁷ *Ombudsmeni z Grupy Wyszehradzkiej i Bałkanów Zachodnich wobec nowych wyzwań*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 13 March 2013, www.msz.gov.pl.

²⁸ What's more, in July 2013, Tusk took part in the solemn admission of Croatia to the EU in Zagreb. He also participated in international conferences in Dubrovnik, at the "Croatia Summit".

²⁹ Komorowski met presidents of the Balkan States during multilateral events such as meetings of presidents of the Central and Eastern European countries. On the fringe of the Economic Forum in Krynica in 2015, Duda held discussions with the presidents of Croatia and Macedonia.

³⁰ The formula is based on the Utrecht Conference, in which Poland received help from the Netherlands on its way to the EU.

Sikorski and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Montenegro, Nebojša Kaluđerović signed a memorandum on European integration and cooperation agreement in the field of culture, education and science.³¹ A memorandum of agreement and cooperation in regional development was signed in Warsaw in November. In October 2014, Aleksandar Pejović, the Secretary of State for European Integration and Chief Negotiator for Montenegrin EU membership, paid a two-day visit to Warsaw as part of consultations on European integration. There, he met several deputy ministers and parliamentarians. In December, a memorandum was signed in Podgorica, on cooperation and exchange of experts between the ministries of agriculture and rural development. In the same year, in Warsaw, the Tusk assured Đukanović of Polish support for Montenegro's Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Tusk's working visit to Belgrade in June 2013 took place a few weeks after the European Commission recommended setting a date for the start of accession negotiations with Serbia. Tusk was accompanied by, among others, Siemoniak, Minister of Regional Development, Elżbieta Bieńkowska, and Under-secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Henryka Mościcka-Dendys. During the visit, a cooperation agreement in the field of defence and a memorandum on cooperation in the field of European integration were signed.³² Based on this, an expert seminar on the use of EU funds was organised at the beginning of 2015, and in June there was another on the subject of Polish integration experiences in agriculture. From 2014, Poland participated in the twinning project on human resources at the Serbian Ministry of the Interior.

A memorandum on cooperation in the field of integration was signed during the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania, Ditmir Bushati, to Warsaw in May 2014. Based on this document, an expert seminar was held in Tirana in December, on Polish experiences regarding, among other things, coordination of European policy, and a year later on the use of the EU funds.

The implementation of the Visegrad idea of expert cooperation with the Western Balkans in the field of rule of law and fundamental rights, launched in the autumn of 2012 in Warsaw, resulted in a meeting of the ombuds of these countries six months later. Poland took the initiative to ensure that meetings were continued in subsequent years. In 2014, ombuds for the children of the Balkan and Visegrad countries met in Warsaw. Based on the experience of this platform, Poland also developed bilateral cooperation with the Balkan countries. In 2014,

³¹ *Spotkanie Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych RP z Ministrem Spraw Zagranicznych i Integracji Europejskiej Czarnogóry*, October 2012, www.msz.gov.pl.

³² P. Malinowski, "Tusk spotka się w Belgradzie z prezydentem i premierem Serbii," *Rzeczpospolita*, 10 June 2013, www.rp.pl.

representatives of the ombudsman offices of Poland and the Balkan countries met representatives of Croatia, Greece and Turkey. Poland also shared its experience in the field of rule of law and human rights with Albania. In October 2013, ombud Irena Lipowicz met in Tirana with the management of several state institutions and took part in a Polish-Albanian seminar entitled *Defending human rights and the role of Ombudsman*. In May 2014, the president of the Albanian equivalent of the Supreme Audit Office, Bujar Leskaj, visited this institution. What's more, cooperation between these offices was conducted, from 2015, as part of the Polish twinning project, in collaboration with Croatia, to strengthen the capacity of external audit.

Expert activities aimed at individual Western Balkan countries, with the participation of Poland or on its initiative, were particularly intense in the years 2014 to 2015. In the autumn of 2015, the MFA presented a comprehensive concept for the entire region, and 24 public administration officials from all Western Balkan countries participated in the first edition of the *Enlargement Academy* in Warsaw. The aim of the project, with the participation of the ministries of agriculture and rural development, infrastructure and development, was to share Poland's experience of social-economic transformation, reforms adapting to EU standards, and the use of EU funds.³³

The Western Balkans were not included in Poland's development cooperation programme for 2012 to 2015.³⁴ At that time, development assistance from the Visegrad Group partners for the Balkans was calculated in millions of euro. Polish embassies in the region implemented "small grants" projects.³⁵ They did not apply to Kosovo, nor to Croatia, which was well-advanced in European integration. At the same time, the MFA donated PLN 800,000 through the Polish Humanitarian Organisation for the reconstruction of schools in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, destroyed during the floods in May 2014.³⁶ What's more, 37 Polish firefighters with specialised equipment went to Bosnia and Herzegovina to combat the effects of floods.³⁷

³³ *Przedstawiciele państw Bałkanów Zachodnich uczestnikami Akademii Rozszerzeniowej*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 5 October 2015, www.msz.gov.pl.

³⁴ *Wieloletni program współpracy rozwojowej na lata 2012–2015. Solidarność, demokracja, rozwój*, Polska Pomoc, 2012, www.polskapomoc.pl. Direct assistance to the Balkans was limited in 2010 to PLN 200,000, from PLN 1 million in 2009 and PLN 2 million in 2008.

³⁵ Detailed information on this subject can be found on the websites of the Polish embassies in Belgrade, Podgorica, Sarajevo, Skopje and Tirana.

³⁶ *Wsparcie ofiar powodzi na Bałkanach poprzez remont 3 szkół w Bośni i Hercegowinie oraz Serbii*, www.pah.org.pl.

³⁷ "Strażacy z Polski wyruszyli do zalanej Bośni. „Tam żywioł zniszczył praktycznie połowę kraju,” *TVNmeteo*, 21 May 2014, www.tvnmeteo.tvn24.pl.

Economic Relations

Polish trade with the Western Balkans was so small that it was not taken into account by the annual reports of the Ministry of Economy on trends in Polish foreign trade. Serbia and Croatia are the largest Polish economic partners in the Western Balkans. Trade in goods with these countries in 2015, similarly to previous years, accounted for almost 80% of Poland's trade with the region. In 2015, Serbia was the 36th destination for Polish exports and the 59th source of imports, while Croatia was 39th and 63rd in these fields, respectively.³⁸ In the Balkans, the Trade and Investment Promotion Department was represented only at the Polish Embassy in Zagreb.

The main Polish trade partner in the region changed. In 2009, Polish exports to Croatia were at twice the level of exports to Serbia, and imports from Croatia were almost three times higher.³⁹ This tendency began to reverse in 2010 and 2011 when Polish trade with these two countries was comparable. From 2012, both exports to and imports from Serbia were higher, and in 2013 they reached almost twice the value of trade with Croatia. This trend continued in 2014 to 2015 but was less distinct after Croatia's accession to the EU.

In the years 2011–2015, the increase in Poland's trade exchange with the region was distinct. Imports from the region's countries in 2015 compared to 2010 increased by 136%, and exports from Poland by 114%.

This dynamic was less distinct against the background of changes in the value of the entire Polish trade exchange. In 2010, exports to the countries of the Western Balkans accounted for 0.59% of all Polish exports, while imports stood at 0.14% of all imported goods. However, the absolute value of Polish exports and imports in the years 2010 to 2015 in relation to the region more than doubled, reaching 0.85% and 0.25% of the total Polish exchange in 2015.

³⁸ *Raport o stanie handlu zagranicznego*, and *Synteza informacji o eksporcie i imporcie Polski* for 2011–2015, available on the website of the Ministry of Development, formerly the Ministry of Economy, www.mr.gov.pl.

³⁹ T. Żornaczuk, "Poland's Policy..." *op. cit.*, p. 224.

Table

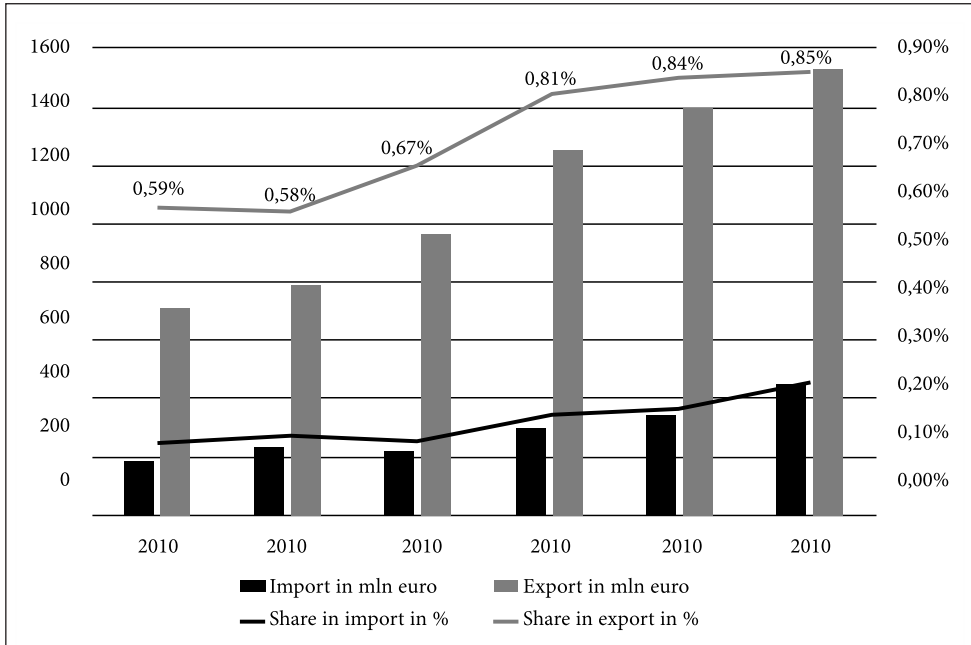
Poland's Trade Exchange with the Western Balkans from 2010 to 2015
(EUR millions)

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Serbia	Import	73.1	87.9	80.8	154.5	180.8	211.6
	Export	282.2	272.7	363.7	631.6	654.0	615.1
Croatia	Import	73.6	86.6	71.7	88.9	96.3	166.1
	Export	266.0	318.8	306.7	326.2	399.0	548.9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Import	24.2	38.5	45.7	35.0	39.0	33.9
	Export	85.8	109.1	170.7	155.1	165.5	185.7
Macedonia	Import	18.0	19.1	16.3	13.5	14.8	23.6
	Export	29.7	37.3	58.6	54.6	52.7	61.6
Montenegro	Import	1.0	3.8	4.4	4.5	7.0	7.9
	Export	8.8	10.0	11.5	14.3	39.2	19.2
Kosovo	Import	0.2	0.1	0.5	3.3	4.5	4.3
	Export	21.0	22.7	22.1	24.4	42.4	57.1
Albania	Import	0.5	0.9	1.5	2.2	2.6	2.9
	Export	19.6	19.6	34.7	40.4	40.6	40.7
Western Balkans	Import	190.7	236.8	220.9	301.9	345.0	450.3
	Export	713.1	790.2	967.8	1246.6	1393.3	1528.3
Poland's total trade	Import	134,305.7	151,291.0	154,934.1	156,318.7	168,366.4	177,182.0
	Export	120,482.6	135,557.8	144,282.4	154,343.7	165,714.9	179,532.6

Source: Author's compilation based on Eurostat data.

Figure 1

**The Absolute Value of Polish Trade with the Western Balkans
and the Percentage Share of the Region in Total of Polish Imports and Exports**



Source: Author's compilation based on Eurostat data.

Goods exported from Poland to the countries of the Western Balkans included, among others, internal combustion engines, car parts, mechanical and electrical devices, furniture, vehicles, mineral fuels, paper, wooden products, cosmetics, and agricultural and food products. Imported goods mainly included metallurgical products, agricultural and food products, mechanical devices and paper products.

