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Political System and Foreign Policy

European Union – Polish project in progress

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Poland will soon be participating in a unique undertaking – European integration will become our concern, a project for Poland – although one that is still in progress, and whose completion is still a long way off. It is therefore essential that we consider carefully all the challenges inherent in European integration. Preoccupied with the details of EU membership, we fail to find enough time for a closer analysis of challenges to European integration. But before long, we will have to – and we will certainly want to – take a considered stance on matters which currently seem too remote and intangible.

My lecture should be treated as an attempt to enliven a lacklustre debate. I shall begin with an outline of the achievements and challenges of the European Union. Then I shall consider the conditions for a democratic nation-state, and finally I will discuss the criteria indispensable for the formation of Poland's position on the challenges facing the EU.

1.

It is indeed astonishing that in such a short time the EU has managed to transform the ideas of philosophers and visionaries into a political and economic reality of fundamental significance for the every-day lives of all Europeans. Initially, the multilateral treaty “merely” provided for the withdrawal of the nation-state from the

sphere of economics, allowing the opening-up of markets for goods, capital and labour, and their subsequent merger into one organism for the exercise of joint control over trade exchange with third-party countries. As a result, this extensive project has created a strong unity of interests which provided the basis for a new order in which the use of force as a means of settling conflicts among EU member states has been eliminated. This is a historic achievement by the West-European nations, which for centuries had been organized into belligerent states or empires.

The achievements of the EU are certainly impressive, although many of them are currently too easily taken for granted. But it would be unreasonable to claim that the political harmony and economic well-being so characteristic of modern Europe are accidental, or the result of pure coincidence. One should not forget that it is the EU that has provided its citizens with a common institutional framework, forced politicians to look for consensus, standardized law for the benefit of its citizens and created a complex and durable network of interaction and close contacts to integrate politicians, officials, companies and institutions from all member states. Last but not least, the emergence of the EU has eliminated conflicts and significantly contributed to peace and security – a situation unprecedented in Europe. Even though in the years 1815–1914 Europe did not experience any whole-continent wars, for many citizens it was a time of tragedy, numerous local conflicts, the Franco-Prussian War and arms races, which subsequently led to the outbreak of World War I. The period 1815–1914 bears absolutely no resemblance to the past fifty years.

Proper functioning of the EU is of key significance to almost all aspects of our future, from peaceful coexistence through high standards of democracy and economic well-being to the enjoyment derived from the European cultural heritage. Today the EU is at the crossroads – a situation quite typical of a project in progress, although this time the dilemmas are of a more fundamental nature: they are considerably more complex and, presumably, long overdue. By establishing the common market in 1987 and introducing a common currency in 1992, the EU has launched ambitious projects resulting in a range of long-term consequences that have not so far been taken into serious consideration in respect of the EU's functioning, structure and future plans. This neglect has been compounded by current challenges posed by EU enlargement: soon the EU will consist of 25 member states with a total population

of over 500 million. It should be noted that enlargement would be a relatively simple task if the EU had only been aware of and had dealt properly with problems in the past.

The most urgent and vital changes are required in three areas. Firstly, in the management of the EU and, more generally, in the process of further European integration. Let me highlight the three most important aspects of this challenge. The first is the necessity to combat the so-called democratic deficit: an occasional failure of the EU to comply with, sometimes even very basic, standards of democracy. In a modern democratic state citizens demand the right to an insight into the decisions made by authorities: to understand, question and be informed about the rationale behind such decisions and to know who is responsible and who will bear the consequences for wrong decisions. Public support for new projects cannot be taken for granted; citizens should feel involved – it is essential that they participate in each new phase of EU history. Otherwise, necessary changes might never be implemented and the progress achieved so far might be called into question.

The second aspect of the challenge is the issue of ineffective problem-solving procedures. The process of decision-making within EU institutions is particularly complicated, but with good reason: a community of hundreds of millions of citizens living in various nation-states that use different procedures for decision-making cannot function as a single state; such a large community has to take into consideration a much wider range of opinions and many more procedures. Unfortunately, the EU's decision-making mechanism remains *exceptionally* inefficient. Immediate changes and new ideas are therefore vital.

