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Poland – a rising engine of European integration

Polish foreign policy and the EU
membership

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Introduction

For Poland, EU accession on 1st May 2004 marked a breakthrough. The achievement of what had been Warsaw's ultimate political goal since the fall of the iron curtain opened new possibilities and set new challenges for the Central European country. One of them was to define its place and interests in the European Union from an insider-position and to re-create its European policy. When entering the EU, Poland was the biggest of the accession states with more than half the total population and almost half the economic weight of all new 10 Member States.¹ It therefore had the biggest political ambitions of all new Member States and the best possibilities to articulate its interests in the EU.

This paper addresses the tensions between the Polish national interest and the constraints and possibilities of European Union membership. The author argues that the national interest of Poland is still largely congruent with a pro-European policy. The institutions and policies of the Union support Poland in accomplishing its strategic interests, which are economic development and strengthening its position as a political leader in Middle and Eastern Europe. One can moreover argue that Poland is a potential driving force of the European Union. As a Member State that benefits financially from various EU policies and is largely dependent on other Member States in terms of its economy, it stands for a closer Union. Moreover, because Poland aims to become a regional power, it will support a further strengthening of European foreign policy and a widening of the Union, especially in terms of its eastern neighbourhood. Poland's EU Council presidency in the second half of 2011 is certainly a moment to critically revisit this young Member State and ask what it can offer Europe.

1. The council presidency

On July 1st 2011 Poland started its Presidency of the EU Council. After Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Hungary it is the fourth of the "new" Member States to hold the Presidency of the EU Council. After the Lisbon Treaty the role of the Presidency has diminished from leading the EU to mainly managing the ongoing legislation within the Council and with the European Parliament². As an advisor to the Polish minister of foreign affairs stressed, 85% of the work of previous rotating EU presidencies deal with ongoing EU issues, a further 10% crisis management and only 5% consist of priorities set by the mandate holder³. Nevertheless, Warsaw regards the Presidency as an opportunity to increase other Member States'

¹ All statistics from eurostat: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>

² Piotr Maciej Kaczyński, *Preview of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union*, <http://www.boell.eu/web/270-656.html>

³ Hungary, Poland outline EU presidency priorities, www.euractiv.com, 15.09.2010. <http://www.euractiv.com/en/priorities/hungary-poland-outline-eu-presidency-priorities-news-497700>

confidence in it as an important EU member. According to government sources “a successful Presidency is the best promotion of Poland and occasion to create positive image of Poland in the world”⁴. One can describe the attitude of Polish EU Council Presidency as “ambitious realism” – Warsaw wants on to exert influence in the EU, parallel it would like to play the role of a non-party mediator, in order to constructively influence the decision making mechanism and show itself as a professional organizer⁵. On the 31st of May 2011 the Council of Ministers adopted the “6-month Programme of the Polish Presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011”, which mentions three headline priorities: European integration as a source of growth, secure Europe (food, energy, defence) and Europe benefiting from openness. The priorities of the Presidency, once deciphered, reflect on the one hand the current problems the Union is facing, and on the other hand the specific political priorities and interests of a country enjoying the agenda-setting possibilities of the presidency.

The first priority - European integration as a source of economic development - aims at developing a new strategy and a new model of **growth** through which the EU will be able to continue its socio-economic development. According to the Polish government, in order to strengthen Europe’s competitiveness on a global scale, it cannot concentrate solely on public finance and limiting budget deficits but must reform its economy. In order to do so the government wants to put more emphasis on the next EU budget (2013 – 2020) and internal-market reform. The Polish Presidency takes a view that the new budget should support the implementation of the “Europe 2020” strategy and that Cohesion Policy should remain one of EU’s key policies. “The Polish Presidency would like the new budget to corroborate that enhanced cooperation within EU is the most appropriate answer to the economic crisis”.⁶ Internal-market reform includes efforts to strengthen the transaction capacity between Member States, thereby bolstering the four freedoms (free movement of goods, capital, services, and people). The Polish Presidency is focusing too on small and medium enterprises, which together make up the largest part of the European economy (SMEs make up approx. 60% of GDP and 70% of all jobs in the EU)⁷.

The second priority, **Secure Europe**, addresses the most urgent current problems of the EU: the economic and financial crisis, external energy policy, Common Agricultural Policy, border security, and military and civil capabilities. Although Poland is not a member of the euro, it declares its support for strengthening economic governance in the EU. It also endeav-

⁴ Mikołaj Dowgiewlewiecz, *Why Presidency is the chance and the challenge for Poland?*, <http://www.prezydencjaue.gov.pl/en/polish-preparations-for-the-presidency>

⁵ Kai-Olaf Lang, *Polens Vorsitz im Rat der EU: Zuversicht in Zeiten der Krise*, p.1-2, http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/aktuell/2011A38_Ing_ks.pdf

⁶ 6-month Programme of the Polish Presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011, <http://www.prezydencjaue.gov.pl/en/areas-of-preparations/program>

⁷ Ibid.

ours to “rapidly complete the process” of amending the Treaty of Lisbon which are a prerequisite for the European Stability Mechanism. The country also supports the work on a new energy strategy. This issue has been raised by Poland for many years. It is of great importance for the country as Warsaw currently invests sizeable amounts of money in its energy sector (it is building an LNG Gas Terminal and drawing up plans for the construction of an atomic power plant). Its priorities in relation to Frontex (the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union) includes a reform of the current regulation in order to ensure that Frontex more effectively supports Member States in crisis situations, such as the one experienced in connection with events in North Africa. The presidency will also work on a reform of the Common Agriculture Policy – food security being a main concern. As regards the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the Polish government declares as goals the strengthening of military and civilian capabilities and the preservation of a direct dialogue between the EU and NATO.

