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Polish–Mexican Cooperation: Where Does Poland Stand?

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Poland and Mexico have unexplored potential for cooperation. Mexico, which has outperformed Brazil in economic growth for the last two years, has a highly open, emerging market with strong links to the rest of the world, including a free trade agreement with the EU. Furthermore, the reforms planned by the new administration, in particular in the energy sector, may result in Mexico's oil and gas industry opening up to foreign participation. At the same time, Poland is improving its economic and political standing in the EU and is looking for closer cooperation with Latin America.

Mexico has recently been emerging as one of the countries to watch in Latin America.¹ It is the 14th largest economy in the world and the second in the region, and has a highly open, emerging market with strong links to the rest of the world. Mexico has one of the largest trade agreements network (free trade or preferential agreements), with 44 countries in the world, which gives it access to about a billion consumers. It has also shown a strong commitment to free trade, avoiding the use of trade restrictions (as opposed to Brazil or Argentina—Poland's principal trade partners in the region). Moreover, Mexico outperformed Brazil in economic growth both in 2011 (3.9% compared to 2.7%), and 2012 (3.7% compared to 1.4%).² Recent optimism regarding the Mexican economy, in particular inspired by the economic agenda of President Enrique Peña Nieto of Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), which focuses on key structural reforms in areas such as energy and telecommunications, is expected to attract significant foreign investments. The United Nations estimates that FDIs in Mexico will reach a record 38 billion dollars in 2013.³

In Polish Foreign Policy Priorities 2012-2016, published by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2012, Mexico was mentioned as one of five Latin American countries (together with Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Peru) with a potential for cooperation in, for example, energy policy as well as in developing trade.⁴ Mexico is Poland's third trade partner in this region⁵ and the volume of trade has been constantly growing since 2010.⁶ In 2012, Mexico was the main destination for Polish exports to Latin America and one of the 30 countries with which Poland had a trade surplus. Even though Poland is Mexico's 13th-placed European Union trade partner and only third in the Visegrad Group (V4), the volume of bilateral trade increased by

¹ "Sorry Brazil, investors prefer Mexico," *Forbes*, 7 October 2012, www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2012/07/10/sorry-brazil-investors-prefer-mexico.

² IMF, Report for Selected Countries and Subjects, www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2012/02/weodata/weorept.aspx?sy=2010&ey=2017&scsm=1&ssd=1&sort=country&ds=.&br=1&pr1.x=50&pr1.y=15&c=273%2C223%2C964&s=NGDP_RPCH&grp=0&a=.

³ U. Diaz, "Favorece IED de 2013 a Peña Nieto," *Reforma*, 3 January 2013.

⁴ *Polish Foreign Policy Priorities*, March 2012, p. 21, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/d31571cf-d24f-4479-af09-c9a46cc85cf6:jCR>.

⁵ In 2010, \$430.4 million, and as of October 2012, \$692 million, in: the Ministry of Economy of Mexico, Poland, http://www.economia.gob.mx/files/comunidad_negocios/comercio_exterior/Ficha_Polonia_ok.pdf.

⁶ From \$558.8 million in 2010 to \$908.8 million in 2012. Internal note on trade relations with Mexico from the Polish Ministry of Economy 2013.

almost 60% between 2010 and 2012. As the volume of trade grows, so could a favourable context for improvement in the other areas.

Poland and Mexico have a history of 85 years of diplomatic relations. In the last three decades both countries went through systemic transformation, developed stable democratic systems, solid macroeconomic footings and positive outlooks for economic growth. During this time they signed nine bilateral agreements, including on Education and Culture Cooperation (1997), No Visa Agreement (1998), Science and Technology Cooperation (1998), Convention on Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (1998) and Tourism Cooperation (2004). Moreover, an Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between Mexico and the European Union signed in 1997, shaping their cooperation. The so called “Global Agreement”, which established a Free Trade Area between the EU and Mexico (in goods since 2000 and in services since 2001), has considerably increased bilateral trade relations and European investments in Mexico.⁷ Furthermore, in October 2008 Mexico became the EU's second strategic partner in Latin America, after Brazil.

