

# YEARBOOK OF POLISH

# FOREIGN POLICY

# 2017



PISM

POLSKI INSTYTUT SPRAW MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH  
THE POLISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



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OF POLISH  
FOREIGN  
POLICY  
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Ministerstwo Nauki  
i Szkolnictwa Wyższego

„Wydanie trzech numerów anglojęzycznego pisma *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* i zapewnienie do niego otwartego dostępu w internecie”

Zadanie finansowane w ramach umowy 890/P-DUNdem/2019 ze środków Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego przeznaczonych na działalność upowszechniającą naukę

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Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy has been published since 1993. (Polish version since 1991). The views expressed here are solely those of the authors.

ISBN 978-83-66091-70-2 (pb)

ISBN 978-83-66091-71-9 (ebook)

ISSN 1233-4794

### **Publisher**

Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych

ul. Warecka 1a, 00-950 Warszawa

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e-mail: publikacje@pism.pl; www.pism.pl

### **Printed by**

Ośrodek Wydawniczo-Poligraficzny

ul. Orzechowa 2, 05-077 Warszawa

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## From the Editor

We present the next volume of the „Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy” to readers. Its authors are analysts from the Polish Institute of International Affairs, who specialise in the discussed issues and monitor the shaping of Poland’s political activity in the international environment and the implementation of its foreign policy on an ongoing basis. They do that on the basis of the same method, repeated in each volume, which makes it possible to observe changes from year to year and to compare individual periods. The methodological approach adopted by the PISM’s analysts, searching for answers to the same research questions every year, is to facilitate future work on a retrospective assessment of the conducted policy.

In each chapter, the authors begin with the policy objectives set out by the government, then describe the means by which these objectives have been obtained, and finally assess the effectiveness of implementing these objectives. In this way, they not only contribute to the fulfilment of one of the statutory tasks of the PISM, which is to promote knowledge of Polish foreign policy, but also enhance the debate on the subject with arguments supported by systematic analytical observation. In my opinion, this is particularly important today, at a time of polarisation of public debate, broadening of its scope by social media, but also its significant reduction, as this does not serve the purpose of reflection, based on reliable analysis, on the relevance of the assumptions and actions adopted in foreign policy.

Each time, a starting point for the considerations of the authors of „Yearbook” is the annual Information of the Government on the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Poland, presented in the Sejm by minister of foreign affairs. In 2017, it was presented for the second time by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Witold Waszczykowski. He stressed that the challenges the Polish foreign policy faces are essentially similar to those he outlined in the previous year. He meant three crises - security, neighbourhood and the European project. In 2017, however, Minister Waszczykowski also drew attention to the wider international context:

„What is causing a lot of discussion today, but also uncertainty, is the future of the international order on a global scale. In 2016, there were widespread voices saying that after several decades, the post-war era ends, at the beginning of which the creators of the UN Charter promised to «save future generations from the disasters of war» and to «restore faith in fundamental human rights, (...) the equality of large and small nations». Are we really facing dramatic and inevitable changes in the international order? It is true that much has changed in

the global system of power since 1945. The Cold War has passed, communism has collapsed, decolonisation has taken place, there have been profound demographic and economic changes on all continents, and yet societies are still attached to the ideas of sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders and respect for human rights. What distinguishes today from past decades is the desire of some countries to undermine this order, to weaken the international order based on these universal principles. This undermining may become permanent if it is not met with a response from the international community. For Poland, for our entire region, which has been severely affected by the merciless 20th century, respect for the values and fundamental principles of international law enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations is fundamental”.

In such circumstances, the Poland’s foreign policy faced a special task - to bring to a successful conclusion many years of efforts to ensure that in June 2017 Poland was elected a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2018-2019 term. It was a clear message of Poland’s readiness to play the role of a proponent of an international order based on international law, democratic equality of states and rejection of the „argument of force” in the pursuit of interests by global powers.

This task was all the more urgent as Russia was constantly taking steps to deny such a world outlook. In 2017, not only did Russia continue the occupation of the Ukrainian Crimea and support for the so-called separatists in Donbass, but also undertook new initiatives that increased a sense of threat in Poland and in the region. These include, in particular, the military exercise “West 2017”, organised in September in conjunction with Belarus and, conducted under the scenario of a conventional war in Europe, or the deployment of Iskander-M rockets system at the end of the year in the Kaliningrad district, which could be used to attack land targets in the countries of the eastern flank of the North Atlantic Alliance. These actions were a clear declaration that Russia sees NATO as a rival and does not intend to give up threats to use force in order to pursue its own interests. Russia’s policy also increased the risk of misunderstandings, military incidents and escalating tensions. As a result, Poland, together with its partners from the North Atlantic Alliance, faced another major challenge. That was such an adaptation of NATO to the threats coming from the east so as to strengthen the Alliance’s deterrence potential against Russia and to increase the Alliance’s political assertiveness, on the one hand, and to maintain dialogue with Russia on predictability in the military sphere, on the other.

A particular context of these efforts was the change of administration in the United States. During the electoral campaign, Donald Trump, who took office as President in January 2017, spoke on several occasions about the need to improve

relations with Russia and to cooperate with that country in the area of combating terrorism, among other things. He also criticised NATO, calling it “obsolete”, and even questioned the legitimacy of the United States’ involvement in the North Atlantic Alliance. In this situation, Poland’s diplomacy had to engage in increased activity to ensure both the continuity of the U.S. action to deter Russia and the sustainability of the U.S.’s commitments towards NATO.

As early as July 2016, following the NATO summit in Warsaw, a plan of a diplomatic operation was developed in the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland to create grounds for a visit of the newly elected President of the United States to Poland. The author of this plan was Minister Professor Krzysztof Szczerski, the Polish President’s advisor for international affairs. The calendar of the U.S. President’s international commitments in Europe for 2017 was analysed. The calendar included two visits of the American Head of State on the Old Continent in the first six months of his presidency - in May in connection with the NATO summit in Brussels and the G7 summit in Italy, and in early July in connection with the G20 summit in Germany. Due to the less busy calendar for the American President’s political meetings, July was considered most likely for organising his visit to Warsaw. Furthermore, it was assumed that the likelihood of such a visit would increase when the new American leader had the opportunity to meet in Poland other leaders of the countries in the region. This circumstance led to the decision to integrate the planned high level of political activity of President Andrzej Duda in the region with his policy towards the United States. As a result of this decision, Poland became strongly involved in the Three Sea Initiative promoted by the Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović. It brought together the European Union countries located between the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Adriatic Sea, striving to match their levels of development with those of a longer membership in the European Union. Thus, at the summit of the Three Sea Initiative in Dubrovnik on 25 August 2016, the President Andrzej Duda proposed that another summit would be held in Wrocław, where the Wrocław Global Forum had been held for several years. In this way, the foreground for further steps towards America was prepared at a time when the campaign before the presidential elections was still under way in the United States. When Donald Trump was elected as the new President of the United States in November 2016, the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland prepared a joint invitation from the President Andrzej Duda and the President of Croatia Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović to participate in the summit of the Three Sea Initiative on 6 July in Wrocław. The invitation was forwarded on 3 February 2017 in Washington during a meeting between Minister Szczerski and Michael Flynn, the U.S. President’s advisor for national security. Following his resignation on 14 February, the diplomatic efforts to invite the President of the United States

continued and, to this end, Minister Szczerki went to Washington for the second time, where he spoke with Flynn's successor, General Herbert R. McMaster, the U.S. President's security adviser, on 26 April.

Eventually, these procedures ended with spectacular success. On 6 July, the newly elected President of the United States, Donald Trump, paid a visit to Warsaw (where, for logistical reasons, the Initiative Summit was moved from Wrocław), where he gave a scheduled speech on the U.S. foreign policy and announced the U.S. support for the Three Sea Initiative, making it an important component of his administration's policy in Europe. The Polish diplomatic action to invite the newly elected American President to Poland, well thought-out and planned, should undoubtedly be regarded as the greatest success of the Polish foreign policy in 2017.

The European direction was not free of major challenges either. In 2017, the Member States of the European Union and representatives of the European institutions debated more and more seriously the future of the Community after Brexit. In these discussions there were unfavourable proposals from the Polish point of view to diversify the pace of integration. Particularly worrying was the prospect of a „multi-speed Europe” gaining popularity among Western European leaders, which could lead to a division of Europe into an inclusive „centre” and „periphery”. The Polish government perceived them as only seemingly serving integration, but in fact threatening to disintegrate the Community. The aim of Poland's diplomacy was, therefore, to prevent them from becoming a reality and to ensure that Polish interests were heard and taken into account in the discussion about the future of the „European project”. This task was not easy due to the simultaneous dispute between the Polish government and the European Commission over compliance with the rule of law in Poland. Moreover, a constant source of challenges for Polish foreign policy towards Europe was the situation around Brexit. The great deal of uncertainty which was associated with this process required Poland not only to take part in co-shaping relations between the United Kingdom and the European Union and to monitor progress in discussions. It also forced Poland to prepare for the most unfavourable turn of events, which would be a no-deal Brexit. Although this scenario still seemed the least likely in 2017, the need to protect acquired rights for Polish citizens living in the United Kingdom should not have been ignored.

On the eve of the centenary of regaining independence, the international situation, which was beneficial to Poland's interests, was clearly coming to an end, and the international order was subjected to constant tests of endurance, because of pressure from the powers aspiring to change it. Thus, Polish diplomacy had to make strong efforts to ensure that the traditional values of Polish foreign policy

- that is, respect for international law or the principles of democratic equality of states and renunciation of force as a means of pursuing interests - remain in the catalogue of values appreciated and shared by most countries of the world. This was the main task of the Polish foreign policy throughout the whole year 2017, even if some of the projects carried out within its framework, such as efforts to obtain a seat for an elected member of the Security Council, were to bring tangible results only in the following year.

Sławomir Dębski



**I.**

**THE BASIS OF POLISH FOREIGN POLICY**



## **Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2017**

(presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland  
Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017)

Mr. President! Mr. Marshal! Dear Prime Minister, Colleagues Ministers! Members of the House! Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Ambassadors! Dear Sir or Madam! When a year ago, for the first time as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I presented the Government's information on the tasks of Polish foreign policy, I did not lack my fears and pessimistic assessments of the international environment. At the time, I was talking about three crises that Poland has to face: a security crisis, a neighborhood crisis and a crisis of the European project. It was an accurate diagnosis. These three issues found themselves at the center of international politics in Europe in 2016, creating an extremely complex and unprofitable situation for Polish interests. In these difficult conditions, however, Polish diplomacy passed the exam perfectly. We have fully completed the tasks set for the government a year ago.

After twelve months, we can safely say that Poland has become more secure. Its policy towards the nearest neighborhood, including Eastern Europe, gained positive dynamics. In the Union itself, in the debate on the future of the European project, our voice is heard and our arguments taken into account. We were convinced of this during the last visit of Chancellor Angela Merkel in Warsaw.

Polish foreign policy has also changed its character. We have restored its subjectivity and proper hierarchy of priorities, taking as a starting point the broad interests of our country. We have devoted a lot of attention and actions to them. Instead of standing on the sidelines and supporting the main players - we ourselves entered the game on the international arena. It turned out that we can develop tactics, put out arguments and convince ourselves. We are able to withstand the first wave of resentment, attacks and even assaults. Build coalitions and win. This was the case with regard to the missile shield, the presence of NATO troops in Poland and the problem of migration.

However, I want to be understood well. Subjective treatment of Polish interests does not preclude concern for the future of a united Europe, for the security of its borders, for stability in the European neighborhood, and finally for strong and strong transatlantic relations. There are no contradictions between these goals.

The foreign policy we implement is a civil policy. The sense of this wording comes down to recognizing the aspirations and needs of Polish citizens abroad. The strength of our foreign policy lies in our social mandate. In international

matters, as well as in domestic ones, we have set goals that our citizens care about and we defend them.

We effectively use bilateral cooperation mechanisms to achieve the goals of Polish foreign policy. Would our voice in NATO be equally audible without the close relations we have with the United States and Great Britain? Would the development of our economy be stable without a great economic partner like Germany? Would we have a greater impact on European affairs without an active and dynamic regional policy? Under no circumstances would this be possible without our allies in Europe and across the Atlantic.

In the twenty-first century, security is increasingly becoming a common good of all mankind. The effects of crises that break out even in the outermost regions quickly make themselves felt in Europe, at the borders of Poland. That is why Poland is involved in security initiatives not only of our country or region, but also of Europe and the world. That is why we are present in NATO and EU missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Our soldiers are serving as part of the global anti-terrorist coalition. Polish policy is solidary and responsible.

International stability and mutually beneficial relations with other countries are the basic conditions for international economic activity. Support for Polish entrepreneurs is one of the priorities of Polish diplomacy. Today, gentlemen, but also ladies, as I recently had the opportunity to listen to the debate between Prime Minister Beata Szydło and Chancellor Angela Merkel, talk about money and devote much more time to this than playing golf. It is with the expansion of Polish companies in mind that we strengthen and expand our diplomatic presence in the world.

We also strive to be present in those parts of the world where memory and love for the home country is present in the hearts and minds of the Polish diaspora and Poles abroad. We build partnerships with them, support Polish diaspora education and Polish language teaching. When necessary, we defend their civil rights. Polonia is and will remain part of our collective consciousness.

All too often, we are dealing with cases of intentional or unintentional hypocrisy of facts from the history of Poland, especially cases of depicting victims of World War II as perpetrators or accomplices. We will strive hard to put an end to lies and historical manipulations and the atmosphere of consent to them.

The successes of Polish foreign policy would not have been possible had it not been for harmonious cooperation between various state institutions. Therefore, from this place, I would like to address words of thanks to the President, to the Prime Minister, to the State Ministers for their help and support.

Members of the House! Last year brought decisions favorable for Poland's international security. The July NATO summit in Warsaw decided to strengthen the eastern flank militarily. Thus, the Alliance confirmed its readiness to fulfill its basic mission, i.e. collective defense, also in our region. These decisions mean a real strengthening of Poland's security. Our borders are safe, we don't have to put fences on them. However, we have set up warning boards with the words "Attention! The territory of the Polish Republic."

Thousands of soldiers from the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Canada together with modern military equipment will support the defense efforts of Poland and the Baltic States in the event of a possible threat. In mid-January this year, the first US sub-units reached our country. The alliance's obligations under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty thus gain credibility.

NATO and the European Union have decided to strengthen their cooperation. The declaration of will signed in July last year here in Warsaw was an expression of the will to cooperate. Polish diplomacy has made a significant contribution to building a bridge between these organizations. An example of this could be a conference organized on the Polish initiative in November last year in Brussels with the participation of the Vice-President of the European Commission Federika Mogherini and mine and my recent participation in the panel on European security during the World Economic Forum in Davos, together with Federica Mogherini and NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg.

Polish diplomacy has actively participated in all discussions regarding not only Euro-Atlantic security, but also the future of the European Union. Contrary to initial doubts, the Polish voice on the migration crisis and the need to reform the Union has been noticed and gained the recognition of our partners. In response to Britain's intention to leave the European Union, we have undertaken successful actions to maintain enhanced cooperation with this country. Relations with Germany were extremely intense, as evidenced by five meetings of presidents, three meetings of heads of government and my constant contact with a German colleague. We have revived relations with our closest partners in the region - as part of the Visegrad Group, with the Baltic and Nordic countries. We have started an intensive dialogue with countries located between the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Adriatic Sea. The Summit of the Three Seas in Dubrovnik organized in August last year on the initiative of the presidents of Poland and Croatia showed significant political and economic potential of the entire region. The November meeting of foreign ministers of Central, Southeastern and Balkan countries with the participation of Federica Mogherini had a similar tone in Warsaw. Poland has made an important contribution to the development of an EU migration policy,

which was reflected in the decisions of the informal EU summit in Bratislava, as well as in shaping our energy reality in our part of Europe.

Stabilizing our neighborhood and, more broadly, European neighborhood is a task for Poland of key importance. This is one of the reasons for our activity in relations with Ukraine and Belarus, but also in relations with the Middle East and decisions regarding military involvement in the region.

In striving to maintain a balance between various elements of foreign policy, Poland has made a profound turn in its non-European policy, opening itself more strongly to cooperation with the countries of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. From this point of view, the significant practical, especially economic, significance of the visit of the President of Poland to China and the President of the PRC in Poland.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the international success that - regardless of the spiritual and religious dimension—became World Youth Day in Krakow with the participation of the Holy Father Francis.

High Sejm! 2017 will be largely marked by the same challenges we faced last year, although the accents will be slightly different. We will also have to consider new trends that have emerged recently.

What causes a lot of discussion today, but also uncertainty, is the future of the international order on a global scale. In 2016, there were voices saying that after several decades the post-war era is over, at the threshold of which the creators of the United Nations Charter promised to “save future generations from the disasters of war” and “restore faith in basic human rights, (...) in the equality of large nations and small“. Are we really facing dramatic and inevitable changes in the international order?

It is true that much has changed in the global balance of power since 1945. The Cold War has passed, communism collapsed, the process of decolonization took place, deep demographic and economic changes took place on all continents, and yet societies are still attached to the idea of sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, and respect for human rights. What differs today from the past decades is the aspiration of some countries to undermine this order, weaken the international order based on these universal principles. This challenge can be permanent if it is not met with international response.

For Poland, for our entire region, hard hit by the merciless 20th century, respect for all, by all states, the values and fundamental principles of international law contained in the Charter of the United Nations is of fundamental importance. For this reason, we will continue our efforts to ensure that in June 2017 Poland is selected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, i.e. the

only global body whose decisions have universally binding force, to which the international community gives the right and duty to respond in defense. peace and security in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, Members! In recent years, we have been convinced once again that the defense of principles and values can be effective only when it is supported by strength—not only moral strength, but also military strength, the strength of alliances. This is our safety umbrella. We strengthen its construction to make it resistant to the worst downpours. Therefore, as in the previous year, security policy will be the top priority of Polish foreign policy.

We are observing with concern the aggressive policy of the Russian Federation in Eastern Europe. In Ukraine, the war conflict that she has been stirring has been going on for the third year. It is a conflict that engages our two neighbors, creating a number of real challenges and threats for Poland. In October 2016, Russia's expectations sounded particularly significant. On the occasion of Russia's decision to withdraw from the US agreement on the utilization of a platoon, we were able to learn about Russian ambitions regarding Eastern and Central Europe, such as the actual withdrawal of NATO from the entire region or the transformation of several countries inhabited by tens of millions of people into a gray zone, destined for instability and uncertainty. Poland will not accept such a vision of political order in Europe, it will not agree to divide our continent into spheres of influence. No more Munich and Yalta.

Russian political activities are accompanied by specific military measures. We are observing with concern the expansion of the Western Military District, which in 2016 was enriched by three new divisions. Further militarization of the Königsberg Oblast is underway, including the deployment of new weapons, including medium-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear charges.

Under these conditions, the obvious task of Polish foreign policy is the full implementation of the decisions of the Warsaw NATO Summit, as well as earlier arrangements with Newport. This will be the focal point of our interest and activity in 2017. In this respect, we are also preparing for the NATO summit scheduled in Brussels this year. In practical and operational terms - it is crucial to establish the advanced military presence of the Alliance in the East in the form of four battalion battle groups in Poland and in the Baltic States. These activities have already begun.

American armed forces are becoming an increasingly important factor of security in Central Europe. In 2017, we will maintain activities aimed at increasing their presence in Poland. They will include the construction of a missile defense base in Redzikowo, the organization of exercises with the participation of the armored brigade that is coming to Poland, as well as a sub-unit of the US Air

Force stationed in Łask and Powidz. We will welcome British soldiers in our country in April this year. In a situation of a direct threat of an armed incident, up to several thousand soldiers of allied countries may appear in our country as a result of recent decisions.

We think about the security of the Commonwealth and Europe in transatlantic terms. Strengthening the cooperation of Americans and Europeans in the field of security remains a priority for us. Political leadership and US military involvement are essential to maintaining NATO's credibility and cohesion. The moment after this is special due to changes in American policy. Against this background, a lot of misunderstanding and speculation arose. There were voices of doubt over the credibility of the United States as a pillar of the North Atlantic Alliance and Poland's strategic ally. The Government of the Republic of Poland closely observes the process of crystallization of foreign policy of the administration of President Donald Trump. After my recent talks with his close advisers, I am convinced that the fruitful cooperation with the USA to date will be continued. Cooperation with Canada will also be continued. The country's commitment to security in our region, the presence of Canadian soldiers on the eastern flank deserves our high praise.

The strength of the Alliance results from unity and solidarity and from loyalty to the values that unite our civilization. We will keep these features in mind when striving for the security of the allied territory and stability of our neighborhood. The most important instrument in this respect is cooperation with partner countries, including with Ukraine, Georgia, Finland, Sweden. This year, we will welcome Montenegro among the full members of the Alliance. This confirms that NATO maintains its current policy - its readiness to join its group of countries that follow a similar understanding of European security and share the same values. We hope that this will not be the last stage of enlarging the Alliance.

The consistent attitude of Rzeczpospolita meant that we are perceived as a country interested not only in our own security, but also in the security of others. Our allies see us as a participant in the team game, which is to ensure security for the entire region. In this spirit, we work to strengthen the Alliance's eastern flank not only in the Baltic Sea region, but also in the Black Sea basin. Regular consultations and consolidation of positions The 'Bucharest Nine' is already translating into a measurable strengthening of the security of our entire area located between the Baltic Sea, the Adriatic Sea and the Black Sea.

The development of national defense capabilities also determines our allied credibility. Poland is set as an example to other Member States as a country that takes security issues seriously. We take full responsibility to the NATO defense spending ceiling of 2% of GDP, with a minimum of 20% of these expenses is

allocated for modernization. Among allies, a similar approach should be the rule, not the exception.

We want to maintain the effectiveness of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). However, whether and to what extent this happens depends on the good will of all participants in this dialogue. This is not always the case. I am thinking primarily of the perverse approach of our largest eastern neighbor to the issue of peace and stability. However, I am convinced that the OSCE can serve as a platform through which it will be possible to return to a predictable and secure security environment in Europe. Poland remains open to dialogue serving this purpose.

At this point, it is worth noting the talks held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the OSCE regarding the status of this organization in Poland. This is particularly important in connection with the location in Warsaw of the largest OSCE institution, i.e. the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). We hope to conclude negotiations on this matter in the first half of this year.

Members of the House! Changes taking place in the European security environment require new, far-sighted solutions. This refers above all to the cooperation I mentioned between NATO and the European Union, which - guided by the principles of complementarity - should focus on the development of civilian-military capabilities. We will be advocating the maximum deepening of this cooperation, in particular with regard to combating terrorism, hybrid threats, strengthening the resilience of partner countries, cybersecurity or joint exercises. An element of this concept is also NATO's support of EU operations in the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea in connection with the migration crisis.

The challenges arising from both the East and the South have contributed to deepening cooperation as part of the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy. Poland participates in activities aimed at strengthening this policy, including regarding the proposed permanent structure for planning and commanding EU missions, strengthening military and civilian capabilities, as well as increasing the use of EU rapid response forces, i.e. European Battle Groups.

The creation of a European border guard may be another step towards building the CSDP. To meet this end, negotiations were finalized at the end of January and an agreement on the status of the FRONTEX agency and its employees was initialed. Warsaw is and will remain the seat of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.

We should also remember that, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon, the Union has the possibility of permanent structured cooperation, under the so-called PESCO, to implement the most demanding operations.

For several years we have been witnessing a dramatic situation south of Europe. The weakness of state institutions in some countries of North Africa and the Middle East creates a vacuum filled by non-state actors, including terrorist organizations whose purpose is to destroy the western world. The ambiguous, disregarding civilian suffering of Russia's policy towards the Syrian conflict raises concern.

We are more vigilant about the terrorist threat than ever before. Although Poland is not among the countries most at risk of attacks, our citizens have already died at the hands of Al-Qaeda and DAESH. What's more, the attacks on Germany, France, Belgium and Turkey hit our allies. Thus, they were also aimed at Poland. We will not be safe as a state or as a citizen until we stop terror. Our response will be further involvement in the activities of the anti-terrorist coalition. At present, several hundred soldiers, army employees and civil experts are serving as part of the coalition in Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, and the ship "Kontradmiral Czernicki" performs tasks as part of the NATO mission in the Mediterranean, Black and Aegean Sea.

Poland will maintain its involvement in NATO and EU operations. Our current participation in two NATO missions and ten EU missions is a valuable experience, but also a reason for well-deserved pride for our soldiers, army employees and civilian experts. We are also in the process of returning to participate in UN peacekeeping missions.

High Sejm! The most difficult challenge we will face in 2017 will be the future of the European Union, which has found itself in an extremely difficult position. This was due to many reasons, but above all, hasty initiatives that were not real and based on ideological motives, not the good of the Union's societies. A gap has arisen between European elites and citizens losing the sense that they have a real impact on what is happening to their countries and to the integration project. For this, societies issue negative censorship to their elites, for whom it should be a call to rebuild relations with citizens, not to question these bad judgments.

The lack of mechanisms enabling the correction of European policy in accordance with the principles of democracy has led to a situation in which an increasing number of Europeans are willing to question the European project in general. This is clearly seen on the occasion of elections and referendums, as well as in public opinion polls. The British referendum on EU membership has become an unprecedented event and a turning point in the history of the Union. It denied the widespread belief that the integration process is irreversible. At the same time, in many other Member States, eurosceptic voices, both on the right and left, questioning the legitimacy of a united Europe have ceased to be a marginal phenomenon.