The last of Poland’s three priorities, Europe benefiting from **openness** aims at strengthening the EU’s position in the international arena. Taking into account the recent “Arab spring”, the Polish Presidency wants to focus on the Southern Neighbourhood in supporting democratic transformation and the creation of modern state structures alongside “economic growth, development and the creation of new jobs, as well as intensifying trade relations and facilitating the movement of people from certain social groups”.⁸ In regard to the Eastern Partnership countries, then, Poland aimed to conclude association agreements and create free trade areas (such as the finalisation of or significant progress in negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova) as well as to achieve progress in visa liberalisation and to deepen sectoral cooperation. Two major conferences are to be held in Poland during the Presidency: the Eastern Partnership Summit of the heads of states and governments of all EU Member States⁹ and partner countries and the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. As for the enlargement agenda, parallel with signing the Treaty of Accession with Croatia and furthering negotiations with Iceland, Poland will continue accession negotiations with Turkey and support the European aspirations of the Western Balkan countries. In regard to Russia, Poland will support measures aimed at signing a new agreement and develop the EU-Russia Partnership for Modernisation.

2. The goals and interests of Polish EU policy

The approach to the presidency and the choice of priorities certainly reflect Poland’s preferences and interests. One of the greatest advantages

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Press release of the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Hungary to the European Union.

http://www.eu2011.hu/files/bveu/documents/EasternP_press_reales_02_17.pdf

of EU membership for Poland is the access to the redistribution mechanisms (CAP, cohesion funds etc.), which contribute to its economic development and the overall modernization of the country. Regional and structural funds foster the development of the infrastructure and the improvement of the quality of human capital, while direct payments from the Common Agricultural Policy support Polish farmers (who still make up the worst-off part of society). Warsaw is therefore a supporter of a strong EU budget which provides structural funds sufficient for the poorer regions and for the maintenance of the Common Agricultural Policy (Poland is particularly against the renationalization of direct income payment to farmers). Poland's economy benefits as well from an integrated and open Internal Market and it is in favour of actions that foster the economic integration of all Member States (c.f. Warsaw's position on the free movement of workers¹⁰).

Warsaw's interest in security and foreign policy includes democracy promotion in the countries surrounding the EU and maintaining the best possible relations with Russia. The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy clearly corresponds to "the promotion of Poland's own interests in the East, both with regard to the European Union-Russia relationship and through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)"¹¹. Poland has steadily stressed its support for Ukraine's European aspirations as well as for EU enlargement towards Turkey and Western Balkans. It has also declared support for the Common Security and Defence Policy, but is reluctant regarding any initiatives that would undermine NATO's position in the European security architecture. Being mostly dependent on Russian oil and gas imports, Poland regularly expresses the wish to establish a Common Energy Policy. The strategic goal of Polish foreign policy is to become a leading EU member¹².

There is a consensus amongst Polish politicians that membership of the European Union is a means to improve Poland's position in international politics and to promote its political goals. Analyzing the available government information on foreign policy, presented annually by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, it is apparent that, despite changes in government, the national interest and the goals of the foreign policy are formulated identically. In a nutshell, these comprise: the need for a strong European Union that supports Poland's effort in modernization and promotes its interest in eastern policy; the maintenance of good relations with Germany and France as Poland's main partners in the European Union, with the Weimar Triangle a crucial platform of cooperation; the maintenance of

¹⁰Polish Ministry for Labour and Social Policy, *Informacja w sprawie zatrudnienia obywateli polskich w państwach Europejskiego Obszaru Gospodarczego i Szwajcarii oraz obywateli państw EOG w Polsce*, p.7, <http://www.mpips.gov.pl>

¹¹ Nathaniel Copsey, Karolina Pomorska, *Poland's power and influence in the European Union: The case of its eastern policy*, *Comparative European Politics* (2010) 8, p. 306

¹² Radek Sikorski, *The Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Republic of Poland's Foreign Policy for 2010*. <http://www.msz.gov.pl/The,Minister,of,Foreign,Affairs,on,the,Republic,of,Polands,Foreign,Policy,for,2010,35218.html>

the foundations of Polish security - membership of NATO, membership of the CSDP and the strategic partnership with the USA.¹³