At the same time, Poland is also an emerging country to watch in the EU, and can be an attractive trading partner for Mexico. It has the sixth largest gross domestic product (GDP), and the eighth biggest economy in the EU, the highest of all the countries that have gained EU membership since 2004, and has been striving to position itself as an influential Member State.⁸ In the World Investment Report 2012 Poland was ranked 14th on the list of top prospective economies between 2012 and 2014.⁹

Key Areas in Cooperation

Despite striking differences in foreign policy (Mexico focuses primarily on the U.S. and Poland on the EU), a difference in market scale (the total area of Poland is the size of one Mexican state, i.e., Chihuahua), and international positions (Mexico is already part of G-20), bilateral relations have good foundations for further exploration in the near future, especially as both countries plan to diversify their markets (78.5% of Mexican exports go to the United States, and 75.8% of Polish exports to the EU). In the face of the last economic slowdown in the U.S. and the EU, Polish and Mexican companies started to search for prospective trade partners in other markets. Moreover there is a growing number of Polish business internationalisation activities intertwined with government plans for commercial engagement in Latin America (for example the 2012 Poland–Mexico Economic Forum, and commercial missions to Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Peru). Mexico's new administration also plans to expand international cooperation and to boost Mexico's standing in the global arena (*México Próspero*).

The Polish Embassy in Mexico assesses that, besides the potential of increasing current Polish exports,¹⁰ there are opportunities to sell, for instance, building materials, tractors, agriculture machinery, and furniture. Cooperation could also be extended in the shipyard industry, aviation, and specialised machinery (for example food processing and power plant machinery). It is worth mentioning that, during the Poland–Mexico Economic Forum that took place in Mexico in October 2012, some institutions¹¹ offered technical, financial and educational support to the companies that are looking for opportunities to invest in Mexico or Poland.

Car Parts and Components

The biggest sector of Polish trade with Mexico is the automotive industry. In 2011, trade in cars, car parts and accessories accounted for 21% of Polish exports and 25% of imports. In 2011, Mexico was the eighth

⁷ Total bilateral trade has doubled, passing from €21.7 billion in 2000 to €40.1 billion in 2011, in: The EU's free trade agreements, “Where are we?”, 25 March 2013, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-282_en.htm.

⁸ Macroeconomic Analysis of the Polish economy, http://www.msp.gov.pl/portal/en/87/4013/Macroeconomic_Analysis_of_Polish_economy.html.

⁹ World Investment Report 2012: Towards a New Generation of Investment Policies, p. 22, <http://www.unctad-docs.org/files/UNCTAD-WIR2012-Full-en.pdf>.

¹⁰ In 2011, it consisted of cars, car parts and accessories (21%), coke (9%), powdered milk and cream (4%), parts for turbines (4%), and helicopters (3%).

¹¹ Such as on the Polish side, Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego, the Export Credit Insurance Corporation Joint Stock Company (KUKI S.A.), and the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency (PALiZ), and on Mexican side, PALiZ's equivalent—ProMéxico—and the Mexican Business Council for Foreign Trade, Investment and Technology.

leading car manufacturing (2.55 million units) and the fifth leading car exporter (2.14 million units). Poland is the second-biggest car producer among new EU members (between the Czech Republic and Slovakia), and its automotive industry accounts for about 7% of industrial output and a sixth of exports.¹² At first glance, they could be perceived as potential competitors, but they could equally be seen as trade partners, especially since they have already started cooperation in this sector. Special attention should be given to the area of car parts and components. In Mexico (with a value close to \$25 billion) they are supplied to the industry from abroad, which means that Mexico's demand for them is expected to keep growing. Poland is performing well in the production of car parts (i.e., engines for Toyota, Volkswagen and Fiat) and components (Delphi and Visteon). Growing demand in Mexico, combined with good Polish performance in producing car parts promises still more growth in this sector in the future. Firstly, Polish businesses could work with Mexico in supplying its manufacturing chain with car parts, and secondly it could not only operate on its own but could also work with principal Mexican partners in Europe such as Germany, Italy and Spain to boost trade with Mexico (for example by creating complementary manufacture chains that would meet Mexican demand).

Energy

In March, President Enrique Peña Nieto, outlined the main areas on which recent energy reform will focus (with the main being a reform and establishment of a new organisational structure for the state-owned oil company—PEMEX). Should this come to pass, it would result in opening Mexico's oil and gas industry to private and foreign participation.¹³

It is worth mentioning that the new government is also keen to exploit shale gas resources.¹⁴ According to some studies, Mexico ranks fourth internationally, with 6% of world shale gas recoverable resources (the second in Latin America, after Argentina). In 2011, PEMEX estimated shale gas potential in the range of 150 to 459 trillion cubic feet (TCF) with an average resource of 297 TCF (equivalent of 60 billion barrels of oil).¹⁵ The planned reform could drive forward higher levels of foreign investment and international cooperation, which could be interesting for Polish companies that want to be involved in shale gas exploration and extraction (for example, for Orlen Upstream, Lotos Petrobaltic and PGNiG).