I would like to emphasize here: the priority for our government is to repair the European Union, not to dismantle it. Returning to Europe of national egoisms would be just as harmful as integration utopias, which are not rooted in the social and political realities of our continent. The renovation of the European Union, which we postulate, cannot rely on renewing the facade and discussing decorative details, but on a thorough assessment of the condition of the foundations on which the entire construction of the European building is based. We do not rule out the fact that a new Union will have to be built on the basis of the new European Treaty on the basis of the four freedoms.

This year, we will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Rome Treaties, which gave rise to today's European Union. It will be an opportunity to summarize the achievements, but also to reflect on the future of the integration project. In view of the scale of today's challenges, the time has come for rational debate and seeking common solutions. I believe that a new political compromise on the future of the Union is achievable. Poland will co-create the foundations of new solutions serving both our national interests and the broader European interest. I believe that these efforts will work because I am a peer to the Treaties and I would like to celebrate these two anniversaries in a good mood.

A strong and competitive Union lies in the interest of Poland and Europe. That is why we are committed to strengthening the single market that fosters EU unity and cohesion. We consider it a priority to fully utilize this potential in the services and goods sector, support entrepreneurship and improve the competitiveness of European industry. We oppose protectionist practices and the creation of new barriers, especially with regard to the free movement of persons. They are manifested, among others, by changes in the provisions on the posting of workers and the lack of freedom to provide services, which the united Europe began to implement in 1977, that is forty years ago.

We want to adapt the single market to the challenges of the so-called fourth industrial revolution. The Union must become a space where, in addition to the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital, the free flow of data will be ensured. This will open new development opportunities for entrepreneurs. Poland will strive to ensure that the benefits of the digital single market are distributed as evenly as possible throughout the EU.

The year 2017 will be important due to the work on the shape of the Multiannual Financial Framework after 2020. We will actively participate in this process to secure our interests, including in relation to cohesion policy and the Common Agricultural Policy.

Negotiations with Great Britain on the country's exit from the EU have a very strong impact on the debate on the future of the European Union. We respect

the democratic choice of British citizens. We believe that negotiations should be factual, emotion-free and focus on future relations between the Union and the United Kingdom. We want them to be close relationships, but based on a balance of rights and obligations. Their result should not be conducive to further disintegration of the Union.

The priority will be for us to protect the rights acquired by Polish citizens living on the Islands. They should be guaranteed regardless of the length of stay in the United Kingdom. We will strive hard to include Polish interests in the discussion on the shape of the European Union after Brexit. It should first of all be a discussion about the necessary changes in the practice of EU action in response to tensions in the European construction that have emerged in connection with the British referendum. We are convinced that it is also necessary to restore the central place of the Member States in the Union. EU action should focus on laying the foundations for economic growth, citizen security and tackling migration challenges. Brexit will also involve challenges related to the departure of one of the main net payers to the budget, a country like us not belonging to the euro area.

In the face of the migration crisis, we are convinced that the way out of the current problems should be sought not in forced relocation of immigrants, not in resettlement by force, but in solving problems at their place of origin and in protecting the Union's external borders more effectively. The river of immigrants flowing into Western Europe will not change its course due to EU directives. The concept of effective solidarity proposed by the Slovak presidency gives a chance to build a broad agreement. Poland is not idle. In 2016, Polish border guards and policemen supported their colleagues in Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece, Slovenia and Hungary. Polish humanitarian aid also goes to migrants and refugees in Jordan and Lebanon. This year, we will seriously increase this assistance.

A separate issue is the perception of some Western European politicians of the Polish contribution to the management of migration pressure from the East. Over a million people, mainly citizens of Ukraine troubled by war and the economic crisis, stay and work in our country. This huge number shows that Polish policy in this field is effective, although we achieve our goals in other ways. In this light, attempts to force consent to relocate refugees with threats of reducing EU subsidies for Poland and other Central European countries are completely unjustified.

Energy policy will remain another important element of Polish involvement in Europe. The strategic goal is in particular to open access to Norwegian gas deposits in the North Sea. In this context, we will implement investment projects to strengthen energy independence, in particular the Baltic Pipe gas pipeline.

We expect the same from the EU, where the legal framework and implemented projects must strengthen the security of supply of all Member States, not the dominant supplier as in the case of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline.

Guided by the common good of all humanity, Poland, like 120 other countries, has ratified the Paris Agreement on climate, which should limit the impact of climate anomalies on the lives of societies, including the conditions in our part of Europe. At the same time, however, we see no basis for the EU to increase its ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Economic logic and the threat of negative impact of such changes on the competitiveness of the European Union speak against hasty decisions. Therefore, we will strive to obtain legal solutions favorable to Poland within the scope of previously agreed emission reduction targets. We will also strive to provide Member States with autonomy in shaping their own energy mix.

Members of the House! Poland's active European policy is also supported by bilateral relations with our partners, as well as regional cooperation. Last year there was an institutional strengthening of relations with Great Britain. implementation of the first Polish-British intergovernmental consultations. I know that sometimes there are skeptical voices whether it is worth investing in relations with a country that is leaving the Union. This is a bad question. It is worth cooperating with a nuclear state, a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a still active partner in European security policy. It is worth pursuing the interests of Poles living on the Isles, over a million Poles. The answer is unambiguous - such cooperation is in the strategic interest of Rzeczpospolita. We hope that the United Kingdom will remain a close partner of Poland and the Union in activities aimed at stabilizing the international environment. We also hope that the rights acquired by Poles working and living in Great Britain will be respected, as the head of the Polish government has repeatedly assured, and recently in the conversation Ms Theresa May.

We want to maintain close relations with Germany—our main partner in the European Union, a priority economic partner and an important ally within NATO. The measure of good quality of our relations in 2016 were repeated meetings of politicians and the 25th anniversary of the Treaty on Good Neighborhood and Friendly Cooperation with the participation of the presidents of both our countries. We will expand this dialogue. At the same time, we expect from the other party greater openness and understanding for Polish reasons and our right to pursue Polish interests. Poland and Germany, working together and respecting each other, can do a lot of good for Europe suffering from the effects of the economic and political crisis.

We do not forget about German Polish diaspora. We will work to improve her situation, including ensuring adequate access to learning Polish. We welcome the recent decisions of the Land of Hesse in this matter made with the commitment of our consular services and the local Polish community.

Poland is interested in the best possible relations with France, based on strong foundations of shared values and rich history. We are united not only by a common history, love of democracy and commitment to the European process, but also by multi-billion economic and investment cooperation and traditionally close contacts of societies. The future of bilateral relations should not be hostage to a single commercial contract. In relations with both Paris and Berlin, we will propose the next steps to make better use of the Weimar Triangle for harmonious cooperation between our three countries. A comparison to three Musketeers may seem too far-reaching, but the slogan “one for all, all for one” (un pour tous, tous pour un) would be perfect for our relations. Without this cooperation, it is difficult to imagine the future of the European project, since Poland, Germany and France constitute one-third of the territory of the European Union and over one-third of its population. It also seems natural to start cooperating with the Weimar Triangle with the Visegrad Group, i.e. linking such a political clamp to two parts of Europe.

It is in our strategic interest that the Three Seas, i.e. the region located between the Baltic Sea, the Adriatic Sea and the Black Sea, as soon as possible attain the Western European level of civilization development and comfort of safety. Therefore, we develop various formats of regional cooperation: from the project of the 12 countries of the Three Seas, implemented at the level of presidents, focused on north-south infrastructure and energy security, through the dynamic Visegrad Group, oriented to the needs of the 9 countries of the NATO's eastern flank, the Bucharest Initiative, to dialogue with a number of countries of the region using the V4 + formula. It is particularly worth emphasizing here that the regional initiatives supported by us are not directed against anyone and anything, and by their essence they enrich and complete the sense of European integration.

Dear Sir or Madam! We have recently crossed the halfway point of our presidency in the Visegrad Group. Recent months have confirmed the rightness of the decision to revive this forum as the most important mechanism of Polish foreign policy in Central Europe. We are convinced that 2017 will be equally fruitful in this respect. Close ties with our neighbors help us formulate a common position on the EU forum, build understanding and support for our demands in other European capitals. At the same time, by engaging in Central European cooperation, Poland has established itself as the region's spokesperson in some cases.

Thanks to the revival of contacts with the Nordic and Baltic countries, including as part of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States that ended in June 2016, we understand each other better and know how to cooperate more effectively. The coming months should bring a series of my bilateral meetings with almost all Nordic and Baltic partners. We also want to cooperate with the new Lithuanian government in a matter-of-fact manner, although it depends a lot on the good will of our partners, first and foremost regarding the implementation of the rights of Poles in Lithuania. I talked about this with my Lithuanian counterpart during his recent visit to Poland. We are committed to checking new forms of cooperation.

For us, Romania and Turkey are important economic and security partners in the Balkans and the Black Sea and the Middle East. Cooperation with these countries has acquired an institutional form in the form of the so-called triangle of the eastern flank. We are carefully observing the developments in the latter country, which plays an extremely important role in EU plans to solve the migration crisis. We trust that our Turkish allies will manage to maintain the right balance between respect for the rule of law and the need to firmly oppose terrorism.

Poland will remain an advocate of the EU enlargement process. We believe that Europe's door should remain open to countries sharing the vision of cooperation between democratic countries. We prefer to extend our hand in greeting than goodbye, as is the case with Great Britain. We would like to continue to share our accession experiences with the Western Balkan countries. This year, we are planning a series of initiatives targeted at six EU candidate countries from this region, namely Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo.

Ladies and gentlemen, Members! Poland is the only country in Europe bordering three Eastern European countries and, of course, more than anyone else is interested in the stability and peaceful development of this area. We are safe in our Polish home, but like any good neighbor, we cannot remain indifferent to what is happening behind the wall. And as a good neighbor, we believe that the basis of the political order in Eastern Europe, as well as in the whole of Europe, can only be the sovereign choice of own development path by each society.

We respect the individual choices of our partners - those who are in favor of closer relations with the European Union, as well as those who prefer looser forms of cooperation. In this spirit, we support the idea of tailoring the content of the Eastern Partnership to the individual needs of individual countries. The preparations for this year's Partnership Summit in Brussels should be an opportunity for realistic assessment and new impulses.

Poland continues its policy of supporting Ukraine's pro-European aspirations. We believe that the basis for a peaceful resolution of the conflict is the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements. The importance and importance of bilateral relations were confirmed by last year's visits of President Andrzej Duda in Kiev and President Petr Poroshenko in Warsaw. We support the activities of the Ukrainian authorities in the field of decentralization, local government reform and combating corruption. 2016 was a good year for mutually beneficial Polish-Ukrainian defense cooperation. The Polish-Lithuanian-Ukrainian brigade took part in the "Anakonda-2016" exercises. We have started training Ukrainian soldiers at the training ground in Jaworów, together with, among others with the United States and Canada. The Ministries of Defense of Poland and Ukraine have signed two important agreements: a new general agreement on defense cooperation and detailed agreements regulating cooperation between industries. All this shows that the Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership is increasingly filled with content and will help build our neighbor's resistance to destabilization. We give Ukraine a clear signal that what is happening to their country today not only raises our concern, but also a specific response. This particular is also over 1 million 200 thousand visas issued last year by our consular offices in Ukraine, including over 650 thousand. employee visas. Such action also meets the needs of the Polish labor market, looking for employees in Ukraine in increasingly numerous sectors of the economy, and is a concrete example of foreign policy action for the economic interests of the country.

By supporting Ukraine in its reform efforts and pro-European policy, we are not losing sight of historical matters. We believe that true strategic partnership should be accompanied by truth. At the same time, we do not want our bilateral relations to become a hostage to the past. With her in mind, with social dialogue in mind, we decided to resume the activity of the proven format of bilateral cooperation, which is the Polish-Ukrainian Partnership Forum. We also strive to establish a Polish-Ukrainian Center for Good Neighborhood, which would bring together Polish and Ukrainian nations through the development of good-neighborly relations, cooperation and cultural exchange.

Over the past year, Poland's policy towards Belarus has changed. We have completed a number of important visits and bilateral meetings that have significantly broadened the horizon of our relations. The basic task will be to confirm the normalization of bilateral relations with specific decisions, primarily in the field of economic and border cooperation and trade, as well as in the scope of normalization of relations with the communities of Poles in Belarus. We are also preparing to launch the Polish-Belarusian Historical Commission.

Policy towards the Russian Federation is unfortunately conditioned by aggressive Russian actions in Eastern Europe. At the same time, however, we see the need for dialogue with our Russian neighbor. We will take steps to develop social dialogue, people-to-people contacts, cultural cooperation and reconstruction of bilateral economic relations. We hope that the resumption of work of the Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Issues will contribute to this. We take Russia seriously, just as a big state and a neighbor are treated. However, when it comes to our relationships, it takes two to tango. Therefore, we will continue to convince our Russian partners that constructive cooperation is possible if we base it on careful listening and understanding the expectations of the other party. We expect the return of the presidential plane TU-154 to its rightful owner, i.e. the Polish state. The issue of recovering the Tupolev wreck is at heart at the government of Law and Justice, especially the head of Polish diplomacy. I will not stop my efforts to fulfill the will of Poles who have been waiting for it for almost seven years. We are currently considering submitting a complaint regarding the Russian investigation into the Smolensk disaster to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

We intend to make the most of the potential of relations with countries further east, the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, especially in the field of trade and investment cooperation. The new Polish Institute in Tbilisi, planned by us, will help.

Members of the House! One of the measures of the international position of states in the 21st century is their ability to cooperate effectively not only with the immediate geographical environment, but also on a global scale. Last year, we put a lot of effort into developing relationships with non-European partners. We will continue these activities this year, taking into account the various dimensions of foreign policy.

Strategic partnership with the People's Republic of China has become a permanent element of Polish foreign policy. We use the favorable atmosphere in Polish-Chinese relations after last year's contacts at the highest level. We are counting on further development of cooperation in the 16 + 1 format, i.e. between the countries of Central Europe and China, including through the Secretariat for Maritime Affairs located in our country. As the Chinese sentence says, a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. We have already made several steps.

We also want to develop contacts with the other two strategic partners in Asia, namely Japan and the Republic of Korea. They are the largest Asian investors, thanks to whom many jobs have been created and are still being created in Poland.

Cooperation with India is also gaining momentum, as evidenced by the recent visit of Deputy Prime Minister Piotr Gliński to this country at the head of a business delegation and his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Along with the development of economic relations, we strive to strengthen dialogue on global security issues, especially in connection with the increase in terrorist threats. We attach key importance to cooperation with Japan, Australia and New Zealand. This will be served by my visit to these countries next month.

The Middle East, North Africa, the Horn of Africa have been inflammatory regions on the world map for many years. At the same time, we perceive this area not only in the context of challenges, but also opportunities, especially in the field of economic cooperation, as demonstrated by the increase in trade with countries such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. We were able to strengthen Poland's energy security thanks to the supply of Qatari gas to the gas port in Świnoujście that started last summer. Tankers with crude oil supplies from Iran also reached Gdańsk.

Since the establishment of the current government, bilateral contacts have clearly increased with African and Middle East countries. We have resumed the activities of embassies in Senegal and Tanzania. The President of the Republic of Poland paid a visit to Jordan and hosted the King of Jordan, the Presidents of Senegal and the Palestinian Authority as well as the Vice President of Iran in Warsaw. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Polish-Israeli intergovernmental consultations took place in Jerusalem. As a Minister of Foreign Affairs, I visited Israel and Palestine. I participated in the ministerial summit of the EU - League of Arab States in Cairo and in subsequent conferences on the Middle East peace process initiated by France. In 2017, I plan visits to a number of Middle Eastern and African countries: Sudan, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania.

In response to the dramatic situation of civilians affected by the effects of the war in Syria, we have taken action to support the suffering, refugees and their communities in neighboring countries. Providing assistance in Syria itself, as well as in Lebanon and Jordan, is a priority. We reach out to help those in need without media hype and political fireworks. At the initiative of Prime Minister Beata Szydło and Chancellor Angela Merkel, a joint three-year project to rebuild schools in Lebanon was launched in 2016. The Polish response to the humanitarian and migration crisis is also participation in special EU funds. The total value of aid in response to the Syrian conflict and migration crisis last year was over PLN 119 million.

Poland strengthens political and economic relations with Latin America and the Caribbean region. This was served, inter alia, by my participation in the October summit of EU and Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Latin American and Caribbean Community in the Dominican Republic. In the coming year we want to give a strategic dimension to our partnership with Mexico, which will

be served by the planned visit of the President of the Republic of Poland to this country. We will consistently strengthen cooperation with other Pacific Alliance countries - Chile, Colombia and Peru. We will host the president of the last country in Poland this year.

Initiatives undertaken around the world by Polish diplomacy are accompanied by concern for the state of human rights. In 2016, the UN Human Rights Council adopted, on a consensus basis, a resolution proposed jointly by Poland, Australia, Chile, the Republic of Korea and South Africa on the role of good governance in promoting human rights.

Poland is seeking that the protection of the rights of religious minorities, including Christians, be the subject of interest and joint actions of the European Union and the UN. We are involved in the elaboration of documents regarding freedom of religion and belief and we take part in debates on this subject.

Poland belongs to the sponsor countries of the UN resolution on freedom of religion and belief. We pay attention to cases of non-compliance with the rights of religious minorities, including cases of persecution of Christians. During the December conference Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one of the conference sessions was devoted primarily to the protection of the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities.

At the international forum, we draw attention to the worrying situation of human rights in Crimea, including the situation of religious and ethnic minorities, especially the Crimean Tatars.

Mr. Marshal! Ladies and gentlemen, Members! Supporting Polish enterprises abroad is one of the priority tasks of Polish diplomacy. This is done, among others, by expanding the network of our diplomatic missions around the world. Our companies are increasingly better prepared to face international competition, but diplomatic assistance is often necessary to enter the new market. It is also often the only weapon in cases of unfair and discriminatory practices.

In 2017, we will focus on promoting Poland as a creative and innovative country. We will support Polish start-ups in establishing contacts on foreign markets. Our goal is also to activate cooperation between Polish and global research centers. I initiated such activities last year, visiting important centers at the head of economic missions, such as Seattle in the USA and Vancouver in Canada.

As part of the economic promotion, we will devote a lot of attention to green technologies, especially during the Energy Forum in Vienna and during the preparation of the COP24 climate conference in Poland in 2018.

We are making efforts to increase the participation of Polish companies in tenders and projects of international organizations of which Poland is a member. We are pleased that nearly 1,500 Polish enterprises have participated in such initiatives in the last two years.

We are increasingly involved in supporting international activities of economic and territorial self-governments. A special place among these activities will be the support for Łódź's efforts to organize EXPO in 2022.

Members of the House! Polonia and Poles living outside the country occupy a unique place in Rzeczpospolita's foreign policy. They are members of our Polish family, a part of Poland in the farthest corners of the world. That is why we care about relations with the Polish diaspora and Poles more than others. Last year, we put a lot of effort into seeking the interests of Polish communities in various countries. In Latvia, we prevented the liquidation of the Polish school in Krasław. In Germany, we negotiated financing for the renovation of the Polish House in Bochum. After long negotiations, we have concluded a cooperation agreement with Belarus in the field of education. To meet the expectations of our compatriots from the East, we have amended the Act on the Polish Card.

We anticipate that due to the new rights of Cardholders, the number of people applying for it will increase significantly this year. Last year, consuls adopted a record number of over 27,000 applications.

The government also took actions to accelerate the process of repatriation of Poles from the East. The largest group of repatriates - over 150 people came from Kazakhstan last December. The new legal solutions significantly improve the assistance provided to countrymen settling in Poland from across the eastern border. We are ready to continue these activities.

The Polish authorities will continue to strive for respect for the rights of both Polish minorities in the East and their compatriots in other regions of the world, especially recent immigrants to Western Europe. Cases of aggression against Polish citizens are meeting and will be met with a strong and immediate response from the authorities and consular services. Supporting the teaching of Polish language and knowledge about Poland will remain a priority task in the implementation of the Polish diaspora policy. We intend to allocate much larger funds than currently to support Polish education abroad. We will place particular emphasis on the historical education of the young generation.

The partnership also undertakes in relations with the Polish diaspora. New initiatives and a new look at the possibilities of cooperation and dialogue are needed on both sides.

In particular, we are counting on the active involvement of our compatriots in activities for a positive image of Poland in the world. We want effective and close cooperation between our branches and the Polish diaspora, which is why we will develop Polish Diaspora Councils operating at diplomatic and consular posts.

High Szym, Polish diplomats not only strive for the interests of the Polish diaspora, but also help the citizens of the Republic of Poland in every latitude. They do this both when someone loses their passport and when they are victims of a kidnapping. It is thanks to our diplomats that Poles staying abroad can count on support in difficult situations.

In order to provide effective assistance to Polish citizens abroad, we are expanding the network of consular offices. We have established the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Houston, Texas, and we plan to open a consular office in Belfast this year. In order to improve the telephone service of Polish citizens residing in the United Kingdom and Ireland, we have established an already functioning Consular Information Center - a consular call center for Polish citizens. At the same time, we launched the Integrated On-call Telephone, which facilitates efficient contact in crisis situations requiring contact with the consul outside the hours of consulates. Subsequently, we envisage extending these services to other countries.

One of the most serious problems faced by our consuls are matters regarding the parental responsibility of Polish citizens. This mainly applies to countries that are the target of intensive migration - Great Britain, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Norway. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Polish consular offices will make every effort to ensure that parents receive due assistance and support in such matters.

2017 will be another year of active and multidirectional public diplomacy coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Diplomacy, which takes care of Poland's good name and image as its primary goal. This year, the most important directions of activities include the promotion of Polish political thought and history, Poland's contribution to the global heritage of humanism, and the promotion of creative and innovative Poland.

As in the previous year, we will devote a lot of attention to Polish historical narrative in the world. The main goal of our activities will be to present Poland as a modern country drawing on its tradition, as a tolerant state of many nations and cultures. We must also, in accordance with historical facts, strengthen the good name of Poland and strive for its proper place in the history of Europe and the world. We have activated activities aimed at combating false wording regarding the responsibility for the organization and functioning of Nazi German death camps during World War II. Modern forms of communication can be used to

decipher historical forgery. An example is the publication of the movie “Words Matter,” or “Words matter,” through our embassy in Washington via social media.

In 2017, the historical narrative will focus on the achievements of such outstanding figures as Tadeusz Kościuszko, Józef Piłsudski and Józef Haller. In 2017, large international conferences, co-organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will be devoted to, among others, the situation of European intellectual elites under German occupation and the Polish Righteous who saved Jews. We will make extensive use of various public diplomacy tools, especially study visits with representatives of foreign opinion leaders.

Mr. Marshal! You Members! In the years 2008-2015 dozens of Polish diplomatic and consular missions were closed. In some regions of the world - especially in Africa - large white patches have formed. This means not only diplomatic absence, but also a lack of consular assistance for citizens who are in need. Last year we reversed this trend. We are gradually recreating a network of Polish embassies and consulates. Embassies in Senegal and Iraq already operate. In January this year embassies were established in Tanzania and Panama, and in early February the Consulate General in Houston. These branches will be fully operational in the second half of this year. We are planning to establish a consular office in Belfast in the near future. Depending on your budget options, we will consider opening an embassy in the Philippines. If security conditions allow, we will resume operations in high-risk countries that are important from the point of view of Polish foreign and economic policy, i.e. Syria and Libya.

We are modernizing many Polish foreign branches, as part of an extensive program of leveling years of neglect in proper maintenance of the infrastructure necessary for the functioning of the foreign service. This year we will start building embassies in Berlin and Minsk.

2017 will be the first full year of operation of the newly created Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose task is to educate young diplomats and professional development of the Ministry’s employees. From the beginning of February this year, 32 people selected in a multi-stage recruitment process, publicly announced in the press, began diplomatic and consular apprenticeship. This is twice as many applicants as were educated in recent years.

With a view to further professionalization of the diplomatic staff, we started work on the amendment to the Foreign Service Act. It is to help recruit high-class specialists, people dedicated to serving Poland and Poles.

In 2016, we noted an increase in ICT attacks, unfortunately, against the Ministry’s critical infrastructure, also on December 15, 2016. We will continue preventive and reactive activities to increase the possibilities of our diplomats without worrying about the security of information sent.

High Sejm! The international order established after the Cold War is changing right before our eyes. The international environment of Rzeczpospolita is also changing. We treat it as difficult challenges that we have to face. Polish diplomacy is taking this glove. In these conditions, we will be guided by special responsibility and prudence, and at the same time undertake far-sighted actions that will make the Commonwealth even more secure and will be able to use its development potential more fully. A strong, developing and enjoying world authority will be a credible ally within NATO, an important Central European country and a country co-shaping the European Union.

Dear Sir or Madam! The concept of Polish diplomacy in 2017 presented today, subjective and civic, strongly embedded in multilateral cooperation and building valuable alliances, is the right answer to those problems that we have to face. This is the course we have chosen. This is our navigation in new realities. Before the debate, which I hope will begin soon, I will again refer to the Chinese wisdom "A man who says: this cannot be done should not disturb THE HIM who does it."

I am asking the High Chamber to accept the Government's information on the tasks of Polish foreign policy in 2017.

Thank you very much for your attention.

# Poland's Security Policy

ARTUR KACPRZYK\*, WOJCIECH LORENZ\*\*, MARCIN TERLIKOWSKI\*\*\*

In 2017, Russia's policy towards NATO and other neighbouring countries, including persistent involvement in the conflict in eastern Ukraine, remained the main threat to Poland's security. On the other hand, the strengthening of the Alliance's deterrence and defence potential has had a positive impact on Poland's security, in particular by increasing the military presence of its members in accordance with the decisions of the NATO summit in Warsaw in July 2016. However, there was an ongoing debate regarding the scale and directions of further adaptation to the Russian threat, and uncertainty about the future of this process increased after Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential election. The European pillar of Polish security was to be strengthened as a result of deep reform of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), including the activation of the mechanism of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF). At the same time, these efforts restored concerns about the possibility of the EU duplicating and undermining NATO's efforts, including the adaptation process. The destabilisation of the Middle East, which distracted the U.S. and many European allies from the Eastern Flank, also remained a challenge for Poland.