The third aspect is the matter of management efficiency. The work of the EU authorities, and indeed of any other type of authority, can be viewed as a set of diverse programmes and policies. The success of these programmes depends to a large extent on how well and how effectively they are managed. Regrettably, the abilities of the EU authorities at present are frequently questioned in relation to both the selection of managers and organizational issues.

Economic policy is another area where changes are imperative. The introduction of the single currency calls not only for the reinforcement of the structures responsible for the management of the economy but also for cooperation in other branches of economic

policy (e.g. in fiscal policy). However, the governments of the EU member states seem to be reluctant to cooperate in such areas.

The third aspect I would like to discuss is foreign policy. The success of European integration has raised justifiable expectations among third-party states that the EU will assume a more prominent role in foreign relations. Also, member states expect the EU to provide a framework for an efficient system of defence against any possible conflicts in the immediate vicinity of the EU or further afield. Additionally, the EU ought to assume a more active role in the areas of international trade, finance and environmental protection. The example of the US proves that it is impossible to escape from such responsibilities: the policy of isolationism is not a desirable option, as it eventually works to the detriment of the isolationist country.

Although it would be possible to discuss the aforementioned dilemmas more extensively, they can be conveniently grouped into two fundamental sets of issues: (1) the transfer of further nation-state powers to EU authorities (this is a highly political issue and therefore more controversial) and (2) qualitative changes in democratic procedures.

The dilemmas of our Western neighbours will soon become our own: the European integration will also become a project in progress for Poland. Therefore, we need to adopt a considered approach; we have to be able to relate to these problems from the point of view of our own objectives and national interests.

2.

Our search for the criteria necessary for us to adopt an appropriate stance on EU dilemmas should start with the realization that fewer and fewer common objectives can be achieved through the nation-state.

Free independent citizens organize themselves into states to attain goals they cannot achieve individually. This is how I understand the notion of a state: not as an autonomous entity, heritage or power, but as a common undertaking or shared effort of all citizens. I believe that this is also how other contemporary citizens understand the idea of state. We are still willing – as Thomas Hobbes wrote – to cede our freedom to the Sovereign in return for his provisions, though only that part of our freedom which we consider appropriate, in return for only those provisions that we require. And, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote, we expect the state to fulfil only those goals and

interests that are expressed through the common will: exclusively those and no others. Through the medium of the state, citizens demand an effective and democratic influence on their circumstances in those areas in which they are not able to take individual action.

Let us consider in more detail the words: "to have an effective and democratic influence on our circumstances." How is it possible nowadays to have an effective influence on our circumstances? It has become more and more obvious in recent years that in many areas we do not want, or are not able, to influence our circumstances through the medium of the nation-state. This has resulted in a noticeable weakening of competences of the nation-state. There are two reasons for this situation.

The first reason is that the increase in the level of education and better awareness of rights and civil liberties have contributed to a more general acknowledgment of the aforementioned definition of the state. As the state is an attempt to attain objectives that cannot be achieved by individual citizens on their own, it should not be concerned with activities appropriate to individual citizens. Anything that can be done by individual citizens on their own should be excluded from the sphere of state responsibility. Entrepreneurs tend to produce cheaper and better goods: so states that previously built up monopoly control of the means of production are now divesting themselves thereof through privatisation. Since the state is a common enterprise of free citizens, they should be able to establish appropriate institutions for the purpose of completing specific tasks. Certain tasks can be carried out more efficiently by international institutions. For industry as well as for consumers it is both more convenient and cheaper if certain technological standards (e.g. rail gauges) are the same in all neighbouring countries. It therefore becomes the responsibility of international institutions to coordinate such standardisation.

There is another, even more important, reason for the dwindling competences of the nation state: in some areas the nation state has lost its sovereignty; it is no longer able to undertake important social tasks independently. It should be made explicit that sovereignty here means primarily control over all the resources and institutions essential for self-reliant rule; only secondly does it mean independence in the context of relations with other countries and entities. Clearly, it is impossible to be independent without being self-reliant.