One major Polish transaction on the Balkan markets was the sale of 200 Solaris buses for public transport in Belgrade. The value of the contract, signed in March 2013, amounted to almost €65 million (almost PLN 270 million).⁴⁰ However, there were also failures for Polish business in the Balkans, including the experience of the Ursus company in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Ursus factory was opened in Bijeljina in 2012, but it ceased operations in 2014.⁴¹

⁴⁰ "Potpisano: Stiže 200 autobusa za BG," b92, 8 March 2013, www.b92.rs.

⁴¹ "Ursus wychodzi z Bośni i Hercegowiny. Sprzedali Fabrika Traktora za markę," *Wyborcza.biz*, September 2014, www.wyborcza.biz.

Cultural and Social Relations

A maximum of several hundred Poles live in each of the Western Balkan countries. They are associated with Polish diaspora organisations, of which some countries have a few. There is no Polish institute in any of the capitals in the region.

Poland's promotional actions are undertaken by the Polish embassies. Polish Days were among the most important events in the field of public and cultural diplomacy. They were organised in various Balkan capitals, sometimes accompanied by economic forums. Not only cultural achievements but also tourism promotion and investment opportunities were presented. What's more, embassies organised various promotions of Polish literature, music and art with varying frequency.⁴²

Polish culture has become more and more known to the mass audiences of the Balkans. Since 2011, Belgrade has hosted the Polish Film Autumn festival. Polish films were shown at festivals in Sarajevo, Zagreb and Belgrade. The film *Ida* was displayed in some arthouse cinemas. During the Zagreb Film Festival in 2013, viewers saw several Polish films from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Occasional concerts by contemporary Polish musicians in the Balkan countries alternated with piano concerts featuring the music of Fryderyk Chopin. Poland was the guest of honour at the International Belgrade Book Fair in 2013.

The culture of Balkan nations was increasingly popular in Poland, including among mass audiences. Every year, as part of the Warsaw Film Festival, productions from the region are shown and sometimes they win the festival prizes.⁴³ Balkan cinematography is more and more often distributed in Polish cinemas, although usually in those of the arthouse variety. Balkan music is increasingly available in Poland.⁴⁴ It is also present outside of large cities, including at the Visegrad Wave festival in Czeremcha in Podlasie and (from 2013) at the Pannonica Folk Festival in Barcice in Kotlina Sądecka. Every year since 2012, the Serbian Culture Festival Vidovdan has taken place in Białystok, dominated by religious elements.

As in previous years, the Balkans occupied very little space in the Polish media. However, Croatia's accession to the Union, the floods in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and migrants and refugees heading to Western Europe

⁴² Detailed information on such events can be found on the websites of the Polish embassies in Belgrade, Podgorica, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tirana and Zagreb.

⁴³ In 2012, the Kosovo film *Kolumna* was awarded the audience prize for the best short film. In 2014, Croatian director Ognjen Sviličić received the award for best directing, for the film *Takie są zasady*. For more, see: www.wff.pl.

⁴⁴ Polish groups, such as Warsaw Balkan Madness and Balkan Sevdah and Sharena, toured all over the country.

through Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia, did attract greater attention. In March 2011, the Polish web portal *Balkanistyka.org* was created, offering news from the region.

Among the Balkan countries, Polish tourists most often visited Croatia. In 2011, almost half a million Poles holidayed there (compared to about 460,000 in 2010), in 2012, this figure stood at approximately 580,000, and in 2013 it reached almost 680,000. Similar numbers were recorded in the following two years. On the other hand, none of the Balkan States was among the most frequent visitors to Poland, although citizens of these countries began to be more noticeable after the abolition of visas for the Schengen area in 2009 and 2010.

The floods in May 2014 in southeastern Europe triggered assistance campaigns in many cities in Poland.⁴⁵ From public collections (among others, through the embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the embassy of Serbia and the consulate in Katowice), several hundred thousand zloty and tens of tons of gifts were transferred to the affected countries.⁴⁶

Expert work on the Western Balkans was continued by Polish centres studying international policy, primarily the Polish Institute of International Affairs and the Centre for Eastern Studies. Apart from regular analysis and policy recommendations about the region,⁴⁷ the publications of Polish Balkanists appeared in papers and the press in Poland and abroad.⁴⁸ These centres continued to establish contacts with research institutions and NGOs in the Balkans. The results of such cooperation were joint projects, events and publications, implemented with the support of the International Visegrad Fund, among others.⁴⁹ Senior politicians of the region gave lectures at seminars and conferences on the subject of the Balkans and their European prospects.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ "Pomoc z Polski dla dotkniętych powodzią krajów bałkańskich," *Wyborcza.pl*, 3 June 2014, www.wyborcza.pl.

⁴⁶ Up to 30 tons of gifts were collected. The equivalent of over €40,000 was paid into special accounts opened by the Embassy of Serbia. The Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church donated €10,000.

⁴⁷ See, for example: T. Żornaczuk, "How to Upgrade Poland's Approach to the Western Balkans? Ideas for the Polish Presidency of the V4," *PISM Strategic File*, no. 23, October 2012, www.pism.pl.

⁴⁸ Including Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Belgium, Great Britain, Slovakia and Hungary.

⁴⁹ See projects: "Thinking for Governance," carried out by PISM in 2013–2014, which resulted in publication *Civil Society in the EU Integration of the Western Balkans*, presented in all capitals of the region and several capitals of the EU; "Visegrad support for Serbia-Kosovo dialogue," implemented with the participation of PISM in 2012–2014; "European Integration of the Western Balkans: Can the Visegrad group Countries Serve as Role Models?" and "Current state of stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina—Possible Intensified V4 Contribution," implemented with the participation of OSW in 2014–2015. For more see: www.pism.pl and www.osw.waw.pl.

⁵⁰ Among others, seminars organised at PISM included "Kosowo: europejska perspektywa," 2011, "EU Enlargement Towards the Western Balkans," 2012, "Visegrad for Strengthening Democracy

Appraisal

The Western Balkans remained outside the priority areas of Polish foreign policy in the years 2011–2015. This is confirmed by the small number of contacts at the highest level, the limited reference to the region in government documents, and the lack of direct development assistance. Even during V4 meetings with the Balkan countries, Poland was most often represented by a deputy minister of foreign affairs, whereas the Visegrad partners were usually represented by a minister.

Poland's actions towards the Western Balkans, as in previous years, did not result from a comprehensive strategy. Although the MFA attempted to develop such a strategy in 2013, it was only in 2014 that a short government document entitled "Guidelines for the Government of the Republic of Poland towards the Western Balkans" was adopted. The lack of diplomatic relations with Kosovo, despite the rapid recognition of its independence, or the ambiguous support at times for Serbia on its path to the EU were examples of the lack of consistency in policy towards the region.

Although the Balkans were not perceived by Poland as a strategic area in the political dimension, military and police involvement ceased to be a dominant element of the Polish approach to strengthening security in the region. Political initiatives, which were absent during Albania's and Croatia's integration into the Alliance, emerged to accelerate Montenegro's NATO accession, particularly following Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014.

Poland's presidency of the EU Council in 2011 provided a greater incentive to act in the Western Balkans. However, some of the objectives regarding the region have not been achieved. Another impulse, six months later, was Poland's presidency of the Visegrad Group, of which an important element was cooperation with the Balkan countries. Some commentators of Polish foreign policy pointed out that "Polish diplomacy in recent years is increasingly aware that the creed of Visegrad and the EU solidarity should be, at least, kindness towards the V4's involvement in supporting the integration efforts of the Western Balkans."⁵¹ During the presidency, Polish initiatives for involvement were developed. EU and

in the Western Balkans: Poland's Experience with Cooperation between Civil Society and Public Administration," 2013, "Serbia i Kosovo: rok po porozumieniu z Brukseli," 2014, and the OSW-organised "V4 a Bośnia i Hercegowina," 2015. See more at: www.pism.pl and www.osw.waw.pl. At PISM, a lecture was given by the Deputy Prime Minister and Chief Negotiator of Serbia's membership of the EU, Božidar Đelić (in 2011) and the President of Croatia, Ivo Josipović (in 2014).

⁵¹ M. Gniazdowski, "Polska polityka w Grupie Wyszehradzkiej: paradoksy skali," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 2 (64), 2012, p. 61.

Central European activities translated into an intensification of cooperation with the region, including in the bilateral dimension at the expert level.

The first regular expert-level undertaking held in the Western Balkans since 2010 was the Skopje Conference. The number of initiatives grew, and their profile increased against the background of broader political commitment, especially in 2014–2015. Some trends were apparent in these activities, such as the focus on cooperation between human rights institutions, and the selection of Albania as the main recipient of shared experiences in this respect. Polish participation in twinning projects directed at the Balkans was a novelty. Transferring Polish pre-accession experiences, preferably to countries advanced in the process of EU integration, was much more apparent. The memoranda of European integration, signed between 2012 and 2014 with Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, indicate this trend.

In Polish policy in the Western Balkans from 2011–2015, there was a shift from perceiving the region almost exclusively through the perspective of security and towards EU enlargement. Poland was more visible in the region in connection with the preparation of the treaty on Croatia's accession to the Union during the presidency of the EU Council. The other elements were the support for Montenegro's membership of NATO' and Poland's much more ambitious expert cooperation programme than in previous years, the effects of which were most apparent from 2014 to 2015. These engagements revealed a departure from traditional Polish involvement in the Balkans, from policies implemented mainly through international and regional organisations to a more proactive approach to the region.

Thus, we may speak of the opening of a new chapter in Polish policy in the Western Balkans. It will be more difficult to describe Poland's attitude as a *désintéressement*, an accusation made by some other EU Member States in the past. It will also avoid the Visegrad Group being perceived as the V3 in the context of the Balkans, for which other V4 members blamed Poland. However, if Polish policy in the Balkans is really to take on a new quality distinct from that of other states, it should be based on a strategy focused on achieving specific goals and supplemented by, among other things, development assistance and intensification of contacts at the highest political level. This would also make activities at the expert level more apparent and would indicate a comprehensive approach to cooperation with the region.

Poland's Policy towards the Middle East and North Africa

PATRYCJA SASNAL*

Determinants

In the Middle East, the years 2011–2015 were full of unprecedented and historical events known as the Arab Spring. Mass revolts led to the fall of dictators, which resulted in political transformations and a period of destabilisation. In several cases, these revolts evolved into civil wars, often of regional (Yemen) and even global (Syria, Libya) importance. In other countries affected by the transformation, they became less violent, but bloody political changes ensued (Egypt, Bahrain). However, in one case (Tunisia), the revolt resulted in systemic improvement.

The year 2011 was full of dramatic political turns. In January 2011, President Ben Ali, who had ruled for a quarter-century, fled Tunisia. In February, Hosni Mubarak's government in Egypt collapsed and the army seized power. This sparked anti-government demonstrations in Libya, Syria, Bahrain, and Yemen. In March 2011, a coalition of France, the UK, and the U.S. launched air raids on Libya. The operation, eventually taken over by NATO, led to the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in the form of a public lynching in October 2011. The situation in Syria, three times larger than Libya in terms of population, developed more slowly, and European states and the U.S.—aware of the bad results of their involvement in Libya—did not intend to intervene openly. The war in Syria evolved into a conflict with international dimensions—Saudi Arabia vs. Iran, Sunnis vs. other factions, Russia vs. the West, Turkey vs. the Kurds, the West vs. the jihadist terrorist organisation the “Islamic State” (ISIS).