## Determinants

At the beginning of 2017, the greatest controversy in the Alliance concerned the policy of the new U.S. administration. As a Republican party candidate, Trump questioned the legitimacy of U.S. involvement in NATO. This followed a broader scope of his views, consisting of a combination of isolationism, unilateralism, and a transactional approach to foreign policy associated with narrowly defined national interests. Trump described NATO as "outdated", mistakenly claiming that it was not involved in the fight against terrorism. He particularly criticised the low defence spending of most NATO countries—in 2016 the U.S. accounted for around 68% of the total defence budgets of the Alliance. He also suggested that

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he would honour collective defence guarantees contained in Art. 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty only to those members who achieve the goal of defence spending at the level of at least 2% of GDP.

After taking office in January 2017, Trump partly softened his rhetoric towards NATO and even declared strong support for the Alliance. Still, he spoke vaguely about the obligations under Art. 5, which, contrary to expectations, he did not address directly at a special meeting of the heads of states and governments of the Alliance (25 May in Brussels).<sup>1</sup> Representatives of the president's administration tried to use his statements to strengthen pressure on allies with regards to defence spending. At the February meeting of defence ministers, Secretary of Defense James Mattis warned that U.S. involvement in NATO could be limited and demanded the adoption of tangible plans to achieve the 2% target by 2024 to meet the postulates of the Wales Summit in 2014. In 2016, apart from the U.S., only Estonia, Greece, Poland, and the United Kingdom achieved the spending target. Romania was to join this group in 2017, and in 2018 Lithuania and Latvia.

The controversy in NATO concerned the pace and scope of increasing defence spending, not the need to raise it—in 2015 it increased in Europe and Canada by 1.8%, in 2016 by 3.3%, in mid-2017 one forecasted another increase by 4.3%<sup>2</sup> (which Trump considered a personal success). According to many European countries, however, the 2% of GDP target has been too ambitious and arbitrary in itself. Some of them, including Germany, argued that it was not an adequate measure of the contribution to common security because expenditure efficiency should be the key, not the scale.

Uncertainty about American policy towards NATO was also intensified by Trump's statements about Russia during the campaign and the first months of office. As a candidate, he emphasised the need to cooperate in the fight against terrorism. Already after the election, he suggested striving for rapid improvement of bilateral relations, potentially even at the expense of the interests of the U.S. allies and partners. These announcements were not implemented, but the avoidance of strong criticism of Russia raised doubts as to whether the president's position had changed, or rather his freedom of decision-making was limited by the support for tough policy towards Russia dominating his administration and in Congress. At the same time, the FBI began an investigation of possible cooperation between Trump's campaign staff and Russia, which according to U.S. intelligence estimates

<sup>1</sup> A. Kacprzyk, "NATO Special Meeting in Brussels," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 16/2017, 26 May 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl). The opportunity for the meeting was the opening of a new NATO headquarters. Formally, it was not a summit, which has a longer duration, more complex agenda, and ends with the adoption of a joint public document.

<sup>2</sup> "Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2010–2017)," NATO, 29 June 2017, [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int).

interfered with the presidential election to increase the chances of the Republican candidate.

Despite these controversies and ambiguities, the U.S. continued to strengthen its military presence in Europe. Just before the May meeting in Brussels, the Pentagon requested an increase in funds for the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) from \$3.4 billion to \$4.8 billion in 2018. As early as in January 2017, the U.S. Armoured Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) came to Europe—around 3,500–4,000 troops along with 90 Abrams tanks and 90 Bradley infantry fighting vehicles—followed by their support units. The U.S. forces that were deployed as part of bilateral military cooperation with selected allies were to rotate every nine months. By mid-year, four multinational battalion battle groups (in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland) were also deployed as part of NATO Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP), a total of about 4,500 troops rotating every six months. Therefore, the scale and form of the U.S. and NATO presence in Poland and the Eastern Flank countries changed radically. Until the beginning of 2017, it was based on the rotation of small units for training purposes, but during the year it reached a combat volume and became a clear signal of deterrence to Russia and emphasises that an attempt at aggression in NATO's border states will draw the involvement of the entire Alliance in the conflict.

However, the implementation of the Warsaw decision did not change the regional balance of power: Russia still had a clear military advantage over NATO along the Alliance's eastern border. Despite the cuts in the defence budget in 2017 stemming from the deterioration of its economy, Russia also continued to expand its potential in its Western Military District. During the *Zapad 2017* (*West 2017*) exercises carried out in September also on the territory of Belarus and Kaliningrad, the transfer of some new units near NATO borders was practiced.<sup>3</sup>

With regards to these activities, the conviction in NATO gradually strengthened that the credibility of deterrence and defence required an improvement of the ability to deploy larger support forces. At the same time, there was an awareness of the scale of this challenge at several levels: the expansion of high readiness and adequate (including heavy) equipment by member states, counteracting Russian systems that could hinder the transfer of armed forces (A2/AD) or shortening of political and military decision-making procedures in NATO. Allies, however, differed as to whether such big changes were financially, politically, and militarily necessary. These differences were mainly due to different assessments of the degree of threat from Russia. What's more, a significant number of European countries

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<sup>3</sup> A. M. Dyner, "The Importance of the *Zapad 2017* Exercises," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 86 (1026), 21 September 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl); M. Barabanov, "Zapad-2017 Strategic Drills," *Moscow Defence Brief*, no. 6, 2017, [www.mdb.cast.ru](http://www.mdb.cast.ru).

prioritised threats in the Alliance's Southern Flank. These differences were also apparent during the discussion that began in February 2017, the review of NATO Command Structure (NCS), which after the Cold War was systematically reduced and optimised for crisis-response operations outside Europe.

In 2017, finding the right balance in relations with Russia—between deterrence and dialogue—was the second major challenge for NATO. In accordance with the decisions of the Warsaw summit, discussions were held on strengthening predictability in the military sphere and reducing the risk of disagreements, military incidents and escalation of tensions. This was facilitated by meetings of the NATO-Russia Council at the level of ambassadors, which were to be “periodic, specific and significant in nature” and based on reciprocity on the part of Russia. The Russians sought to supplement the political dialogue with expert meetings. This would mean, de facto, withdrawal from suspension of practical cooperation between NATO and Russia, announced after the aggression against Ukraine. Some NATO countries, however, seemed willing to broaden the dialogue topics to maintain Russia's interest in the discussions. Russia also wanted to stop the further enlargement of the Alliance, but despite putting pressure on NATO, the Alliance, in political and practical terms, demonstrated its support for the open-door policy. In June 2017, after the process of ratifying the accession treaty, the Alliance officially welcomed Montenegro.

Terrorism and uncontrolled migration related to instability in the Middle East and North Africa remained a threat in 2017 to the security of NATO countries (and more broadly, the entire Euro-Atlantic area). However, the scale of irregular migration to Europe has decreased. One-third fewer immigrants reached Italy through the Mediterranean in 2017 than in the previous year.<sup>4</sup> There was also a breakthrough in the fight against the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) in Iraq, where the authorities announced victory over the extremist group. The main area of instability in the Mediterranean region remained Syria.<sup>5</sup> The Bashar al-Assad regime, with the support of Russia and Iran, regained control over a substantial part of the territory,<sup>6</sup> and in April regime troops used chemical weapons in Khan Shaykhun. In response, the U.S. carried out spot strikes on Syrian military facilities.<sup>7</sup> However, the most important U.S. objective in Syria was to defeat ISIS.

<sup>4</sup> S. Scherer, “Migrant Arrivals to Italy by Sea Fall by a Third in 2017,” *Reuters*, 31 December 2017, [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com).

<sup>5</sup> M. Chmaytelli, A. Aboulenein, “Iraq Declares Final Victory over Islamic State,” *Reuters*, 9 December 2017, [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com).

<sup>6</sup> “Israeli Security: Assad Will Regain Control of Syria in 2018,” *Middle East Monitor*, 31 August 2017, [www.middleeastmonitor.com](http://www.middleeastmonitor.com).

<sup>7</sup> P. Sasnal, “The U.S. Strike on the Syrian Base in Al-Shayrat,” *PISM Spotlight*, no. 1/2017, 7 April 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

The international coalition led by the United States, mainly carried out airstrikes and provided support to Kurdish units fighting ISIS. American help for the Kurds caused tensions with Turkey, which feared the strengthening of Kurdish fighters associated with the terrorist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The U.S. called for greater participation of NATO members in the fight against ISIS. They also sought to strengthen the *Resolute Support* (RSM) training mission in Afghanistan, especially when a new American strategy for the country was presented (in August). It announced an increase in military support for Afghan forces fighting the Taliban.<sup>8</sup>

At the beginning of 2017, for the first time in many years, a lively debate on security issues in the EU was also expected. The discussions and activities of the Member States and EU institutions were to focus on launching the PESCO mechanism and the European Defence Fund, proposed by the European Commission in November 2016. There were also plans, though to a lesser extent, to implement other CSDP reforms, such as the Annual Defence Review (CARD).<sup>9</sup> By mid-2017, however, the dynamics of these activities were limited as the EU faced the challenge of defining the shape of PESCO in order to reconcile the ambitious provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon, on the one hand, presenting PESCO as the defence core of the EU, and, on the other hand, the Council's decision of December 2016 to ensure the inclusiveness and flexibility of this mechanism. While the treaty assumed the establishment of PESCO by countries fulfilling "higher criteria" of military capabilities and, at the same time, ready to participate "in the most demanding missions" (Art. 42), the Council decided that deeper integration via PESCO should be open to anyone interested. A compromise between these two assumptions had to take the form of more specific obligations of acceding countries provided for by the treaty in five general categories: financing armed forces, cooperation in defence planning, using armed forces in operations, development of military capabilities in terms of the needs of CSDP, and joint arms programmes.

Most Member States approached this problem passively, not seeing in PESCO significant benefits for their security or not understanding its potential impact on defence policy in Europe. A group of countries striving to shape PESCO as closely as possible to the original (exclusive) concept was led by France. It argued that the EU's task was primarily to speed up the development of military capabilities in Europe, required for an effective operational response in the

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<sup>8</sup> W. Lorenz, M. A. Piotrowski, "Military Dimension of the New U.S. and NATO Afghanistan Strategy," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 130 (1070), 27 December 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>9</sup> See: A. Kacprzyk, W. Lorenz, M. Terlikowski, "Security Policy of the Republic of Poland," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2016*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2019.

neighbourhood (which was directly correlated with France's growing problems with maintaining operational involvement in Africa, mainly in the Sahel). On the other hand, Germany sought to ensure broad participation in PESCO, seeing this as a possibility of a new impulse of European integration.

Despite disagreement about the shape of PESCO, on 22 June the European Council agreed that there was a need to activate this mechanism and called on the individual Member States to develop a practical concept for its implementation within three months. In this way, 10 years (!) after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the Union formally began the process of activating PESCO. Also in June, the European Commission activated the European Defence Fund, a financial instrument to support the defence industry in the EU by co-financing scientific research into new, innovative defence technologies (Research and Technology, R&T) and research and development (R&D) work in the field of armaments and military equipment. This gave new impetus to the debate on the future of European industrial and defence policy in the new financial perspective for after 2021, including the industrial dimension of the EU strategic autonomy concept. In autumn, the Commission announced the first grant competitions for projects in the field of security and defence, such as the development of new unmanned technologies, including maritime autonomous systems for mine countermeasures. In this way, for the first time in the history of the EU, the funds from the Union's budget were used to build the defence capabilities of the Member States.

In the second half of the year, the activation of PESCO sped up as a result of a French-German compromise made at a bilateral summit on 12 July. Its basis was the recognition that, by joining PESCO, the states would undertake certain obligations in terms of defence policy, including, in particular, cooperation with EU partners. In this way, the accession criterion was not to be related to military potential (as was commonly understood before) but only to political will. This concept was written in a joint document of eight countries (France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, supported by Czechia, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Finland), presented in a letter of 20 July to the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini.<sup>10</sup> In the absence of alternative concepts, this document became the basis for the notification of the will to establish PESCO, expressed on 13 November by 23 EU Member States. The final activation of PESCO by the EU Council was made on 11 December in qualified-majority voting. In total, 25 EU countries joined the mechanism (without the UK, which is leaving the Union, nor Denmark, which does not participate in CSDP, and Malta, which conducts a policy of neutrality).

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<sup>10</sup> The document can be found in the private archives of the co-author of the article.

## Objectives

Strengthening security played a key role among the priorities of Poland's foreign policy in 2017.<sup>11</sup> The specific objectives included full implementation of the NATO provisions of the Warsaw Summit on increasing the allied deterrence and defence potential. In practical and operational terms, the most important was the deployment of allied forces in Poland and the Baltic states under the EFP as well as strengthening the Alliance's presence in the Black Sea region. At the same time, Poland announced that within NATO and through bilateral relations it would strive to strengthen the American military presence on its territory, emphasising the key importance of U.S. military involvement in Europe and American political leadership for NATO's credibility and cohesion.

Poland announced closer cooperation in the field of security with the UK, which, as a nuclear power and one of the few countries in Europe with the potential to deploy substantial combat forces, was of great importance for conducting a collective defence mission. Poland was also ready to provide appropriate conditions for stationing NATO forces on its territory and develop infrastructure enabling the adoption of much larger support forces.<sup>12</sup>

The main objectives also included strengthening cooperation between NATO and the EU in combating terrorism and hybrid threats as well as cybersecurity, resilience to threats, and the organisation of joint exercises. Poland also declared its support for the CSDP through the development of capabilities to plan and conduct crisis-response missions that do not duplicate NATO structures. Support for strengthening defence cooperation in the EU, especially under the PESCO mechanism, was dependent on whether it will lead to the strengthening of both European defences and NATO without duplicating allied processes and initiatives.<sup>13</sup>

An important objective also was support for activities aimed at stabilising Europe's southern neighbourhood and combating terrorism. Poland was ready to demonstrate that it was not focused only on its own security. Therefore, it intended to maintain its involvement in NATO and EU missions and the international anti-terrorist coalition fighting against ISIS. This involvement was instrumental

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<sup>11</sup> *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, September 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl); "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017)," see p. 13 in this volume; The full record of the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee, no. 57, 8 February 2017, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>12</sup> *Detailed records of National Defence Committee meeting, no. 47*, 25 January 2017, [www.sejm.pl](http://www.sejm.pl).

<sup>13</sup> See: *Detailed records of Foreign Affairs Committee meeting, no. 70*, 12 October, 2017 r., [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

in nature and treated as a way to gain support for NATO adaptation to threats in the east.<sup>14</sup> Poland was also to continue its efforts to join the UN mission again, which, on the other hand, was subordinated to attempts for obtaining the position of a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Poland's goal was to stabilise its neighbourhood through cooperation with Finland, Sweden, Georgia, and Ukraine. An important role in shaping Polish security policy was also played by cooperation with the Visegrad Group and as part of the so-called Bucharest Nine.

### **Polish policy in NATO and bilateral cooperation with the U.S.**

**The U.S. military presence on Polish territory.** In January, just before Trump took office, the American armoured brigade began to deploy to Poland.<sup>15</sup> After unloading in Bremen, the first U.S. subunits were in Poland on 7 January. An official welcome of the unit was held on 14 January and its first exercises began on 30 January. Then, three manoeuvre battalions were deployed for exercises to the Baltic states, Germany, Bulgaria, and Romania. In bases in the west of the country (in Żagań, Skwierzyna, Świątoszów, and Bolesławiec) the elements of the brigade, including command and support units, remained. The scale of the ABCT's presence in Poland changed during the rotation, depending on the location of the exercises carried out.

In February, the U.S. Combat Aviation Brigade came to Europe with about 2,200 troops and more than 80 helicopters. In March, a deployment of one of its advanced components began in Powidz (the others in Romania and Latvia). It numbered about 100 troops and included four Blackhawk multipurpose and Apache assault helicopters. Also in Powidz, there was a larger portion of the 750-strong combat support battalion responsible for logistics service of the American operation *Atlantic Resolve* on the Eastern Flank. What's more, a component of the divisional command responsible for all U.S. operations in this region deployed from Germany to Poznań in May. Practical rotations of C-130 transport aircraft and F-16 fighters to bases in Poland were continued as part of the U.S. Air Force subunit in Powidz (AV-DET).

At the turn of March to April, a NATO battalion battle group was deployed in Orzysz. Its core was also made of American units: its first rotation included about

<sup>14</sup> *Information of the Ministry of National Defence on the participation of the Polish Armed Forces in operations outside the country in 2016 and 2017*, The Senate National Defence Committee, 31 January, 2018, [www.senat.gov.pl](http://www.senat.gov.pl).

<sup>15</sup> The armoured brigade was deployed on a bilateral basis, but in coordination with the Alliance activities.

1,000 U.S. troops from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment stationed in Germany (equipped with, among others, Stryker wheeled armoured carriers). It was supplemented by 150 British troops from a reconnaissance squadron and 120 Romanians from an anti-aircraft battery.<sup>16</sup> Poland was the only NATO country simultaneously hosting EFP battle group and contributing to another one, from May in Latvia, with an armoured company (170 soldiers and 16 PT-91 Twardy tanks). In the same month, as part of NATO's tailored forward presence (tFP) in the Black Sea region, Poland dispatched 250 troops to a multinational brigade in Romania. In 2017, it also took over the six-month command of the NATO naval mine warfare unit (SNMCG-2) on the Black, Aegean and Mediterranean seas, and was on duty for the air policing mission of the Baltic States (four F-16 fighters in the period May 2017 to January 2018). Three hundred troops participated in the KFOR mission in Kosovo.

The Polish authorities endeavoured in NATO and in relations with the U.S. to make the presence of allied forces permanent. Unlike many European politicians, Polish representatives did not criticise Trump for his statements about NATO and Russia. They consistently raised the issue of strengthening the Eastern Flank with Trump's advisers and with members of Congress.<sup>17</sup> Minister Witold Waszczykowski met with Michael Flynn, then the president-elect's national security adviser, in January 2017. The minister emphasised that Poland does not oppose U.S. rapprochement with Russia provided that it does not affect Polish interests.<sup>18</sup> He received positive response, as did the head of President Duda's cabinet, Krzysztof Szczerski, who met with then formal National Security Adviser Flynn at the beginning of February. In the same month, both the foreign minister and the president of Poland emphasised that Trump administration policy was still forming but would not weaken the security of Poland nor the Alliance.<sup>19</sup>

The Polish authorities indicated that Trump's pressure on defence budgets was in line with Poland's efforts to strengthen NATO as Poland had achieved the 2% of GDP target in 2015 and 2016. It also planned to maintain this level in 2017.<sup>20</sup> This was justified by higher economic growth than assumed at the time the budget

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<sup>16</sup> In the next rotation, the Romanian and British contingents did not change significantly, the U.S. sent about 800 troops, and Croatia joined with about 70 troops.

<sup>17</sup> As President elect, Trump was to confirm the Polish-American alliance in a telephone conversation with President Andrzej Duda on 16 November 2016. See: *Trump w rozmowie z Dudą: Stany Zjednoczone zawsze staną w obronie Polski*, TVP Info, 16 November 2016, [www.tvp.info](http://www.tvp.info).

<sup>18</sup> "Szef MSZ w USA. Spotkanie z doradcami Donalda Trumpa," *Polskie Radio*, 10 January 2017, [www.polskieradio.pl](http://www.polskieradio.pl).

<sup>19</sup> "Government information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2017..." *op. cit.*; *Prezydent RP: Relacje między UE a USA powinny być jak najlepsze*, 7 February 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>20</sup> In 2018, it turned out that it had spent slightly less, at 1.99% of GDP.

was planned.<sup>21</sup> What's more, it was only in September 2017 that an amendment to the Act on defence expenditure was adopted, according to which its amount is to be calculated in accordance with NATO methodology, i.e., relative to GDP in the current and not—as before—in the previous year. It also assumes an increase to 2.5% by 2030, as reported in April 2017.

At the end of March, after a meeting of the anti-ISIS coalition in Washington, Minister Waszczykowski expressed Poland's readiness to increase its participation in the fight against terrorism. It could include, for example, the extension with combat missions of the mandate for four Polish F-16 aircraft operating from Kuwait (to date, they had only carried out reconnaissance flights).<sup>22</sup> There was no such change, but the issue of the fight against terrorism remained an important topic of dialogue with the U.S., also during the April discussions in Washington with the head of the National Security Bureau Paweł Soloch and Minister Szczerski, among others, with Trump's new National Security Advisor, Gen. H.R. McMaster (Flynn resigned from this position in mid-February after the vice president stated the adviser had lied about contacts with Russian diplomats).

The course of the special meeting of NATO heads of state and government in Brussels (25 May) was positively assessed by the Polish authorities despite a controversial public speech by Trump. President Duda pointed out that during the closed part of the meeting, the allies confirmed the implementation of the provisions of the Warsaw Summit and further rotation of forward forces until 2022.<sup>23</sup> Polish representatives also argued that Trump's rhetoric served to increase pressure on allies while the U.S. continues to meet its commitments, including plans to increase funding for its presence in Europe in 2018.<sup>24</sup>

The approval of NATO countries for the American postulate of presenting, by the end of the year, national plans for the implementation of the 2% expenditure target was positively assessed. The plans were to be subject to annual reviews and also cover investment in specific military capabilities and participation in missions and operations. This was a compromise between the U.S. and other states' positions on measures regarding the NATO contribution. At the same time, Poland emphasised the importance of adopting new objectives for the development of military capabilities by the allies, such as the establishment

<sup>21</sup> J. Borowski, "MON: wydatki obronne 2017 odnosiły się do PKB z roku poprzedniego," *Gazeta Prawna*, 16 March 2017, [www.gazetaprawna.pl](http://www.gazetaprawna.pl).

<sup>22</sup> "Waszczykowski: Polska jest gotowa rozważyć zwiększenie swego zaangażowania w działalność Globalnej Koalicji do Walki z ISIS," *wPolityce*, 23 March 2017, <https://wpolityce.pl>.

<sup>23</sup> "Prezydent RP: 'W tej chwili mówi się raczej o obecności wojsk NATO w Polsce do 2022 r,'" *Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego*, 26 May 2017, [www.bbn.gov.pl](http://www.bbn.gov.pl).

<sup>24</sup> L. Gibadło, "NATO po spotkaniu w Brukseli. 'Gra o spójność i efektywność Sojuszu,'" *Defence24*, 29 May 2017, [www.defence24.pl](http://www.defence24.pl).

of a third German land forces division.<sup>25</sup> NATO also decided to increase its participation in the fight against terrorism by formally joining the coalition against ISIS, intensifying reconnaissance flights of AWACS aircraft over Turkey, appointing a special coordinator for the fight against terrorism, and improving the exchange of intelligence. Poland declared its readiness to become a NATO leading country in training Iraqi forces how to maintain post-Soviet equipment. These activities began in September when an increase in the contingent of 190 troops in Afghanistan (in the RSM mission) was announced. At the same time, about 60 Special Forces troops in Iraq continued to train Iraqi soldiers as part of the international coalition since 2016.

Despite optimistic rhetoric, the Polish authorities did not seem fully convinced of the sustainability of the U.S. obligations. Before President Trump's visit to Warsaw (6 July), Minister Waszczykowski indicated that Poland expects "NATO and the U.S. side to provide us with responses to military threats that come from Russia."<sup>26</sup> In line with this expectation, Trump explicitly confirmed the guarantees under Art. 5.<sup>27</sup> He also praised Poland for fulfilling its financial obligations and for the intended purchase of a Patriot air-and-missile-defence system. Another memorandum, in this respect, was signed during that visit, and in November Congress approved selling the system. The prolonged negotiations on the purchase details did not allow it to be finalised in 2017 as the Ministry of National Defence had hoped. The conclusion of a contract under the Homar missile artillery programme also failed.

Poland's objective was to both increase the American presence and create a permanent base for it. Tomasz Szatkowski, undersecretary of state at the Ministry of National Defence, expressed such hopes in January.<sup>28</sup> Minister Antoni Macierewicz also discussed the subject during the September meeting with Secretary Mattis at the Pentagon, when the decision was made to establish a working group for the coordination of bilateral military cooperation.<sup>29</sup> The Ministry of National Defence further reported that Poland was being considered as a location for the stationing of a rocket artillery brigade, which the U.S. was

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>26</sup> L. Lemaniak, "Witold Waszczykowski dla 'GPC': Duże oczekiwania w związku z wizytą Trumpa," *Niezależna*, 5 July 2017, [niezalezna.pl](http://niezalezna.pl).

<sup>27</sup> President Trump expressed similar assurance in June during a press conference with the President of Romania. His short and spontaneous statement in response to a journalist's question did not dispel doubts about his actual views.

<sup>28</sup> R. Gramer, "With Russia Threat Looming, Poland Pins Cautious Hopes on a Trump Administration," *Foreign Policy*, 6 January 2017, [foreignpolicy.com](http://foreignpolicy.com).

<sup>29</sup> P. Gliška, "Minister Macierewicz o Patriotach," *Polska Zbrojna*, 25 September 2017, [www.polska-zbrojna.pl](http://www.polska-zbrojna.pl).

looking at placing in Europe.<sup>30</sup> In the administration and Congress there was ongoing debate whether a permanent presence would be more effective in terms of operations and finances than rotations. The Ministry of National Defence confirmed that an equipment warehouse for the U.S. armoured brigade will be constructed in Powidz.<sup>31</sup> U.S. military officers had spoken since March about plans for its construction, along with financing in the amount of \$220 million from NATO funds. Together with the existing and supplemented depots in 2016 in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany, equipment and armaments were to be deployed for a full division of U.S. land forces in Europe by 2021. The new administration also continued the construction of the missile base in Redzikowo.