Mexico's new National Energy Strategy 2013–2020 also recognises that the new targets for shale gas production might require specific regulatory provisions. As a result, since there are no specific national regulations for shale gas in place in either country, Poland and Mexico could establish a fixed platform, i.e., for exchange of information on state of play of regulations on exploration and extraction of unconventional gas. This would also be a good opportunity for updates on growth forecasts in the shale gas sector in both countries and for the national companies to meet and explore possible areas of cooperation.¹⁶ Especially when some foreign companies (for example, Talisman Energy of Canada and Marathon from the U.S.) are pulling out of shale gas fracking in Poland, and Polish companies may have some interest in looking for new partners.

Tourism

Poland and Mexico could take greater advantage of the agreement on Cooperation in Tourism. Despite an agreement signed in 2004, and no visa requirements (for stays of up to 90 days) the number of Mexican tourist to Poland is small. In 2011, only 1,400 Mexicans visited Poland (compared with 2,800 Brazilians), which is less than the average number of Poles visiting Mexico each month (1,809) between 2005 and 2012.¹⁷ This sector shows potential especially for Polish firms operating in Mexico. As they are experienced

¹² Automotive Industry in Poland, Report PZPZ 2012, www.kpmg.com/PL/pl/IssuesAndInsights/ArticlesPublications/Documents/mot_5.pdf.

¹³ Mexico's oil sector was nationalised in 1938. To help increase production capability, the government enacted new legislation in 2008 that sought to reform the country's oil sector. The reforms permit PEMEX to create incentive-based service contracts with private companies. The reforms did not go far enough.

¹⁴ National Energy Strategy 2013-20, pp. 44–47, www.energia.gob.mx/res/PE_y_DT/pub/2013/ENE_2013-2027.pdf.

¹⁵ Gobierno Federal, "Why Shale gas/oil is important?" http://www.energia.gob.mx/webSener/shale/shale_en.html.

¹⁶ Deputy Minister Beata Stelmach backs Polish entrepreneurs in Mexico, 3 October 2012, http://www.mfa.gov.pl/en/news/deputy_minister_beata_stelmach_backs_polish_entrepreneurs_in_mexico.

¹⁷ Central Statistical Office, Tourism in 2011, p. 140, http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbr/gus/kts_turystyka_w_2011.pdf.

in operating in the Mexican market, they could start bringing Mexican tourists to Poland. Polish tourism companies that want to conquer the Mexican market could either cooperate with Mexican equivalents or set up their own offices (not only in the national capital but also in the capitals of other prosperous states such as Guadalajara or Nuevo Leon). Another idea would be to establish cooperation with the Polish Honorary Consuls in Mexico, who know the local market better and could advise on promotional campaigns.¹⁸ As for services, to attract Mexican tourists, they could offer for example full-package trips to Poland such as “In the footsteps of Pope John Paul II” whom the Mexicans loved, or for music festivals such as the annual Open’er Festival on the Polish coast). To those who wish to visit more European countries, the companies could offer, for example, V4 round tours. If the idea of charter flights to Mexico, which are supposed to kick off this winter,¹⁹ is successful, it could serve as a good incentive to create a route in the other direction too. Another idea could be to create a fixed charter line, following the example of Bingo Airlines (the Polish charter airline operating from Poland to the Mediterranean Sea area), which would operate from Poland to Mexico.

People to People

As Mexico has not been one of the main hosts for Polish migrants, the diaspora in both countries is small. An estimated 10,000 people of Polish descent live in Mexico (the same as in Peru and Uruguay), compared to Brazil (1.8 million people) or Argentina (450,000).²⁰ The number of Mexicans in Poland is even lower (est. 250).²¹ In this aspect, connecting people could be more demanding than for example in Brazil or Argentina, as cooperation has little basis in historical and cultural traditions. Yet, despite this, Mexicans and Poles connect well. They are both moderate pro-transactional cultures, which means that they prefer contact directly with people, and to do business with those they know.²² In most cases, business meetings are preceded by a few minutes of casual talk. They are also highly contextual cultures which suggest that people usually read “between the lines”. Finally, they are both ceremonial and hierarchic cultures (i.e. ceremony in relations as a way of showing respect). In sum, cultural misunderstandings should not hamper attempts to establish relations, and Mexico and Poland should take advantage of their cultural similarities and use them for developing economic cooperation. Closer cooperation on the societal level through, for example, culture, research and education could, in the long term, lead to intensification of political relations.