3. Euro-sceptic vs. Pro-European approach in Warsaw's European policy

Since its accession to the European Union, Poland has been ruled by three governments: a social democratic (Democratic Left Alliance) government in 2004 and 2005, a national conservative (Law and Justice) government from 2005 to 2007 and a liberal conservative (Civic Platform) government from 2007 on¹⁴. As noted, every government has defined nearly identical goals and interests of Polish policy in the European Union. However, there are some substantial differences among each of the governments in the choice of instruments of foreign policy, the perception of the international community and the vision of Poland in the international environment and last but not least in the rhetoric and the style of politics. After achieving the ultimate goal of EU membership, the main political actors expressed their own vision of Warsaw's European policy. Researchers have classified the social democratic and the liberal conservative government as pro-European and the national conservative government as soft euro-sceptic.¹⁵

Euro-sceptic policy is associated with the Kaczynski-led Law and Justice government. The party's European policy was in the first place oriented toward defending Poland's (narrowly defined) national interest. The main features of this policy are the conservative notion of sovereignty and the perception of Europe as an arena of competition between nation states. As a populist and anti-establishment party, the government announced a turning point in Warsaw's present foreign policy and a "recapturing" of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹⁶: foreign policy would now be formulated 'assertively', national interest would be put first, and there would be no shrinking from abrasive conflicts if Poland's national interest was perceived to be in danger.¹⁷ Further European integration was perceived as inimical to the country's values and interests. Maintaining intergovernmental relations between the EU members was a core value of the Kaczynskis' EU policy – the government delayed the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and won the right to opt-out from the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

¹³ Polish Minister's of Foreign Affairs Annual Address on foreign policy.

<http://bip.msz.gov.pl/Ministers,Annual,Address,on,foreign,policy,2156.html>

¹⁴ Civic Platform won the parliamentary elections on October 9th 2011. Prime Minister Tusk announced that his government would maintain the same policy direction as during the four preceding years. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-15230750>

¹⁵ Aleks Szczerbiak, Paul Taggart (ed.), *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euro-scepticism*, Oxford University Press 2008, p. 12

¹⁶Kai-Olaf Lang, *Populismus im postkommunistischen Europa*, SWP-Studie. http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/studien/2009_S16_lng_ks.pdf

¹⁷ Krzysztof Bobiński, *Polish Foreign Policy 2005–2007*, Instytut Spraw Publicznych, p. 4. <http://www.pasos.org/www-pasosmembers-org/publications/polish-foreign-policy-2005-2007>

During the party's two-year rule, Polish relations with Germany and Russia worsened in pursuit of a closer partnership with the USA and eastern European and Caucasus republics. According to the then government's vision, "Polish national interest was particularly threatened by the German hegemony in the EU"¹⁸ and German eastern policy was contradictory to Poland's interests in the region (the North Stream pipeline project and the good state of Russo-German relations were offered as proof). In security matters, the Law and Justice government relied on NATO and concentrated its political effort on maintaining good relations with the USA. It also actively supported the Baltic States and former Soviet Republics in tightening their relations with the West. Its attitude to the EU was contradictory however: while opposing the deepening of integration in areas such as the ESDP (viewing this as a threat to NATO) the government stood for Europe's active role in Eastern Europe, participated in the development of the EU's military capabilities and strongly supported those EU policies, which provided transfers to the new Member States, like the regional policies or the common agriculture policy.

As for the European policy conducted by the Civic Platform government, this set different priorities and represented a different worldview than the previous government. When the coalition government came to power in November 2007 it announced a shift or rather a return to normal in foreign policy, with a special emphasis on European policy. The external actions were "to become more effective through an open, constructive, unprejudiced and coalition-based approach"¹⁹. Some researchers speak about a re-orientation of Polish European policy in the spirit of team playing and coalition building.²⁰ The political centre recognizes that Poland, as a still relatively weak Member State, needs a strong European Union to successfully compete and cooperate in the world. The current government stands for good relations with the strongest EU Member States and a strategic partnership with Germany. Parallel to this, it wishes Poland to become a leading Member State and a patron and promoter of the EU's Eastern policy. The government steadily expressed its conviction that both the deepening of cooperation within the EU and its enlargement are in the interest of all Member States²¹ - support for a stronger Union was expressed in the speech, which the Foreign Minister held in the Polish Parliament in 2010: "Inspired by ... the uplifting experience of six years of participation in the European Union, we repeat with conviction: We need

¹⁸ Agnieszka K. Cianciara, 'Eastern Partnership' – opening a new chapter of Polish Eastern policy and the European Neighbourhood Policy?, *Analyses & Opinions* No. 4, June 2008, The Institute of Public Affairs, p. 8 <http://www.pasos.org/www-pasosmembers-org/publications/eastern-partnership-opening-a-new-chapter-of-polish-eastern-policy-and-the-european-neighbourhood-policy>

¹⁹ Agnieszka K. Cianciara, *The European Policy of Donald Tusk's Government*, *Analyses & Opinions* No. 8/98, April 2009, The Institute of Public Affairs, p. 2

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Agnieszka K. Cianciara, *The European Policy of Donald Tusk's Government*, *Analyses & Opinions* No. 8/98, April 2009, The Institute of Public Affairs, p. 4

more Europe, not less"²².