**Further adaptation of NATO on the Eastern Flank.** In June, initial operational readiness was achieved by the command of the Multinational Division Northeast, formed on the basis of the command of the Polish division in Elbląg and responsible for the coordination of NATO battalion groups. In the same month, the transformation ongoing since 2014 of the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin into a high-readiness unit capable of commanding forces of up to five divisions in Central and Eastern Europe was completed. During the November meeting of NATO defence ministers, Poland announced its efforts—with the perspective of the NATO summit in Brussels in 2018—to create an allied “military” command on its territory, i.e., one able to command an operation involving several corps (in November, during NATO’s table-top exercises *Trident Javelin*, the scenario practiced conducting such an operation for the first time in almost 20 years). This would be an additional command alongside the two that were decided to be established in November: a logistics command and one responsible for operations in the Atlantic Ocean (what’s more, NATO agreed then that a cyberspace operations centre would be created). On 19 October, the NATO Counterintelligence Expert Centre opened in Cracow.

In 2017, the number of troops exercising in Poland increased—up to 30,000 compared to 25,000 in 2016 and 4,000 in 2013. Such dynamic growth, combined with the stationing of allied troops, translated into a significant burden on the Polish host nation system (HNS) and highlighted infrastructural deficiencies.<sup>32</sup> For almost two decades of membership in NATO, Poland has created a legal and organisational system for the needs of accepting allied forces, but it did not have

<sup>30</sup> Ł. Zalesiński, “Polska w grze o amerykańską brygadę,” *Polska Zbrojna*, 26 September 2017, [www.polska-zbrojna.pl](http://www.polska-zbrojna.pl).

<sup>31</sup> D. Stoutamire, “Polish village could become future Army hub, USAREUR commander says,” *Stars and Stripes*, 27 April 2017, [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

<sup>32</sup> *Information Minister of National Defence on the operation of the HNS (Host Nation Support) in Poland in the light of the presence of allied forces*, National Defence Committee, meeting no. 47, 25 January 2017, [www.sejm.pl](http://www.sejm.pl).

the necessary infrastructure to quickly transfer and station higher numbers of troops. Exercises throughout the Eastern Flank showed a number of barriers to military mobility. They concerned, among others, insufficiently developed transport infrastructure, including in the transport of heavy vehicles, and shortages of means of transport. An additional problem was that it took too long to issue permits for the passage of troops and their equipment, although it was not clear whether this also applied to Poland, which adopted a law improving these procedures in 2016.

**NATO-Russia dialogue.** Poland did not block the dialogue with Russia, but in December 2016 it indicated that the Russians were not conducting the talks in good faith and were trying, above all, to gain influence over Alliance decisions.<sup>33</sup> It also pointed out that Russia did not show reciprocity towards positive NATO gestures and continued, for example, making dangerous manoeuvres near U.S. ships and aircraft and violating or bypassing arms-control agreements. This included providing false information about the numbers of soldiers in training so as not to reach the threshold that under the Vienna Document (VD) requires the participants to inform other countries about manoeuvres or to invite observers. An example of such an attitude was the *Zapad 2017* manoeuvres. According to Russia's declarations, 12,700 troops participated in them, but according to other estimates, from 40,000 to 70,000. Therefore, Poland opposed discussions about new arms-control agreements and supported the initiation of the so-called structured dialogue within the OSCE as a forum for discussing military doctrines and threat perceptions in 2017.<sup>34</sup> During its second session (in June), an analysis prepared by PIIA was presented as a contribution to the discussion on trends in the armed forces in Europe.<sup>35</sup>

Poland strived for improvement of existing instruments. Among other activities, it initiated the proposal to strengthen the mechanism for responding to military incidents under VD. Poland also proposed Russia and NATO conducting briefings in the NRC<sup>36</sup> on the selected exercise for each party—this was held, for the first time, in July 2017. Poland also agreed to broaden the discussion at the same meeting about the situation in Afghanistan. It also emphasised the need to harmonise the actions of its allies with NATO policy. It did not join the group of

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<sup>33</sup> *Minister Waszczykowski pyta w NATO o sens dialogu z Rosją, depeza PAP z 6 grudnia 2016 r., Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.ms.gov.pl.*

<sup>34</sup> *Statement by H. E. Witold Waszczykowski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland 23rd Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, Hamburg, 8 December 2016, www.osce.org.*

<sup>35</sup> M. Terlikowski (ed.), "Trends in Force Posture in Europe," *PISM Strategic File*, no. 1 (85), 6 June 2017, www.pism.pl.

<sup>36</sup> D. P. Jankowski, T. K. Kowalik, "The Dangerous Tool of Russian Military Exercises," CEPA, 9 May 2017. <http://cepa.org>.

20 countries (as of the end of 2017) that since September 2016—outside of the OSCE and NATO—discussed the future arms-control regime (a so-called *like-minded group*).

### Poland Towards CSDP

**Poland's approach to and decision to join PESCO.** In the debate on the conditions for activating PESCO, Poland consistently emphasised the risks arising primarily from possible duplication and even obstruction by the EU of planning, programmes, initiatives, and other NATO activities that make up the allied adaptation process. Particular concerns were related to the possible weakening of decisions on the development of military capabilities taken as part of NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) by competing (because they take away financial resources and the attention of governments) PESCO projects. It also emphasised that cooperation in PESCO cannot be a substitute for increasing defence budgets, which has sometimes been suggested to some Member States (e.g. to Germany). What's more, Poland clearly opposed treating PESCO as a necessary response to the alleged crisis in transatlantic relations, triggered by attempts to implement Trump's views on U.S.-Europe cooperation (e.g., the U.S. withdrawing from the Paris climate agreement and suspending discussions on the TTIP). In this context, Poland particularly criticised the reference in the PESCO debate to the urgent need to build European "strategic autonomy". Poland indicated that the EU lacks agreement on the understanding of this concept (introduced by the European Global Strategy) and that it could be interpreted as a desire by European NATO members to break with U.S. security guarantees, including the nuclear umbrella. At the same time, Poland emphasised the importance of practical cooperation between the EU and NATO, and prompted by the July 2016 declaration this translated into over 40 proposals for joint actions at the beginning of 2017. In accordance with the Polish concept, through EU-NATO cooperation PESCO should become a form of strengthening European deterrence and defence potential in NATO, and not a competitor.

This position meant that Poland was perceived in the EU as the main sceptic of PESCO, occupying the traditional position of the pro-Atlantic UK from earlier debates on strengthening the CSDP. This, on the other hand, resulted in Poland remaining outside the group of countries seeking to quickly initiate PESCO and coordinate their positions on this matter—France, Germany, Italy, and Spain (with the latter two in a rather support role). Some countries (e.g., Sweden and Romania) and numerous experts pointed out that initiating PESCO without Poland—the strongest military country on NATO's Eastern Flank—would be a major weakening of the initiative, undermining its credibility and political

legitimacy. At the same time, Poland's very clear position was convenient for a group of countries that admittedly shared the Polish fears (again Sweden, the Baltic states), but for various reasons did not want to explicitly criticise PESCO, the flagship project of the largest EU countries.

However, in the first half of the year Poland did not speak strongly on this subject, mainly because of the lack of a specific proposal on how to implement PESCO. To settle it, the European External Action Service sent a special questionnaire to the Member States, evaluating their approach to PESCO and helping to indicate the limits of the consensus. Despite expectations often expressed in 2016 that the European Council summit on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome Treaties could be an opportunity to activate PESCO, this was not the case. In the anniversary declaration of 25 March, the Council did not address this issue at all, merely recognising that strengthening CSDP is necessary in view of the new scale of the challenges to European security. It emphasised that this process must be conducted in cooperation and complementarity with NATO.<sup>37</sup> This last reservation met the Polish postulates presented on the eve of the summit by Prime Minister Szydło.<sup>38</sup> They were mentioned again on 22 June at the Council meeting. Deciding on the need to launch PESCO, the Council once again emphasised the key importance of transatlantic relations and the EU-NATO partnership for European security.<sup>39</sup> This was recognized by Prime Minister Szydło for meeting the condition necessary for Poland's accession to PESCO.<sup>40</sup>

In the second half of the year, the process of activating PESCO sped up, and the reference point for the debate (and the Polish position) was a document made by eight countries of 20 July. It contained a proposal of more than 20 fairly general commitments to take specific actions in the defence policy of the states (e.g., constant increase in defence budgets, including expenditures on new armaments), and above all to undertake military cooperation with partners from the EU (e.g., in the field of CSDP operations, research and industrial projects, cybersecurity).<sup>41</sup> It was worked on, mainly, in the format of workshops with the participation of the Political and Military Group (PMG), i.e., the preparatory body for the Political

<sup>37</sup> See: J. Szymańska, "The 2007 Berlin and 2017 Rome Declarations: Compared, with Conclusions," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 34 (974), 4 April 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>38</sup> Prime Minister Beata Szydło also emphasised that Poland is opposed to the concept of a "two-speed" Europe. See: "Premier Beata Szydło przed wylotem do Rzymu na szczyt Rady Europejskiej," 24 March 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>39</sup> See: "Beata Szydło: Polska jest gotowa do wzmacniania europejskiej polityki obronnej, depesza IAR," 22 June 2017, [www.polskieradio.pl](http://www.polskieradio.pl). *Konkluzje Rady Europejskiej z 22–23 czerwca 2017 r.*, Bruksela, 23 June 2017, EUCO 8/17, [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu).

<sup>40</sup> "Premier Beata Szydło: Nadszedł czas, by walka z terroryzmem była skuteczna," 22 June 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>41</sup> For more, see: M. Madej, M. Terlikowski, *Wspólna Polityka Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony: PESCO i EDF, czyli wreszcie przełom?*, „Rocznik Strategiczny” 2017, no. 18, pp. 62–80.

and Security Committee (PSC), strengthened by additional representatives of Member States (the so-called PMG+ format). At the same time, countries submitted proposals for capability development projects that were to constitute the second PESCO pillar (the first being commitments in defence policy). Poland invariably emphasised the need to maintain PESCO complementarity with NATO operations and criticised the concept of EU strategic autonomy.<sup>42</sup> In particular, it aimed to soften proposals that would tie defence policy to EU rather than alliance initiatives, giving priority, for example, to EU-defined capability development goals. Poland, however, did not submit any PESCO project of its own.

Despite the development of the notification required by the treaty on the will to establish permanent structural cooperation and the earlier declarations of Prime Minister Szydło, Poland did not confirm its interest in the initiative until the last moment. This was mainly because of doubts raised by the Ministry of National Defence regarding the effects such a step would have on Polish defence policy. It was not until 9 November—four days before the meeting of the EU Council at which the submission of notification was planned—that Prime Minister Szydło declared Poland's interest in PESCO in her speech at the 15<sup>th</sup> Forum of Polish Foreign Policy.<sup>43</sup> A day later, Secretary of State for European Affairs Konrad Szymański confirmed Poland's willingness to sign the notification of intent.<sup>44</sup>

Eventually, Poland joined the group of 23 countries that on 13 November submitted a notification of intent to activate PESCO to the EU Council and to the High Representative. It largely corresponded to the July proposal—the commitments were not specified and some were even weakened (e.g., ideas for allocating a certain part of defence budgets to European defence programmes). At the same time, a preliminary list of the first 17 capacity-development projects to be implemented as part of the EU initiative was developed. However, their acceptance was postponed to the following year. Formally, Poland became a participant in the PESCO mechanism on 11 December. This decision was accompanied by a letter by ministers Waszczykowski and Macierewicz in which they repeated the Polish conditions of not duplicating or weakening NATO through EU projects.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> See: "Wizyta ministra A. Macierewicza w USA," Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 22 September 2017, [www.mon.gov.pl](http://www.mon.gov.pl).

<sup>43</sup> The Forum is organised by the Polish Institute of International Affairs. For a recording of the speech, see: "Premier Beata Szydło podczas XV Forum Polityki Zagranicznej," 9 November 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>44</sup> "Szymański: w poniedziałek Polska zadeklaruje gotowość udziału we współpracy obronnej UE," PAP, 10 November 2017, [www.pap.pl](http://www.pap.pl).

<sup>45</sup> See: "komunikat: Spotkanie ministrów obrony państw UE, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej," 13 November 2017, [www.mon.gov.pl](http://www.mon.gov.pl).

**Initiating EDF.** Poland was significantly less involved in the discussion on the European Defence Fund than in PESCO. First of all, Poland emphasized the need to guarantee equal opportunities for defence companies with medium capitalisation (so-called *mid-caps*, i.e., firms with a market value of between \$2 billion and \$10 billion) and not to favour only small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), a target objective of the EC. It resulted from the characteristics of the Polish technological and industrial base of the defence sector, which was consolidated within the Polish Armaments Group (PAG) and to a very small extent includes SMEs.

The EDF's objectives were presented on 7 June. It was to consist of two pillars ("windows" in line with EC terminology). The first concerned scientific research on innovative defence technologies (R&T). Financing was to be provided on the basis of grants awarded to consortia of research institutions and companies in a competitive procedure, similar to the mechanisms of the Horizon 2020 program and covering up to 100% of eligible project costs. The Commission proposed financial means for this purpose amounting to €90 million by the end of 2020 and €500 million per year in the new financial perspective (from 2021). The second pillar was to concern the development of new types of armaments and military equipment, including prototypes (R&D), with European funding only up to 20% of the project value (30% for projects conducted under PESCO). The size of the second pillar was set at €500 million as the EC contribution by 2020, which was to be supplemented by €2 billion by Member States interested in participation in projects. In the new financial perspective, the European Commission proposed €1 billion a year for this purpose, which, together with the expected four times greater co-financing by the states, would amount to up to €5 billion a year for new capacity development projects in Europe.<sup>46</sup>

For Poland, the most important issue was to ensure that EDF, and in fact its second pillar, would allow preferential treatment of national defence enterprises not meeting the criteria of SMEs. This was managed on 22 June, soon after the presentation of EDF. The Council agreed in its conclusions that "the development of the European defence industry will also require EU support for SMEs and indirect investments (mid-cap companies) implemented in the field of security and defence". In this way, Poland opened the way to record, in the *European Defence Industrial Development Program*, EDIDP), which was to become the legal and operational form of the implementation of the second pillar of EDF, preferences in financing projects from the EU not only for SMEs but also for the entire class of medium-sized companies, such as those that are part of PGZ.

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<sup>46</sup> See: M. Terlikowski, "Przyszłość europejskiej obronności," EC Delegation in Poland, 21 December 2017, [ec.europa.eu/poland](http://ec.europa.eu/poland).

In the second half of the year, the EC launched grant competitions under the first pillar, which was named the *Preparatory Action on Defence Research*. Three of the first five projects financed included Polish entities: Military University of Technology (PYTHIA project, concerning forecasting the development of defence technologies), Maritime Technology Centre (OCEAN 2020, concerning robotic, reconnaissance and maritime mine countermeasures) and a private company ITTI (GOSSRA project, regarding the individual soldier's electronic equipment).

**Operational dimension of the CSDP.** In 2017, Poland increased its involvement in NATO and EU missions and operations. The number of projects involving Poles increased from six to 10 while the number of soldiers serving outside the country rose from 1,400 to 2,500. About 50 police and border guard officers and civilian experts served in the missions as well.

Poland maintained its involvement in civilian missions and military operations under the CSDP. A minor contribution to operations in Africa (two officers in EUMAM RCA mission headquarters in the Central African Republic and EUNAVFOR Atalanta in Somalia) was balanced by an apparent presence in the Eastern Europe and Balkans' missions. The largest contribution was made by Poland to the EULEX mission in Kosovo. The mission was supported by about 120 persons, including a 100-strong special police force present in that country since operation UN UNIKIK. The EUFOR *Althea* military ground operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was augmented by 35 Polish troops. Poland belonged to the countries contributing the most to the EUMM observation mission in Georgia (20 persons) and to the EUBAM mission in Moldova and Ukraine (18 persons). In the second half of the year, Poland began preparations to increase its contribution to operation Sophia in the Mediterranean—activities included dispatching a Bryza reconnaissance aircraft and around a hundred personnel, including a boarding group and operational and staff officers.

### Assessment

The credibility of allied security guarantees for Poland in 2017 was significantly strengthened by implementing the provisions of the NATO summit in Warsaw and continuing the process of adaptation of the Alliance. Particularly important was a far-reaching increase—and in a few cases going beyond the 2016 arrangements—in the presence of U.S. troops on Polish territory. According to American commanders, Poland became the “centre of gravity” of the U.S. activity on the Eastern Flank. One of Poland's achievements was also the establishment of good relations with the Trump administration, possible largely due to maintaining the high level of defence spending and announcements that it would increase

to 2.5% of GDP, as well as increasing the participation of the Polish military in NATO missions and operations, both expeditionary and on the Eastern Flank.

However, Trump's rhetoric remained a challenge for NATO's transatlantic relations and cohesion, and thus for the prospects of Poland's security. Although uncertainty about the new president's approach to the Alliance was reduced, it was not completely eliminated in the view of Trump's ability to take positions different from the official statements of his administration. Paradoxically, despite positive bilateral relations with the U.S., Poland could still suffer in the event of further aggravation of U.S.-European disputes (e.g., regarding defence expenditures) or a re-evaluation of the U.S. policy towards Europe. Other risks began to appear due to Poland's insufficient preparation to host allied forces of the size necessary to conduct a defence operation. Over time, if unaddressed, this may translate into a weakening of Poland's credibility in calling for further strengthening of the Alliance's defence policy and deterrence. The prolonged process of modernisation of the Polish armed forces may have a similar effect.

With regard to the development of the CSDP, Poland managed to achieve assurance that EU efforts will not undermine NATO's activities, but will be fully complementary. The documents deciding on key, if not crucial, issues for the Union (PESCO activated 10 years after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty; EDF, the first instrument to finance the development of military capabilities from the EU budget), contain clear statements about the primacy of NATO as a pillar of European security and about the need to develop EU-NATO cooperation in accordance with the principle of cooperation and seeking synergies, not competition. Considering that it was a *sine qua non* condition for Poland's accession to PESCO and support for broader reform of the CSDP, Polish success in this respect should be recognised. However, these assurances at the end of 2017 did not go beyond the sphere of declarations. The specific formula of PESCO and EDF, especially capability-development projects and their links to defence planning in the EU (CARD review, Capability development plan) remained a challenge for the following years. What's more, the rhetoric of some EU countries, experts and media, showing the construction of European strategic autonomy as an alternative to transatlantic relations, has become stronger along with the activating of PESCO. The challenge for Poland will be to strengthen its position in the EU in such a way that after Brexit, the discussions on strategic autonomy will not lead to political initiatives weakening NATO.

# Poland's Policy in the European Union

JOLANTA SZYMAŃSKA\*

The year 2017 was a period of intensification of the debate on the shape of the European Union after Brexit, in which Polish proposals for the improvement of the organisation were confronted with reform plans formulated in other Member States and by representatives of EU institutions. Although there was no decision on the direction of further development of the European project, the concept of a “multi-speed” Europe and the associated risk of dividing the bloc into central and peripheral regions, popular among the Western European leaders, remained a challenge for Poland. The pursuit of Poland's interests in the EU was hindered by the EU institutions' initiation of the procedure for investigating breach of the rule of law by Poland. The lack of progress in the dialogue between the Polish government and the European Commission led the latter to recognise the clear risk of violation of the rule of law in Poland, and to activate the sanction procedure under Article 7 of the EU Treaty (TEU) at the end of the year.

## Determinants

The year 2017 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Rome. Celebrations were accompanied by a discussion on the reform of the European Union. These circumstances were the context for the implementation of Poland's European policy. EU reform was to contribute to the revival of integration after years of economic crisis, and prepare the bloc for challenges in the international environment, such as tension in relations with the United States after the election of Donald Trump, Russia's aggressive policy in the region, instability in the Southern Neighbourhood, intensification of international migration, and the growing importance of China on the global arena. The aim was also to prepare the EU for functioning in a smaller group, without the United Kingdom.

The dynamics of the discussion on EU reform were determined by the elections held in 2017 in many Member States, including the Netherlands, France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Austria. Despite fears of a significant increase in the influence of Eurosceptic forces and the possible organisation of further

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exit referendums, favourable attitudes towards European integration started to reappear within the Member States (in a Eurobarometer survey conducted in the spring of 2017, the level of support for the EU reached 57%, returning to the 2007, pre-crisis level),<sup>1</sup> and pro-European parties won elections (although Eurosceptics also achieved good results, the Freedom Party of Austria even joined the government coalition). The results of the elections also influenced the content of the proposed reforms of the EU and, at the same time, the evolution of the way of thinking about the bloc's future.

The reasons for the increase in pro-European sentiment were, on the one hand, the conviction that the European Union needed unity in the face of challenges coming from outside, and, on the other hand, the assessment that, after a period of cumulated crises, it was beginning to recover.<sup>2</sup> Both positions were mainly supported by positive economic indicators. In 2017, GDP in the EU grew by 2.4%, the best result since 2007, and unemployment declined steadily, to 7.3% in December.<sup>3</sup> In 2017, illegal migration, which had been a major cause of social concern since the escalation of the migration crisis in 2015, was also significantly reduced. In 2017, Frontex recorded 204,000 illegal border crossings, a decrease of 60% compared to the previous year. The reduction was possible mainly due to the 2016 agreement between the EU and Turkey, and the intensification of cooperation with Libya (an agreement between Italy and Libya came into force in July, enabling the return of migrant boats to Libya). The political crisis in the UK after the Brexit referendum was also an important factor in toning down Euroscepticism in 2017. Internal political games and disputes over the strategy of leaving the organisation<sup>4</sup> weakened the UK's position in negotiations with the EU, undermining the confidence of British society that the government would manage to sign a favourable agreement. On the continent, however, they strengthened spirit in favour of integration.

In Poland, as in other Member States, the perception of European integration has improved. In a CBOS survey of April 2017, 88% of Poles declared their support for EU membership, while only 8% declared their opposition. In social discussion on the future of the EU, support for deepening European integration increased

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<sup>1</sup> "Two years until the 2019 European elections," Special Eurobarometer of the European Parliament, April 2017, [www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat data available on the website: [https://europa.eu/european-union/documents-publications/statistics\\_pl](https://europa.eu/european-union/documents-publications/statistics_pl).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example: J. Szymańska, "Tories Lose Their Absolute Majority in UK General Election," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 25/2017, 12 June 2017; P. Biskup, "British Party System and the Brexit Negotiations," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 114 (1054), 22 November 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

significantly, to Some 48% ( the highest percentage since 2009). The conviction that this process had gone too far was expressed by 24% of Poles.

At the same time, Poles were reluctant to the idea of a multi-speed Europe. In the Eurobarometer survey, 42% of Poles declared their support for the statement that Member States that want to integrate faster should do so without waiting for the others, while 46% supported the position that it is better to wait with further integration until all Member States are ready. The results in Poland are clearly different from those in other Member States (especially in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany), where public support for the idea of a multi-speed Europe exceeded 60%.<sup>5</sup>

### Aims and Objectives

The Polish government set itself the goal of actively participating in the discussion about the reform of the Union. As Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski pointed out in his annual exposé, Poland's ambition was to initiate a thorough EU renewal and even to build a "new EU" on the basis of four freedoms and a new European treaty.<sup>6</sup> Poland was to be an advocate of pan-European unity, taking a critical view of the concept of a multi-speed Europe. During the conference "European Integration—Jubilee and New Opening" preceding the summit in Rome, Prime Minister Beata Szydło argued that a formal sanctioning of "multi-speed", although it seemed attractive to some countries, would harm the Union as a whole, leading to disintegration.<sup>7</sup>

The reluctance towards the concept of a multi-speed Europe and the associated risk of country marginalisation in the EU system did not mean that the Polish government intended to accelerate its efforts to join the Eurozone, around which reform plans were focused, and which, according to EU politicians, was to be the *avant-garde* of further integration.<sup>8</sup> The Eurozone was perceived by Polish decision-makers as an ideological project devoid of "reasonable economic solutions". As a result, Poland's accession to the Eurozone was considered

<sup>5</sup> "Two years until the 2019 European elections...", *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017)," for more, see p. 13 in this volume.

<sup>7</sup> "Premier Beata Szydło podczas konferencji 'Integracja Europy—jubileusz i nowe otwarcie,'" 23 March 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>8</sup> See, for example: A. Chrisafis, J. Rankin, "Macron lays out vision for 'profound' changes in post-Brexit EU," *The Guardian*, 26 September 2017, [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com).

economically unfavourable,<sup>9</sup> and its prospect was postponed. At the same time, however, it was stipulated that new initiatives to reform the Eurozone should remain open to all Member States.

As regards the permanent structural cooperation in defence (PESCO), which was announced at the Bratislava summit in September 2016 and which, like cooperation in the Eurozone, was perceived as an element of progressive diversification of integration, Poland expressed an interest in participating by imposing certain conditions. These included ensuring the complementarity (and not competitiveness) of PESCO with NATO initiatives, taking challenges in cooperation into account, not only in the south but also on the eastern outskirts of Europe, and obtaining a guarantee of equal access for small and medium-sized enterprises to armaments projects.<sup>10</sup>

An important objective of Polish European policy in 2017 was the protection of achievements considered crucial in the current development of European integration (the single market and the Schengen area). With regard to the common market, the Polish government considered the intensification of protectionist tendencies in Western European countries to be disturbing. They were manifested, among others, in efforts to revise the regulations on the posting of workers in the EU, which, according to the Polish government, undermined the EU freedom to provide services and movement, and was also aimed at Polish companies operating abroad. The Polish government also saw the potential for further strengthening of the single market, especially through the completion of the digital single market and the Energy Union. In energy matters, the government consistently maintained its opposition to the plans to build the Nord Stream 2 (NS2) gas pipeline.<sup>11</sup> It also defended coal as the basis for Poland's energy mix.