The years 2011–2015 were also a time of new Palestinian initiatives at the UN forum and their attempts to obtain the status of a member state. Another military example of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were two Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip in 2012 and 2014. Radical sentiment spread in both societies to the extent that in 2015 an immediate outbreak of the third *intifada* was predicted, mainly due to the numerous knife attacks by Palestinians on Israelis.

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The year 2011 was also unprecedented for Polish foreign policy. The first Polish presidency of the EU Council required Poland take a position on issues related to events in the Middle East. Its voice was to set the tone for the EU position. Moreover, the revolts in the Arab world under slogans akin to “bread and freedom,” similar to those from before the Polish transformation that began in the late 1980s, placed Poland well as a country with experience of the systemic reforms needed by the changing Arab states.

The region's extreme destabilisation followed by the return or persistence of authoritarian leaders conditioned the abandonment by the EU Member States and the U.S. of a policy aimed at democratising the Middle East in favour of stability at all costs. The chaos verging on civil war in Egypt—the largest Arab country—and a similar situation in Libya and Syria at the end of 2013 questioned not only the possibility of carrying out political transformation in such conditions but also maintaining lasting political relations with the countries of the region. This was mainly due to the growing terrorist threat resulting from the expansion of ISIS, which took Mosul in 2014 (the main city in the north of Iraq), then controlled the northeastern part of Syria and attracted more than 30,000 foreign fighters, including almost 5,000 from Europe and the U.S.

The circumstances intensifying the decline in interest in the Middle East were—overlapping with the deteriorating situation in this region—the outbreak of protests called Euromaidan in Ukraine in November 2013 and the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014. These events dominated Polish foreign policy for the following years to such an extent that the development of relations with countries of traditionally minor significance in the Middle East was abandoned.

What's more, the period 2011–2015 included the largest migration of peoples and the largest humanitarian crisis in the 21st century. In view of the war in Syria that had killed more than a half-million people, more than 4 million Syrians fled the country and more than 6 million became refugees within the country. Most Syrian refugees remained in neighbouring countries, although in 2014 and 2015 over half a million of them came to Europe. The migration crisis in 2015 was also caused by the destabilisation of Libya, through which the population of African countries reached Italy.

Aims and Objectives

Although one of the objectives of the Polish presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011 was to be strengthening the EU's awareness of the situation beyond its eastern border, the events in North Africa and the Middle East persuaded Poland to include these regions as well. It was impossible to ignore

the issue of social-political changes in the South and in exchange to promote the Ukraine issue.¹ Thus, events in the Middle East in view of the impending presidency of the EU Council meant that Poland had to define more precisely than before the objectives of its policy in the region that previously—with the exception of Israel—was of marginal significance in Polish foreign policy.

Over the period 2011-15, three main goals of Poland's policy towards the Middle East came to the fore: (1) the opportunity to share the experience of the Polish transformation with the Arab countries, (2) further search for opportunities to develop economic relations with the Middle East including the implementation of the LNG supply agreement signed in Qatar in 2008, and (3) an attempt to develop—in line with the mainstream European policy—a balanced position towards ongoing changes and conflicts in the region, in particular, Israeli-Palestinian. However, the emphasis on each of these objectives varied depending on the situation in the Middle East and North Africa.

The MFA has been working almost permanently on a document defining Poland's long-term strategy towards the Middle East (the last such project was developed in 2013), however, it was never finalised. The goals for this region were set out in the only official document on the priorities of Polish foreign policy for the years 2012-2016 as follows: "Poland is active in the face of changes taking place in the Middle East and North Africa. Offering its transformation model, Poland supports modernisation and democratisation changes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Poland will continue to support the activities of the international community aimed at a comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Arab conflict based on the idea of (the *two-state solution*) co-existing side by side, accepted by both parties to the conflict and supported by the members of the Middle East Quartet."²

Giving priority to communicating Poland's transformation experience was announced in a speech by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski along with government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011. He recognised the changes in the Arab world as the second biggest challenge for the EU. It was also one of the most substantial information from a minister on Polish foreign policy regarding the Middle East since 1990: "Just as the freedom protest and establishing 'Solidarity' on the [Polish] Coast in 1980 was a symbol of a certain era, this is how current events should be perceived in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya or other countries of the region. ... Poland has more to say in the area of political transformation

¹ See chapter in this volume: K. Borońska-Hryniewiecka, P. Toporowski, *Poland's Policy towards the European Union*, p. 134.

² *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012-2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, p. 20, www.msz.gov.pl.

than others. That is why we will share our experiences of freedom with Tunisians, Egyptians and all others who so desire. And also to make sure that—like in Russia in 1917, in Germany [in] 1933, or in Iran in 1979—greater freedom does not give an opportunity to extremists. We hope that the democratising Arab states will support the peace process between democratic Israel and aspiring-for-independence Palestine.”³

In the competition for good relations with the changing countries of North Africa, Poland, therefore, found a niche in competences related to systemic transformation absent in the larger, economically and militarily stronger states. Under the new conditions, Poland intended to make of it a *leitmotiv* for its policy towards the entire region. However, even in 2011, when interest in the EU's southern neighbourhood peaked and a review of European neighbourhood policy was planned, Poland's strategic and tactical goal was to influence EU policy changes—also in terms of assistance—for the East to benefit. The European Endowment for Democracy (EED) proposed in the minister's information from 2012, was to serve both geographical neighbourhood dimensions.⁴ The aim of sharing Poland's transformational experiences with the Arab world was repeated in the information from 2013, although briefly and in the context of Polish development assistance.⁵ In 2014, however, the minister recognised this assumption as an achievement in building a positive image of Poland,⁶ although conditions in the region significantly limited Polish activities at the time.

In 2011–2015, Poland intended to continuously develop economic relations with the countries of the region, especially in the area of the diversification of energy supplies. This was confirmed by the foreign minister's annual information on Polish foreign policy. In 2013, Saudi Arabia was mentioned in the context of commercial contacts and, in 2014, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with which exports increased by two-thirds, year on year. The minister even directly indicated that “the priority in contacts with non-European countries is, therefore,

³ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 16 March 2011),” see p. 11 in this volume.

⁴ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2012 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 29 March 2012),” see p. 27 in this volume.

⁵ “Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2013 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 20 March 2013),” see p. 41 in this volume.

⁶ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2014 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at the sitting of the Sejm on 8 May 2014), see p. 59 in this volume.

the economy.”⁷ Confirmation of the superiority of economic contacts in relations with the countries of the region was included in the information of the new minister, Grzegorz Schetyna, in 2015.⁸ It demonstrated that the Middle East was no longer a possible beneficiary of the Polish transformation experience (this aspect was omitted) rather that it was a partly destabilised region and partly a potentially important trading partner.

Aiming to develop a position in line with the European mainstream regarding the conflicts and changes in the Middle East, the Polish authorities called for an Israeli-Palestinian agreement and, since 2014, also to stabilise the situation in Syria. Poland's position on these issues, as well as on the agreement with Iran on its nuclear programme, coincided with statements by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton, and then Federica Mogherini. What's more, in Schetyna's information on foreign policy in 2015, he also supported strong leadership in the region by key, moderate countries. In this context, he mentioned Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, and Algeria, and he specifically distinguished Israel.

Political Relations

In 2011, Poland individually undertook more than 30 initiatives related to **promoting the Polish transformation experience** in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. Numerous activities in this area were continued until 2013. At the time, on the initiative of Poland, the EED was created and its executive director was Polish diplomat Jerzy Pomianowski.

Poland selected **Tunisia** as a priority country in the context of its activities in North Africa. In 2011, the government allocated PLN 1.5 million to help this country. In March that year, Poland delegated a task force to Tunisia from the MFA, which initially recognised the possibilities of sharing the Polish democratisation experience. It was calculated that having few budgetary resources for this purpose, Poland would gain greater visibility in this small country (about 10 million inhabitants) than in Egypt (more than 80 million inhabitants) although relations with Egypt were closer than with Francophone Tunisia. It seemed at the time that the image of France in Tunisia had declined and the Polish and Tunisian transformation shared similarities in the political sphere (significant role of trade unions, fragmentation of the political scene in the period immediately after the

⁷ *Ibidem.*

⁸ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2015 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Grzegorz Schetyna at a sitting of the Sejm on 23 April 2015),” see p. 77 in this volume.

revolution, need for constitutional reforms) and socially (homogeneous and religious society, high unemployment rate, disparities in regional development). In April 2011, Lech Wałęsa, and in May, Speaker of the Senate Bogdan Borusewicz, visited Tunisia. In July, in turn, the Tunisian Minister of Regional Development and Planning Abderrazak Zouari came to Poland and in November 2012, his successor Jamel Eddine Gharbi. These visits are only examples of high-level discussions, while at the level of NGOs, international organisations and analytical institutions, there were more contacts in the form of workshops, seminars, and joint press publications. The topics of local government reform and reducing differences in regional development in Poland during the transformation turned out to be particularly fruitful and aroused interest on the Tunisian side.

Cooperation with **Egypt** also developed dynamically because the Polish initiatives fell on fertile soil. In the first half of 2011, Egyptian diplomats in Central Europe were given the task of gathering information on transformation, which meant real interest in the Polish experience as well. In September 2011, the Egyptian Foreign Minister Muhammad Kamal 'Amru came to Poland. At the same time, Tunisian and Egyptian opposition leaders paid a five-day study visit to Poland, and in October, 15 delegates from Egypt, Tunisia and Libya observed the Polish parliamentary elections to gain experience with democratic electoral processes. In 2011 and 2012, the MFA organised the training SENSE (Strategic Economic Needs and Security Exercise) for several dozen Tunisians, Egyptians, and Libyans. In 2013–2014, Egypt plunged into internal instability, which resulted in an MFA warning against travelling to this country. This affected political contacts—in 2013 and 2014, there were two visits at the level of the deputy minister and only in April 2015 did the Egyptian foreign minister visit Warsaw.

Poland's high diplomatic activity in Egypt and Tunisia did not mean joining military operations against Gaddafi's rule in **Libya**. This decision was justified by new rules for Poland's military involvement abroad and the lack of a direct threat to the security of the country and its NATO allies.⁹ Nevertheless, while preparing for the Polish presidency of the EU Council, Sikorski was active within the international Contact Group for Libya. In May 2011, he was the first of the heads of diplomacy of the EU Member States to visit Benghazi, controlled by rebels. In July, this city became the headquarters of the Polish embassy in Libya, which meant Poland was taking a line against Gaddafi's government in Tripoli. The situation in Libya was also discussed in Warsaw with the Algerian foreign minister, with whom a bilateral air-transport agreement was signed on this occasion. In connection with the deteriorating level of security in Libya, the Polish embassy suspended activity on 31 July 2014.

⁹ "Tusk: Nie wyślemy naszych żołnierzy do Libii", *TVN24*, 18 March 2011, www.tvn24.pl.

Poland maintained the embassy in war-torn **Syria** until 27 July 2012, also representing the U.S. since February 2012. At the EU level, Poland was against lifting the embargo on arms supplies to Syria—facilitating re-arming of the opposition—and emphasized the dramatic situation of Syrian Christians and the threat of extremism. When chemical weapons were used against civilians in the suburbs of Damascus in August 2013 and the U.S. considered an attack against Syria, Poland declared that it would not participate in such an operation. Just before the Russian-American agreement on the removal of chemical weapons from Syria, there was speculation that Minister Sikorski was the author of this idea, which was partly confirmed in an official statement from the MFA in mid-September 2013.¹⁰ Polish interests in Syria over the period 2012–2015 were represented by the Czech embassy, and the Polish government—instead of directly supporting either party—favoured a diplomatic solution to the conflict.