In political relations sovereignty has been, and most probably will remain, strongly emphasised and guaranteed. Probably never in history have there been so many independent states as nowadays. And never before have there been so few imposed supra-national and supra-state structures: empires, colonies, protectorates, etc. Never have international affairs been so equally balanced and based so strongly on the principle of reciprocity. Consequently, it has never been so difficult to call “disobedient” states to order: the example of Kosovo demonstrates how universal and complex international agreement has to be nowadays for military intervention to take place.

In actual fact no individual state is able to fully exercise its sovereignty. This is why there are so many voluntary supra-state organizations. All countries in the world are members of the United Nations, with the vast majority also belonging to the International Monetary Fund, World Bank or World Trade Organization; all continents have their own free trade agreements. Nation-states voluntarily cede part of their powers to bilateral or multilateral structures, and subsequently participate—or choose not to—in their decision-making procedures.

It is even more difficult to talk about full sovereignty in the context of modern economics. The world of finance is no longer governed by states or superpowers but by “supra-markets”. This can be illustrated by the recent crisis in Russia, where the absence of the necessary reforms of the tax system, compounded by a fall in the price of raw materials and incompetent administration, together with depletion of foreign exchange reserves, caused panic among foreign investors, drastic devaluation of the rouble and deep economic crisis. Even substantial foreign aid did not manage to avert the catastrophe. Subsequently, after initial bluster, Russian politicians had to tone down their imperialist language and decided to conform to the demands of international financial circles. This reminds one of a similar crisis in Britain, which had to opt out of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism after a dramatic struggle to stay in, and a consequent loss of several billion dollars. Neither historical greatness nor geopolitical position or military powers are a sufficient safeguard against financial crisis if there is a widespread belief that the economic foundations of a country are weak or the government’s policies inappropriate. Old glory and worth have lost their lustre: nowadays the fact that they were “revered” for hundreds of years is simply irrelevant. It is true that the British

pound sterling used to be the strongest currency in the world, that the Bank of England formerly had a decisive influence on the world financial markets and that the City remains the second most important financial centre in the world; nowadays, however, these facts no longer matter. If private investors conclude that the risks are too high, they will not be convinced by any political arguments or guided by sentimentality: they will simply withdraw their money and refuse to make any further investment.

Consider another example—technology. Major technological innovations inevitably lead to completely new situations that can be neither regulated nor controlled by the nation state. A spectacular example of such technological development is the Internet—a global invention, but also a product, significantly influencing the economic activities of individuals and whole communities, which at the same time completely eludes government control. Through new information technologies, more and more people will be able to use devices that eliminate the limitations resulting from the need to reside in a particular place. Nowadays one can live on a boat in the Caribbean and at the same time “go” to work in Poland, while keeping in touch—in real time—with one’s managers in France and the rest of the team scattered all over the world. Without travelling, one can do one’s banking in Switzerland and buy books in the US and clothes in the UK. From the moment people are able to plug their phones straight into “heaven”, there are virtually no limitations to the way human activities can be organized; there are no chains tethering anyone to any specific place.

In Poland gradual weakening of powers of the nation-state still arouses feelings of disappointment and anxiety. This is not surprising considering the fact that Poland has regained its independence only recently, after many years of sacrifice and strenuous effort. For more than 250 years hostile military forces of neighbouring countries were stationed on the Polish territory. Poles still remember very well the restricting and damaging influence of the lack of independence. We honour all known and anonymous patriots who fought and died for our independence. We remember those who never lived in an independent Poland: their dismal fate, unfulfilled hopes and wasted opportunities. We rejoice over our independence, regained in such a remarkable way, but at the same time we feel disappointed when we realize that our country cannot be completely sovereign.

Poles tend to perceive themselves as integral elements of the state. For many people the terms Poles, Poland and the Polish Republic are synonymous; they are just different words used to describe the community living in the territory of our country. We tend to believe that if the state is becoming weaker, the same happens to us, the citizens.