Such an attitude toward European policy was focused on co-operation with EU partners and a constructive approach to the process of European integration. In practice the coalition government supported a quick ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, improved Warsaw's relations with Germany and stopped blocking the start of the EU-Russia negotiations immediately after Moscow lifted its embargo on Polish food²³. The relations with the USA became rather realist and interest based: Warsaw withdrew its troops from Iraq, which the previous government refused, and took a harder negotiation line in the talks on stationing the anti-ballistic missile system in Poland. Civic Platform government continued Poland's participation in CSDP missions, EU Battle Groups and the works of EDA, however for the first time the Minister of Foreign Affairs has put CSDP at the same position as NATO in providing Poland's security²⁴. Poland was also actively supporting Common Foreign and Security Policy and initiated the Eastern Partnership.

All in all, these two means of achieving the country's foreign policy goals differ very much in political style and substance. The current liberal (2007-) government maintains good relations with Poland's European partners, especially Germany and France. They also strongly supported the deepening and widening of European integration. This way of doing politics is constructive in terms of the process of European integration and is predictable for other Member States. The national conservative Law and Justice government (2005-07) dissociated from the policies of former governments and introduced a new way in European policy. Instead of fostering cooperation with the leading Member States, it tried to become a leader for the new Member States, especially the Baltic States. While supporting some features and rules of European integration, like solidarity, cohesion or the veto right of small Member States, it blocked the reform of the EU by opposing the Lisbon Treaty. The populist Law and Justice government, with its eurosceptic actions, gave Warsaw a negative image in the EU, as a breaker of the integration process and a problematic member.

However, through seven years of membership, Poland's European policy remained steady. All governments stood for European solidarity and integration of the internal market, as well as for EU's active role in international politics. While Poland's national interests were formulated alike by all governments, there was a discord how to realise them.

²² Radek Sikorski, *The Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Republic of Poland's Foreign Policy for 2010*, http://www.msz.gov.pl/The_Minister_of_Foreign_Affairs_on_the_Republic_of_Poland's_Foreign_Policy_for_2010,35218.html

²³ Ibid., p. 8

²⁴ Radek Sikorski, *The Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Republic of Poland's Foreign Policy for 2010*. <http://bip.msz.gov.pl/Expose,2008,27479.html>

4. Poland's attitude towards key policy areas

As the following analysis of Poland's activities concerning CFSP, CSDP and the attitude towards monetary union will show Warsaw is a pro-European Member State, which supports the EU's efforts to become a political actor in its own right. In the case of Europe's Eastern Policy, it is even the driver force of this political direction. These policy areas on the one hand show how Poland uses the EU to achieve its interests and on the other hand reflect Warsaw's willingness to integrate with the Union. The policy of a Member State toward Common Foreign and Security Policy as well as toward monetary integration is largely dependent upon a country's preferences and can be therefore seen as an indicator on how pro-integrationist a Member State is and the degree to which integration with the EU is congruent with its interest.

In the Polish case one can see how a pro-European policy matches with a country's interest. Warsaw uses the Common Foreign and Security Policy instruments to influence its eastern neighbours and to strengthen its position in negotiations with Russia. By participation in the Common Security and Defence Policy it is improving its national security as well as its relations with European partners. Poland doesn't want to become marginalized in the Union, therefore it aims at eurozone accession – again the national interest matches a pro-European policy

4.1 CFSP, CSDP

Warsaw's attitude towards the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) is an illustration of how this policy of the EU can be attractive even for a big Member State and how it can be used to strengthen its international position. From the beginning of its institutionalized relations with the EU, Poland was keen to be involved in Common Foreign and Security Policy. Already before entering the Union in May 2004 the country participated in numerous declarations and common positions. Warsaw's attitude towards the European Security and Defence Policy since its inception in 1999 has been reluctant and tempered by concern about diminishing NATO's leading role in the European security system and jeopardising the US military presence in Europe. However the further the ESDP project advanced and the deeper Poland's integration with the EU became (especially following membership in 2004) the more open its attitude became.

After EU accession, successive Polish governments failed to make use of Common Foreign and Security Policy mechanisms. The breakthrough came after the parliamentary elections in autumn 2007²⁵, when the Civic Platform government started to take advantage of the CFSP instruments to foster its foreign actions (e.g. Prime Minister's Tusk presence at the EU-Latin America and the Caribbean Summit in May 2008, cooperation with

²⁵ Ryszard Zięba, *Główne kierunki polityki zagranicznej Polski po zimnej wojnie*, Warsaw 2010, p. 125

Russia and the EU that resulted in Russia's lift of the embargo on meat from Poland and opened a way for negotiations on EU-Russia PCA²⁶). At present, Warsaw's policy in CFSP is to promote the eastern dimension of European Neighbourhood Policy and actively participate in CSDP, but in parallel to maintain good relations with the USA and to fulfil its NATO obligations.