In **Iraq**—especially in the west of the country—as the ISIS terrorist organisation was growing and religious divisions were deepening in the country, Minister Sikorski, together with ministers Carl Bildt from Sweden and Nickolay Mladenov from Bulgaria, paid a several-day visit to Iraq and Lebanon as EU representatives. Thus, they symbolically expressed interest in the situation in these countries and in Syria, also partly occupied by ISIS, despite the fact that their countries were not among the group of European states most actively dealing with this issue. After ISIS captured Mosul in June 2014, the costs of maintaining the security of the Polish embassy in Baghdad increased disproportionately to the relatively low level of Polish-Iraqi relations. Therefore, on 9 September, the facility was temporarily closed. It did not mean, however, the suspension of relations with the authorities in Baghdad, because in Erbil—the capital of the Autonomous Region of Iraqi Kurdistan—the Polish diplomatic post was still active. It had, however, much better contact with regional authorities than with Baghdad.

Polish-Israeli relations are more intense than bilateral relations with any other Middle East state. Although they have no strategic political significance, they have a special status. In the years 2011–2015, there was also an unprecedented strengthening of political, economic, and social bilateral contacts. In February 2011 in Jerusalem, the first Polish-Israeli intergovernmental consultations were held: Israel uses this formula, which assumes regular meetings of heads of government and ministers, only in contacts with close partners. During the meeting, prime ministers Donald Tusk and Benjamin Netanyahu discussed cooperation in the area of health, education, military relations, renewable energy, energy resources,

¹⁰ *Oświadczenie MSZ ws. poddania syryjskiej broni chemicznej pod kontrolę międzynarodową*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 12 September 2013, www.ms.gov.pl.

and history, resulting in seven signed agreements.¹¹ Both sides also declared the allocation of budget funds for youth exchanges and began discussions on cooperation in the field of new technologies. Further consultations took place in Warsaw in June 2013; however, their significance was not as high as Poland had wished. Netanyahu decided that in addition to meeting the Polish government, he would open the “Shoah” exhibition at Auschwitz. Therefore, the media response to the consultations was reduced mainly to messages from Oświęcim. Moreover, the discussions were organised in a hurry, preventing many important ministries from participating. Nevertheless, the two rounds of intergovernmental consultations contributed to a real increase in the level of bilateral relations and to the extension of areas of cooperation. The most important of them in the years 2011–2015 were research and development.

During the jubilee year 2015, when both countries commemorated the re-establishment of diplomatic relations in 1990, many conferences, exhibitions and other occasional events took place, which further strengthened bilateral relations. In June, Minister Schetyna celebrated the 25th anniversary of the reestablishment of relations during a visit to Israel. On this occasion, a jubilee declaration was issued (on 14 June) on bilateral relations, listing the most promising areas and trends in Polish-Israeli cooperation: innovations, including the announcement of the establishment of a bilateral Innovation Council, the growing importance of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, and increasing social and economic relations.¹²

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict means that Poland must periodically adopt a position on this matter in international forums. This took place in particularly important votes at the United Nations Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) forum in November 2011 on the issue of Palestine membership in UNESCO and the UN General Assembly in November 2012 on granting **Palestine** non-state observer status at the UN. In both cases, Poland abstained. These decisions should be seen in terms of European policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Poland at the UN—both when it held the EU presidency in 2011, and in 2012—proposed that all EU Member States abstain. Most countries did so on the first ballot, but unity was not achieved. In the second, Poland abstained, although Germany and others voted against granting Palestine non-state observer status. Polish-Palestinian relations cannot be close even for formal reasons. The Palestinian side, many times weaker and under Israeli occupation, cannot offer opportunities similar to those of other countries in the Middle East. Palestine is one of the

¹¹ *Wspólne oświadczenie premierów Polski i Izraela*, 24 February 2011, www.premier.gov.pl.

¹² *Joint Declaration summing up the last 25 years of Polish-Israeli bilateral cooperation*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.ms.gov.pl.

few priority partner countries in Polish development cooperation. Bilateral aid for Palestinians and through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Middle East (UNRWA) in 2011–2015 increased annually (from less than PLN 2 million in 2011 to PLN 3.89 million in 2015) and totalled about PLN 14 million.¹³

Military Relations

In military relations with **Israel**, in 2011–2015, there was relative stagnation related to controversies regarding tenders for defence systems—there was speculation that Israeli offers may have been favoured. As a result, the participation of Israeli entities in tenders for the modernisation of the Polish military was burdened with additional political baggage but that did not discourage Israeli companies from submitting offers. To a lesser extent, the slowdown in military contacts should be attributed to the differences between Poland and Israel in the assessment of Russia's actions in Ukraine. Despite the slowdown, two important defence events took place with the participation of the Polish and Israeli army in the years 2012–2015. In March 2012, Polish fighters from the base in Łask took part in joint air exercises with the so-called Red Squadron at the Uvda air base near Eilat on the Red Sea. In October 2015, six F-16 fighters and about 80 troops from a base in Krzesiny participated in the international manoeuvres *Blue Flag* in Israel.¹⁴ Working cooperation between defence ministries also continued, including the annual strategic dialogue.

In the framework of the agreement between Iraq and NATO at the end of 2011, 18 Polish military experts stayed in **Iraq** as part of the NATO Training Mission (NTMI). They organised foreign training for Iraqi officers and protected the Al-Rustamiyah military base, where they also trained an Iraqi guard battalion. Poland and Iraq continued military training cooperation and in 2014, officers of the National Defence Academy lectured at the Military Academy in Baghdad and companies involved in the Polish military-industry participated in tenders for equipment for the Iraqi armed forces.

Poland also cooperated in the military field with other countries of the region. In 2014, the Polish Chamber of Manufacturers for National Defence promoted its services in Lebanon, encouraged to do so after a visit of the Lebanese delegation to Poland (3–7 November 2014), consisting of representatives of the Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces. In December of the same year, an agreement was signed with the Algerian government on the protection of

¹³ See further annual reports about Polish Aid: "Dokumenty i Publikacje," www.polskapomoc.gov.pl.

¹⁴ "Polskie F-16 lecą do Izraela," *Polska Zbrojna*, 14 October 2015, www.polska-zbrojna.pl.

defence-related classified information. Joint training, among others, is provided for in the Polish-Saudi defence agreement concluded during the visit of President Bronisław Komorowski to Saudi Arabia in December 2013.

In 2011–2015, no major arms contracts with Middle Eastern countries were implemented. The largest of them amounted to around €83 million and concerned the sale of military equipment within three categories—aircraft, fire-control equipment, land vehicles and components—to Algeria in 2015.¹⁵

Economic Relations

In bilateral relations with the Middle East, Polish diplomacy put a special emphasis on the development of economic cooperation. This region owns resources of strategic importance, namely oil and gas, and capital, and is also a dynamically growing market for Polish goods and services. Nevertheless, trade turnover with all Middle East countries has not exceeded 1% of the total Polish trade exchange. In the years 2011–2015, Poland recorded the highest trade turnover with five countries of the region—Israel, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Algeria—maintaining a positive trade balance.

Table 1

Poland's Trade Turnover with Middle East Countries in 2011–2015 (in PLN millions)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Israel	764.2	762.7	865.4	1290.4	904.8
Saudi Arabia	538.4	623.9	795.9	861.5	872.1
Morocco	431.9	541.8	607.8	754.8	839.9
Algeria	403.3	473	535.9	736.2	811.9
UAE	351.9	379.6	395.9	721.2	628.9
Egypt	297.5	339.1	384.8	416.6	498.7
Iran	232.9	302.1	249	323.2	370
Tunisia	218	170.2	106.3	159.3	326.8

Source: author's compilation based on data from the Ministry of Development.

In 2011–2015, economic relations with Israel in the field of modern technologies strengthened. In Israel, Poland noted the model of a state effectively supporting innovation and became interested in the legal framework of the Israeli solutions. Israel also sought to promote its ideas and expand its market. During

¹⁵ *Eksport uzbrojenia i sprzętu wojskowego z Polski. Raport za rok 2015*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2016, www.msz.gov.pl.

President Komorowski's visit to Israel in November 2013, representatives of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the Israeli Ministry of Science, Technology and Space signed a letter of intent on scientific cooperation. The document enabled the expansion of cooperation, better exchange of experience, as well as drawing on Israeli achievements in the field of research and development. In the following year, a bilateral agreement on cooperation in the field of industrial research and development was signed in Warsaw (it entered into force in February 2016),¹⁶ facilitating cooperation between private and public entities in innovation. At the end of 2014, several dozen Polish and Israeli businessmen and scientists participated in the conference "Polish innovations in advanced materials and nanotechnologies" in Tel Aviv. Since 2010, the National Centre for Research and Development and the Israel Industry Centre for R&D have cooperated to support Polish and Israeli entities in the implementation of joint industrial and development research.

Each year, Israel is among the three Middle East countries with the largest trade volume with Poland, but in 2011 and 2012, it topped the list. However, the growth in trade value remained only at the few-percent level in the years 2012–2015. Food and electromechanical products dominated Polish exports to Israel, which—in addition to chemical industry products—were also imported most frequently by Poland.¹⁷

The analysed years were full of initiatives to deepen cooperation and promote Polish manufacturers on the Persian Gulf markets. Particular progress was made in relations with the UAE. In April 2012, an economic cooperation agreement was signed that became the basis for establishing the Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation at the ministerial level. The commission convened twice, first in Warsaw in February 2013 and then in Abu Dhabi in April 2015.¹⁸ After the first meeting, by a ministerial decision of December 2013, the Trade and Investment Promotion Section in Abu Dhabi was created—the first Polish trade office in the Persian Gulf.¹⁹ At the end of 2012, Emirates Airlines opened a direct Warsaw-Dubai connection. Bilateral economic forums and visits of the Minister of Agriculture to the UAE as well as investment and economic missions were held several times. The new, main topic of discussion in 2015 was cooperation in the

¹⁶ *Umowa między Rządem Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej a Rządem Państwa Izrael o współpracy w zakresie przemysłowych prac badawczo-rozwojowych, podpisana w Warszawie dnia 28 października 2014 r.*, Internetowy System Aktów Prawnych, <http://isip.sejm.gov.pl>.

¹⁷ The State of Israel. Information on economic relations with Poland, Ministry of Development, www.mr.gov.pl.

¹⁸ Note on Polish-Emirates Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Development, www.mr.gov.pl.

¹⁹ Apart from Abu Dhabi, there are four Polish Trade and Investment Promotion Sections in the Middle East: in Israel, Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco.

field of green technologies during the visit of the Polish environment minister to the UAE. The turnover with the UAE recorded a large increase in 2012 and 2013, and in 2014 it reached a level more than three and a half times higher than in 2011. Poland, at the time, recorded the highest turnover with the UAE among the Middle East countries, the reasons for which lie in the great re-export capabilities of the Emirates. Nevertheless, the abrupt percentage increases in exports resulted from the still-low initial overall turnover—one large contract is enough to increase turnover by several dozen percent, especially if Polish exports concern electronic devices (60% of Polish exports to the UAE in 2015 were mobile phones). Aluminium alloys and plastic products dominated imports.

In the Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia is still an important and prospective partner, despite the fact that bilateral contacts in some areas suffer from bureaucratic difficulties. One of them is the Saudi ban on importing Polish meat.²⁰ Positive steps include the signing of the convention on avoidance of double taxation in 2011 and establishment of the Polish-Saudi Chamber of Commerce in 2014. In April 2012, Prime Minister Donald Tusk, together with the minister of National Defence, the Treasury, and five deputy ministers of other departments and a group of businesspeople visited Riyadh. This visit at the highest level was the first since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1995. Another high-level visit took place in December 2013 when President Komorowski inaugurated the Polish-Saudi Economic Forum.