Such an attitude, such a perception of ourselves, creates serious problems. The nation-state will inevitably grow weaker: in some areas it will wither altogether or will eventually be replaced by other institutions. We will grow weaker and wither along with the state if we insist on considering it as the only institution that belongs to us. We have to do everything to avoid such future.

Fortunately “we” is something more than just the state. “My folk are those who speak to me in my own language,” wrote Aleksander Brueckner at a time when “we” existed but the Polish state did not. The state does not constitute the whole “public space”, the political philosopher would contend; it does not constitute the whole “social existence”, a Christian would say. The state is not the same as “Poland” or “society”. The state is only one of many institutions which we have to, or may, create to attain our common goals. “Citizen” is only one of our attributes: only one (although perhaps the nearest to us) of several dimensions in which we co-exist within a community.

It is extremely important to understand the difference between the state and society. Only then will we be able to relate adequately to the problem of the weakened state. Instead of making repeated but futile attempts to repair the state, we will come to the obvious conclusion that if we cannot be self-reliant in some (or even many) areas, then perhaps we should enter into direct cooperation with other communities. In other words, we should acknowledge the fact that in some cases the nation-state is no longer able to address satisfactorily some issues and we should therefore look to other institutions. Mankind faced similar challenges in the past, and it was then that the nation-state emerged. This bold innovation allowed for the better management of apparently unmanageable issues, which previously could not be properly dealt with within the city-state. It also gave citizens self-determination.

Can we achieve something similar today? The prospect of a supra-national democracy remains a hazy notion and as a world-wide phenomenon it seems even more implausible. Such a democracy could only originate in regions characterized by strong community identity and awareness. In most parts of the world

communities have little or nothing in common. Fortunately, in our part of the world the situation is different: Europe in this respect is unique and early institutions characteristic of multi-national communities are already in place. Soon we will have to decide whether we want to take part in the endeavour of building a multi-national community. Will our participation in such a community be effective in terms of achieving our objectives?

Let us consider the fundamental task of ensuring security. It is difficult to envisage a society that would not make national security its own objective, a society which would not want to ensure it independently, or a society which would prefer security to be ensured on its behalf by a protector. Yet there are only a few communities that are able to carry out this task completely independently. Poland cannot ensure its national security independently, since it lacks sufficient resources and expertise. The belief that we are able to defend our independence unaided is not tenable and, in fact, even further exacerbates Poland's vulnerability. Fortunately, Poland has decided to join NATO and become a member of that group of European and North American democracies in military alliance.

But this does not entirely eliminate all Poland's security problems. Regrettably, there are good reasons to believe that NATO membership might not be sufficient to secure our independence; it might not satisfactorily guarantee our national survival. NATO on its own does not significantly improve the prospects for stable democratic and economic development in our region. Like any international agreement, NATO too might one day prove to be only transitory; at some point in the future the treaty might terminate and NATO might disintegrate. Moreover, NATO is not able to change the nature of relations on our continent. Whether peace is a permanent phenomenon in our part of the world will not depend so much on military alliances as on the state of relations between European nations—whether these relations are cooperative and friendly, or rather competing and hostile. If Europe is to remain divided into separate, competing countries or blocs of nation-states, peace sooner or later will be put to the test. To ensure security not only for today but also for the future, it is essential to change the relations between nations on our continent; Poles should be particularly aware of this.

Let me expand on my previous statement. Norman Davies, a British historian, concluded one of his lectures with a remark particularly pleasing to the Polish ear: "here in Krakow, at the

Jagiellonian University, we are 'at the heart of the heart of the Heart of Europe'". Yet Slawomir Mrozek, a Polish writer, in one of his plays describes Poland as "a country to the East of the West and to the West of the East". According to Jerzy Liebert, a Polish poet, we are "neither in the West nor in the East. It is as if you were standing in the doorway". So where are we exactly? In the heart of Europe, as Davis maintains, or nowhere, as the two Polish writers claim. Actually, it depends on "where" Europe is: if it is united, we are in its heart; if divided, we are on the periphery, in a vacuum; and this is how we can briefly characterize Poland's opportunities and pitfalls.