Challenges to Overcome

Even though there are some opportunities, one has to be aware of several constraints to the development of Polish–Mexican cooperation. The first and greatest challenges are the very limited knowledge that each country has of the other and a lack of sufficient incentives to boost genuine mutual interest. This is accompanied by infrequent bilateral visits. Since 2004, when Mexican President Vicente Fox Quesada paid a visit to Poland, there has been no top level bilateral meeting. In November 2012 the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Latin America but went only to Brazil.

Secondly, Poland has no clearly defined strategy toward Mexico, and vice versa. Hungary, which is more of a reference for Poland, has already undertaken steps to engage more actively in the region. This may explain why its trade with Mexico is higher than Poland’s. Currently, Poland is Mexico’s third trade partner in V4.²³ Although Hungarian GDP is smaller than Poland’s (in 2011, Hungary’s GDP was \$140 billion and

¹⁸ In Acapulco, Cancun, Guadalajara, Guanajuato, Monterrey, Tijuana, Tulancingo, See: Polish Embassies Abroad, http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/informacje_konsularne/polskie_placowki.

¹⁹ LOT Polish Airlines, in cooperation with travel agency Rainbow Tours, would launch non-stop charter flights to Rivera Maya, specifically to Cancun (Mexico). The estimated flight time would be at least five hours shorter (around 12 hours instead of 17), and the price would be PLN 3,000-3,500 instead of PLN 5,000, See: LOT: Mexico, Sri Lanka, Cuba, Tajland, <http://www.aeronews.pl/pl/aktualnosci/informacje-z-kraju/lot-meksyk-sri-lanka-kuba-tajlandia-dreamlinerem-1317>.

²⁰ The numbers differ, those quoted are from Wspólnota Polska (The Polish Commonwealth Association), which cooperates with Polish diasporas abroad. See: Wspólnota Polska, “Polonia w liczbach” (“The Polish community abroad in numbers”), <http://archiwum.wspolnotapolska.org.pl/index.php?id=pwko00>.

²¹ O. Kasprzak, M. Mroz, La comunicad Mexican en Polonia, in: F. Villagómez Porras, Relaciones entre Polonia y México, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

²² See more: R.D. Lewis, When Cultures Collide: Managing Successfully Across Cultures, London: Nicolas Brealey Publishing, 1999.

²³ Second place goes to the Czech Republic. Total trade volume is \$743.2 million, in: http://www.economia.gob.mx/files/comunidad_negocios/comercio_exterior/Ficha_Republica_Checa_ok.pdf.

Poland's was \$514.5 billion),²⁴ the country trade volume with Mexico is \$968.5 million, to compare with Poland's \$692 million.²⁵

Thirdly, despite the depth and speed of the trade-in-goods liberalisation process in Mexico, some barriers to trade still remain. Mexico is known for poor infrastructure and powerful monopolies, but also for an excessive bureaucracy and complex regulations, which result in non-tariff barriers. It regulates products in a number of areas, mainly for health and safety reasons. Goods subject to non-tariff regulations include hazardous materials, pharmaceuticals, food items, and medical equipment, etc. As a result, Mexico is still a relatively difficult market for Polish companies.

Fourthly, developments in the relations of both Mexico and the EU with the United States could make Polish-Mexican cooperation more difficult in the near future. First of all, as the North American Free Trade Agreement will mark its 20th anniversary next year, some ideas about increasing interdependence among NAFTA partners have been mooted. Some experts call for broadening the scope of North American integration and cooperation, or even for setting up a Customs Union in North America (as that of the EU).²⁶ Closer Mexican cooperation with its northern neighbours could reduce its motivation to trade with a more distant European Union, and especially with trade partners such as Poland, outside the top ten. On the other hand, the free trade talks between the EU and the United States, that are due to begin in July in areas such as agricultural products and the automotive industry, could clash with NAFTA and have a negative impact on one of the agreements.