Polish exports to Saudi Arabia consist mostly of sound-recording devices, finished food products, and wheat while imports are dominated by petroleum, with a clear upward trend.²¹ Out of the 26.5 million tonnes of imported and processed petroleum in Polish oil refineries in 2015, 1.4% was imported from Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, 6.3% of the raw material was imported from Iraq to Naftoport in Gdańsk (a purchase by Grupa Lotos S.A.). This was a record share of oil from Arab countries in Polish oil processing.²² This single purchase from Iraq generated a five-fold increase in Polish-Iraqi trade in 2015 compared to the previous year and made the country the second-most-important Polish economic partner in the region, at a comparable level of trade to the UAE and Israel. However, due to the closing of the embassy in Baghdad and the destabilisation of Iraq, economic

²⁰ For more see: K. Brudzińska, P. Sasnal, B. Wiśniewski, "Energy and Meat: Towards Better Polish-Saudi Relations," *PISM Policy Paper*, no. 10 (58), April 2013, www.pism.pl.

²¹ The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Informacja o stosunkach gospodarczych z Polską*, Ministerstwo Rozwoju, www.mr.gov.pl.

²² *Raport roczny „Przemysł i handel naftowy 2015,”* Polska Organizacja Przemysłu i Handlu Naftowego, 2016, p. 14, www.pophn.pl.

relations with this country were developed mostly through the Kurdistan regional authorities rather than through Baghdad.²³

Table 2

Share of Middle East Countries in Petroleum Supplies to Polish Refineries in 2010-2015 (in 2011 and 2013, there were no deliveries from these countries)

	2010	2012	2014	2015
Iraq	–	0.5%	1%	6.3%
Saudi Arabia	–	0.2%	–	1.4%
Algeria	–	0.4%	–	–
Iran	0.5%		–	–

Source: author's compilations based on data from the Polish Organisation of Oil Industry and Trade.

In relations with **Qatar**, the years 2011–2015 are a period of stagnation despite expectations that after signing an LNG import agreement²⁴ the turnover balance would increase significantly. However, due to the prolonged completion and commissioning of the gas terminal in Świnoujście, the first LNG ship from Qatar, the *Al-Nuaman*, arrived in Poland only in December 2015. Until then, since the first Polish-Qatar economic forum in Warsaw in 2011, the most important event in bilateral relations was the opening by Qatar Airways of a direct Warsaw-Doha connection at the beginning of 2013.

Iran is traditionally a promising market in the Persian Gulf. However, due to the tightening of international sanctions in 2012, bilateral economic relations stagnated until July 2015 when the P5+1 negotiating group reached an agreement with Iran on its nuclear programme. In the years of stagnation, contacts with Iran were numerous but they did not concern economic issues and were rather symbolic (commemorating the 70th anniversary of the evacuation of Poles from the USSR to Iran in 2012 or the 540th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations in 2014). However, at the beginning of 2014, on the occasion of a visit by Minister Sikorski, a programme of intensification of economic relations began to be developed, anticipating the lifting of the sanctions imposed on Iran. From

²³ *Republika Iraku. Informacja o stosunkach gospodarczych z Polska*, Ministerstwo Rozwoju, www.mr.gov.pl.

²⁴ See: "Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 2010," Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2011, pp. 225–226.

October 2014 to September 2015, three bilateral visits at the ministerial level were paid and an economic cooperation agreement was signed (26 September 2015).²⁵

In 2012, the Ministry of Economy selected **Algeria** as one of the five most promising non-European markets next to Brazil, Canada, Kazakhstan, and Turkey. This allowed Algeria to be included in the three-year promotional programme in 2013–2015, thanks to which several dozen missions and conferences promoting bilateral relations were held. The new formal facilitations in business contacts include those signed in 2015: the “Declaration on economic and industrial cooperation between the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Industry and Mining of Algeria,” and the “Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the cooperation of the PAIIZ investment agency and the Algerian ANDI.” More than half of Polish exports to Algeria were food products, and more than 90% of imports were calcium phosphates.²⁶

Morocco and Egypt are also at the forefront of Poland's trading partners in North Africa. However, focusing resources on promoting relations with other countries and the periodic destabilisation of Egypt after the Arab Spring negatively affected the possibilities of developing bilateral economic relations. For example, in relations with Morocco, after the peak of 2014, the volume of turnover decreased. In the years 2011–2014, exchange with Egypt grew slowly to record a slight improvement in 2015.

Social and Cultural Relations

In the years 2011–2015, Polish-Israeli relations were strengthened in socio-cultural aspects the most. A landmark event in this respect was the opening of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews “POLIN” in 2013 and its permanent exhibition in 2014. Youth exchanges between Poland and Israel were also accelerated in terms of both the number and type of participants and the programme of visits. The number of young Israelis visiting Poland increased from 30,000 before 2011 to more than 40,000, of which about 5% were young professionals, such as firefighters, police, and soldiers. The visits of Israeli youth did not concern only a tour of places related to the Holocaust. A meeting with peers in Polish schools also became a point in the programme. In addition, bodyguards of the tour groups were forbidden to carry long firearms and guards began to be supplied by

²⁵ *Islamska Republika Iranu. Informacja o stosunkach gospodarczych z Polska*, Ministerstwo Rozwoju, www.mr.gov.pl.

²⁶ *Algierska Republika Ludowo-Demokratyczna. Informacja o stosunkach gospodarczych z Polska*, Ministerstwo Rozwoju, www.mr.gov.pl.

the Polish side. POLIN provided Israeli groups with high-quality substantive and logistics infrastructure.

Tourism is the area with the greatest social potential in contacts with Arab states. In 2011, Polish tourists in Egypt were the fifth-largest national group in terms of numbers—more than 500,000 tourists on an annual basis. Around 115,000 Poles visited Israel and Palestine and 90,000 visited Tunisia at that time. In connection with the terrorist attacks in Egypt and Tunisia, the popularity of these countries as holiday destinations decreased, for example, since 2012 the share of trips to Egypt in Polish tourism dropped from over 30% to just over 5% in 2016.²⁷ However, cooperation between cities and regions, including the Autonomous Region of Iraqi Kurdistan with Małopolska, Wielkopolska and Podkarpacie, Amman with Krakow, Irbid in Jordan with Czeladź, Kętrzyn with Jericho, or Częstochowa with Bethlehem, have developed well. Apart from traditional Chopin concerts, commemorations of subsequent round anniversaries of diplomatic relations, exhibitions of Polish artists, several innovative ventures happened, including concerts by Polish metal bands in Cairo in 2013 and 2014, widely listened to by young Egyptians.

Media reports had the greatest impact on the perception of the Middle East in Poland. Official actions cannot match their effect. One event that enjoyed media popularity was, for example, the participation of the Saudi Princess Amira al-Tawil in the 5th Congress of Women in Warsaw in 2013. Six months earlier, the first delegation of Polish women went to Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the negative perception of the region was deepened by reports on the activities of terrorist organisations, especially in Syria and Iraq, including the kidnapping of Polish photojournalist Marcin Suder in July 2013 by ISIS—he was released after four months of detention. In the context of the 2015 migration crisis, the Middle East featured in the Polish public debate. It became the subject of internal policy before the parliamentary elections in 2015 to a greater extent than in the case of the Iraq war in 2003.

Appraisal

In the years 2011–2015, the Middle East was an extremely difficult region from the point of view of Polish foreign policy. Changes in the Arab world in 2011 gave Poland hope to open a new and important topic in bilateral political relations by exchanging experience regarding transformation and democratisation. However, the destabilisation of the region in subsequent years resulted in a gradual decline in interest. In 2014 and 2015, there was no doubt that economic relations had

²⁷ *Raport: jak wypoczywali Polacy*, Polska Izba Turystyki, 25 January 2017, www.pit.org.pl.

priority in relations with the Middle East and other contacts lasted by virtue of mere continuation.

The effectiveness of achieving Poland's three goals in relations with the Middle East can be assessed as satisfactory, although the effects of actions promoting Polish transformational experiences could have been more apparent if more funds had been allocated. Then, for example, the establishment of the Institute of Democracy, negotiated with the Tunisian party, could have been achieved, although according to Tunisian experts, the visibility of Poland increased anyway.²⁸ The attitude of fear that events in the southern neighbourhood would limit the EU activity towards the East invariably weakened Polish involvement in achieving the first goal.²⁹ Nevertheless, the establishment of the EED should be considered an achievement as well as the fact that Poles were appointed as EU diplomatic representatives in Amman (Joanna Wronecka) and Riyadh (Adam Kułach).

The second goal—developing economic relations—was pursued by the Polish authorities with greater conviction, especially in the Persian Gulf, Israel, and Algeria. It also seems that the government drew lessons from failings of previous years and decided to strengthen economic initiatives with high-level political support. For example, an agreement on economic cooperation with the UAE was signed on the occasion of Prime Minister Tusk's visit, and an agreement on defence cooperation with Saudi Arabia on the occasion of President Komorowski's visit. The successes include not only the opening of the office of the Trade and Investment Promotion Section (TIPS) in Abu Dhabi but also its thought-out activities, including preparing a series of modern tutorials for Polish and Arab entrepreneurs. Contacts with that part of the world were certainly facilitated by direct-air connections with Dubai and Doha, opened at the turn of 2012 and 2013. There was also a gradual breakthrough in relations with Israel—cultivating historical memory stopped disturbing the establishment of cooperation in new fields, such as research and development. However, the delay in the implementation of the LNG supply contract with Qatar should be considered a failure.

The third goal—the Europeanisation of Poland's policy towards the conflicts and changes in the Middle East—was only partially achieved. In the face of the

²⁸ This is what Ahmad Driss, the director of the Centre des Études Méditerranéennes et Internationales (CEMI) in Tunis, assesses.

²⁹ For example, Donald Tusk warned that "nie można dopuścić do tego, by wydarzenia w Afryce Północnej zablokowały dalsze rozszerzenie [UE]" [we cannot allow events in North Africa to block EU enlargement]. "Premier Tusk dla pięciu wielkich gazet: Europa na ciężkie czasy," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 8 April 2011, <http://wyborcza.pl>.

Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Poland indeed had a balanced position in line with the European mainstream. *Post factum*, the decision to refrain from intervening in Libya, which until the end of 2015 did not manage to end the civil war, should be considered correct—the Polish position was similar to the one presented by Germany. At the end of 2015, the Polish voice regarding the conflicts in Syria and Iraq was seen, however, from the perspective of the growing opposition towards solidarity mechanisms in the EU in terms of helping countries overloaded with refugees from the Middle East. What is more, by suspending the operation of the embassy in Baghdad, Poland deprived itself of an important contact with a key country in the region, intensifying the impression of a country lacking interest in the Middle East.

Poland's Policy towards the People's Republic of China

JUSTYNA SZCZUDLIK*

Background

At the beginning of 2011, Polish-Chinese relations were in quite a favourable condition, with Poland expressing greater interest in China than ever before. In the short term, it resulted from Poland's participation in the Expo 2010 world exhibition in Shanghai (May to October 2010), which provided an opportunity for visits by the representatives of the Polish government and a programme to promote Polish culture.¹

In the long run, the intensification of bilateral contacts was the result of Poland's change of attitude towards the PRC starting in late 2008, which was symbolised by Donald Tusk visiting China in October of the year, the first Polish prime minister to do so since 1994, to discuss mostly economic issues.² Until then, Polish-Chinese relations had been quite limited, as Poland defined its foreign policy as a function of transatlantic relations, its position in the European Union, and political and economic relations with its neighbours and European partners. The change in Poland's attitude towards China was motivated by the outbreak of the economic crisis of 2008, which made the country's dependence on the EU market very evident and forced the Polish authorities to more actively seek non-European countries as potential economic partners. Additionally, the prospect of the saturation of the European market and the reduction of EU subsidies made Poland search for new markets and capital sources. A closer focus on Asia, in particular, was motivated by the dynamics of the economic development on the

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¹ Over 8 million people visited the Polish pavilion, including representatives of the Polish government and parliament (Speaker of the Sejm Grzegorz Schetyna, Minister of Infrastructure Cezary Grabarczyk, Minister of Agriculture Marek Sawicki, and Minister of Culture Bogdan Zdrojewski). During the exhibition, 40 events promoting the Polish economy and 130 events promoting Polish culture took place. See: *Podsumowanie promocji Polski na Światowej Wystawie Expo 2010*, Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency, 16 November, 2010, www.paih.gov.pl; "Ponad 8 mln gości w polskim pawilonie na Expo," *Forbes*, 15 November, 2010, www.forbes.pl.