In a united Europe we would be able to feel secure; we would fully develop our potential and enrich the European heritage with our own contribution. In a divided Europe, however, our considerable territory in the centre of the continent, between Germany and Russia, is the object of our powerful neighbours' craving. In a divided Europe Poland resembles a pendulum: it swings to one side only to return later to the other. The "pendulum effect" has often influenced our unenviable fate: our history of cruel wars, enslavement and abject poverty. As long as Europe remains divided into competing states or blocs of states, Poles as a nation cannot feel secure or be sure of survival. In a divided Europe international policy is based on the balance of power; it is a zero-sum game in which Poland can merely play a passive role, the role of a pendulum. Unfortunately, we have to bear in mind that Poland's chances of becoming a sufficiently significant economic or military power to become an active player in this game are vanishingly minute.

European integration (understood as an objective and as a guiding principle) provides an opportunity to get out of this historical, seemingly inescapable, predicament. Integration enabled West European countries to eliminate the policy of the balance of power from their mutual relations. Without any doubt, Poland's membership of the EU would significantly improve our security and uphold our independence. From another perspective, our EU membership would strengthen European integration and thus also contribute to greater security among our Western neighbours. Secondly, the Franco-German experience might become a pattern for settled Polish-German relations. Thirdly, it would open possibilities for extending integration to our Eastern neighbours in order to eliminate any possible conflicts in this part of the continent. We cannot attain this without joining the European Union. On the one

hand we would demonstrate to our Eastern neighbours that the EU does not want to be a closed, elitist club of selected nations; we could prove that the Union is open to new members. This would certainly contribute to the reinforcement of pro-Western attitudes among Belarusians and Ukrainians, many of whom still believe that the only pragmatic option for them is close cooperation with Russia and the formation of a separate organization rivalling the EU. Polish membership would allow the EU to expand eastwards: Poland, unlike Switzerland, cannot be simply “jumped over”. Fourthly, it would be possible to develop closer relations with our Eastern neighbours and thus influence relevant EU policies. Poland would be able to work towards facilitating personal, economic and cultural relations between East and West Europeans. Hopefully, we would be able to win our neighbours’ friendship and appreciation and consequently we would manage to change the perception of our country, from a historic site of conflict, loss and sorrow into a modern place of friendly relations, good opportunities and fulfilment. Last but not least, we would gain genuine influence on the future shape of the EU.

Similar benefits of Poland’s membership of the EU for our economy and culture could also be demonstrated, but they deserve separate treatment. Here I will only reiterate that in many areas it would be much more reasonable to cede some of our freedoms to the EU rather than to the nation-state, and some of our Polish objectives would certainly be more effectively completed by the means of the EU rather than through the nation-state.

3.

A question remains whether by gaining effectiveness we would not be sacrificing our democracy. We have already established that our influence on our circumstances should be both effective and democratic.

Democracy cannot be fully separated from the state – indeed, the most obvious, “operational” manifestation of democracy is Parliament. However, no arguments exist that would indicate that the opening-up of the nation-state threatens democracy in any provable way. Of course I do not mean here the Athenian type of democracy, which used to impose barriers on trade with other city-states to avoid excessive interdependence. Today such a model of democracy would not find many supporters. Putting up barriers, no matter how sophisticated and expensive, as the example of the

Chinese and Berlin walls demonstrated, simply will not work. Opening-up fosters democracy in the modern sense of the term: it fosters economic development and creates beneficial conditions for international business contacts. Development creates appropriate conditions for democracy. Empirical research proves that, as a rule, improved standards of living foster the democratisation of political life. Affluent citizens tend to be better “consumers” of democracy than the underprivileged. International contacts encourage interpersonal relations and expose citizens to diverse values and ideas, thus advancing tolerance. Without a certain level of tolerance a minority will never accept the decisions of the majority; obviously, opening-up promotes democracy. As Joseph Schumpeter has proved, economic development leads to peace: affluent democracies will not engage in wars against one another.