Although Poland commits most of its military resources to NATO operations, it still participates in most military and civilian missions of the EU. Before accession, in 2003, 17 Polish soldiers participated in the Concordia operation in Macedonia. After the 2004 enlargement, over 200 Polish soldiers were participating in the EUFOR ALTHEA military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina - they ended the mission in October 2009. From February 2008 until March 2009, 400 soldiers supported the EUFOR mission in Chad. In 2006, 130 Polish military policemen were present at the EUFOR RD Congo military operation.²⁷ Currently two Polish officers are supporting the EUNAVFOR ATALANTA operation. When it comes to civilian missions Poland has the biggest number of participating personnel (16 out of 129 national experts) in the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine. 100 experts from the Polish Police and Ministry of Finance are participating in the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and 26 observers take part in the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia. Polish officials are participating in the EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan²⁸. Participation in the missions illustrates Poland's political and historical ties to Eastern Europe (missions in Moldova and Georgia) and its commitment to peace and stability in Europe (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo).

Besides the engagement in military and civilian missions Poland commits to improve EU's military capabilities, therefore it participates in EU Battle Groups and the works of European Defence Agency. Initially Poland's activity in creating EU Battle Groups was limited due to the military engagement in Iraq. In May 2005 it signed a declaration on creating a Battle Group (BG) in cooperation with Germany, Slovakia, Latvia and Lithuania.²⁹ Polish soldiers and staff constituted about half of the 3000 personnel, and the country was the Lead Nation of this BG which was on standby in the first half of 2010. Two other Battle Groups are planned. In July 2006 Poland, France and Germany agreed to create the Weimar Battle Group which would be in operation in the first half of 2013. Poland would again be the Lead Nation and provide over 50% of the BG staff. Also in 2007 the Ministers of Defence of the Visegrad Battle Group (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia) agreed on creating a BG that would be

²⁶Russia lifts embargo on Polish meat, www.euractiv.com, 21.12.2007,

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/trade/russia-lifts-embargo-polish-meat/article-169365>

²⁷ Polish Ministry of Defence, http://www.wp.mil.pl/en/strona/310/LG_183_239

²⁸ Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

<http://www.msz.gov.pl/Operacje,NATO,i,UE,29520.html>

²⁹ Polish Ministry of Defence, <http://www.wp.mil.pl/pl/arttykul/9559>

operational by 2015.³⁰ In July 2006 Poland joined the “Intergovernmental Regime to Encourage Competition in the European Defence Equipment Market” of the Agency, it is also one of the biggest participants in the first research program of the EDA “Defence Research and Technology Joint Investment Programme on Force Protection”, according to the Ministry of National Defence.³¹ Its activity in the EDA is fuelled on the one hand by the desire to influence the development of European defence capabilities in the field of crisis management (and thus to keep them in accordance with NATO capabilities) and on the other hand by its support for the Polish military industry and research and development institutes. Poland does not want to miss the chance to improve the quality of its army.

4.2 Eastern Partnership

The Eastern Partnership has a special place in Poland’s foreign policy. In the information on foreign policy given in 2010 by the government, the first paragraph was titled “a strong Poland in Europe, a patron and promoter of its Eastern policy”³² - this implies that Poland aims at becoming an important Member State with an unquestionable expertise in Eastern policy. Indeed, Poland was already engaged in designing the future shape of the Eastern Partnership long before entering the EU.

The concept of Poland’s eastern policy goes back to the beginning of the 1990s and the fall of Communism. Since then, the goal of its policy towards Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova has been promoting democracy and economic development by exporting its own model of successful transformation and involving the countries in joint political initiatives with the West. All activity in this region is of strategic importance for Poland’s economy and security. Being a geographically peripheral country of the EU and the Schengen Area, Poland recognizes the need to promote western values, norms and standards³³ among its eastern neighbours and therefore assists these countries in fostering their integration with the EU. In 1998, shortly after the start of Poland’s EU accession negotiations, the then Foreign Minister called for a strengthening of the ‘Eastern Dimension’ of the European Union. At the Copenhagen Summit in December 2002 Poland presented, as a comment to the April proposal tabled by the UK and Denmark, a ‘non-paper’ concerning future EU policy towards the former Soviet Republics.³⁴

Although the Kaczynski government in the years 2005 – 2007 put a

³⁰ Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

<http://www.msz.gov.pl/Rozwoj,wojskowych,zdolnosci,UE,29516.html>

³¹ Polish Ministry of Defence, http://www.wp.mil.pl/en/strona/310/LG_183_239

³² Radek Sikorski, *The Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Republic of Poland’s Foreign Policy for 2010*, <http://bip.msz.gov.pl/The,Minister,of,Foreign,Affairs,on,the,Republic,of,Polands,Foreign,P olicy,for,2010,35218.html>

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Agnieszka K. Cianciara, *‘Eastern Partnership’ – opening a new chapter of Polish Eastern policy and the European Neighbourhood Policy?*, Analyses & Opinions No. 4, June 2008, The Institute of Public Affairs, p. 5

great deal of effort into intensifying its relations with Ukraine, the Caucasus and Central Asia, especially in regards to a possible cooperation in gas and oil supply³⁵, its policy did not prove successful. The neglect of the German ‘Neue Ostpolitik’ proposal, presented during the German presidency in 2007, eventually resulted in less favourable financial conditions for the ‘strengthened ENP’. The government also failed to prepare visa facilitations for Ukraine before entering the Schengen zone. Similarly, it vetoed the EU mandate for negotiating the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Russia, because of the embargo on Polish food products. This policy weakened Poland’s position in negotiating a stronger eastern dimension of the ENP, although the actions were steadily coordinated with other new Member States – the Visegrad Group (Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia) and the Baltic States.