² J. Szczudlik-Tatar, "Polish-Chinese Relations from 2004 to 2009: Main Issues and Developments," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2010*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2012, pp. 318–334.

continent (including China) and the increasingly widespread conviction that the “centre of gravity” of the world was shifting in this direction.

In 2011, Poland’s political relations with China were dominated by preparations for President Bronisław Komorowski’s visit at the end of the year. In the following years, Poland’s policies were influenced by new Chinese regional and global initiatives, and the necessity to respond to them, taking into account both bilateral relations and EU membership. The most important initiatives undertaken in this respect included the creation of a mechanism of cooperation between sixteen Central European states and China (the 16+1 format or the China-CEEC Summit³), proposed by the Chinese authorities, in 2012, the Silk Road initiative, announced in 2013 by PRC’ Chairman Xi Jinping,⁴ and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), in 2014.

The economic foundations for the process were laid by Polish initiatives aimed at opening the Chinese market more widely for Polish export products and attracting Chinese investments to Poland. An important development in this respect took place in 2009, when the China Overseas Engineering Group Co., Ltd. (COVEC) became the first Chinese company ever to win a European tender for an infrastructure investment (the construction of a section of the A2 highway between Łódź and Warsaw). The failure of this investment in 2011, and Poland’s efforts to negotiate over a number of years the return of performance bonds by Chinese banks, constituted an important factor in bilateral relations. Another important element was China imposing an embargo on Polish pork at the beginning of 2014 after cases of African swine fever (ASF) were detected in Poland.

Goals and Assumptions

Poland’s policy towards China mainly strove to develop effective economic cooperation. The Polish authorities perceived Asia as a potential source of capital, a large and absorbent market, and a promising investment destination. Therefore, Poland undertook to increase exports to China and attract Chinese, mainly greenfield investments to encourage technology transfer and generate

³ The 16 countries include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Hungary.

⁴ An initiative announced by Xi Jinping in September and October 2013. Two slogans were promoted then: the Economic Silk Road Belt (*sichou zhilu jingjidai*) and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (*21-shiji haishang sichou zhilu*). From 2014, China promoted another name for the initiative: “One Belt, One Road” (*yidai yilu*), and since 2015 has been using “Belt and Road.” It is worth noting that, since 2014, the Chinese name has remained unchanged, only its English translation changed.

new jobs. Poland was also vitally interested in participating in infrastructure projects in Asia, which was becoming the largest construction site in the world. These goals were to be supported through regular and intensive political dialogue and the promotion of the image of the Republic of Poland through cultural and educational activities.

Of note is the fact that, during the period in question, Poland perceived China not only as an important economic but also political partner. During Tusk's second term as Polish prime minister, relations with China were defined as a means for strengthening the country's position in Europe and the world. The mindset was that the lack of intense relations with China—a country that has been a regional power and aspiring to play a greater role in Asia and beyond, and proving quite resistant to the international crisis, would weaken Poland's role, at least in the EU.

These goals were officially stated in the Polish government's policy documents. Information on the priorities of Polish foreign policy for the years 2012 to 2016 emphasised that "the role of emerging economies has been increasing" and that "China, which in 2010 became the second economy in the world and the largest global exporter, starts to outperform the U.S. and European countries as far as investments are concerned [...], has started to compete with Western services and goods, catches up with the EU in innovation rankings, and the development distance between them and the Western world is gradually decreasing."⁵ It was noted that "the importance of the Asia-Pacific region is growing in the world, and it is important that Poland builds its image there as an EU member."⁶

During the period in question, references to China were regularly made in information about foreign policy directions presented by Poland's ministers for foreign affairs. In 2011, Minister Radosław Sikorski emphasised that China was Poland's largest economic partner in Asia, and announced plans for Komorowski's visit.⁷ In 2013, Sikorski noted that "Poland has a strategic partnership with China, confirmed by last year's summit in Warsaw, which was also attended by the leaders of our region. We perceive the Middle Kingdom as a trans-regional power, which should more and more actively engage in solving problems on a global scale. We will be glad to share our experiences if China decides to make

⁵ *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, www.msz.gov.pl, p. 3.

⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 20–21.

⁷ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 16 March 2011)," see p. 11 in this volume.

its political system more pluralistic.”⁸ In 2014, it was stated that “China’s economy has been growing for over 30 years at a pace unprecedented in human history. Both bilateral relations in the form of a strategic partnership and regional ones have been intensified. We can already observe the first results of the process: the increase in Chinese investments in Poland and in Polish exports to China. The city of Łódź faces an opportunity to become a facilitator of trade between companies from the whole region with China.”⁹ In 2015, the newly appointed minister of foreign affairs, Grzegorz Schetyna, stated that the Republic of Poland should strengthen relations with other continents, since “the centre of world dynamics is shifting towards the Pacific, and the role of China as a global power is growing.” He argued that “Poland is facing a huge challenge: either it will become a country capable of playing an important role in cooperation between Europe and other continents, or it will be condemned to the role of a niche player, limiting itself to issues in its own region, and in the future, end up marginalised.” The Polish authorities highlighted that the success of Polish non-European policy would only be possible thanks to relations with Asian countries, especially with strategic partners such as China.¹⁰

These goals were to be achieved through bilateral and multilateral initiatives. This approach was expressed in the statements of Polish government representatives regarding Poland’s participation in the 16+1 format (initiated in Warsaw in April 2012), the Silk Road initiative, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. In 2014, Sikorski stated: “Beijing has realised that Poland and, more broadly, the region of Central and Eastern Europe, is an important area of growth in Europe. It is no accident that Poland was the host of the first summit of the prime ministers of 16 Central and Eastern European countries and China.”¹¹ Finance Minister Mateusz Szczurek, justifying Poland’s accession to the AIIB, pointed out that “all the major European countries have expressed their willingness to participate and take part in negotiations. While the bank intends to focus on investment projects

⁸ “Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2013 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 20 March 2013),” see p. 41 in this volume.

⁹ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2014 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at the sitting of the Sejm on 8 May 2014), see p. 59 in this volume.

¹⁰ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2015 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Grzegorz Schetyna at a sitting of the Sejm on 23 April 2015),” see p. 77 in this volume.

¹¹ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2014...”, *op. cit.*

implemented in Asia that aim to benefit the countries of this region, some of these projects may have direct or indirect effects on Poland.”¹²

Political Relations

Political Dialogue. The 2011–2015 period saw intensified political dialogue between Poland and China, a significant change compared to previous years. Of special importance in this respect were the events of 2011. At the beginning of June, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CPC), He Guoqiang, visited Poland to meet Komorowski and invite him to visit China at the end of the year.¹³ In August, China's foreign minister, Yang Jiechi, visited Poland to meet Tusk and Sikorski.¹⁴

The most important event in this respect in 2011 was Komorowski's visit to China in December (the first of the kind since 1997), which was considered a symbol of a new opening in the relations between the two countries. Komorowski met PRC Chairman Hu Jintao, as well as Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, the Chairman of the Chinese parliament Wu Bangguo, and Deputy Prime Minister Li Keqiang. The visit resulted in the signing of a joint declaration in which bilateral relations were granted the status of a strategic partnership.¹⁵ The document emphasised the need to intensify high-level political dialogue, establish a new mechanism of cooperation at the level of deputy foreign ministers (the strategic dialogue) and support for cooperation at a local level as a new dimension of relations.¹⁶ The declaration was a signal that China recognised Poland as an important partner in this part of Europe.

The intensity of political contacts was maintained in 2012. In March, Warsaw was visited by China's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Song Tao, who participated in the first meeting of the newly established strategic dialogue.¹⁷ The

¹² *MF: powstaje Azjatycki Bank Inwestycji Infrastrukturalnych*, Polska Agencja Prasowa, June 2015, www.pap.pl.

¹³ *Spotkanie Prezydenta i He Guoqianga*, July 2011, www.prezydent.pl.

¹⁴ *Wizyta Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych Chin Yang Jiechi w Polsce*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, August 2011, www.msz.gov.pl.

¹⁵ From June 2004 (Hu Jintao's visit to Poland) to December 2011, Polish-Chinese relations were referred to as “friendly relations of friendly cooperation.”

¹⁶ *Wspólne oświadczenie Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej i Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej w sprawie ustanowienia partnerskich stosunków strategicznych*, Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Poland, 13 January 2012, <http://pl.china-embassy.org>.

¹⁷ *Polsko-chiński dialog strategiczny*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 21 March 2012, www.msz.gov.pl.

most important event in bilateral relations occurred in April, with the visit of Wen Jiabao to Poland, the first at this level since 1987. During the visit, a new formula of cooperation (16+1) was announced. At the economic forum accompanying the first summit of the heads of government, Wen Jiabao announced a programme of “12 Measures for Promoting Friendly Cooperation with Central and Eastern European Countries,” a document describing 12 short- and medium-term goals set by China to strengthen cooperation with the region.¹⁸ It is worth noting that the creation of the format aroused both interest and distrust in the EU: as China created a 16+1 Secretariat in its Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate the activities of this institution, it was feared that Central European countries would also strive to institutionalise this formula, which could disrupt the EU’s unity and its common policy towards China.¹⁹

Sikorski’s visit to Beijing in September 2012 focused on finalising the institutional dimension of the strategic partnership. As a result of his meeting with Minister Yang Jiechi, an intergovernmental committee headed by foreign ministers of both countries was established, which was to prepare regular meetings between the Polish and Chinese prime ministers. It was also decided to organise a Poland-China Regional Forum in Poland in 2013.

The year 2013 was less intensive in terms of bilateral visits, as a consequence of the process of change and consolidation of power in China. The most important event of the year in this respect was the June visit of Polish Parliament Spokesperson Ewa Kopacz, which was the first top-level meeting between a representative of the Polish authorities with the new Chinese administration. Doubts were raised by the Polish media concerning the date of the visit (4 June, the anniversary of the pacification of the Tiananmen Square protests), yet the visit constituted the next stage in strengthening the strategic partnership between the countries. Kopacz visited Beijing, Tianjin, Guangzhou and Zhuhai, and met the head of the Chinese Parliament, Zhang Dejiang, the Head of the International Department of the (CPC), Wang Jiarui, and the Secretary of the Party in the Guangdong Province (also member of the Party’s Political Bureau), Hu Chunhua. The promotion of Polish agricultural products, pharmaceuticals, mining and environmental protection technologies was discussed. In November, in turn, Tusk took part in the second summit of the 16+1 format in Bucharest. Since that moment, the documents adopted by the participants of the meetings

¹⁸ *China’s Twelve Measures for Promoting Friendly Cooperation with Central and Eastern European Countries (Announced by Premier Wen Jiabao on the Economic and Trade Forum)*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 26 April, 2012, www.fmprc.gov.cn.

¹⁹ S. Bolzen, J. Erling, “Divide, Conquer, Aim East: China Has a Sharp New European Trade Strategy,” *Die Welt* (English edition), 11 November 2012.