With regard to the Schengen area, the government supported the idea of restoring the full functioning of the Schengen system, which was to be achieved by increasing efforts to protect the external borders while limiting recourse to the final measure, i.e. restoring border controls within the area. At the same time, it maintained its opposition to the idea of transferring to the EU level the competences of states with regard to asylum policy including, in particular, the mechanism of relocation of asylum seekers.

During the Brexit negotiations, the Polish government stressed that it was in Poland's interests to have close ties between the European Union and the United

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<sup>9</sup> “ Wejście do strefy euro jest dla nas ekonomicznie niekorzystne,” (interview with Witold Waszczykowski), *TVP INFO*, 24 March 2017, [www.tvp.info](http://www.tvp.info).

<sup>10</sup> See: W. Lorenz, A. Kacprzyk, M. Terlikowski, “Poland's security policy,” in this volume

<sup>11</sup> See: J. Szymańska, P. Toporowski, Poland in the European Union,” *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2016*, Polish Institute of International Affairs, 2019.

Kingdom, based on a balance of rights and obligations.<sup>12</sup> Apart from protecting the rights of Polish citizens living in the UK, Poland's priority was to obtain a guarantee that the United Kingdom would meet its financial obligations towards the EU budget for 2014-2020. The Polish government also stressed the need to continue close cooperation between the EU and the United Kingdom in the field of security.

Brexit was also important in view of work on the shape of the multiannual financial framework after 2020. The Polish government announced its active participation in this process, stressing the importance of maintaining transfers under the cohesion policy and the common agricultural policy.

#### Political and Economic Relations

In the first months of 2017, during preparations for the 60th anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Rome, diplomats from the 27 EU Member States (excluding the United Kingdom) negotiated the content of the Rome Declaration, which was to take stock of the achievements of integration to date and define its direction for the coming years.

Even before the anniversary summit (1 March 2017), the European Commission published a white paper on the future of the EU, in which it outlined five scenarios for the development of the organisation until 2025.<sup>13</sup> One of them was the multi-speed Europe, with some countries accelerating their integration in selected areas and leaving other countries free to join in when they were ready. This vision was endorsed by the leaders of France, Germany, Italy and Spain at the informal summit in Versailles on 6 March. The summit was not attended by Polish representatives, who worked out their positions on reform in cooperation with partners from the Visegrad Group. The result was a joint statement by the prime ministers of the V4 as a contribution of the members of the group to the Rome Declaration.<sup>14</sup> It did not include the postulate, raised by the Polish authorities, to revise the EU treaties. However, there was a call for all forms of differentiated integration to remain open to all Member States.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017...", *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> "Biała księga w sprawie przyszłości Europy. Refleksje i scenariusze dotyczące przyszłości UE-27 do 2025 r.," Komisja Europejska, COM(2017)2025 z 1 marca 2017 r., <https://ec.europa.eu>.

<sup>14</sup> "Joint Statement of the Heads of Governments of the V4 Countries Strong Europe—Union of Action and Trust Input to Rome Declaration 2017," Visegrad Group, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

The final form of the declaration adopted in Rome on 25 March<sup>16</sup> reflected the lack of a shared vision for the development of the EU.<sup>17</sup> On the one hand, the document stressed the need for unity, and on the other hand, it opened the door to a multi-speed Europe, as the text contained a provision: “we will act together, at different paces and intensity where necessary, while moving in the same direction”,<sup>18</sup> The declaration ensures that new integration initiatives will remain in line with existing treaties.

The idea of reforming the EU in the spirit of “multi-speed” became particularly popular after the victory of Emmanuel Macron and his movement *En Marche!* in the French elections. In his speeches (for example, in Athens and at the Sorbonne in September 2017), the new French president argued about the need for closer integration, pointing out that the engine of deep transformation of the EU should be cooperation between France and Germany. At the same time, Macron contrasted Western Europe, striving for reform, with the eastern part of the continent, which distances itself from changes and “turns its back”, treating the EU as a “supermarket”.<sup>19</sup>

Plans for reform of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) were an important element of the discussion of the future of the EU. At the end of May, the European Commission published a paper opening the debate on the deepening of EMU and completing its establishment by 2025. It was to be a supplement of the white paper on the future of the EU. According to the plans of the European Commission, in the first stage of reform (by 2019), the European Union was to finalise the establishment of a banking union and a union of capital markets. In the second stage (by 2025), the architecture of the Economic and Monetary Union was to be completed by, among other things, the communitarisation of financial risk and the development of tools to support countries in crisis.<sup>20</sup> Macron demanded bold reforms of the Eurozone, including the creation of a separate budget, the appointment of a finance minister and a parliament. However, Macron’s ambitions to create a core of integration around the Eurozone were cooled down by both Germany (the largest economy in the zone) and the

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<sup>16</sup> “Deklaracja rzymska. Deklaracja przywódców 27 państw członkowskich oraz Rady Europejskiej, Parlamentu Europejskiego i Komisji Europejskiej,” Rada Europejska, 25 March 2017, [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu).

<sup>17</sup> See: J. Szymańska, “The 2007 Berlin and 2017 Rome Declarations: Compared, with Conclusions,” *PISM Bulletin*, no. 34 (974), 4 April 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>18</sup> “Deklaracja rzymska...,” *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> An interview with Emmanuel Macron for *Le Soir, Le Temps, Le Figaro, The Guardian, Corriere della Sera, El País, Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Gazeta Wyborcza*. In Polish: “Prezydent Macron w wywiadzie dla ‘Wyborczej’: Europa nie jest supermarketem,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 21 June 2017, [wyborcza.pl](http://wyborcza.pl).

<sup>20</sup> S. Płóciennik, “Eurozone Reform: European Commission’s Vision,” *PISM Spotlight*, no. 17/2017, 1 June 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

European Commission. Primarily, Germany emphasised compliance with fiscal discipline in the Eurozone, and was cautious about creating political institutions that could deepen divisions within the EU. The proposal for EMU reform, presented by the European Commission in December 2017,<sup>21</sup> toned down French postulates concerning the institutional architecture of the Eurozone, suggesting consolidation rather than a profound reconstruction of the existing system. The parliamentary elections, followed by prolonged coalition discussions in Germany, dismissed the prospect of resolving the dispute over the shape of Eurozone reform, postponing the discussion until 2018.

Despite the lack of final decisions on this issue, other reform projects based on enhanced cooperation between Member States as part of the EU's 2017 reconstruction, were accelerated. The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and the Permanent Structured Cooperation in the field of Defence (PESCO) were established.

Between April and June, the Member States notified of their participation in enhanced cooperation within the framework of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, and a regulation was finally adopted in October.<sup>22</sup> In all, 20 Member States decided to involve themselves in the cooperation within the framework of the EPPO. Poland did not join this group.<sup>23</sup> The Polish government justified its decision with the fear that the independence of national prosecutors' offices might be threatened by a new institution.<sup>24</sup>

Despite doubts as to the legitimacy of strengthening defence cooperation in the EU in the context of broader alliance cooperation in NATO, the Polish government decided to join PESCO. On the one hand, the government's decision was dictated by concerns about Poland's marginalisation in EU defence policy (almost all Member States joined PESCO),<sup>25</sup> and on the other hand, it was

<sup>21</sup> "Komunikat Komisji do Parlamentu Europejskiego, Rady Europejskiej, Rady i Europejskiego Banku Centralnego dalsze działania na rzecz dokończenia budowy Unii Gospodarczej i Walutowej: Plan działania," COM/2017/0821 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu>.

<sup>22</sup> "Rozporządzenie Rady (UE) 2017/1939 z dnia 12 października 2017 r. wdrażające wzmocnioną współpracę w zakresie ustanowienia Prokuratury Europejskiej," OJ L 283, 31 October 2017, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu>.

<sup>23</sup> Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Slovenia.

<sup>24</sup> E. Świętochowska, "Prokuratura Europejska powstaje bez Polski," *Gazeta Prawna*, 9 October 2017, <http://prawo.gazetaprawna.pl>.

<sup>25</sup> Eventually, 25 members joined PESCO: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Spain, Holland, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Hungary, and Italy. See: "Council Decision establishing Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and determining the list of Participating Member States," Brussels, 8 December 2017.

justified by the relatively superficial nature of integration under the new initiative, including Polish postulates. Commenting on the decision to join PESCO, Waszczykowski stipulated, however, that Poland may resign from cooperation if it proves unsatisfactory.<sup>26</sup>

In 2017, an important element of the discussion on the future of the EU was the political game around drafts of regulatory changes in the EU internal market, tightening divisions between the “old” and “new” EU. The liberal approach to the four freedoms of the Treaty presented by, among others, Poland, was confronted with the protectionist actions of many Western European countries. After Macron came to power, France took the lead in the offensive to combat “social dumping”. He visited European capitals, convincing leaders (among others, those of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe) of the need to change the regulations on the posting of workers. His itinerary did not include Poland, which was the main opponent of changes to Directive 96/71/EC on the posting of workers. On 23 October, in Luxembourg, a vote was held on the “general approach” of the Council concerning new regulations in this respect. With the opposition of Poland, Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia, the Council supported the proposal of the European Commission for equal working conditions for posted workers in relation to local workers. The result of the vote was interpreted as a break-up of the alliance within Central and Eastern European countries in this matter (in 2016, these countries attempted to stop work on the directive using the “yellow card” procedure).<sup>27</sup> Commenting on the course of the meeting, the Minister of Labour, Elżbieta Rafalska showed her disappointment with the lack of unity of the Visegrad Group during voting.<sup>28</sup>

Another area generating divisions in Europe was the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. At EU level, Poland consistently stressed that the implementation of investments undermined the energy independence of Central and Eastern European countries, damaged the security of the region,<sup>29</sup> and contradicted the idea of a common energy policy and the directions of the EU’s eastern policy. The countries from which the project stakeholders came (including Germany, Austria, France, the Netherlands and Belgium) presented a different approach. In March 2017, the European Commission proposed that the legal status of the gas pipeline should be regulated by an agreement between the EU and Russia, which the

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<sup>26</sup> “Minister Witold Waszczykowski: przystąpiliśmy do PESCO z wątpliwościami; można wystąpić,” *PAP*, 13 November 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>27</sup> See: J. Szymańska, P. Toporowski, *op. cit.*

<sup>28</sup> “Jest stanowisko ws. pracowników delegowanych. Rafalska: Nie udało się osiągnąć porozumienia,” *Gazeta Prawna*, 24 October 2017, <http://serwisy.gazetaprawna.pl>.

<sup>29</sup> See: “Nord Stream 2 dzieli Europę,” *WNP Portal Gospodarczy*, 22 October 2017, [www.wnp.pl](http://www.wnp.pl).

Commission would negotiate on behalf of the EU.<sup>30</sup> In November, the European Commission presented a draft amendment to the gas directive, aimed at adapting Nord Stream 2 to the requirements of the third energy package.<sup>31</sup> Although the EC's ability to block the NS2 project was limited, its attempts to subordinate the pipeline to EU law and anti-trust regulations were in line with Poland's position.

On the other hand, negotiations on the reform of EU climate policy developed unfavourably for Poland. In 2017, work on the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) for the period after 2020 accelerated. Poland argued for concessions in favour of a domestic energy system based on coal, demanding, in particular, the possibility to use money from a special fund to modernise coal energy assets. In February, together with Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Hungary and Italy, Poland voted against the Council's negotiating mandate on this issue, which did not stop work on the project. In November, the Estonian presidency negotiated an agreement with the EP on the directive regarding the ETS system, which was then approved by the ambassadors of the Member States in the Council. The agreement prevented Poland from using funds for the modernisation of coal power engineering, allowing such a solution only for countries whose GDP per capita fell below a specified limit (only Romania and Bulgaria). During the vote on the agreement in the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER), the Polish delegation abstained.<sup>32</sup>

Brexit negotiations became an important area of European policy in 2017. On 29 March, the United Kingdom submitted a formal notification of its intention to leave the EU, which, in accordance with the requirements set out in the EU treaties, was to take place by 29 March 2019. Poland, together with other Member States, worked on negotiating guidelines, which were adopted on 29 April 2017,<sup>33</sup> and procedural arrangements within the scope of negotiations adopted by the Council on 22 May 2017.<sup>34</sup> The EU guidelines specified that, in the first phase, discussions would concern citizens' rights, financial obligations of the UK towards the EU, and the regulation of border issues between Northern Ireland and the

<sup>30</sup> See: A. Gawlikowska-Fyk, S. Zaręba, "Negotiations between the European Commission and Russia on Nord Stream 2," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 41 (981), 26 April 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>31</sup> B. Bielszczuk, "Competition under Control: A Perspective on the Application of EU Law to Nord Stream 2," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 122 (1564), 6 December 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>32</sup> "Reforma handlu emisjami: Rada zatwierdza porozumienie z Parlamentem," 22 November 2017, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu>.

<sup>33</sup> "Special meeting of the European Council (Art. 50) (29 April 2017)—Guidelines," Brussels, 29 April 2017, [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu) [access: 19.04.2018].

<sup>34</sup> "Negotiating directives for Article 50 negotiations," Council of the European Union, Brussels, 22 May 2017, <https://ec.europa.eu>.

Republic of Ireland.<sup>35</sup> In December 2017, after six negotiating rounds, the first phase of discussions was completed, giving the green light to the start of the new one on future relations between the parties. In the first phase, the EU obtained significant concessions, including a guarantee that the UK contributions to the budget under the 2014-2020 financial perspective would be maintained, that the acquired rights of migrants in the UK would be protected, and that the Court of Justice of the EU would take precedence over British courts' interpretation of these rights for eight years after Brexit. The British government also agreed to ensure that there would be no "hard border" with Ireland.<sup>36</sup>

In the first months of 2017, in the background of the discussion on the future of the EU after Brexit, the appointment of the head of European Council were discussed. During national debate, this issue raised a lot of excitement, and the Polish government faced a dilemma of whether to support the extension of the term of office of Donald Tusk (the main political opponent of the ruling camp in Warsaw) or to present its own candidate. Finally, it opted for the second scenario. A few days before the March summit of the European Council, at which the decision on appointment was to be made, the Polish side submitted the candidacy of MEP Jacek Saryusz-Wolski. However, the Polish government did not gain support of European partners. At the summit on 9 March, the leaders decided to re-elect Tusk, with 27 countries voting "for," and only Poland against. The unsuccessful attempt to block the extension of Tusk's term of office was interpreted as an image failure of the Polish government. In a CBOS survey of spring 2017, the social perception of Poland's position in the EU deteriorated significantly.<sup>37</sup>

The perception of the state's position in the EU was also influenced by the dialogue between the Polish government and the European Commission on the protection of the rule of law. On 26 July 2017, the European Commission addressed to Poland its third recommendation related to the planned reform of the judiciary (the previous ones had been issued on 27 July and 21 December 2016). It concerned four legislative acts adopted by the Polish parliament: the Supreme Court Act, the National Judicial Council Act, the Common Court System Act, and the National School of the Judiciary Act. According to the EC, the adoption of these laws would "lead to a structural weakening of judicial independence and the independence of judges in Poland", with "an immediate and significant negative impact on the

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<sup>35</sup> See: J. Szymańska, "Prospects for the Negotiations on Brexit," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 69 (1009), 18 July 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>36</sup> "Komunikat Komisji dla Rady Europejskiej (art. 50) w sprawie stanu zaawansowania negocjacji ze Zjednoczonym Królestwem na mocy art. 50 Traktatu o Unii Europejskiej," COM(2017)784 final, <https://ec.europa.eu>.

<sup>37</sup> See: "Po reelekcji Donalda Tuska na szefa Rady Europejskiej," komunikat CBOS nr 45/2017, Warszawa, April 2017 r.

independent functioning of the whole judiciary”.<sup>38</sup> As the recommendation did not produce the results expected by the European Commission, and the dialogue with the Polish government lost its intensity, pushing away the perspective of a compromise, the Commission decided to activate a procedure against Poland, to protect the rule of law, as set out in Article 7 TEU, on 20 December 2017. The EC submitted a request to the Council to adopt a decision declaring “a clear risk of a serious breach of the values set out in Article 2 TEU”, arguing that, within two years, the Polish authorities had adopted more than 13 pieces of legislation which placed the courts under the political control of the ruling majority.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, the EC addressed its fourth recommendation on the rule of law to the Council of Ministers,<sup>40</sup> calling for the problems identified to be resolved within three months. Moreover, it brought an action against Poland before the EU Court of Justice, for violation of EU law by introducing provisions into the Act on the Common Court System, on different retirement ages for judges depending on sex.

Imposing sanctions under Article 7 TEU requires the consent of all Member States (except for the one undergoing the procedure) during voting in the European Council (Article 7(2) TEU), which significantly reduces the effectiveness of this mechanism. Hungary openly declared its support for Poland. Even before the procedure provided for in Article 7 of the TEU was activated, the discussions on alternative forms of imposing sanctions on states that did not respect the rule of law had begun in the EU. One of the proposals was to link the issue of the rule of law with payments from the EU budget. Such a postulate was included, among others, in the document opening the debate on the future of EU finances published at the end of June 2017. The EC justified it by the existence of “a clear link between the rule of law and effective implementation of private and public investments supported by the EU budget”.<sup>41</sup> These arguments were rejected by the Polish government, with the Minister for European Affairs Konrad Szymański arguing that such a solution would be discriminatory and illegal.<sup>42</sup>

Apart from the issue of the rule of law (and its link with access to EU funds), the subject of dispute between EU institutions and the Polish government also

<sup>38</sup> “Komisja Europejska podejmuje działania w obronie praworządności w Polsce, Komisja Europejska—komunikat prasowy,” Brussels, 26 July 2017.

<sup>39</sup> “Praworządność: Komisja Europejska staje w obronie niezależności sądów w Polsce,” Komisja Europejska—komunikat prasowy, Brussels, 20 December 2017.

<sup>40</sup> “Commission Recommendation of 20 December 2017 regarding the rule of law in Poland complementary to Commission Recommendations (EU) 2016/1374, (EU) 2017/146 and (EU) 2017/1520,” Brussels, 20 December 2017, C(2017) 9050 final, <https://ec.europa.eu>.

<sup>41</sup> “Dokument otwierający debatę na temat przyszłości finansów UE,” Komisja Europejska, COM(2017)358 of 28 June 2017, <https://ec.europa.eu>.

<sup>42</sup> “UE: KE przedstawiła koncepcje w sprawie finansów do 2025 roku,” PAP, 28 June 2017.

included migration policy issues, such as the implementation of the decision to relocate asylum seekers as well as problems of nature and environmental protection, especially the issue of logging in the Białowieża primeval forest.

With regard to the first issue, after a series of reminders for failure to comply with the relocation decisions adopted in September 2015, in December 2017 the European Commission submitted a complaint against Poland, Czechia, and Hungary, to the Court of Justice. Earlier, in September 2017, the EU Court of Justice had dismissed the action of Slovakia and Hungary for annulment of the relocation decision. Poland intervened in this case in support of the applicants' claims.<sup>43</sup> The refusal to accept asylum seekers and the question of the rule of law were linked to negotiations on the Multiannual EU Budget after 2020. In an interview for *Politico*, referring to the idea of cutting funds to Member States refusing to relocate immigrants, Szymański announced that Poland would block the budget providing for such changes.<sup>44</sup>

A no less controversial dispute, which found its final before the Court of Justice of the EU, was the case of logging in part of the Białowieża primeval forest, conducted by the State Forests since March 2016. The Polish authorities justified logging by the need to combat bark beetle, but in the EC's opinion these actions went significantly beyond what was necessary for the safe use of the forest, which is a Natura 2000 protected area. In the EC's opinion, it violated, in particular, the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive, which are the basis of the Natura 2000 programme. In June, the EC called on the Polish authorities to correct the infringement, threatening proceedings at the Court of Justice. In July 2017, it finally referred Poland to the court, calling on the Polish authorities to put an immediate end to the logging. At the end of the year, the new Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, in his exposé, assured that Poland would respect the court's judgment in this case.

## Assessment

In 2017, the Polish government presented an assertive approach to European partners. However, this did not translate into an increase in the effectiveness of the efforts for national interests in the EU, as evidenced by the lack of satisfactory solutions in the matters of the posting of workers and the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), and the complaints against Poland before the Court of Justice in

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<sup>43</sup> For more see: J. Szymańska, "CJEU Dismisses Complaints by Slovakia and Hungary on Refugee Relocation," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 50/2017, 7 September 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>44</sup> J. Barigazzi, "Threats to Poland over refugees are 'European populism' says minister," *Politico*, 24 May 2017, [www.politico.eu](http://www.politico.eu).

connection with the lack of implementation of decisions on the relocation of asylum seekers. The success achieved, among other things, thanks to the unity of the EU position, was the negotiation of significant concessions by the UK with regard to citizens' rights and financial settlements during the first phase of Brexit negotiations. These achievements are, however, conditional, as the results of the first stage of the discussions will only come into force if the whole negotiation process is successful, while the most controversial issues remain unresolved.

In the discussion on the future of the EU after Brexit, especially after Macron came to power in May 2017, Poland was forced onto the defensive. Although the future of Eurozone reform (crucial in this context) remains uncertain, Germany's scepticism towards French concepts may mitigate and delay this reform. Poland's distancing from membership carries the risk of political marginalisation and may also be associated with specific financial losses. In his speech on the state of the EU, the head of the European Commission announced additional financial support for those states outside the zone which decided to join in the near future. Under the influence of the discussion on strengthening the integration of the zone and financial incentives coming from Brussels, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe remaining outside the zone may intensify their preparations for membership.

The prospect of further enlargements of the Eurozone may become an additional challenge for Poland's alliances in the EU,<sup>45</sup> which were already undergoing a difficult test in 2017. Attempts to build a coherent position among the bloc of Central and Eastern European countries encountered problems in the discussion on the posting of workers, work on climate policy reforms, and the comprehensive debate on the future of the EU (seen, for example, in the lack of support for the Polish government's postulate on the revision of treaties). The problems resulted from differences in the interests of the countries of the region in individual policy areas, and from different integration ambitions. In this context, the key challenge for European government policy, with respect to sectoral policies and priority multiannual negotiations of financial frameworks in the near future, remains to expand alliances with partners from outside Central and Eastern Europe. This may be supported by Poland's conclusion of a compromise with the European Commission on the question of the rule of law.

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<sup>45</sup> More on the subject regarding Poland's alliances in the EU in: J. Szymańska, P. Toporowski, *op. cit.*



**II.**

**POLAND'S POLICY**

**TOWARDS SELECTED STATES AND REGIONS**



# Poland's Policy Towards the United States

ANDRZEJ DĄBROWSKI\*

## Determinants

The main determinants of Poland's foreign policy towards the United States included the new American president and the resulting implications from the objectives of the incoming administration. With the start of his term in January 2017, Donald Trump left his domestic political partners and American allies with a high degree of speculation about his administration's future foreign policy. Since Trump had never held any public, civil or military function prior to becoming president, predictions about his actions were almost exclusively made based on his rhetoric during the campaign period and decisions about his transition team staff<sup>1</sup> and personnel directly appointed to the government.<sup>2</sup> The president's approach to building relations with Russia<sup>3</sup> was particularly troubling and alarming for Polish interests. Trump, referring to plans to end the U.S. involvement in ending the civil war in Syria, described Russia as America's "rival" and a key state in the future foreign policy of his administration.<sup>4</sup>

The vision of U.S. foreign policy under Trump's slogan "America First", which was presented by the Republican candidate during his election campaign, is based on the following assumptions: the primacy of bilateral relations over multilateral agreements, selective and conditional involvement of the U.S. in the world, and moving away from active forums supporting ideas such as free trade or the fight against climate change. The axis of Trump's political strategy has been to criticise

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<sup>1</sup> The term "transition team" should be understood as a broad group of associates of the winning candidate for president of the United States who, in the period between the election and his swearing-in, cooperate with officials in the administration to take over the duties of managing federal institutions.

<sup>2</sup> "From Lobbyists to Loyalists, See Who's on Donald Trump's Transition Team," NPR, 16 November 2016, [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org).

<sup>3</sup> J. Haszczyński, "Nowa twarz USA," *Rzeczpospolita*, 20 January 2017, p. A1.

<sup>4</sup> A. Kaczynski, Ch. Massie, N. McDermott, "80 times Trump talked about Putin," CNN, <http://edition.cnn.com>; "Donald Trump's speech on U.S. foreign policy of 27 April 2016 delivered at the Centre for the National Interest in Washington, DC," <http://nationalinterest.org>.

the achievements of Barack Obama's time as president, both at home and abroad.<sup>5</sup> According to Trump, the U.S. has been victimised by other countries, which exploit America's economic and military power while ignoring the political and financial costs that the U.S. incurs. Trump has also pointed to the need to turn the new administration towards a more transactional perspective of international involvement.<sup>6</sup> As a candidate, he stressed unequal economic competition with the U.S., citing negative American trade indicators (e.g., deficits).<sup>7</sup>

Important determinants of Poland's foreign policy towards the U.S. in 2017 included the implementation of commitments made at the NATO summit in Warsaw in 2016 and a separate decision by the Obama administration to strengthen security on the Alliance's Eastern Flank. President Trump, like his predecessors, criticised NATO countries for underspending on defence, but unlike them, he suggested that the U.S. obligations under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty may be conditional. However, this criticism was not directed at Poland, which by 2016 had met the goal in the Welsh NATO summit declaration about increasing defence spending to at least 2% of GDP. At the same time, the Trump administration worked to accelerate the implementation of the commitments from the Newport (2014) and Warsaw summits, proposing, among other things, a schedule for increasing defence spending to 2% of GDP by 2024.<sup>8</sup> From Poland's point of view, it was significant that President Trump asked Congress to increase the amount of funding in the defence budget for the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) programme in 2018 to \$4.7 billion (\$1.4 billion more than in fiscal year 2017).<sup>9</sup> In doing so, the administration stressed the importance of the ERI for the security of the allies on the Eastern Flank of NATO. Additional instruments for strengthening Poland's security (allied and American military presence) obtained in 2016 during the NATO summit in Warsaw made it a challenge for Poland to guarantee adequate infrastructure for American soldiers serving on Polish bases.