The attitude towards the ENP demonstrated by the following Civic Platform government favoured a more active and alliance-prone approach. Already one month after coming to power, in December 2007, the government presented a joint Polish-Lithuanian proposal for a multilateral framework of the ENP, which was accepted by the Council. After the French proposal of creating the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Poland responded with the proposal of creating the ‘Eastern Partnership’ as a multilateral platform for cooperation with Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, and the three South Caucasus republics. The project was presented on the European Council in May 2008 as a joint Polish – Swedish proposal. It was approved by the Council in March 2009. As Copsey and Pomorska put it “the proposal could be described as somewhat lacklustre, and did not represent anything particularly new for the eastern neighbours”, the authors also assessed Poland’s influence in the case of the Eastern Partnership proposal as very limited.³⁶ However it was the biggest Polish diplomatic success in the European Union. The country managed to win diplomatic support from Germany for the project, and to bring the region of the greatest importance for its foreign policy on top of the European agenda, on the same level as the “French” Union for the Mediterranean.

Since the launch of the Eastern Partnership (EaP), Poland has steadily expressed its wish to strengthen the initiative by establishing a Special Coordinator for the EaP and creating a Secretariat, as well as increasing the number of European Commission employees dealing with this area³⁷. It also implemented some projects in the EaP framework financed from its own budget. In the years 2009 and 2010, four of the seven priority countries to receive Polish development aid were EaP countries (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia).³⁸ Warsaw insisted on signing the association

³⁵ Ibid., p. 9

³⁶ Nathaniel Copsey, Karolina Pomorska, *Poland’s power and influence in the European Union: The cas of its eastern policy*, *Comparative European Politics* (2010) 8, p. 313

³⁷ Ed. Beata Wojna, Mateusz Gniazdowski, *Partnerstwo Wschodnie – raport otwarcia*, PISM, Warszawa 2009

³⁸ Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
<http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Komu,pomagamy,3.html>

agreements and on establishing free trade zones with those countries. It is a supporter of full visa liberalisation for those countries, as well as for Russia and the countries of western Balkans.

4.3 Enlargement

Poland regards the Eastern Partnership only as an alternative to the current 'enlargement fatigue'- the ultimate aim is an eastern enlargement of the EU. Warsaw supports the adjustment of the eastern European countries to European standards, so that they can eventually meet the criteria listed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and be ready for accession. The strategic importance of a future eastern enlargement for Poland is the same as the creation of the Eastern Partnership. The support for an enlargement is steadily expressed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the government. During his recent visit in Turkey the Prime Minister Tusk reassured Warsaw's involvement in favour of enlarging the European Union and announced an acceleration of negotiations on Turkey's membership of the Union during the Polish presidency in 2011. The "Polish presidency will be a time when negotiations will gain momentum. This is in the interest of Poland and Europe at large", he declared.³⁹

However unlike many western European states, Poland is much more concerned with the future of Ukraine in the EU rather than with Turkey. This focus is occasioned by its clear economic and political interests in that region. Some scholars also argue that Poland is not doing enough to support the enlargement towards the Western Balkans, which has been left instead to Slovenia, Hungary and the Czech Republic.⁴⁰ Yet, it is of course clear for the Polish authorities that EU enlargement cannot continue without the accession of the former Yugoslav republics and Albania. The government has therefore announced its increased support for the Western Balkans during the Polish presidency in the second half of 2011⁴¹. Poland is one of the greatest supporters of the enlargement of the EU.

4.4 Monetary Union

Although Poland committed already during its accession talks to introduce the euro by accepting the *acquis*, there has never been a national

³⁹ Prime Minister after the first day of his visit in Turkey, 8.10.2010.

http://www.premier.gov.pl/en/press_centre/news/id:5806/

⁴⁰ Agnieszka K. Cianciara, 'Eastern Partnership' – opening a new chapter of Polish Eastern policy and the European Neighbourhood Policy?, Analyses & Opinions No. 4, June 2008, The Institute of Public Affairs, p. 9; Adam Balcer, Grzegorz Gromadzki, *Doceńmy wreszcie Bałkany*, Gazeta Wyborcza 27.10.2010

⁴¹ Sikorski zapowiada wsparcie Bałkanów w ich drodze do UE, www.euractiv.pl, 09.11.2010, <http://www.euractiv.pl/rozszerzenie/artukul/sikorski-zapowiada-wsparcie-bakanow-w-ich-drodze-do-ue-002196>

consensus over the desired date of entry. The pro-European Civic Platform always declared its intention to join the eurozone as quickly as possible and pointed out the possible gains for the country's economy; the conservative Law and Justice government would rather delay the process and concentrated on possible losses and drawbacks for the economy by giving up the national monetary policy. This did not stop the eurorealist government from drafting a plan to introduce the single currency already in 2012.⁴² Within society, the support for introducing the single currency is not unanimous. Whereas business leaders generally advocate it⁴³ as it would diminish transactions costs, the support among the society is steadily decreasing from 70 % in 2002⁴⁴ to 32% this year⁴⁵.