(the guidelines) have been discussed with the countries of the “16” and EU institutions to ensure that their provisions comply with EU law. In addition, the guidelines which are the main product of the summits always include a statement that 16+1 cooperation is part of the EU-China Strategic Partnership.²⁰

In 2014, political contacts between Poland and China continued to be less intensive. In June, Poland was visited by Sun Zhengcai, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CCP and Party Secretary in Chongqing, and in August by the Chinese Minister of Defence Wang Chang. Prime Minister Kopacz did not take part in the third 16+1 summit in Belgrade in December, which was met with dissatisfaction by the Chinese authorities.²¹ Poland was represented by Deputy Prime Minister and National Defence Minister Tomasz Siemoniak.

In June 2015, Polish Foreign Minister Schetyna visited China to participate in the inaugural meeting of the intergovernmental committee. Schetyna met Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Vice Chairman of the PRC Li Yuanchao and discussed economic issues, with particular emphasis on cooperation within the Silk Road project.²² Another important event in this respect was the participation of the Speaker of the Polish Parliament, Małgorzata Kidawa-Błońska, in Beijing in events marking the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Asia. In October, Wang Yi visited Poland with the purpose of discussing the state of bilateral relations, preparations for the 16+1 summit in Suzhou, Poland's participation in the AIIB, and bilateral cooperation at the level of local governments.²³

The most important event of 2015 was the November visit to China by the newly elected Polish President Andrzej Duda. It took place shortly after the government in Poland was formed by the Law and Justice party, and the new Polish authorities confirmed their will to continue the policy of strengthening bilateral relations. The visit had bilateral and regional dimensions. Duda took part in the fourth 16+1 summit, marking the first time when Poland was represented by its head of state. Duda emphasised that the 16+1 format now had a permanent place in European-Chinese relations, and noted that “in Poland, this is perceived as a natural stage of closer relations between two important regions working together for global development, peace and stability.” He explained that “both China and

²⁰ *Bucharest Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries*, Guvernul Romaniei, 27 November 2013, www.gov.ro.

²¹ Author's conversation with a Chinese analyst dealing with Central Europe, Warsaw, September 2015.

²² *Wizyta szefa polskiej dyplomacji w Chinach*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 17 June 2015, www.msz.gov.pl.

²³ *Spotkanie ministrów spraw zagranicznych Polski i Chin*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, October 2015, www.msz.gov.pl.

the countries of Central Europe are playing an increasingly important role in the global economic bloodstream, so it is worth joining forces, implementing joint investments and planning the future together,” and he pointed to culture and science as important elements of cooperation.²⁴ In addition to Suzhou, where he met Prime Minister Li Keqiang, Duda also visited Beijing where he spoke to PRC Chairman Xi Jinping and Head of the Chinese Parliament Zhang Dejiang, and Shanghai where he opened the Polish-Chinese economic forum. Duda confirmed that the strategic partnership between China and Poland would continue, and added that choosing China as the only Asian country for one of his first foreign visits was an expression of the importance that he attached to bilateral relations.²⁵ Duda invited Xi Jinping to visit Poland in 2016.

Institutionalisation. The period 2011 to 2015 saw progressive institutionalisation of the bilateral relationship. This consisted of creating new cooperation mechanisms, thanks to which the dialogue became regular. Institutionalisation took place at the national level, which involved creating new institutions within the Polish administration, and bilateral level, which concerned mechanisms created as a result of decisions taken by Poland and China.

In December 2012, Tusk appointed a government advisory body, the Interministerial Team for Coordination of Actions for the Development of the Strategic Partnership Between Poland and China, which was assigned the following main tasks: making recommendations to deepen bilateral relations, monitoring contacts, ensuring the efficient flow of information between Polish state administration bodies, and presenting new initiatives. The team is headed by an undersecretary of state in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the deputy minister of the economy is vice-chairman while members are the Polish ambassador to China and representatives of various ministries. The team meets at least twice a year.²⁶

In 2012, The Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency (PAIiIZ) and the Ministry of Economy launched the GoChina Internet platform, the purpose of which is to collect economic information that could help Polish entrepreneurs enter the Chinese market and establish cooperation with Chinese partners. In the same year, the Polish-Chinese Cooperation Centre was established within

²⁴ *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia ma ogromne znaczenie dla rozwoju stosunków z Chinami*, 24 November 2014, www.prezydent.pl.

²⁵ *Prezydent Duda z przywódcą Chin o współpracy i partnerstwie*, 25 November 2015, www.prezydent.pl.

²⁶ “Zarządzenie nr 108 Prezesa Rady Ministrów z dnia 10 grudnia 2012 r. w sprawie Międzyresortowego zespołu ds. Koordynacji Działań na rzecz rozwoju Partnerstwa Strategicznego między Rzeczypospolitą Polską a Chińską Republiką Ludową,” *Monitor Polski*, 14 December 2012.

PAliIZ, the only Polish institution of this type devoted entirely to one country. The agency opened its first foreign office in Shanghai.

New institutions were also established at the Polish embassy in Beijing. In May 2014, the Polish Institute was launched by expanding the cultural department. It was opened by the Polish deputy minister of foreign affairs, Artur Nowak-Far. In the same year, a new position was also created at the embassy, that of a counsellor representing the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Institutionalisation also occurred on a bilateral level. As a result of the declaration on strategic partnership, the strategic dialogue, consisting of annual meetings between deputy foreign ministers of both countries, was created. The first meeting of this kind took place in March 2012 in Warsaw, and it was chaired by deputy ministers Song Tao and Jerzy Pomianowski. The second meeting was held in May 2014 in Beijing, with Poland represented by Artur Nowak-Far and China by Wang Chao. The third meeting took place in April 2015 in Warsaw, and it was chaired by Katarzyna Kacperczyk and Wang Chao.

2012 also saw the creation of the Polish-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee, meetings of which are to be held every two years and chaired by foreign ministers of both countries, with representatives of other institutions also invited, depending on the subject of the talks. The first meeting of the committee was held in June 2015 in Beijing.

In 2013, during National Defence Minister Siemoniak's visit to China, a strategic dialogue mechanism was also established at the level of defence ministers. The first meeting in this formula was held in November 2014 in Beijing, and it was chaired by deputy ministers Robert Kupiecki and Wang Guanzhong.

Among the new bilateral institutions created was also the Poland-China Regional Forum, which is a platform for contacts with local authorities, enterprises, universities and cultural institutions. The goal of the Forum is to promote relations at the local level, which are to constitute the concrete dimension of Polish-Chinese relations. Due to China's extensive territory and considerable diversity, including in cultural terms, relations at the central level are not sufficient to achieve the main goals of Polish policy towards the country. In Poland, institutions of local government (voivodships, powiats, and communes) are better acquainted with the needs and fortes of their regions and local entrepreneurs, and therefore they are better suited to identify potential areas of cooperation. As a result, the local government dimension of Polish-Chinese relations has become an increasingly important way of achieving the objectives set by Polish diplomacy.²⁷ The first

²⁷ A. Skorupska, J. Szczudlik-Tatar, "Regional Cooperation Key to Polish-Chinese Strategic Partnership," *PISM Strategic File*, no. 25 (61), November 2014; T. Jurczyk, "Współpraca gospodarcza

forum was held in April 2013 in Gdańsk, the second one in June 2014, in Guangzhou, and the third in June 2015, in Łódź. Cooperation at local level has greatly intensified during the period in question, with a model example being cooperation between the City of Łódź and the Łódź Province in Poland with Chengdu and Sichuan Province in China. Both sides have opened offices in the partner cities, and a freight rail connection has been operating between Łódź and Chengdu since 2013. Cooperation at the local level led to opening the Polish consulate general in Chengdu in 2015.

Economic Relations

Poland's Initiatives to Improve Economic Relations. Economic goals which Poland set in China necessitated ensuring greater access to the Chinese market for Polish entrepreneurs. This required the promotion of knowledge about business partners, markets, business principles, and export products that could be competitive in the Chinese market.

In the 2011 to 2015 period, the Polish authorities worked towards this goal on two levels simultaneously. On the one hand, they worked on creating a friendly political climate as an “umbrella” for enterprises of both countries, and, on the other, they made administrative decisions to facilitate bilateral economic contacts.

Activities aimed at implementing the first of those goals included addressing economic issues during all meetings, regardless of level and format. For example, during the visits of Komorowski and Duda to China, Polish-Chinese economic forums were organised. These are also held during the 16+1 summits, and every two years (in June) a meeting of representatives of the ministries responsible for economic affairs is held in Ningbo. During the meetings, members of the Polish authorities raised the issue of a large trade deficit on the Polish side, barriers to access to the Chinese market (difficulties in obtaining certificates for agricultural and food products, or the Chinese embargo on the import of Polish pork, in force since the beginning of 2014), and also the issue of the return of the bond guarantees and the imposition of contractual penalties after the failed Covec investment. They also encouraged Chinese entrepreneurs to invest in Poland, emphasising its competitive advantages.

During his visit, Komorowski emphasised that Poland enjoyed a favourable economic situation despite the crisis, pointing to the 4% economic growth in 2011 and to the fact that Polish local authorities were very active and willing to cooperate, 14 special economic zones offering preferential conditions for investors,

na poziomie władz lokalnych,” *Poland-China Business Magazine*, no. 1, 2014; *Przewodnik po współpracy z chińskimi władzami lokalnymi*, Stała Ogólnopolska Konferencja Współpracy Międzynarodowej Samorządów, Łódź, 26 September 2014, p. 35.

and Polish bonds were safe. He identified services, research and development, shipbuilding and the automotive and infrastructure sectors as attractive for the investments of Chinese entrepreneurs, whom he also encouraged to participate in the privatisation and transformation of the healthcare system.²⁸ Komorowski also emphasised that Poland had a stable financial and banking sector, which had proven itself during the crisis in Europe, and a strong brand in terms of external investments. He encouraged Chinese companies to invest in Poland, arguing that it was a large market in European terms, and it should be seen as a gateway to the European market of 500 million consumers. Komorowski also argued that both countries were growth leaders: Poland in Europe, and China in Asia.²⁹

During his visit to China, Duda stressed that Poland offered economic and political stability. He stated that the Silk Road project was a great opportunity for the development of China, Asia and Europe, including Poland, and that Polish authorities and enterprises were interested in investments planned under this project. Duda also argued that Poland's role as China's main partner in Europe, as part of the Silk Route, was substantiated by its geographical location and business experience in a variety of industries³⁰ and in the developed logistics sector,³¹ and that this status was strengthened by Poland's accession to the AIIB and the desire to participate in its work and co-create its policies.³²

In the 2011–2015 period, efforts were undertaken to intensify Polish-Chinese relations and eliminate problems. PAIiZ organised training sessions and trips to trade fairs for Polish entrepreneurs interested in cooperation with China, conducted meetings informing about the principles of AIIB's functioning, and acted as the main institution helping Chinese investors start doing business in Poland. The growing interest in Poland among Chinese entrepreneurs at that time was testified to by the constantly growing number of Chinese delegations received by PAIiZ, representing local authorities, investment agencies and entrepreneurs.

Another important measure was the establishment in Poland of two economic mechanisms under the 16+1 format. In November 2014, PAIiZ inaugurated a cooperation mechanism between investment agencies, and in December 2014, at the 16+1 summit, the Business Council was established with headquarters at

²⁸ A. Gradziuk, J. Szczudlik-Tatar, "Perspektywy rozwoju współpracy gospodarczej Polski z Chińską Republiką Ludową," *PISM Report*, February 2012.

²⁹ *Wizyta Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej Bronisława Komorowskiego w Chińskiej Republice Ludowej 18–22 grudnia 2011—wymiar gospodarczy*, Kancelaria Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2012, pp. 12, 13, 19, 23.

³⁰ *Chcemy współpracować z Chinami dla rozwoju Polski i Europy*, 23 November 2015, www.prezydent.pl.