Another determinant of Polish-American relations in 2017 was the public's favourable attitude towards the United States.<sup>10</sup> More than two-fifths of Poles

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<sup>5</sup> Z. Lewicki, "Od Baracka Obamy do Donalda Trumpa: fundamentalna rewolucja czy funkcjonalna kontynuacja?" *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, no. 1, 2017, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> "Remarks by President Trump at NATO Unveiling of the Article 5 and Berlin Wall Memorials—Brussels, Belgium," speech by U.S. President Donald Trump at NATO headquarters in Brussels on 25 May 2017, [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).

<sup>7</sup> P. Navarro, W. Ross, "Scoring the Trump Economic Plan: Trade, Regulatory, & Energy Policy Impacts," 29 September 2016, <https://assets.donaldjtrump.com>.

<sup>8</sup> A. Kacprzyk, "U.S. Policy towards NATO: Continuation with Risk of Change," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 30 (970), 23 March 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>9</sup> C. Pellerin, "2018 Budget Request for European Reassurance Initiative Grows to \$4.7 Billion," U.S. Department of Defence, 1 June 2017, [www.dod.defense.gov](http://www.dod.defense.gov).

<sup>10</sup> "Stosunek do innych narodów," *Komunikat z Badań CBOS*, no. 37/2018, March 2018, [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl).

described Americans in the survey as a sympathetic nation. At the same time, as many as 43% of Polish respondents claimed that the new president of the U.S. does not inspire their trust.<sup>11</sup> Public opinion polls showed the importance for Poles of the events that took place on the American political scene in 2016 and 2017. According to the respondents to the CBOS survey, Trump's victory in the presidential election was the most important event of the year.<sup>12</sup> The scepticism about Trump as a person and his policy was modified by his visit to Warsaw in July 2017. At that time, as many as 52% of Poles were of the opinion that the arrival of the American president would be beneficial for Poland.<sup>13</sup>

A new circumstance for Poland's policy towards the United States was the possibility of importing liquefied natural gas (LNG) exported by American companies. In 2016, the first terminal on the Atlantic coast of the United States was created, which was to significantly increase the country's LNG export capacity. Also in 2016, the LNG terminal in Świnoujście was put into operation, which enabled Poland to diversify its sources of natural gas supplies from several exporters, including the U.S. Thus, a possible Polish-American commonality of interests, regarding gas matters, became a new determinant. Poland's foreign policy towards the U.S. was also determined by Russia's efforts to build the Nord Stream 2 (NS2) gas pipeline. Obviously, the U.S. perceived Europe as an outlet for the natural gas produced by American companies. However, the main factor that made the U.S. oppose the NS2 project was the desire to stop further European dependence on gas supplies from Russia, which would result in undermining energy security and political cohesion of the European Union.<sup>14</sup>

Public opinion in the U.S. was shaken by accusations of possible Russian interference in the 2016 presidential elections. These assumptions were confirmed as early as at the beginning of 2017 by U.S. services pointing to the role of the Russian authorities and their subordinate institutions in, among other things, spreading false and manipulative information on the internet, spreading propaganda, and hacking into the Democratic Party's information systems.<sup>15</sup> Apart from the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the aggressive attitude towards

<sup>11</sup> R. Wike, J. Poushter, H. Zainulbhai, "As Obama Years Draw to Close, President and U.S. Seen Favorably in Europe and Asia," Pew Research Center, 29 June 2016, [www.pewglobal.org](http://www.pewglobal.org).

<sup>12</sup> "Wydarzenia roku 2017 w Polsce i na świecie," *Komunikat z Badań CBOS*, no. 2/2018, January 2018, [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl).

<sup>13</sup> "Polacy zadowoleni z wizyty Trumpa," IBRIS opinion poll for *Rzeczpospolita*, 10 July 2017, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

<sup>14</sup> A. Gurzu, "Trump's Russian pipeline policy Opposing the Nord Stream 2 project finds favor with Central Europe," *Politico.com*, 19 June 2017, [www.politico.eu](http://www.politico.eu); A. Dąbrowski, A. Legucka, "U.S. Sanctions on Russia," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 73 (1013), 31 July 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>15</sup> "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections," Intelligence Community Assessment, 6 January 2017, [www.dni.gov](http://www.dni.gov).

American allies on NATO's Eastern Flank, these reports became one of the main reasons why public opinion in the U.S. paid full attention to the actions of the Russian authorities. This also was the reason for the increased interest, including by Congress, in the threat Russia poses to Central and Eastern European countries, including Poland, and to American interests in the region.

The problem of bilateral relations remained the requirement that Poles apply for visas before entering the United States. This issue was further complicated by the increasing rate of refusals of entry by U.S. consular posts—in 2017, it was 5.9% compared to 5.3% in 2016.<sup>16</sup>

### Aims and objectives

The most urgent goal of Poland's policy towards the United States in 2017 was to establish working relations with the new American administration. The turn towards strengthening the security of Central and Eastern Europe, which only took place during Obama's second term in office after Russia's aggression against Ukraine, was an important factor in the Polish authorities' policy towards America. In information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the tasks of Polish foreign policy in 2017, issues related to Polish security were presented strictly in a transatlantic context. The political and military potential of the U.S. was to remain the foundation of NATO's effectiveness.<sup>17</sup> Also, the government's document, *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, indicates actions “to strengthen transatlantic relations and a broad U.S. presence in Europe” as a long-term objective of policy towards the United States.<sup>18</sup>

Poland's objectives in 2017 included finalising the discussions on acquiring a medium-range anti-aircraft and anti-missile defence system. The Polish government wanted to end the ongoing efforts to equip the armed forces with this kind of equipment since 2012, thus pursuing two strategic goals: increasing the level of defence spending and strengthening bilateral relations with the U.S. based on the purchase of armaments produced by American concerns. In 2017, the key decisions were made of the State Department and the U.S. Congress on the consent to make the technology developed in the U.S. available to Poland.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> State Department Data: <https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/Statistics/AnnualReports/FY2017AnnualReport/FY17AnnualReport-%20TableIV.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017),” For more, see p. 13 in this volume.

<sup>18</sup> *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, September 2017, p. 9, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>19</sup> M. Stone, “Raytheon gets OK for \$10.5 billion Patriot sale to Poland: Pentagon,” *Reuters*, 17 November 2017,

At the same time, Poland was trying to obtain the best possible offer of the so-called offset, which would compensate the expenditure of purchasing expensive equipment.<sup>20</sup> The Polish government also identified as a priority actions to complete the construction of elements of the American missile defence shield in Redzikowo and to organise exercises with American troops stationed in Poland.<sup>21</sup>

Poland's strategic objective was to confirm the Trump administration's efforts to block the NS2 project. In this area, Poland's priority was to get the U.S. authorities to consider the construction of the gas pipeline as a political project that directly affects the energy security of Central European countries and exposes Europe to greater dependence on gas supplies from Russia.<sup>22</sup>

Poland also sought the recognition by the U.S. of the potential of the Three Seas Initiative (TSI), co-created by Poland. This new venture, designed to deepen cooperation in infrastructure and energy of the EU countries situated between the Adriatic, Baltic, and Black seas, needed strong external support, which the organisers of the TSI summit in Warsaw (6-7 July 2017) saw in the U.S.<sup>23</sup>

The presence of the American president at the TSI summit was to provide credibility to the initiative as an integration project. At the same time, the Polish government tried to convince Trump and his aides to carry out the president's first bilateral visit to Europe.<sup>24</sup> That, they believed, would demonstrate that the impression that the new administration had only moderate interest in Central and Eastern Europe was wrong.<sup>25</sup> Also, given Trump's reluctance to publicly confirm the key importance of the United States to the stability of the North Atlantic Alliance, the Polish government hoped that American president would take up this topic in Warsaw as a conventional reference to important international issues.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> J. Palowski, "Offset kluczowy dla Wisły. MON: umowa planowana w tym roku," *Defence24*, 3 August 2017, [www.defence24.pl](http://www.defence24.pl).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*; "Government information on Polish foreign in 2017..." *op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> "Szef polskiej dyplomacji w Houston," Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 17 December 2017, Wiceszef polskiego MSZ Marek Magierowski z wizytą w Waszyngtonie, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych," 3 November 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>23</sup> B. Wiśniewski, "Trójmorze—nowy instrument w polskiej polityce zagranicznej," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 4 (71), 2017, p. 28.

<sup>24</sup> "Prezydent Andrzej Duda zaprosił prezydenta Donalda Trumpa do złożenia wizyty w Polsce," 2 February 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>25</sup> A. Dąbrowski, "Między placem Zamkowym a placem Krasińskich," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 4 (71), 2017, p. 132.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 132-134.

## Political relations

In 2017, bilateral political relations with the U.S. were a visible and important part of Polish foreign policy. The government's activities in this period were characterised by increased activity to establish cooperation with the Trump administration at the turn of 2016 to 2017.

Even before Trump's swearing in, the Polish diplomatic services started to seek a bilateral visit and the president's participation in the TSI summit, scheduled for July in Wrocław. Initially, there was no clear position from the White House on the possibility of Trump visiting Poland, and reference was made to him still forming his administration. However, at the beginning of June, a response to the invitation was forwarded to the Polish side. The American side declared its participation in the proposed undertakings and a speech by the new president. As a result, the TSI summit was relocated to Warsaw. The visit resulted in a stronger political message about the potential of the initiative. President Trump selected Warsaw to present, for the first time, a coherent vision of U.S. foreign policy under his leadership. He referred to the custom of his predecessors, who in recent decades used visits to Poland to speak on issues relevant to transatlantic relations.<sup>27</sup>

An element of the political relations between Poland and the U.S. were discussions on the finalisation of the agreement on the purchase of the Patriot anti-aircraft and anti-missile defence system, which were ongoing in 2017. The procedure for purchasing this type of equipment involved not only the readiness of the purchasing country to pay the cost but also the consent of the American administration and Congress to make the technology available abroad. After acquiring the Patriot system, Poland would become one of 15 countries in the world with the system<sup>28</sup> and, in parallel with the American military, would also receive the latest-generation PAC-3 MSE system. The main area of negotiations in the procedure for obtaining the Patriot system was the issue of "offset" (i.e., industrial compensation) and the value of contracts related to it.<sup>29</sup> The Polish side was primarily interested in obtaining the highest possible offset from system suppliers while the American side negotiated the latest possible delivery of the equipment ordered by the Polish side, the technology of which was still under negotiation at the construction stage.

In 2017, the Polish authorities sought to persuade the U.S. authorities to more strongly oppose the NS2 project as undermining European energy security

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>28</sup> Besides the U.S., the Patriot system is in use in Israel, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Taiwan, Greece, Spain, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, the Netherlands, Romania, and Germany.

<sup>29</sup> R. Lesiecki, "Macierewicz: umowa na Patrioty, jeśli rząd USA spełni polskie warunki," *Defence24*, 19 September 2017, [www.defence24.pl](http://www.defence24.pl).

and solidarity.<sup>30</sup> The Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) became the tool through which the U.S. aimed to reduce the impact of Russian gas on the European market.<sup>31</sup> Adopted by an overwhelming majority that included both major political parties, it aimed to strengthen sanctions against Russia, North Korea and Iran. The document attributed to Russia the violation of territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine as well as interference in elections in the U.S. and other countries. The law provided an opportunity to unilaterally impose sanctions on companies that engage funds in the implementation of Russian energy projects, including NS2.<sup>32</sup>

Separately, the issue of reform of the justice system carried out in Poland since 2015 remained an element of Polish-American relations. The State Department formulated its comments on the changes taking place in Poland in a communiqué stressing the importance of the countries' alliance and the importance of dialogue in conducting the policy of changes in the judiciary.<sup>33</sup> The Polish authorities, in meetings with representatives of the American administration, tried to explain the essence of the introduced reforms, explaining them as necessary changes in existing regulations.<sup>34</sup>

Table 1.

#### Visits of Polish officials to the United States in 2017

Representative of the Polish authorities	Month	Purpose and course of the visit
President Andrzej Duda	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the president's participation in the UNGA</li> <li>– bilateral meetings with the presidents of Lithuania and Ukraine to discuss issues such as security and construction of the NS2 gas pipeline</li> <li>– meeting with the president of the International Red Cross to discuss Poland's involvement in humanitarian aid</li> <li>– encouraging representatives of American investment funds to invest capital in Poland and promoting projects of the Three Seas Initiative</li> <li>– a visit to the West Point military academy</li> <li>– meeting with the Polish community in Wallington</li> </ul>

<sup>30</sup> J. Bielecki, "Z Ameryką przeciw Niemcom," *Rzeczpospolita*, 24 August 2018, p. A8.

<sup>31</sup> H.R.3364 – *Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act*, [www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov).

<sup>32</sup> A. Dabrowski, A. Legucka, "U.S. Sanctions ...," *op. cit.*

<sup>33</sup> "Poland: Independence of the Judiciary," press release of the State Department, 21 July 2017, <http://archive.md/8oSbh#selection-1667.0-1667.38>.

<sup>34</sup> "Nasz wywiad. Wicepremier Morawiecki o kulisach wizyty w USA: 'Przekonuję Amerykanów, że chcemy być państwem prawa, a nie prawników,'" *Wpollyce.pl*, 31 August 2017, <https://wpollyce.pl>.

Secretary of State in the Chancellery of the President of Poland Krzysztof Szczerski	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– forwarding an invitation from President Andrzej Duda and Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic to President Donald Trump to participate in the TSI summit in Warsaw</li> </ul>
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Development, Minister of Finance Mateusz Morawiecki	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– discussion with Secretary of Trade Wilbur Ross and Secretary of Energy Rick Perry on the prospects for the development of trade between the U.S. and Poland, including the purchase of American LNG by Poland</li> <li>– meeting with Janet Yellen, president of the Federal Reserve System and Christine Lagarde, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, on U.S. monetary policy and development policy as a tool for bridging economic differences between countries</li> </ul>
	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– participation in the official announcement of J.P. Morgan's plans to open its corporate centre in Poland</li> <li>– meeting with the Polish community as part of a visit to the Polish Army Veterans Association in America</li> </ul>
	October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– participation in a session of the governors of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which focused on the challenges of the global economy, prospects for sustainable and stable growth, the fight against poverty, and support for regional development</li> <li>– announcement of the decision to withdraw Poland from the IMF credit line</li> <li>– encouraging the largest Polish businesses to reinvest in the Polish economy</li> </ul>
Minister of Foreign Affairs Witold Waszczykowski	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– participating in the UN Security Council debate on conflict prevention and promoting Poland's candidacy for a non-permanent member of the council</li> <li>– meeting with the new UN Secretary-General António Guterres to discuss Poland's candidacy for a non-permanent member of the Security Council</li> <li>– promotion of the Polish candidacy for the Security Council among the representatives of countries at the UN</li> </ul>
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– promotion of Poland's candidacy for the Security Council among the representatives of countries at the UN and presentation of the assumptions and priorities of Poland's membership of the Council to the elected ambassadors of the UN member states, mainly from the South East Asia (ASEAN) region</li> </ul>

Minister of Foreign Affairs Witold Waszczykowski	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Participation in a meeting of the heads of foreign ministries of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS in the seat of the U.S. Department of State</li> <li>– participation in a meeting of the “small group”— countries most involved in the Coalition’s activities</li> </ul>
	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a meeting with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to discuss the prospects for NATO and bilateral allied cooperation, including in the areas of security, economy, energy, and innovation</li> <li>– meeting with representatives of analytical and research institutions (American Enterprise Institute, German Marshall Fund, Atlantic Council, Cato Institute, and RAND Corporation) to discuss the policy of the new administration, Polish-American relations, Russian activities in Ukraine, and the situation in Syria and North Korea</li> </ul>
	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– participation in the election of non-permanent members of the UN Security Council for the 2018-2019 term</li> <li>– a meeting with the U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley, among others</li> </ul>
	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Minister’s participation in the UNGA</li> <li>– participation in a meeting of the Community of Democracies organisation and assumption of the six-month presidency of the Council by Poland</li> <li>– meeting with the Polish community in Doylestown</li> </ul>
	December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– visit to Texas to open the Consulate General of Poland</li> </ul>
Minister of National Defence Antoni Macierewicz	November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A meeting with the U.S. Secretary of Defence James Mattis to discuss security issues, the presence of U.S. troops in Poland and the Russian Zapad 2017 exercise. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the procedure for the sale and transfer of technology of the HIMARS missile artillery system and the PATRIOT anti-aircraft defence system</li> <li>– participation in the Centre for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) conference</li> <li>– attending a meeting with the CIA leadership</li> <li>– visit to Doylestown and meet with the Polish community</li> </ul>

Source: Author’s compilation based on data from Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, Kancelaria Prezydenta, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, and Ministerstwo Rozwoju I Inwestycji.

## Military cooperation

One of the most important events in 2017 of strategic importance for Poland's security and the efficiency of allied deterrence policy against Russia on the Eastern Flank, was the deployment of American forces on Polish territory as part of the arrangements of the NATO summit in Warsaw in 2016. The decisions concerned the start of Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP), in which the United States became a framework state of a multinational combat group stationed in Poland and, in a bilateral formula between Poland and the U.S. (according to the American decision, an armoured brigade group was to rotate to Poland). The operation to deploy American troops began in January. The 3,500 troops of the U.S. Army's Armored Brigade Combat Team<sup>35</sup> began stationing and exercises in the area of Drawsko Pomorskie and Żagań.<sup>36</sup> In Powidz, in May, the 10<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) entered service with about 50 troops in the initial phase and about 100 by the end of 2017.<sup>37</sup>

In 2017, the negotiations between the Polish and American governments and the producers of the Patriot system was underway. In March, the Ministry of National Defence submitted a revised version of a "Letter of Request" (LoR) to the American government. The Polish government declared the maximum amount of the order as PLN 30 billion. In July, the U.S. Department of Defence and the Ministry of Defence signed a memorandum on the acquisition of the Patriot air-defence system by Poland. The agreement stipulated that Poland would purchase anti-missile systems in two phases—in the first phase, two Patriot batteries in the existing "3+" configuration, and in the second phase, six batteries, already equipped with AESA omnidirectional radars (new and still in development), IBCS system and missiles: PAC-3 MSE and SkyCeptor. The last element on the American side was to submit to Congress information about the intention to sell arms to Poland. The Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the U.S. government agency responsible for preparing interstate arms sales contracts, announced that it intends to sell two batteries of these weapons to Poland.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> The group was equipped with 87 tanks, 18 self-propelled howitzers, 144 infantry fighting vehicles, and more than 400 auxiliary vehicles of various types.

<sup>36</sup> "US Army ujawnia szczegóły wsparcia dla Europy. '1,3 tys. pojazdów, 650 kontenerów,'" *Defence24*, 5 January 2017, [www.defence24.pl](http://www.defence24.pl).

<sup>37</sup> The CAB was equipped with UH-60L Black Hawk multipurpose helicopters, AH-64 Apache assault helicopters and CH-47 Chinook transport helicopters. "10<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade deploys to Poland in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve," U.S. Army, 5 May 2017, [www.army.mil](http://www.army.mil); "Atlantic Resolve Aviation Rotation Fact Sheet," U.S. Army Europe, 28 May 2018, [www.eur.army.mil](http://www.eur.army.mil).

<sup>38</sup> The entire system, which was the subject of negotiations with the American side, consisted of four AN/MPQ-65 radars, four battle stations, 16 M903 launchers, two new IBCS EOC 6 command stations, as well as 208 PAC-3 MSE and 11 test PAC-3 MSEk missiles.

In 2017, the construction of the base hosting what has been called the anti-missile shield in Redzikowo was underway. It was to be part of the NATO and U.S. missile defence system (European Phased Adaptive Approach, EPAA). This system was designed as a land-based modification to the AEGIS Ballistic Missile Defence—AEGIS Ashore. Completion of the installation and commissioning of the system is scheduled for 2018.<sup>39</sup>

### Economic relations

The trade turnover between the U.S. and Poland reached record levels in 2017. The total value of trade was \$12.7 billion. Poland recorded, however, one of the lowest negative trade balances in the recent history of economic relations with the USA.<sup>40</sup> The increase in the volume of trade was influenced, among others, by the good economy both in Poland and the United States, the increasing demand for goods, as well as broadening the list of goods imported by Poland. As in previous years, Polish companies exported furniture, jet engines and turbines, aircraft and car components. American machines, aircraft and photographic instruments were brought to Poland. According to estimates, the U.S. companies employed about 220,000 people in Poland, of which 73,000 were employed in shared services centres in 2017.<sup>41</sup>

The Polish authorities actively sought further American investments in Poland. One of the significant successes in this area was the acquisition of the headquarters of the American investment bank J. P. Morgan Chase, where even 5,000 people were to find work.<sup>42</sup> President Andrzej Duda encouraged investment in Poland during meetings with representatives of American investment funds interested in the Polish stock market.<sup>43</sup> The American representatives were also met by foreign minister, who promoted investment of capital in Poland among representatives of the energy sector.<sup>44</sup>

The year 2017 was crucial for Poland in terms of energy security, especially due to the launch of American gas imports to Poland. The government sought to ensure

<sup>39</sup> “Baza obrony przeciwrakietowej w Redzikowie,” Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, <https://archiwum2019.mon.gov.pl>.

<sup>40</sup> The compilation based on data from the Central Statistical Office and <http://swaid.stat.gov.pl>.

<sup>41</sup> “Inwestycje amerykańskie w Polsce. Partnerstwo dla sukcesu na kolejne 100 lat!” KPMG, April 2018, <https://assets.kpmg.com>.

<sup>42</sup> “J.P. Morgan otwiera Centrum Korporacyjne w Polsce,” Ministerstwo Rozwoju, 26 September 2017, <http://archiwum.miir.gov.pl>.

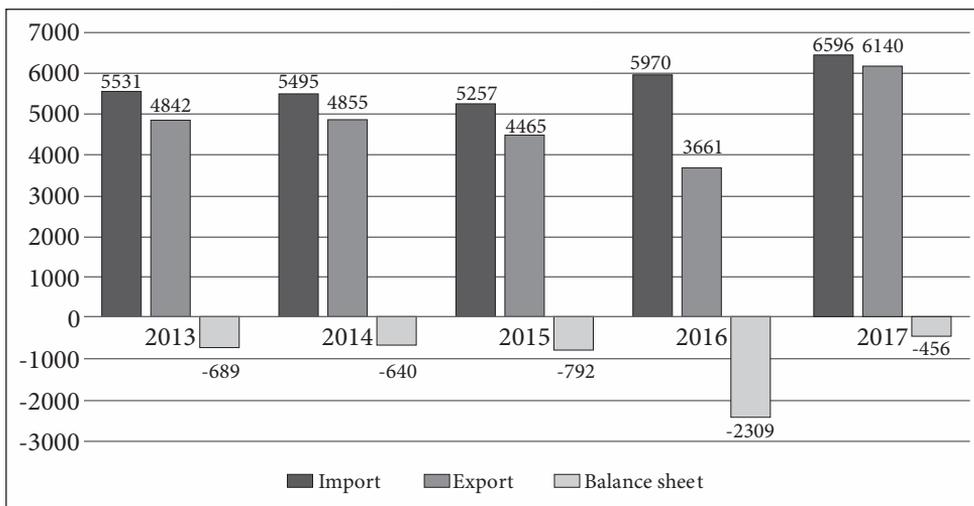
<sup>43</sup> “Wizyta Prezydenta Andrzeja Dudy w USA,” Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Waszyngtonie, 20 September 2017, [www.waszyngton.msz.gov.pl](http://www.waszyngton.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>44</sup> “Rozmowy w Houston o polsko-amerykańskiej współpracy energetycznej,” Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 16 December 2017,

diversification of gas sources for the internal market and possible redistribution of the resource among the countries of the region. For this purpose, it made efforts to acquire an American LNG supplier. In July, the first shipment of LNG from the U.S. arrived at the Świnoujście gas port. The gas was purchased by PGNiG under a flexible short-term contract (spot) from the terminal in Sabine Pass on the Gulf of Mexico—the only LNG export facility launched in the U.S.<sup>45</sup> According to the government, increasing the supply of LNG to Poland was to ensure diversification of raw material sources and, as a result, to become independent from the Russian gas monopoly in Europe. The projected increase in demand for gas, the planned increase in the capacity of existing terminals and the construction of new ones in the U.S. will affect the attractiveness of LNG in the near future.<sup>46</sup> Another step towards reducing Poland’s energy dependence on gas from Russia was the signing by PGNiG and Centrica LNG Company Limited of a five-year contract for the import of American LNG. The contract assumed the transport of nine shipments of LNG. The parties agreed that the contract will start in 2018.<sup>47</sup>

Graph 1

**The trade balance between Poland and the United States in 2013–2017**  
(in USD million)



Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny and Internetowy System Informacji Gospodarczej.