There is no contradiction between democracy and the idea of cooperation between communities. However, such cooperation has to be direct and not, as it is nowadays, executed through the medium of member nation-states. Let us consider the following example: Poland is a member of NATO. As a result of a decision of the North-Atlantic Council of Ambassadors, a Polish citizen living in the environs of Krakow goes (quite rightly) to Bosnia to participate in law enforcement operations. We believe that this decision has been made by the citizen himself, in a democratic, albeit extremely complex, way: he has a representative in the lower chamber of the Parliament. Although “our” citizen did not vote in the elections for this particular MP, his representative was nominated by the winning party from the party list. The MP participated in the election of the Prime Minister, who—in turn—appointed the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Minister of Foreign Affairs negotiated Polish membership of NATO. The negotiated agreement was then accepted by the Polish government and sent to Parliament for ratification. Later, acting through his proxy, the Minister of Foreign Affairs cooperated with ministers of other NATO member states to define appropriate strategies for operations in Kosovo. After the approval of these strategies by the Polish government, “our” citizen was sent to Bosnia apparently at his own request and using the money he paid in taxes.

In no way would we be able to convince an ancient Athenian that the above example resembles democracy. Indeed, in case of external threats, Athenians were willing to enter alliances with other city-states but only for the time of insecurity. A permanent

alliance, or a *league*, was considered undemocratic: the *demos* would not be able to govern a *league* directly; the assembly would need elected representatives and therefore it would not have full, sovereign authority over the city. Although the development of representative democracy has significantly changed our perspectives, it is still difficult to accept as democratic the way "our" citizen "decided" to send himself to Bosnia. Such decision-making is only a mock-up of democracy, a by-pass allowing the sidestepping of democratic procedures, which would be ineffective in this particular case. However, this is no fault of democracy; democratic channels did not become "clogged-up" in this case: it is not possible to proceed democratically in areas in which a community can no longer decide independently and where it has lost its sovereignty. In such areas we can only pretend that we have a democracy. Although we know that we cannot accomplish an objective on our own, we keep on pretending that we are still able to act through the nation-state instead of choosing to cooperate directly with other communities. We prefer to pretend that our nation-state is fully sovereign, and consequently we authorize it to pursue an objective. Subsequently, in order to attain the objective, the state enters into agreements with other states to form a supra-national institution and hands over its relevant responsibilities and prerogatives. As a result, the nation-state merely resembles local authorities, which function along the guidelines set by higher-level governments, while the citizen is reduced to the status of a local community member, who expects the mayor of a city to be accountable, for instance, for the state of national security. Therefore, "the democratic deficit" is increasingly becoming a recurring and pronounced problem; the deficiency cannot be fully eliminated without getting rid of the nation-state in those areas where communities have already established close cooperation. Only then will the citizens be fully able to decide for themselves.

4.

Our approach towards the idea of supra-national democracy should be rational, without prejudice or fear, but also without naïve enthusiasm. Such enthusiasm would probably make us care less about our nation-state, as we would tend to believe in its imminent end; such a belief, as all self-fulfilling prophecies, might eventually lead to the collapse of the state. We are against such a scenario, and

so our position on the challenges facing the EU should be formulated exceptionally cautiously and carefully. In view of this I would like to present four criteria that should be taken into consideration.

Firstly, we should acknowledge that the most important objective that we want to achieve through our membership of the EU is national security and the consolidation of our independence. Therefore, all changes and new projects should be subordinate to this objective or at least not stand in its way. Particularly important here is the issue of the cohesion of the EU. Disagreements among present members over the intensity of integration in some areas, e.g. common currency, will soon be deepened even further by the inability of new members to participate in some EU projects. As a result, different zones or spheres are already emerging: at one end of the spectrum there are those members who not only make full use of *acquis communautaire* but also engage in projects involving more advanced cooperation. At the opposite end of the spectrum some members are not able, or simply refuse, to accept their duties ensuing from *acquis communautaire*. Such a situation does not augur well for the stability of our independence. If one of the principles of the EU was diversification based on free choice of responsibilities, the EU would soon stratify into smaller, rival groups, and European unification would be illusory. Such an institution would be subject to strong internal and external pressures. Poland particularly – as an economically weak country situated on the eastern frontier – would be exposed to such pressures. Therefore, Poland should actively support the cohesion of the EU, and in those cases where stratification is unavoidable, we should make every effort to be in the same group of states as our neighbours, particularly Germany.