Finally, as President Peña Nieto seems to have got approval for numerous key structural reforms in his first six months in office, the major challenge such as drug-related violence, which has cost as many as 70,000 lives since 2006, still remains a concern.

Recommendations for Polish–Mexican Cooperation

In order to invigorate bilateral relations, several activities should be undertaken simultaneously on different levels. These are governmental cooperation, business, and track two diplomacy.

Political and economic dialogue. During President Fox's 2004 visit to Poland, both sides agreed to create a working group of Polish and Mexican economic analysts (it was called "think-tank").²⁷ The aim was to make periodical updates on state of play of bilateral economic relations and to identify the sectors in which trade could be intensified. During the last eight years only two meetings have taken place (in 2005, the governors of Mexico and Jalisco visited Poland, and the second meeting took place in Mexico in 2010). Both governments could consider organising these meetings on a more regular basis. They could also add political aspects to the agenda, transforming it, for example, into Strategic Political and Economic Dialogue. The meetings, which could take place every two years, alternating between Poland and Mexico, would give each government good grounds for defining their strategy toward the other country, and would be a clear signal that they are committed to exploring cooperation. To stimulate significant business cooperation, entrepreneurs could meet in the margins of these meetings.

Finally, as Mexico was also one of the 30 countries with which Poland had a trade surplus in 2012, and this trend continues, it could consider granting Mexico the status of prospective market (as with Brazil). As very high-level bilateral contact creates a natural opportunity to assess the state of such relations and to seek ways to strengthen ties, it would be recommendable that the Polish President or Prime Minister paid an official visit to Mexico.

Poland should also take greater advantage of the EU framework of the relations with Mexico, in particular the EU–Mexico Free Trade Agreement, which has allowed significant growth in bilateral trade and

²⁴ World Bank, GDP, Hungary, Poland, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD>.

²⁵ Country Report: Hungary http://www.economia.gob.mx/files/comunidad_negocios/comercio_exterior/Ficha_Hungria_ok.pdf and Poland http://www.economia.gob.mx/files/comunidad_negocios/comercio_exterior/Ficha_Polonia_ok.pdf.

²⁶ M.A. Villarreal, I.F. Fergusson, NAFTA at 20: Overview and Trade Effects, 21 February 2013, p. 23, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42965.pdf>.

²⁷ Economic cooperation with non-European countries, Mexico, <http://www.mg.gov.pl/Wspolpraca+z+zagranica/Wspolpraca+gospodarcza+Polski+z+krajami+wschodnimi+i+pozaeuropejskimi/Meksyk.htm>.

stimulated investment flows.²⁸ Between 1999 and 2012, the total EU-Mexico trade tripled (from €15.5 million in 1999 to €47.3 million in 2012).²⁹ The EU is now Mexico's third trade partner and the second largest investor.³⁰ Similarly to Poland, the EU maintains trade surpluses with Mexico (they gradually expanded from €5.636 million in 1999 to €8.555 million in 2012).³¹ This can be attributed to the strong demand for machinery and transport equipment, chemicals and related products from Mexico. As the EU–Mexico FTA foresees that both parties will review and further liberalise trade in agricultural goods, services and investment, Poland should participate in the ongoing discussions, and could benefit more from the agreement in the future.

Business. As there are neither private nor public institutions that would promote the trade exchange between Poland and Mexico,³² Poland should consider opening a Trade and Investment Promotion Section at the Embassy of Poland in Mexico.³³ There would be added value in such a section, which would also serve six other countries, as the Polish Embassy in Mexico covers also Belize, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Salvador. To avoid duplication of the activities, such as organising conferences or bilateral business summit series,³⁴ carried out by the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency (PALiZ) and its Mexican equivalent—ProMéxico,³⁵ the section could provide extensive, updated information in both Polish and Spanish about the political, economic and social situations of each country, and present specific business opportunities (a good example is a work done by the Spanish Agency of Export and Investments—ICEX). Another recommendable activity could be promotion of Polish companies' success stories in Mexico.