The Civic Platform government was initially very keen on joining the eurozone already in 2011. Eventually the financial crisis and abrupt rise of the public deficit made it impossible for the country to enter the ERM II, however the government did much to bring Poland closer to the single currency. In 2008 it adopted a roadmap⁴⁶ on joining the eurozone; in 2009 it established an organizational structure, for the purpose of a better coordination between the public administration and the government.⁴⁷ The current budgetary situation caused by the financial crisis makes it impossible for the country to enter the ERM II mechanism; however experts predict that Poland will join the eurozone in 2015.⁴⁸

There is no doubt among Poland's ruling elites about the crucial strategic purpose of introducing the Single Currency. Apart from the economic arguments, there is an important political argument: staying outside the monetary union means Polish marginalization in the process of political and economic integration. Although having a national currency proved successful during the crisis (Poland was the only EU member to avoid recession during the crisis), it can lead to a marginalization in the future. Warsaw does not want to be left out from the deeper economic integration that will surely follow the monetary integration (it participates already in the 'Euro Plus Pact'). Poland will move towards adopting the single currency in order to strengthen its position within the EU and to fulfil the

⁴²Gilowska: Polska gotowa przyjąć euro w 2012 roku, www.gazeta.pl, 16.10.2007.

<http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/Wiadomosci/1,80353,4583309.html>

⁴³ Arkadiusz Domagala, *Integracja Polski z Unią Europejską*, Warszawa 2010, p. 254

⁴⁴ Komunikat CBOS BS/14/2007, *Opinie o wprowadzeniu euro*, p. 44; from: Arkadiusz Domagala, *Integracja Polski z Unią Europejską*, Warszawa 2010, p. 255

⁴⁵CBOS: za przyjęciem euro 32 proc. Polaków, przeciw 60 proc., *Polish Press Agency PAP*, 28.03.2011.

http://www.pap.pl/palio/html.run?_Instance=cms_www.pap.pl&_PageID=1&s=infopakiet&dz=gospodarka&idNewsComp=110857&filename=&idnews=89133&data=infopakietinfopakiet&_Checksum=671779403

⁴⁶Roadmap on introduction of Euro. Information of the Polish Ministry of Finance.

http://www.mf.gov.pl/_files/_euro/raporty/rzadowe/2_mapa_drogowa_28_10_2008.pdf

⁴⁷ Decree of the Council of Ministers, 03.11.2009.

http://www.mf.gov.pl/_files/_euro/akty_prawne/2_dz.u.09.195.1505_struktura.pdf

⁴⁸Rosati: przyjęcie euro realne w 2015 roku, *Polish Press Agency PAP*, 28.05.2010,

http://www.pap.pl/palio/html.run?_Instance=cms_ep.pap.pl&_PageID=1&menuId=17&nrDep=1528&_Checksum=168030718

needs of the EU-oriented economy.

4.5 Energy and climate policy

Energy security and climate policy are both key issues for Poland's economy and security. Unlike western Europe countries is Poland entirely dependent on bituminous and brown coal-based electricity generation (94% of electricity generated from coal-fuelled power plants⁴⁹), it also imports most of its oil and gas from Russia. The historical "Coal Complacency" has led Poland to a point where the wellbeing of the entire economy depends on the coal price and the CO₂ emission costs. The advantage of Poland's energy mix is its relative independence, as the country is itself the biggest coal producer in EU – only 18% of all energy has to be imported.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, diversification of external and internal energy sources has been a priority for all governments since 1990. The country is currently transforming its energy market in order to get a fair balance between energy security and CO₂ reduction goals set by the EU. Poland is supporting Common Energy Policy within the EU and a multilateral approach in relations with Russia – its main gas and oil supplier. In regard to climate Policy Warsaw's position is contradictory to the proposals of European Commission.

"Poland's Energy Policy until 2030" – a strategic document developed by the Ministry of Economy includes, besides the improvement of energy efficiency and limiting the environmental impact, the goal of ensuring Poland's energy security. According to this strategy energy security will be based on domestic fuel and energy resources, especially hard coal and lignite. Additionally, the energy mix will change as more energy will be produced from renewable energy sources (RES) and from the country's first nuclear power plant. These measures will ensure independence from external sources of supply as regards the production of electricity and, in large part, heat. In the area of oil, gas and liquid fuels the document assumes diversification, which now applies not only to supply sources, but also to production technologies. Support will be given to develop technologies whereby it will be possible to acquire liquid and gaseous fuels from domestic resources. The EU is playing a crucial role in reforming Polish energy sector. Warsaw is in favor of the European Commission proposal of introducing full liberalization of European energy and gas market. The biggest obstacle in the liberalization process is the lack of the necessary interconnectors with the transmission systems of other Member States. European Commission is supporting the construction of electricity and gas interconnectors within the TENE network. Poland is currently working on two projects: the Poland-Lithuania energy bridge and gas connection with Denmark.⁵¹ Warsaw is also investing in the construction

⁴⁹Martin Kremer/Kai-Olaf Lang, *Polen – Vom Bremsklotz zum potentiellen Klimapartner Deutschlands?*, p.1

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ 5 years of Poland in the European Union, Warsaw 2009, Office of the Committee for

of liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Swinoujscie. In order to meet the EU requirements and to ensure its energy security Poland is steadily developing a network of liquid fuel stocks. The country already has the capacity to maintain stocks of crude oil sufficient for 90 days of average consumption, and according to a new law passed in 2007 the Polish state is going to be the sole owner of all reserves by 2017.