Secondly, one of the basic principles of democracy is equality. A common concern is that after Poland joins the EU, we will not be treated equally; we worry that our position will be inferior. Formally, such worries are unsubstantiated – we would enjoy exactly the same status as other present or future members. However, since Poland – with its weak economy and lack of experience in EU diplomacy – does not currently participate in a well-developed network of informal relations between politicians, entrepreneurs and prominent citizens, it will inevitably be less influential and important than the senior members of the EU. In this situation we should embrace the principle of “forward escape”: we should ardently support solutions which introduce and strengthen all aspects of

supra-national democracy. Poland, with its 40 million citizens, will be in the forefront of the EU, in the group of the six largest countries; therefore any changes gearing the decision-making mechanism of the EU towards higher standards of democracy will be positively beneficial and advantageous for Poland.

Thirdly, we aspire to join the EU because we realize that in certain areas Poland is not able to achieve important objectives independently. Each time we consider our participation in new EU projects, we have to make sure in each case whether a loss of sovereignty has already taken place, and whether this loss is permanent or the result of a temporary weakness. Whether the loss of sovereignty is irreversible often depends on ourselves. For instance without rapid improvements in our judicature, the number of appeals to international judicial institutions will constantly increase and might soon become a common and enduring practice. To conclude, it is highly unreasonable to hand over to the EU those objectives which we can achieve more efficiently on our own.

Fourthly, projects which do not allow the EU to create a sovereign community, i.e. a community commanding resources and institutions indispensable for sovereign self-government, are pointless. For instance, according to the aforementioned criterion, a common European defence system would not be viable, since without the United States such an institution would not be capable of sovereign self-government. Only a Euro-Atlantic defence community would be sovereign according to this criterion. The idea of a sovereign Euro-Atlantic defence community should be particularly supported by Poland: not only because we like Americans, or—as some people nonsensically claim—because we are an American Trojan Horse in Europe. We should defend the idea of a Euro-Atlantic defence community because without the United States it will not be possible to find a suitable place for Russia in Europe. Russia is simply too big: its inclusion in the EU would throw the whole structure off-balance. Still, without Russia unification of Europe will not be complete; the continent will remain divided. As it has been already stated, in the foreseeable future, European defence cannot afford to dispense with the military potential of the United States.

5.

A lot has already been done to unite Europeans within a community. The success of the EU is certainly irrefutable and lasting: it provides a basis and support for future structures. By defeating

communism, Central and Eastern Europeans have contributed towards elevating the status of citizens and their rights to new, higher levels. At present this advancement is being reinforced by new information technologies which create new opportunities for the creativity of the mankind. A creative person is a person who is well-informed, independent and able to communicate with others on equal terms. Only independent people are able to leave the cocoon of the nation-state. The defeat of communism has left capitalism unrivalled: nowadays even Cubans know – although they are still in denial – that central planning does not work. The very nature of capitalism forces the opening-up and merger of markets; it pushes us towards supra-national democracy. The last ten years have witnessed an unprecedented surge in European solidarity: examples range from German food parcels for Poles in the period of economic crisis, through multi-billion aid to Russia, to military intervention in Kosovo. It seems natural to help someone living in the other end of the same continent as, by and large, we are part of the same community.

Many tasks remain to be completed by the European nations. For Poland, a nation which for many years did not exist on the political map of Europe, or was merely a satellite state, this represents a great historic opportunity and a reason for satisfaction. Our patriotic duty is to use this opportunity to the best of our ability, as it represents a unique chance to fulfil dreams of “unity to which the different European tribes tirelessly aspire, unity universally expected and prophesised”, as Adam Mickiewicz, a renowned Polish poet, once wrote.

Source: *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, tom 1, nr 1(1) 2001, p. 61–75.