³¹ *Polsko-chińskie spotkanie szefów państw*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Pekinie, 1 December, 2015, www.pekin.msz.gov.pl.

³² *Chcemy współpracować...*, *op. cit.*

the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development. In March 2015, Poland applied to the AIIB for the status of a founding member of the bank. On 9 October 2015, the Polish ambassador in Beijing, Mirosław Gajewski, signed the agreement establishing AIIB.³³

The State of Economic Relations and Main Problems. Until 2014, China was Poland's third-largest economic partner as far as imports were concerned, after Germany and Russia. In 2015, it was second only to Germany. In 2011, the value of goods imported to Poland from China amounted to €13.2 billion, and in 2015, it increased to nearly €20.5 billion, which accounted for 11.5% of all Polish imports. Polish exports to China grew more slowly, however. In 2011, they amounted to €1.3 billion, and in 2015, to €1.82 billion, which corresponded to about 1% of all Polish exports, with China ranked 21st among the recipients of Polish foreign sales.³⁴

The main problem in economic cooperation was constituted by a very high, deepening trade deficit: in 2011, Poland imported 10 times more from China than it exported to the country, with the deficit amounting to nearly €12 billion, and by 2015, the ratio increased to 11:1, with the deficit reaching €18.6 billion.³⁵ The deficit was caused, among other things, by the Chinese embargo on Polish pork. Visits of Chinese veterinary inspectors to Poland and the visit of Minister of Agriculture Marek Sawicki to China in May 2014, which aimed to persuade China to lift the embargo, did not change the decision of the Chinese authorities. Polish exports were also influenced by difficulties in accessing the Chinese market, mainly in the form of non-tariff barriers. For Poland, the difficulty in obtaining certificates for agricultural and food products posed a particular problem. This issue became even more problematic in 2014 when Russia imposed an embargo on certain agricultural and food products from EU countries.

The trade structure was highly unsatisfactory from the Polish point of view because about 40% of Polish exports were unprocessed goods (base metals, chemical products and plastics), which are susceptible to price changes on global markets. The unfavourable trade balance further worsened when demand for copper, the main Polish export product to China, decreased as a result of lower industrial production in the PRC. On the other hand, in Polish imports from China, electro-mechanical products (54.8%) and textiles (10%) dominated, and due to the structure of this trade, which mostly included goods with high added value, Poland's goal was not to limit those imports.

³³ *Umowa AIIB podpisana*, Ministerstwo Finansów, 9 October 2015, www.mf.gov.pl.

³⁴ *Chińska Republika Ludowa. Informacje o stosunkach gospodarczych z Polską*, Ministerstwo Rozwoju, www.mr.gov.pl, p. 4.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

During the period under analysis, the value of Chinese investments in Poland was quite low. In 2013, it amounted to \$266 million, which constituted only 0.14% of investment overall. The two largest Chinese investments at that time were the takeover of the non-military part of the Stalowa Wola Foundry in 2012 and of the Rolling Bearing Factory in Kraśnik in 2013. In the following years, only a handful of Chinese investments were listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange. On the other hand, the growing interest of Chinese companies in investing in the energy sector is to be noted. In 2014, the Chinese company Pinggao won three tenders for the construction of transmission lines, and also took part in the tender for the construction of the power unit of the Opole power plant. Additionally, in 2015, the Sinohydro company won the tender for the construction of a power line between Chełm and Lublin.

An important issue in bilateral relations concerned the tender won by the Chinese consortium Covec in 2009 for the construction of two sections of the A2 motorway, which were to be completed before the European football championships in Poland and Ukraine in mid-2012. However, the investment ended in fiasco in 2011. The company, which won the tender due to the lowest price, applied to have the value of the contract increased, which the Polish side (Main Directorate for National Roads and Motorways) refused. As a result, Covec withdrew from the investment. Until 2015, the repayment of performance bonds from Chinese banks was negotiated, followed by talks on the imposition of contractual penalties by China.³⁶

Chinese investments in Poland during the period in question concentrated in the electronics industry (production of LDC-TLC monitors in Żyrardów and Digital View in Koszalin), the electromechanical industry (the Nuchtech company produces scanners for freight trains in Kobyłka, near Warsaw), the IT sector (at the Warsaw offices of ZTE and Huawei) and distribution (GD Poland in Wola Kosowska, near Warsaw). It is worth noting the interest in Poland by the Chinese financial sector. In 2012, the Bank of China and ICBC opened branches in Warsaw.

Polish investments in China remained at a low level. At the end of 2014, their value amounted to PLN 628 million, with Polish enterprises investing in the mining (KGHM and Kopex), pharmaceutical (Bioton), furniture, construction (Selena) and food sectors.

³⁶ S. Ogórek, "Covec oddał bankowe gwarancje. Teraz negocjuje spłatę 550 mln odszkodowania," *Money.pl*, 15 February 2015, www.money.pl.

Cultural and Social Relations

Cultural relations, education and tourism are perceived by the Polish authorities as an instrument for creating a positive image of Poland in China. In the years 2011 to 2015, this dimension of bilateral relations was intensified by Poland. The Polish authorities began to stop focusing on organising “days of culture,” which until then had been the basis of cultural relations, as they were not considered very effective. It was decided, instead, that the promotion of Polish culture would be targeted to a selected audience. After the success of activities promoting Polish culture during Shanghai Expo in August 2010, it was decided that for the period of the Polish presidency of the EU Council in 2011, Beijing would become one of the 10 “Presidency Capitals,” in which cultural events were organised.³⁷ The main institution responsible for with the promotion of culture in China was the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, within which the Asia Project operates.³⁸ The institute presented Polish culture in six cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Tianjin and Wuhan, which were chosen due to the fact that the best cultural institutions operated there and a large group of potential recipients existed.

The promotion mainly concerned Polish theatre, film and music. The Institute developed strong permanent relations with Chinese theatre institutions including the Tianjin Grand Theatre (Elżbieta Sikora’s opera *Madame Curie* was staged there in 2013, and Krystian Lupa’s *Persona Marylin*, and *Wycinka (Felling)* followed in 2014 and 2015) and the Wuzhen Festival, with *Portraits of the Cherry Orchard* presented by the Teatr Pieśni Kozła) and music (primarily at the two main Beijing concert halls). Many one-off events were also organised, including the “Treasures from Chopin Country” traditional art exhibition of at the National Museum of China (organised in 2015 by The Adam Mickiewicz Institute in cooperation with the National Museum in Warsaw) and the “State of Life” exhibition of Polish contemporary art at the National Gallery of China (presented by the Institute with the Museum of Art in Łódź). In Beijing, Adam Mickiewicz’s *Dziady* (parts I, II, and IV) was staged by the Polish Theatre in Wrocław. In addition, the Sinfonia Varsovia orchestra performed in China.³⁹

The social dimension of Polish policy towards China focuses, among other things, on educational cooperation. Poland is interested in the presence of Chinese students, not only for financial purposes, especially in view of the decreasing

³⁷ *The International Cultural Programme of the Polish EU Presidency*, Instytut Adama Mickiewicza, www.azja.iam.pl.

³⁸ For detailed information regarding Project Asia IAM, see: www.asia.culture.pl/pl.

³⁹ A. Walulik, “Chiński rynek kultury,” in: M. Jacoby (red.), *Urzednicy, biznesmeni, artyści. Analiza sektora kultury w krajach Azji Wschodniej i Indiach*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Instytut Adama Mickiewicza, 2016, pp. 21, 33, 35.

number of Polish students due to the demographic decline, but also to build good interpersonal relationships that can have a positive impact on economic relations. Universities are increasingly willing to prepare study programmes in English for Chinese students, and educational cooperation is also developed through Rectors' Forums, the first of which was held in Beijing during Komorowski's visit, and the second and third in Warsaw, in 2013 and September 2015.

Tourism has also become an important dimension of Polish-Chinese relations, with Poland interested in increasing inbound tourism from China. In recent years, the Polish Tourist Organisation (POT) has been operating in this field: In 2011, it opened its "home office" in Beijing, in cooperation with a Chinese partner, Beijing Zhongjia Space & Display Design, which conducts promotional campaigns on behalf of the POT. POT also organised workshops and study visits for tourist agencies and journalists, prepared information folders and guidebooks in Chinese, and organised training for Polish tourist agencies, hoteliers and restaurateurs, with particular focus on the need to adapt services to the requirements of Chinese tourists. In 2013, the POT launched the "I like Poland" campaign in China, India and Japan. During Duda's visit to China, Poland and China signed a memorandum on tourism cooperation, and the POT made the decision to open a permanent branch in Beijing (the Foreign Centre of the Polish Tourist Organization, ZOPOT). Tourism is also promoted by the direct flight connection between Warsaw and Beijing, launched in mid-2012 by the Polish national carrier, LOT.

Assessment

During the 2011–2015 period, political goals set by the Polish authorities were largely met. This is evidenced by the fact of raising the level of relations to the rank of a "strategic partnership" as well as dynamic political dialogue (the number of visits at the highest and lower levels increased), and the institutionalisation of bilateral relations (creation of new cooperation mechanisms). At the end of 2015, Polish-Chinese relations were functioning at the following levels: bilateral, which includes the central and local tiers; regional, mainly in the 16+1 format; and the EU, through participation in annual EU-China summits and numerous sectoral contacts. Thanks to the initiatives of the Polish authorities and the positive reactions to those in China, Poland did not play a marginal role in Chinese European policy at that time. The country also gained a stronger position in relations with both China and within the EU thanks to the 16 + 1 formula, in which it exerts considerable influence as the largest country of the "16." Moreover, Poland promoted the format within the EU, which was initially wary of the project. Participation in the format strengthened the position of Poland (and

other countries of the region) in Europe, showing that it can conduct an active policy towards China not only within the framework of bilateral and EU relations but also in other formulas.

However, good political relations did not translate into achieving the economic goals set by the Polish authorities. Economic cooperation remained largely unilateral, with China as the main beneficiary, as testified to by the increased trade deficit on the Polish side and an unsatisfactory inflow of Chinese investments. While Poland constituted an important market for China, the Chinese market remained largely closed to Polish exporters, as evidenced by the embargo on Polish pork. Moreover, in the period under review, Chinese investments in Poland mostly consisted of mergers and acquisitions, gaining access to distribution channels, technologies, management methods and sales markets, which are much less profitable than greenfield investment, creating new jobs and enabling technology transfer.

However, some positive results for Poland resulting from investment cooperation with China are worth highlighting. The Covec affair has demonstrated that Poland can successfully achieve its objectives, regaining bank guarantees thanks to consistently raising this issue at every opportunity. The failed investment has also provided a valuable lesson for Poland and other European countries in terms of manners of assessing Chinese bids in public tenders. It also sent a signal to Chinese investors that their investment model is not suitable for Europe. Despite the unsatisfactory experience with Covec, the Polish authorities have continued to encourage Chinese entrepreneurs to invest and participate in tenders. However, the lowest price has ceased to be the most important selection criterion. Now, investors' experience and resources required to complete the project are also taken into account. On the other hand, Chinese investors who won tenders in Poland in 2014 and 2015 for smaller energy projects have attempted to erase the bad impression left by the Covec affair.

The *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2011–2015* is the only volume describing five years of Polish foreign policy activity. Conventionally, the yearbook is published annually and discusses the past year. Unfortunately, for reasons unknown, in 2012 the publication of the Yearbook was discontinued, which created a huge gap in reflection on Polish foreign policy. We decided to supplement it and make up for lost time, although not everything can be restored without any loss of precision in the method applied. This Yearbook—or rather a Five-year-book—offers an analysis of Polish foreign policy in fifteen areas: from Polish European policy and Poland's first presidency of the EU Council to Poland's policy towards the Middle East or China. Enjoy the reading!

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