In order to ensure security of supply of natural gas and oil, Warsaw is in favor of multilateral initiatives in this respect, as well as a Common Energy Policy. The Visegrad Group is a frame for such a multilateral approach. During the V4 Group meeting in Bratislava this year, the prime ministers have passed a declaration⁵², where energy security was one of the top priorities of future cooperation. The leaders agreed on regional cooperation within the EU framework to diversify the routes, sources and suppliers of energy carriers and to develop the energy infrastructure, especially by the implementation of the North-South gas interconnections and modernisation of the oil and electricity networks. Poland's position in energy policy is on the one hand influenced by its dependency on gas and oil imports from Russia, and on the other hand by globalization. As the Minister of Economy Pawlak expressed during a meeting with EU Commissioner for Energy Günther Oettinger: "We believe that without a strong and coherent policy in this regard the EU will be unable to maintain its position on the global market. In talks with our partners, the EU as a whole can win much more than individual Member States on their own"⁵³.

According to the Climate and Energy Package adopted by the Commission in December 2008, Poland has to meet the following goals by 2020: reduce greenhouse gas emission by 20%, increase the share of renewable energy sources (RES) by 20% and increase energy efficiency by 20%. The first goal is for many reasons the most critical for Poland's interests. There is a serious threat that this measure will lead to a drop in economic growth rate and budget revenues, because the costs of CO2 allowances would be shifted on private consumers. Critics of this measure also note that the eastern non-EU neighbours of Poland do not pay as much attention to CO2 reductions – so the ecological argument loses its power. The climate policy issue sets Polish European policy in an inconvenient position. Its image as a pro-European Member States fades away in comparison with its unilateral approach to climate policy. A possible solution to this problem would be a broad modernisation of Poland's energy sector, supported by the decision makers and the civic society⁵⁴, as

European Integration, p.143 - 145

⁵² The Bratislava Declaration of the Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Visegrad Group (15 February 2011, Bratislava).

<http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=859&articleID=32697&ctag=articlelist&id=1>

⁵³ Meeting of Minister of Economy Waldemar Pawlak with the EU Commissioner for Energy Günther Oettinger, Warsaw 31 March 2011. <http://www.mg.gov.pl/node/13985>

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 6-8

well as by a tighter cooperation with those member states that are more advanced in fighting CO2 emissions.

Conclusion

As the analysis has shown, Polish foreign policy and its national interest are complimentary with EU foreign and defence policy and with the deepening of European integration. Even when the country was ruled by a eurosceptic government, it pursued a pro-European course (e.g. the Eastern Partnership initiative, cooperation within CSDP, setting plans for a quick introduction of the euro, support for Common Energy Policy). Poland's relative weakness in its relations with Germany and Russia, and its eagerness to be influential in the region, as well as in Ukraine and Belarus, also push the country towards Brussels. A coordination of all EU Member States' foreign policies would certainly give Warsaw the necessary resources to become a more powerful actor in Central and Eastern Europe. Its geopolitical position, as a border state of the EU, naturally implies a pro-enlargement strategy. Relative economic weakness and economic dependence on EU markets, as well as the dependence on energy imports from Russia, force Poland into a pro-integrationist course in the common market policy and the monetary union. As one of the biggest beneficiaries of regional policy and common agricultural policy Poland stands for a strong EU budget. All these factors influence the country's policy towards the EU. Some researchers recognize an evolution in Warsaw's EU policy from a defensive position in the first years of the membership to an active Member State, which stands for an inclusive model of integration and widens its field of activities from budget issues and security policy, to socio-economic problems.⁵⁵ Poland's pro-European attitude has become a key factor during its current Council Presidency. With the three focal priorities (European integration as a source of growth, secure Europe – food, energy defence, and Europe benefiting from openness), Poland follows a pro-integrationist track. The Central European state, whose society eagerly embraces the European idea, carries great potential.⁵⁶ The last seven years of Poland's membership have shown that it can positively influence European integration and it has all the resources to become one of the driving forces of the EU.

⁵⁵ Kai-Olaf Lang, *Polens Vorsitz im Rat der EU: Zuversicht in Zeiten der Krise*, p.5, http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/aktuell/2011A38_lng_ks.pdf

⁵⁶ In the June 2010 Eurobarometer survey, Poland was the 6th most Euro-Enthusiastic country with 62% support for the membership. Eurobarometer survey, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/showchart_column.cfm?keyID=5&nationID=24,&startdate=2010.06&enddate=2010.06