Finally, Poland and Mexico should consider supporting activities on all of these levels through **track two diplomacy**, to enliven societal relations. Encouraging connections between Polish and Mexican people could be aided through activities run by the Polish Honorary Consulates in Mexico and their Mexican counterparts in Poland (5),³⁶ student exchanges (both governments already offer scholarships but the number of students is still low) and joint research projects (for example, the project launched by TEC Monterrey, where Mexican students work with Poles on projects that, in their opinion, would boost bilateral commerce).³⁷

Both countries could also consider deepening cooperation within the framework offered by the EU strategic partnership with Mexico. This includes a series of sectoral dialogues (i.e. Human Rights, climate change, science and technology, education), and from which arose the EU-Mexico Civil Society Forum, a platform through which civil society organisations engage in dialogue, and present recommendations to

²⁸ The EU opened its market very rapidly, eliminating tariffs on 82% of Mexican products on 1 July 2000, and successively liberalising all industrial products from 1 January 2003. Mexico, on the other hand, has not applied tariffs on half (48%) of European industrial products as from 1 July 2000. As from 1 January 2003, the liberalisation covered 52% of the European products, while a specific plan to dismantle tariffs for the remaining 48% applied from 2003, until they were finally liberalised in 2007. For farm and fishing products, 62% of the trade had been fully liberalised by 2010. The EU obtained the progressive and total liberalisation of wines, alcoholic beverages and olive oil; Mexico in exchange, obtained the elimination of tariffs on export products such as tropical fruit and vegetables. Additionally, the EU granted favourable access conditions through the opening of preferential contingents for farm products that are important for Mexico, such as concentrated orange juice, avocados, honey and cut flowers, See: Contents of the EU-Mexico Agreement, http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/mexico/eu_mexico/trade_relation/free_trade/contents/index_en.htm.

²⁹ The EU trade with Mexico, Exports, <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/setupModifyTableLayout.do>, Imports <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/setupModifyTableLayout.do>.

³⁰ The accumulated flow since 2000 has been \$112.3 billion, primarily directed to services, notably financial and tourism, followed by the manufacturing sector, in: Mexico's trade with the EU and investments from the EU, http://www.economia.gob.mx/files/comunidad_negocios/comercio_exterior/Ficha_UE_ok.pdf.

³¹ The EU-Mexico trade balance, p. 55, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-CV-07-001/EN/KS-CV-07-001-EN.PDF.

³² Between 1935 and 1955, the Polish-Mexican Trade Association "Transmar SA" operated, but it was closed. There are plans to set up the Mexican Business Centre in Poland but the idea has not yet been implemented.

³³ They are located in São Paulo and Buenos Aires, in: Ministry of Economy of Poland, Supervised or subordinated units, <http://bip.mg.gov.pl/Jednostki+organizacyjne+nadzorowane+lub+podlegle#wphi>.

³⁴ Seminar "The Polish-Mexican Outlook 2013" will be organised in Warsaw in 2013, See: ProMéxico, Upcoming events, http://wiki.promexico.de/index.php?title=PMCEE:Current_events.

³⁵ They signed a Memorandum of Understanding on exchange of information about investment opportunities and cooperation in October 2012.

³⁶ Gdańsk, Kraków, Poznań, Szczecin, Wrocław, See: Embassy of Mexico in Poland, Honorary Consulates of Mexico in Poland, <http://embamex.sre.gob.mx/polonia/index.php/consuladoshonorarios>.

³⁷ For Poland, the students came up with the idea of cafes and restaurants. Kraków University of Economics participates in the project, See: TEC Monterrey Students work with European on common projects, <http://www.itesm.edu/wps/wcm/connect/snc/portal+informativo/por+tema/educacion/vinculotecmexicoeuropa5mar13>.

enhance EU-Mexico relations. However, at the last Forum, in Brussels, there were no representatives of civil society from Poland among the 100 participants.³⁸ The government should work more closely with the NGO sector, informing and engaging them, to make sure it is represented at the next Forum, in Mexico in 2014.

Poland and Mexico should make use especially, of the **European Union—Latin America and Caribbean Foundation**, which has been in operation since 2011. It aims to connect thematic networks and to increase interaction between civil society and governments, to foster the participation of civil society in the bi-regional partnership. It also tries to increase the participation of social actors to improve mutual understanding and the visibility of both regions and of the bi-regional partnership itself. As promoters of closer regional ties, Poland and Mexico could not only develop closer bilateral relations, but could also foster them between their respective regions (for example, by organising a V4-LAC Forum).

³⁸ The EU-Mexico Civil Society Forum, Participants, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/mexico/civil_society/conference2012/docs/2013_list-of_participants_en.pdf.