<sup>45</sup> B. Wiśniewski, “U.S. LNG Delivery to Poland,” *PISM Spotlight*, no. 23/2017, 7 June 2017,

<sup>46</sup> B. Bielszczuk, “LNG Developing Rapidly in the Baltic Sea Region,” *PISM Bulletin*, no. 46 (986), 12 May 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>47</sup> “Amerykański gaz popłynie do Polski,” Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Waszyngtonie, DC, 21 November, 2017,

## Social and Cultural Relations

In 2017, Polish public institutions strengthened promotion of Poland. The historic momentum of initiatives undertaken by diplomatic and cultural institutions was the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tadeusz Kościuszko's death.<sup>48</sup>

The Polish embassy in Washington DC carried out a number of projects popularising knowledge about the common hero of Poland and the United States. These included the “Find Your Kosciuszko” project, which included organising local celebrations of the Kosciuszko Year in October 2017 in locations dedicated to the memory of the general. The action included events dedicated to the memory of Kościuszko in the states of Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, Wisconsin, New Jersey, and South Carolina. As part of the action, in August 2017, the “Kosciuszko200” website was created with a map of the United States featuring information and materials on the events conducted as part of the project. What's more, especially in connection with the Kosciuszko Year celebrations, the Polish embassy in Washington prepared an educational film entitled *Kosciuszko Means Freedom*, which was published on social media in August 2017. The film was screened over 100,000 times. A seminar called “The Purest Son of Liberty: Thaddeus Kosciuszko in America,” which was held thanks to the support and cooperation with the Polish Circle in the U.S. Congress. The seminar programme consisted of a panel discussion of historians—recognised specialists in the history at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century: professors Graham Hodges, James Puli, and Andrzej Sulima-Kamiński, and an exhibition of memorabilia related to General Kosciuszko, stored in the library's collection.

The Polish embassy also reacted to cases of blaming Poland for crimes of the Holocaust. The Polish mission in Washington DC intervened in cases when the incorrect term “Polish concentration camps” was used in American media.<sup>49</sup> What's more, the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in New York organised the exhibition “Risking their life—Poles saving Jews during the Holocaust”, which could be viewed from April 2017.<sup>50</sup>

Activities related to the promotion of Polish culture were also carried out by the Polish Institute in New York, which conducted or initiated 105 projects (about 200 single events) in 2017, including 33 projects outside New York. According to the institute's estimates, the total number of recipients of its activities in 2017

<sup>48</sup> “200 rocznica śmierci Tadeusza Kościuszki,” Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Waszyngtonie, 13 October 2017, [www.waszyngton.msz.gov.pl](http://www.waszyngton.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>49</sup> “Polskie obozy śmierci” w tym roku już ponad 30 razy w USA, wywiad z ambasadorem RP w Stanach Zjednoczonych Piotrem Wilczkiem,” RMF24, 9 April 2017.

<sup>50</sup> “Materiały naukowe, publikacje,” Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

could reach even 50,000 people. Among the undertakings organised by the Polish Cultural Institute, one should mention the presentation of the film *Kościuszko: A Man Ahead of His Time*, the historical-social-artistic project “Ziemia” dedicated to the Polish presence in New York, the campaign in American media called “Discover Poland”, an exhibition of interwar Polish posters at the EU Open House in Washington DC.

An important event in the historical and cultural relations between Poland and the United States was the proclamation of 11 October as “General Pulaski Memorial Day” by President Donald Trump. The American president commemorated “the father of the American cavalry troops”, recalling his contribution to the Americans’ struggle for independence.<sup>51</sup>

An unresolved problem in Polish-American relations in 2017 was the visa regime for Polish citizens. Poland was among a group of EU countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Romania) whose citizens must apply for permission to enter the United States. At the same time, it is the only Schengen area country not covered by the U.S. Visa Waiver Program. For the Polish public, this issue remained a troublesome element of Polish-American relations, especially with regard to their good evaluation of relations with Americans.<sup>52</sup> The visa issue, in the context of intense political, economic, and military relations, was not on the government’s list of priority actions regarding the United States in 2017.<sup>53</sup>

Table 2.

**Wizy przydzielone przez placówki konsularne USA w Polsce  
w latach 2011–2017**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of non-immigrant visas granted	78,062	70,039	71,151	84,875	90,697	97,599	99,907
Percentage of rejected applications for a non-immigrant B visa	10.2%	9.3%	10.8%	6.3%	6.37%	5.30%	5.90%

Source: Author’s own compilation based on U.S. State Department data.

<sup>51</sup> “President Donald J. Trump Proclaims October 11, 2017, as the 88<sup>th</sup> anniversary of General Pulaski Memorial Day,” 10 October 2017, [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).

<sup>52</sup> More on the assessment of the United States, political and social relations in the section on determinants.

<sup>53</sup> J. Ceglarz, “Morawiecki o wizach do USA. ‘To nie jest temat pierwszorzędny,’” *Money.pl*, 7 July, 2017, [www.money.pl](http://www.money.pl).

## Assessment

The effects of Poland's policy towards the U.S. can be considered satisfactory. Fairly quickly, considerable impetus was given to relations with the new American administration, as evidenced by the success in Trump's visit to Poland and participation in the TSI summit in Warsaw. The confirmation during Trump's visit of the U.S. attachment to the guarantee under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty was of fundamental importance to the security interests of the Republic of Poland and, more broadly, for maintaining the U.S. commitment to strengthening European security.<sup>54</sup>

An important achievement from Poland's point of view was the recognition by the U.S. of the construction of NS2, not only as a project detrimental to Poland's and the European Union's energy interests but also as a tool for further European dependence on gas supplies from Russia, which would result in undermining the EU's energy security and cohesion.

At the beginning of 2017, the deployment of American troops as part of NATO Enhanced Forward Presence and the forces directed to Poland under the ERI initiative by the previous administration, began. For Poland, this was an opportunity to increase the level of interoperability of its armed forces with the U.S. military stationed at Polish bases and using local training infrastructure.

Discussions with Patriot air-defence system manufacturers and the U.S. government on a possible offset when purchasing the technology, held simultaneously in 2017, were among the important negotiations on an arms purchase in recent years. The Ministry of National Defence, negotiating with the U.S., set the goal of obtaining the largest possible amount of U.S. investments in Polish industry, seeing the difficult procedure to implement it as a chance for the development of the defence sector. In October 2017, the missile manufacturer submitted its offset offer, but the high price of batteries and their components was a point of dispute until the end of the year.<sup>55</sup> The ambitious plan to purchase eight batteries (64 launchers) of the Patriot system was, given the estimated value of the contract and the efforts of the Polish government to implement an offset procedure, undoubtedly the largest process in the history of Poland in terms of cost and complexity of negotiations for the purchase of equipment for the Polish military. In comparison with, for example, the procedure for purchasing JASSM missiles, the negotiations of the final price of the contract had to take into account the need to implement, in the Polish armaments industry, some of the expensive and complicated technologies that are part of the Patriot system. Nevertheless, the

<sup>54</sup> "Remarks by President Trump to the People of Poland," 6 July 2017, [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).

<sup>55</sup> "Raport Zbrojeniowy," *Polityka Insight*, January 2018, [www.politykainsight.pl](http://www.politykainsight.pl).

efforts to complement the country's air-defence forces with modern solutions are a significant step towards modernisation of the armed forces. The government's decision to purchase missile defence solutions from the U.S., Poland's strategic ally in NATO and the largest arms manufacturer and exporter, should also be stressed.<sup>56</sup>

In its policy towards the U.S. in 2017, the government made efficient use of the political circumstances (Trump's election to the presidency), economic and commercial (the launch of the first gas terminal in the Gulf of Mexico and the purchase of LNG), and security (the beginning of stationing American troops in Poland). The Polish government treated these circumstances as part of activities that included the continuation of efforts to develop the TSI or efforts to block the construction of the NS2 gas pipeline. It should be expected that issues related to security and the desire to increase the export of American hydrocarbons to Europe will remain an important level of Polish-American relations also in the coming years.

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<sup>56</sup> P.D. Wezeman et al., "Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2017," SIPRI Fact Sheet, March 2018, [www.sipri.org](http://www.sipri.org).

# Poland's Policy Towards the United Kingdom

PRZEMYSŁAW BISKUP\*

## Determinants

The most important long-term determinants of Poland's policy towards the United Kingdom in 2017 were their joint membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), economic ties worth some PLN 104 billion, and the presence in that country of one of the largest Polish communities abroad. In the analysed period, the UK remained one of Poland's most important allies, due to its military, technological, and financial potential, as well as similar defence policy objectives. **While** Poland's policy towards the UK was also influenced by the asymmetry of the economic and political capacity of the two countries, this was mitigated by the restriction on British freedom of action on the EU forum resulting from the process of leaving the EU (Brexit).

Despite Brexit, from the Polish perspective the UK remained in 2017 an important partner in EU politics. Poland's position vis-à-vis the United Kingdom was strengthened by the expectation of the British side that, through relations with Poland, it would be able to influence the negotiating agenda of the entire EU.<sup>1</sup> However, due to divergences in both countries' interests, the government of Poland decided that in relation to Brexit it would primarily focus on shaping a common EU position, and reserve bilateral talks for tackling the issues outside the EU's competence.

In terms of intergovernmental relations and party politics in the discussed period, an important determinant for cooperation between Poland and Britain was the United Right's<sup>2</sup> (ruling in Poland since 2015) perceived convergence of views with the UK's Conservative Party (the Tories), governing since 2010. The perceived convergence covered transatlantic cooperation, policy towards Russia,

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<sup>1</sup> See statement by the British ambassador Jonathan Knott, in: *Pełny zapis przebiegu posiedzenia Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej (nr 172) i Komisji Łączności z Polakami za Granicą (nr 73) z dn. 7 grudnia 2017 r.*, Kancelaria Sejmu, Biuro Komisji Sejmowych, <http://orka.sejm.gov.pl>, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> The United Right was a coalition composed of United Poland (Solidarna Polska) and Agreement (Porozumienie), parties grouped with the Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS) party. The smaller parties ran in the 2015 parliamentary election on the PiS ticket.

and a critical approach to European integration. The United Kingdom was seen as a credible ally making a significant contribution to the security of Poland, Central Europe, and NATO's entire Eastern Flank. This belief was reinforced by stationing of British military contingents in Poland and Estonia.

In 2017, intergovernmental relations were also stabilised by the governing parties' cooperation within the framework of the European Parliament's European Conservatives and Reformists group (ECR).<sup>3</sup> The announcement on snap elections to the House of Commons on 8 April, which ended up with the Tories losing their parliamentary majority, did not fundamentally affect Poland's policy towards the UK. This was due to Prime Minister Theresa May managing to remain in power after concluding a "supply and confidence" agreement with the Democratic Unionist Party. Similarly, the replacement of Beata Szydło as prime minister by Mateusz Morawiecki on 11 December did not change Poland's policy towards the UK. Moreover, in 2017 there was a high degree of continuity in key ministerial positions in both countries compared to 2015 and 2016, thus facilitating the implementation of joint projects.

### Aims and Objectives

Poland's policy towards the UK in 2017 was based on the assumption that the latter, despite the process of leaving the EU, should remain Poland's leading partner, bilaterally and multilaterally. The Polish government perceived a convergence of goals with the UK, especially in the field of transatlantic cooperation. These assumptions were consistently presented by both Szydło and Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski since 2015, and were associated with granting the United States and the UK a more prominent position in Polish politics than during the PO-PSL coalition government.<sup>4</sup> This general assumption was maintained in 2017, albeit with changes taking Brexit into account.<sup>5</sup>

In the analysed period, the strategic intra-EU goal of Poland's policy towards the United Kingdom was negotiating a favourable agreement on Brexit while maintaining the closest possible cooperation between the EU and the UK. This

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<sup>3</sup> See statement by Konrad Szymański, Secretary of State at the MFA, in: *Pełny zapis przebiegu posiedzenia Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej (nr 121) z dnia 5 kwietnia 2017 r.*, Kancelaria Sejmu, Biuro Komisji Sejmowych, <http://orka.sejm.gov.pl>, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> B. Znojek, "Poland's Policy towards the United Kingdom," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2016*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Premier Beata Szydło: Pozycja Polski jest silniejsza niż dwa lata temu*, Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, 9 November 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl); "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017)," see p. 13 in this volume.

goal required both Poland's active participation in developing a negotiating position for the entire EU, and Warsaw influencing the British negotiating position in the bilateral dialogue. In the extra-EU dimension, however, the main objective of Poland's policy towards the United Kingdom was to maintain and develop bilateral political, security, and defence cooperation.

The operational objectives resulted from strategic ones. They included developing new formats of political cooperation and strengthening the British military presence on NATO's Eastern Flank. What's more, Poland's successful efforts in 2015 to 2017 to become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) resulted in an additional goal of developing Polish-British cooperation in the UNSC in support of "stabilising the international environment".<sup>6</sup>

In his exposé of 2017, Waszczykowski pointed to the need to continue developing the Polish-British Intergovernmental Consultation format created in 2016. This was to strengthen Poland's position through close cooperation with "a nuclear state, a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a still active partner in European security policy until March 2019".<sup>7</sup>

### **Brexit and Poland's Policy towards the United Kingdom**

In 2017, Brexit became a fundamental reference point for Poland's policy towards the United Kingdom. The process was perceived by the Polish government as unfavourable to European integration and posing a challenge for relations between Poland and Britain.

Polish policy towards Brexit was determined by long-term planning of the process and relevant preparations in the country and on the EU forum for its particular stages. The key dates were 29 March, when Prime Minister May submitted a formal request to President of the European Council (EUCO) Donald Tusk for the UK to leave the EU;<sup>8</sup> 19 June, when exit negotiations began; and 15 December, when during the EUCO summit heads of states and governments approved the political agreement regarding the first phase of negotiations. It was signed by May and President of the European Commission (EC) Jean-Claude Juncker on 8 December and enabled opening of the second phase of Brexit talks. The negotiations were accompanied by the Polish-British dialogue.

In the course of Brexit negotiations, the Polish government defined as its three priorities the protection of the rights of Polish citizens residing in the UK,

<sup>6</sup> "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017...", *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>8</sup> *Prime Minister's letter to Donald Tusk triggering Article 50*, Prime Minister's Office and Department for Exiting the European Union, 29 March 2017, [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

ensuring EU budgetary stability, and continuance of economic exchange with the UK (bringing surpluses on the Polish side). In particular, the Polish government required UK recognition of the latter's obligations under the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020 and to safeguard the rights of Polish citizens in the UK under a legal regime controlled by the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU).<sup>9</sup>

The role of Poland was particularly significant during EU works on the "basket of civil rights".<sup>10</sup> In accordance with the adopted strategy government, Poland's priorities became successfully reflected in the negotiation principles developed by the EUCO and the European Parliament (EP) and in the mandate received by the EC's task force for the preparation and conduct of negotiations with the United Kingdom based on Art. 50 TEU (Task Force 50), headed by chief negotiator, Michel Barnier.<sup>11</sup>

The objective of the Polish government in negotiations on Brexit was to develop a model of EU-UK cooperation that would not obstruct the bilateral Polish-British relations. Hence, Poland's support for the single Task Force 50 negotiating team under the strategic supervision of the EUCO.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, Poland was perceived in Britain as a country actively working on the EU forum for reaching an agreement with the UK, and the British government treated it as an ally in this respect.<sup>13</sup>

In 2017, the Brexit policy was concluded by the Joint Report.<sup>14</sup> This document concerned three issues: British receivables to the EU, the protection of citizens'

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<sup>9</sup> See statement by Konrad Szymański, Secretary of State at the MFA: *Pełny zapis przebiegu posiedzenia Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej (nr 121) z d. 5 kwietnia 2017 r., op. cit.*, pp. 3–5.

<sup>10</sup> See statement by Konrad Szymański, Secretary of State at the MFA, in: *Pełny zapis przebiegu posiedzenia Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej (nr 123) z dn. 20 kwietnia 2017 r.*, Kancelaria Sejmu, Biuro Komisji Sejmowych, <http://orka.sejm.gov.pl>, pp. 5–6.

<sup>11</sup> See statement by Konrad Szymański, Secretary of State at the MFA, in: *Pełny zapis przebiegu posiedzenia Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej (nr 124) z dn. 20 kwietnia 2017 r.*, Kancelaria Sejmu, Biuro Komisji Sejmowych, <http://orka.sejm.gov.pl>, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> See statement by Konrad Szymański, Secretary of State at the MFA, in: *Pełny zapis przebiegu posiedzenia Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej (nr 104) z dn. 12 stycznia 2017 r.*, <http://orka.sejm.gov.pl>, pp. 6–7, and *Pełny zapis przebiegu posiedzenia Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej (nr 105) z dn. 25 stycznia 2017 r.*, Kancelaria Sejmu, Biuro Komisji Sejmowych, <http://orka.sejm.gov.pl>, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> J. Crisp, M. Day, P. Foster, "EU infighting over Poland poses threat to Theresa May's Brexit talks," *The Telegraph*, 18 December 2017.

<sup>14</sup> *Joint report on progress during phase 1 of negotiations under Article 50 TEU on the UK's orderly withdrawal from the EU presented jointly by the negotiators of the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 8 December 2017*, Prime Minister's Office and Department for Exiting the European Union. See statement by Konrad Szymański, Secretary of State at the MFA on 28 February 2018, in: *Pełny zapis przebiegu posiedzenia Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej (nr 187) z dn. 28 lutego 2018 r.*, Kancelaria Sejmu, Biuro Komisji Sejmowych, <http://orka.sejm.gov.pl>, pp. 6–7.

rights after Brexit, and the border on the island of Ireland. As regards Poland's priorities, the document contained arrangements between the UK and the EU regarding the methodology for calculating the amounts to be settled and the implementation of the MFF 2014-2020 without changes resulting from Brexit. The British also accepted guarantees for the acquired rights of current British and European Union migrants after Brexit, including the supremacy of the CJEU's interpretation of EU law before the British courts for eight years after the date of exit. At the same time, however, the Joint Report maintained the principle that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed". This meant that the most controversial issues were to be resolved in subsequent stages of talks in 2018.<sup>15</sup>

### Political Relations

Political relations between Poland and the UK developed primarily on two levels: bilateral and EU. In 2017, the importance of cooperation with Britain in global issues increased in connection with Poland's election for a member of the UNSC for the years 2018 to 2019.

High-level Polish-British contacts, which had been intense since the United Right governments took power in Poland in November 2015, were continued in 2017. On 17 July, the Duke of Cambridge and his wife, representing Queen Elizabeth II, paid a royal visit to Poland. On 15 October, Waszczykowski, at the invitation of his counterpart Boris Johnson, participated in a London roundtable on security in Europe.<sup>16</sup>

From Poland's perspective, the importance of new formats and bilateral cooperation initiatives created since 2015 was increased by Brexit. On 21 December 2017, the second Polish-British Intergovernmental Consultations were held in Warsaw, chaired by Morawiecki and May.<sup>17</sup> A Polish-British defence treaty was signed at that time. Consultations in the Quadriga Talks format (created in 2010), involving foreign and defence ministers, reflected the importance of security issues in Poland's policy towards the UK. A meeting in this format was held on 2 October in London, attended by Waszczykowski, Antoni Macierewicz, Johnson, and Michael Fallon. Participants discussed cooperation in terms of

<sup>15</sup> P. Biskup, "Brexit Negotiations: An Agreement without a Breakthrough," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 78/2017, 12 December 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>16</sup> *Odpowiedź na interpelację nr 18294 w sprawie relacji politycznych między Polską a Wielką Brytanią*, Sejm, replying: Secretary of State at the MFA Jan Dziędziczak, 23 January 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Ministers for foreign affairs, internal affairs, defence, energy, treasury/finance and the economy participated in consultations (Witold Waszczykowski, Mariusz Błaszczak, Antoni Macierewicz, Krzysztof Tchórzewski, Boris Johnson, Amber Rudd, Gavin Williamson, Philip Hammond and Greg Clark).

European security after Brexit, counteracting the growing influence of Russia in Europe, cooperation in the Western Balkans, and the coordination of positions in the UN Security Council (UNSC).<sup>18</sup>

On 8-9 March 2017, the First Polish-British Belvedere Forum was held in Warsaw. This was co-chaired by Ryszard Czarnecki, ECR's vice-president of the European Parliament, and former Tory Defence Minister Malcolm Rifkind, with Waszczykowski, and Minister of State for Europe and the Americas Alan Duncan in attendance.<sup>19</sup> The forum was intended as an annual event strengthening the dynamics of cooperation between governments, non-governmental organisations, and experts of both countries, as well as the Polish diaspora with their homeland. Post-Brexit relations between Poland and the UK were discussed in terms of political and economic contacts between societies and in the fields of education and innovation. On 17 October 2017, a meeting of the Belvedere Forum steering committee was held, devoted to preparations for its next edition in London. The meeting was accompanied by a reception arranged at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), during which Deputy Foreign Minister Bartosz Cichocki and Johnson took the floor.<sup>20</sup>

In 2017, Poland's effectiveness in the European Union arena, including in relations with the UK, was limited by the former's dispute with EU institutions, which culminated in allegations of violation of the rule of law put forward by the European Commission against the Polish government under Art. 7 TEU. Although British media and public opinion tended to share the EC's criticism,<sup>21</sup> the British government abstained from supporting the Commission's position.<sup>22</sup> From the perspective of the UK government, such an attitude would be detrimental to relations with Poland during Brexit negotiations and to bilateral military and economic cooperation.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Kwadryga – rozmowy ministrów spraw zagranicznych i obrony narodowej Polski i Wielkiej Brytanii w Londynie*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 12 October 2017, PAP, [www.pap.pl](http://www.pap.pl).

<sup>19</sup> *Minister Witold Waszczykowski wziął udział w Polsko-Brytyjskim Forum Belwederskim*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 9 March 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>20</sup> *Polacy i Brytyjczycy chcą rozmawiać*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 18 October 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>21</sup> D. Boffey, C. Davies, "Poland cries foul as EU triggers 'nuclear option' over judicial independence," *The Guardian*, 20 December 2017; N. Nougayrède, "The EU isn't punishing Poland. It's protecting its integrity as a bloc," *The Guardian*, 26 December 2017.; P. Foster, M. Day, "EU triggers 'nuclear option' against Poland as Theresa May walks into diplomatic maelstrom," *The Telegraph*, 21 December 2017; P. Foster, "Theresa May in Brexit bind as she faces calls to condemn anti-democratic Polish government," *The Telegraph*, 20 December 2017.

<sup>22</sup> M. Gocłowski, "Britain's 'Madame Brexit' tells Poland: Your constitution is your own matter," *Reuters*, 21 December 2017, [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com); "May w Warszawie o artykule 7: kwestie konstytucyjne są sprawą wewnętrzną krajów," *TVN24.pl*, 21 December 2017.

<sup>23</sup> P. Foster, "Theresa May in Brexit...", *op. cit.*

The Polish government failed to obtain British support in blocking Tusk's re-election to the EUCO presidency, as the UK government and the Conservative Party perceived him as an ally in Brexit talks.<sup>24</sup> As a result, Britain voted in favour of his nomination at the EUCO summit on 9 March.<sup>25</sup> Poland also failed to obtain British support in its efforts to block EU works on trade in CO<sub>2</sub> emission rights in the post-2020 period. The British position was finally announced in November when Poland, after unsuccessful attempts to build a blocking coalition, decided to abstain on the matter.<sup>26</sup> Poland had limited success on the EU forum with the UK abstentions on the matter of the EU climate package and Directive 96/71/EC on the posting of workers.<sup>27</sup>

In 2017, cooperation between Poland and the UK regarding the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Neighbourhood Policy focused on EU Eastern Policy. Important undertakings in this area included a joint visit by Waszczykowski and Johnson to Kyiv, and consultations between Poland and the UK on Eastern issues (1 March). Both countries consistently voted on the EU forum to extend sanctions against Russia. Poland also cooperated with the UK on counteracting Russian disinformation (including supporting independent media in the Eastern Partnership countries and the Western Balkans).<sup>28</sup>

Poland's efforts to become a member of the UN Security Council, undertaken between 2015 and 2017, created a new platform to develop cooperation with the United Kingdom as a permanent member of the UNSC. In 2017, both countries presented convergent positions on conflict prevention and resolution, especially in Syria and Libya, and between Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. Poland and the United Kingdom also took the same position regarding the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, for example, in respect of the nuclear programme of North Korea. Poland supported the priorities indicated by

<sup>24</sup> B. Waterfield, T. Ross, "David Cameron scores EU victory as Polish ally named new European president," *The Telegraph*, 30 August 2014.; P. Foster, "EU summit showdown: Theresa May caught in diplomatic crossfire over Donald Tusk re-election," *The Telegraph*, 9 March 2017.

<sup>25</sup> P. Foster, "This unseemly EU spat with Poland could not have come at a worse time," *The Telegraph*, 10 March 2017.

<sup>26</sup> J. Crisp, "Britain threatens to scupper EU climate law over 'Brexit no deal' clause," *The Telegraph*, 18 November 2017.

<sup>27</sup> "Sprawa pracowników delegowanych. Francuskie media piszą o zwycięstwie Macrona," *Gazeta Prawna*, 24 November 2017.

<sup>28</sup> "Anglo-Polish Relations, House of Commons Westminster Hall Debate," House of Commons *Hansard*, 18 July 2017, vol. 627; *Russia: Implications for UK defence and security: The First Report of Session 2016-17*, HC 107, House of Commons Defence Committee, 8 June 2016; *The United Kingdom's relations with Russia: The Seventh Report of Session 2016-17*, HC 120, House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, 21 February 2017; *Russian interference in UK politics and society*, CDP 2017-0255, House of Commons Library Debate Pack, 19 December 2017.

the United Kingdom for the needs of British non-permanent membership of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in 2017 to 2020. These priorities concerned women's equality, combating violence against women, strengthening civil society, fighting religious intolerance, supporting persecuted minorities (including Christians) in the Middle East, combating hate crimes and human trafficking. Cooperation was included in the programme of Poland's membership in the UN Security Council and efforts to become a member of the HRC in 2020 to 2022.<sup>29</sup>

### Defence Cooperation

Poland's defence cooperation with the UK was developed in multilateral (especially NATO) and bilateral formats. The credibility of Britain's alliance was demonstrated by, among other things, the fact that it had the largest defence budget in Europe.<sup>30</sup> Both states clearly supported closer cooperation with the United States. A convergence of positions also occurred on the development of EU-NATO relations and involvement in the fight against terrorism, including as part of the global coalition to combat the so-called Islamic State (ISIS). Both countries also undertook initiatives in cybersecurity and counteracting hybrid threats, such as proposing the establishment of NATO-EU task forces in those fields.

Security issues were discussed during intergovernmental consultations as well as in the Quadriga Talks.<sup>31</sup> Poland and the UK agreed on the need to keep developing forces and capabilities to conduct collective-defence operations and for conventional, nuclear and cyber deterrence. The UK also contributed 150 soldiers to the battalion combat group as part of an Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) on NATO's Eastern Flank. Poland also valued UK's role as an EFP framework country in Estonia (800 troops).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Odpowiedź na interpelację nr 18294 w sprawie relacji politycznych między Polską a Wielką Brytanią, op. cit.*

<sup>30</sup> The United Kingdom met NATO guidelines for defence spending at least 2% of GDP on defence (2.14% of GDP in 2017), including not less than 20% for research and the purchase of military equipment (22.03% in 2017). *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2010–2017)*, NATO, PR/CP(2017)111, 29 June 2017.

<sup>31</sup> *Polsko-brytyjskie rozmowy w MON*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 8 March 2017, [www.mon.gov.pl](http://www.mon.gov.pl); *Polsko-brytyjskie rozmowy o współpracy*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 30 August 2017, [www.mon.gov.pl](http://www.mon.gov.pl); *Umacniamy sojusz polsko-brytyjski*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 12 December 2017; *Polsko-brytyjskie konsultacje międzyrządowe*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 22 December 2017, [www.mon.gov.pl](http://www.mon.gov.pl).

<sup>32</sup> *Ministrowie obrony u żołnierzy EFP*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 22 December 2017, [www.mon.gov.pl](http://www.mon.gov.pl).

A Polish-British defence treaty was concluded during the December intergovernmental consultations in Warsaw.<sup>33</sup> The agreement was negotiated by defence ministers Macierewicz and Fallon. On 1 December, Macierewicz and the UK's new defence secretary, Gavin Williamson, signed the treaty in the presence of their prime ministers. This was to create the basis for bilateral cooperation, complementary to the North Atlantic Treaty. The agreement covered cooperation in the fields of territorial defence, defence industries, and the exchange of information on procurement for the armed forces. The treaty indicated that the defence policies of Poland and the United Kingdom were based on common interests, values and responsibilities, including active engagement within NATO. It was also emphasised that both countries were determined to contribute effectively to the implementation of collective defence within the Alliance.<sup>34</sup>

### Economic Relations

According to data from the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS) in 2017, the UK ranked third among Poland's trading partners. The total value of trade in goods between Poland and Britain amounted to nearly PLN 76.1 billion, which meant an increase of 4.82% compared to 2016. The surplus on the Polish side has been seen for many years. As an importer of Polish goods, the UK was second only to Germany and Czechia. In the analysed period, the value of Polish exports to the UK market was PLN 55.43 billion. At that time, Poland purchased goods from the UK worth PLN 20.66 billion, ensuring a positive balance of PLN 34.77 billion. In 2017, the UK was responsible for 6.37% of Polish exports and 2.38% of imports.<sup>35</sup> The total value of services exchange in 2017 was about PLN 28.2 billion. The UK ranked third, just behind Germany and Switzerland, in terms of the value of services sold by entities from Poland (PLN 16.2 billion) and second behind Germany for services purchased by entities from Poland (PLN 12 billion).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Treaty between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic of Poland on defence and security cooperation*, Poland No. 1 (2018), Warsaw, 21 December 2017, CM 9615, HM Stationery Office, May 2018.

<sup>34</sup> *Odpowiedź na interpelację nr 15280 w sprawie zapowiadzanego polsko-brytyjskiego traktatu obronnego z 03.04.2018*, Sejm RP, replying person: Secretary of State at the Ministry of National Defence Wojciech Skurkiewicz. "Podpisano polsko-brytyjski traktat obronny," *WNP.pl*, 21 December 2017,

<sup>35</sup> *Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski styczeń - grudzień 2017 rok w mln euro*, Ministerstwo Przedsiębiorczości i Technologii, February 2018, tables 3, 6, 7; *Wielkość obrotów HZ Polski - rok według struktury geograficznej (w mln PLN)*. Ministerstwo Rozwoju, system Insigos.

<sup>36</sup> Zob. B. Znojek, "Poland's Policy towards the United Kingdom," *op. cit.* See also: "Import, eksport, saldo usług według krajów," SWAID, <http://swaid.stat.gov.pl>.

In terms of product groups, Polish-British trade covered mainly devices and equipment for transport (38%), processed goods (25%), chemical products (25%), beverages, food and tobacco products (6%), as well as raw materials and unprocessed goods (5%).<sup>37</sup>

The value of accumulated foreign direct investments (FDI) of the UK in Poland in 2016 amounted to about PLN 40 billion, ensuring the sixth position among the largest investors and second in terms of the inflow of FDI investments (over PLN 10 billion).<sup>38</sup> The largest British investors in Poland were Tesco (retail), Imperial Tobacco (the tobacco industry), GlaxoSmithKline (pharmaceutical products), AVIVA (insurance and financial services), Bates (transport and storage), Shell (petroleum products), Rolls-Royce (shipbuilding, aviation, research and development, and shared services), GKN Driveline (cars), Johnson Matthey Battery Systems (electro-mobility), Associated British Foods (teas and spices), Provident (consumer loans), Prudential (insurance), Bodycote International (industrial services) and BP (fuel sales). In view of the Central Statistical Office data for 2015, Polish enterprises had a total of 128 foreign units in the UK. The British-Polish Chamber of Commerce estimated that, in 2016, there were about 20,000 companies registered by Poles on the UK market.<sup>39</sup>

Federations of entrepreneurs, supported by the institutions of the Polish state (the MFA, the embassy and its commercial counsellor's office in London, and consulates in other parts of the UK), played a key role in the promotion of economic cooperation. In 2017 the key federation was the British-Polish Chamber of Commerce (BPCC), with offices in Poland (Warsaw, Wrocław and Kraków) and in the UK (Greater London). In 2017, the BPCC was involved in, among other activities, the organisation of the Polish-British Economic Forum. It was held in Kraków in June for Polish manufacturers interested in operating on the British market.<sup>40</sup> There were also prominent Polish-British business events held in the UK, such as the 4<sup>th</sup> Congress of Polish Entrepreneurs in London (October), with the participation of about 140 companies,<sup>41</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Polish-Scottish Business Forum in Edinburgh (November).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Poland, Export Britain*, British Chambers of Commerce, <http://exportbritain.org.uk>.

<sup>38</sup> *Foreign direct investments in Poland*, Polska Agencja Inwestycji i Handlu, [www.paih.gov.pl](http://www.paih.gov.pl).

<sup>39</sup> Zob. B. Znojek, "Poland's Policy towards the United Kingdom," *op. cit.*

<sup>40</sup> *Polsko-Brytyjskie Forum Gospodarcze*, British-Polish Chamber of Commerce, <http://bpcc.org.pl>.

<sup>41</sup> See: *IV Kongres Polskich Przedsiębiorców w Londynie*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Londynie, 10 November 2017, <https://londyn.msz.gov.pl>.

<sup>42</sup> *III Polsko-Szkockie Forum Biznesowe w Edynburgu*, Konsulat Generalny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Edynburgu, 7 November 2017, <https://edyndyn.msz.gov.pl>.

## Social and Cultural Relations

In 2017, Poles remained the largest national minority group in the United Kingdom. According to the UK Office for National Statistics, the number of people born in Poland and residing in the United Kingdom in 2017 amounted to 922,000 (ahead of India and Pakistan). In 2017, people born in Poland accounted for 9.82% of all residents of this category in the United Kingdom and 24.85% of persons born in EU Member States.<sup>43</sup>

In 2017, Poles living in the UK constituted two basic categories. The first was the Polish diaspora dating back to the Second World War, most often connected by family ties with the indigenous population of the UK. The second category was almost one million economic migrants from Poland who came to the United Kingdom by taking advantage of the free movement of persons within the EU after 2004. Those in the first category mostly communicated in English as a native language and held British citizenship. Overwhelming majority of the latter had neither British citizenship, nor the settled status under the UK law.

In the analysed period, this distinction was crucial from the point of view of Poland's policy towards the UK because the Brexit process directly affected the position of people in the second category. Securing their fundamental interests was the main problem of Polish policy towards Britain in the field of social and political relations, and determined Poland's general approach to Brexit. Poland informed the UK that the issue of respecting the acquired rights of EU citizens after the date of Brexit was crucial for the success of the negotiations. The British position on this matter became finally clarified, in line with Poland's preferences, after the elections to the House of Commons on 8 June 2017.

Due to its size and firm roots in British society, the Polish diaspora clearly indicated its presence in the social and cultural life of the United Kingdom. Over 400 various Polish diaspora organisations and institutions were registered in this country, of which 140 were educational institutions (mainly Saturday schools). For decades, they have played a key role in sharing knowledge of the Polish language to new generations of people of Polish descent. The Polish Social and Cultural Centre (POSK), the Gen. Sikorski Institute and Museum as well as the cooperating Federation of Saturday Schools (Polska Macierz Szkolna), played a significant role among social-cultural organisations. What's more, over 40 media and publishing houses targeted at the Polish diaspora operated in the UK. The total number of Polish diaspora organisations registered in the UK reached

<sup>43</sup> *Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality, January to December 2017*, Office for National Statistics, [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk).

around 500 (according to data from May 2016).<sup>44</sup> Poland directly promoted its culture in Britain by means of the Polish Cultural Institute in London. Whereas the Polish-British Round Table occupied an important place in the Polish-British debate on bilateral and international relations for almost a decade, in 2017 its formula was expanded into the abovementioned Belvedere Forum.

Xenophobic crimes against members of the Polish community in the UK between June 2016 and March 2017 became significant in terms of intergovernmental relations. In 2017, tripartite projects with the participation of the British authorities, the Polish authorities and Polish diaspora institutions took place, addressed to the Polish community and aimed at counteracting these crimes and discussing Brexit. For example, the October 2017 meeting at POSK was attended by the Minister of State in the Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) Baroness Anelay of St Johns as well as DExEU and FCO officials. Similar public consultations were held in Birmingham and Scotland in November 2017, with the participation of senior DExEU officials. Polish diplomats participated in all of these meetings.

### Assessment

In reference to the objectives set by Poland in its policy towards the United Kingdom in 2017, the results of efforts to consolidate the British presence on NATO's Eastern Flank and to maintain British involvement in continental Europe after Brexit deserve a positive assessment.

Concerning Brexit negotiations, the assumption adopted at the turn of 2016 to 2017 on the protection of key Polish interests through the active participation of Poland in creating a single EU institutional framework for negotiations and the mandate, were implemented successfully. Poland supported the handover of negotiations to the European Commission under the political supervision of the European Council, and the choice to emphasise issues relating to exit itself in the first phase of talks and delaying outlining future relations between the UK and the EU until the second phase. It also supported the selection of priorities for the first phase of the negotiations and played a leading role in the development of the EU's mandate for the "basket of civil rights". The political agreement of 8 December was the most tangible result of the Brexit negotiations in 2017 and meant achieving the goals specified by Poland at this stage of talks.

Poland's impact on Britain's European policy was inefficient in several high-profile cases. Three main reasons for failure can be indicated. First, there was a

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<sup>44</sup> See: B. Znojek, "Poland's Policy towards the United Kingdom," *op. cit.* See also: *Baza organizacji i instytucji polskich i polonijnych za granicą*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 5 April 2017, <http://stat.gov.pl>.

significant divergence of interests between Poland and the UK, for example, in the field of climate policy and the free movement of people (including the social context of this issue in reference to Brexit).<sup>45</sup> Second was the need for the United Kingdom to maintain a balance between the diverging preferences of Poland and other EU partners (as in the case of the re-election of Tusk as the EUCO president). Third, there were disputes between Poland and EU institutions, in particular the EP and the Commission, concerning United Right's programme of government. It is noteworthy, however, that Poland managed to persuade the UK to remain neutral in the dispute over the procedure under Art. 7 TEU.

With regard to relations with the United Kingdom after Brexit, Poland used discussions in the EU forum to promote the view that it is necessary to maintain the closest cooperation possible between the Union and the United Kingdom in the fields of economic exchange and security. Especially during the first months of the year, this required opposing the desire among other Member States and EU institutions to punish the UK for the decision to exit.<sup>46</sup> Poland undertook actions to intensify intergovernmental, social and economic dialogue in bilateral relations with the United Kingdom. The Polish authorities got involved in creating new formats, such as the Belvedere Forum, or adaptation of ones already developed in the UK for building its relations with other countries, such as Intergovernmental Consultations (originally created for the purpose of Anglo-French relations). However, the long-term assessment of these activities depended on the final shape of the Brexit agreement and regular development of bilateral cooperation in multiannual perspective.

To sum up, 2017 was a period of gradual transition from relations between Poland and the UK being closely associated with the EU's agenda, to relations involving Brexit. Both sides demonstrated their will to maintain close relations in the area of convergent policies, but implementation of the new model of relations was dependent on the outcomes of Brexit. These, however, were not to be known until the spring of 2019 at the earliest.

<sup>45</sup> J. Huggler, G. Rayner, "Theresa May 'dismayed' at Donald Trump's decision to pull out of Paris climate change agreement," *The Telegraph*, 8 July 2017; A. Gawlikowska-Fyk, "The United Kingdom: A Centrally Designed Clean Economy," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 84 (1157), 27 June 2018; N. Hopkins, A. Travis, "Leaked document reveals UK Brexit plan to deter EU immigrants," *The Guardian*, 5 September 2017.

<sup>46</sup> The best-known representative of this position was the President of France François Hollande ("Il faut qu'il y ait un prix, une menace, un risque"). J.-Ch. Ploquin, "Dans le sillage de Jacques Delors, Hollande, Valls et Juncker enterrent l'Europe fédérale," *Paris Planète*, 8 November 2016; A. Chrisafis, "UK must pay price for Brexit, says François Hollande," *The Guardian*, 7 October 2016.

# Policy Towards Germany

SEBASTIAN PŁÓCIENNIK\*

## Determinants

Poland's policy towards Germany in 2017 had several determinants. First, Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential election caused—both in Poland and Germany—uncertainty about the future role of the superpower in global politics. This uncertainty was increased by Russia's continuation of its aggressive foreign policy stance, which was apparent in its actions in Syria and Ukraine, as well as the suspicions of Russian secret services interfering in the election campaigns in the countries of the transatlantic community. The perception of threats to international security was similar in Poland and Germany despite the persistent differences in the perception of the role of the U.S. and Russia by both societies,<sup>1</sup> the attitude towards the increase in defence spending or the construction of Line 2 of the Northern Gas Pipeline.

Second, the situation in the European Union was an important determinant. Poland and Germany were divided by many issues, from the position on how to solve the migration crisis, through membership in the eurozone, energy policy, rules for paying posted workers, to the future of the EU (Germany strived to deepen integration, the Polish government was in favour of strengthening the voice of nation-states) and the dispute between the Polish authorities and the European Commission over the rule of law. In terms of common interests, however, the promotion of EU unity, the maintenance of close ties between the EU and the UK after Brexit and the strengthening of the competitiveness of European economies through structural reforms, remained common. The potential for cooperation at the European level was weakened by the small role of the Weimar Triangle: although there was a meeting held of foreign ministers and ministers of the European affairs in 2016, it was not possible to organise a meeting of heads of state or governments.

Third, the economies of Poland and Germany were in very good shape and recorded a dynamic development of mutual trade and investment relations.

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<sup>1</sup> “Eine Studie zur politischen Stimmung im Auftrag der ARD-Tagesthemen und der Tageszeitung Die WELT, ARD-DeutschlandTREND,” February 2017, [www.infratest-dimap.de](http://www.infratest-dimap.de).

The challenge remained the asymmetry in favour of Germany in the area of investments, reflecting differences in economic potential and level of development as well as the still low innovativeness of the Polish economy, making it difficult to undertake joint projects.

Fourth, relations at the bilateral level stabilised. After the uncertainty related to the change of government in Poland in 2015 and the announcement of the new ruling camp that it would critically assess relations with Germany, there were many mutual visits. A good opportunity was provided by the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty on Good Neighbourhood and Friendly Cooperation between the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany. The stabilisation of relations was also supported by the fact that Angela Merkel's government avoided open criticism of Poland's actions in European and domestic politics. At the end of 2016, however, factors that could have changed this situation gained importance. Germany entered the campaign before the Bundestag elections scheduled for 24 September 2017 and one of its issues may have been the relations with the government in Warsaw, which was criticised in German media.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The key areas of policy towards Germany were European integration, security, economy, and bilateral relations.<sup>2</sup>

The Polish government's European policy was shaped by the belief that the EU is in a deep political and institutional crisis, with Brexit the most obvious proof. The integration structure should therefore change, preferably by increasing the importance of nation-states at the expense of supranational bodies and developing the common market. The maximum plan for the government was to play an important role in shaping the new order in the EU and thus strengthening Poland's position in Europe, also by reviving cooperation in the Weimar Triangle. The minimum plan, on the other hand, was to block the alternative direction of changes in Europe, which would consist of deepening political and economic integration while at the same time diversifying it, which, due to Poland remaining outside the eurozone, could threaten political marginalisation. In achieving both objectives, Germany was a key partner for Poland, not only because of its importance in the EU but also because it was cautious about rapid federalisation and strengthening of supranational institutions. The government hoped that it would be possible to

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<sup>2</sup> See: "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017)," see p. 13 in this volume.

convince its western neighbour to make concessions on the issues of migration policy, which are burdensome for mutual relations (above all, to abandon the relocation of refugees) and climate and energy policy (Nord Stream).

The second group of objectives of the policy towards Germany was related to the sphere of security. The Polish authorities counted on support of the western neighbour for their efforts to strengthen NATO's Eastern Flank in accordance with the resolutions of the summits in Newport and Warsaw. Increasing importance was also attached to the relationship between the Alliance and the EU in the area of security: they were to work together on a complementary basis, in particular as regards terrorism, hybrid threats, and cybersecurity. Poland expected Germany to continue sanctions against Russia in the face of its actions against Ukraine and its commitment to strategic relations with the U.S. and Euro-Atlantic unity.

The third objective in the policy towards Germany was to develop economic cooperation. The aim was to maintain the positive upward trend in trade turnover—reaching €100 billion in 2016—and to encourage German companies to invest in Poland. However, more and more important was to consolidate the presence of Polish companies in Germany and to convince the authorities and neighbouring businesses that Poland's advantage is, to a lesser extent, a cheap labour force and, to a greater extent, the ability to produce goods based on advanced technologies and innovation. The Polish government also intended to demonstrate that economic cooperation is not served by introducing restrictions that impact Polish workers, e.g., by the minimum wage and changes in posting rules.<sup>3</sup>

In the area of broadly understood bilateral relations, the government wanted to devote a lot of attention to historical policy, especially the fight against the term “Polish death camps” appearing in German media, and to remember the Polish victims of World War II, the crimes committed by the Third Reich. An important objective was to improve the situation of Poles living in Germany, including broadening the possibilities of learning Polish in schools.

## Institutional Relations

As far as bilateral visits are concerned, the year 2017 was less intense than 2016. At the level of heads of state, the first meeting only took place on 19 May in Warsaw on the occasion of the official visit of President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> “Polska ma problem nie tylko z Rosją. ‘Chodzi o protekcyjnistyczne działanie niemieckiego rządu,” *Dziennik.pl*, 5 February 2016, <http://auto.dziennik.pl>.

<sup>4</sup> *Wizyta oficjalna Prezydenta Niemiec z Małżonką w Polsce*, 19 May 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl); *Wypowiedź Prezydenta RP na wspólnej konferencji prasowej z Prezydentem RFN*, 19 May 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

It was held two months after his swearing-in, after he had already travelled to France twice.<sup>5</sup> A longer conversation between presidents Duda and Steinmeier took place on 14 September in Malta during a meeting of the presidents of Arraiolos Group countries.<sup>6</sup> President Duda also met with Chancellor Merkel for the first time on 7 February when she paid an official visit to Warsaw,<sup>7</sup> then on 25 May during the NATO summit in Brussels,<sup>8</sup> and on 1 July at the funeral ceremony of Helmut Kohl in Strasbourg.<sup>9</sup>

Prime Minister Beata Szydło met with Chancellor Merkel twice. For the first time during the Chancellor's official visit to Warsaw on 7 February,<sup>10</sup> then in Hanover where they jointly opened an international industrial fair.<sup>11</sup> At the level of foreign ministers, the most important was the visit of the new head of the German Foreign Ministry, Sigmar Gabriel, to Warsaw on 7 March. It is worth adding, however, that he went to Poland only after trips to France, the U.S., Austria, Italy, the Baltic States, and Ukraine.<sup>12</sup> Meetings of the heads of the Foreign Ministry were held at meetings of international institutions, for example, in NATO on 26 May and 5 December.<sup>13</sup>

In 2017, the long-awaited revival of cooperation in the Weimar Triangle did not take place. During the Security Conference in Munich, Minister Waszczykowski gave an interview in which he admitted that the Polish side very much counted on it, but Berlin and Paris, which neglected this format of cooperation in recent years, should be more active.<sup>14</sup> The last meeting at the highest level was held in Warsaw in 2011, and the leaders also talked in 2013 during consultations in the Visegrad Group plus the Weimar Triangle format. In spring, hopes came to life that a summit of presidents of the Triangle countries would be possible, especially after the May conversation between the French and Polish presidents in

<sup>5</sup> For comparison, Steinmeier's predecessor in office, Joachim Gauck, inaugurated his term of office with a visit to Poland, and in 2016 he had four meetings with President Andrzej Duda.

<sup>6</sup> *Rozmowa prezydentów Polski i Niemiec*, 14 September 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>7</sup> *Spotkanie Prezydenta RP z Kanclerz Niemiec*, 7 February 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>8</sup> *Spotkanie szefów państw i rządów NATO w Brukseli*, 25 May 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>9</sup> *Uroczystości pogrzebowe Helmuta Kohla w Strasburgu*, Prezydent.pl, 1 July 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>10</sup> *Premier Beata Szydło po spotkaniu z kanclerz Angelą Merkel: Polska i Niemcy mają ogromną rolę do odegrania przy zmianach w Unii Europejskiej*, 7 February 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>11</sup> *Premier Beata Szydło na targach "Hannover Messe 2017": Chcemy skuteczniej konkurować na globalnym rynku*, 24 April 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>12</sup> *Szefowie MSZ Polski i Niemiec o Europie różnych prędkości*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 8 March 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>13</sup> *Minister Witold Waszczykowski na spotkaniu ministrów spraw zagranicznych NATO*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 5 December 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>14</sup> "Waszczykowski: 'Chcemy być Robertem Lewandowskim w UE,'" *Deutsche Welle*, 17 February 2017, [www.dw.com/pl](http://www.dw.com/pl).

Brussels. The Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland even placed information on its website that the anticipated date of the Triangle meeting is August.<sup>15</sup> The issue was raised once again during a short conversation between President Duda and Chancellor Merkel on the occasion of Helmut Kohl's funeral ceremony, the final arrangements, however, were not made.

### European Policy

The Polish government counted on deepening cooperation with Germany and on an alliance to reform the EU, that would take into account Polish preferences. During Merkel's visit on 7 February, Szydło emphasized that "Poland and Germany have a huge role to play in reforming the European Union."<sup>16</sup>

The chances for an agreement on the future of the EU were determined by the growing disputes between Poland and Germany. One of them was the election of the president of the European Council. The Polish government hoped to block the re-election of Donald Tusk, claiming that the candidate must have the support of "his country". Eventually, 27 countries supported his candidacy, with Poland voting against. In an interview for *Der Spiegel*, Minister Waszczykowski accused Merkel of forcing Tusk's election among the other Member States. As evidence, he noted the Chancellor's declaration even before the summit that she "looks forward to his election".<sup>17</sup>

Another issue for mutual relations was the dispute between the Polish government and the European Commission concerning the rule of law.<sup>18</sup> For quite a long time, representatives of the German government avoided direct criticism of Poland, although it often appeared in the German press, as well as in statements made by Andreas Voßkuhle, president of the Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe. German politicians also raised the issue of the rule of law in their speeches, but avoided, however, direct reference to Poland.

The Chancellor's speech at the annual summer press conference on 29 August can be seen as a signal of change in Germany's position. Answering journalists' questions, Merkel formulated clear criticism of Poland on this issue.<sup>19</sup> The reasons can be ascribed to the change in political situation. The French presidential

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<sup>15</sup> *Spotkanie Trójkąta Weimarskiego prawdopodobnie pod koniec sierpnia*, 25 May 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>16</sup> *Premier Beata Szydło po spotkaniu z kanclerz Angelą Merkel: Polska i Niemcy mają ogromną rolę do odegrania przy zmianach w Unii Europejskiej*, 7 February 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>17</sup> "Polen: 'Nächstes Mal ein Mexikaner,'" *Der Spiegel*, 25 March 2017, [www.spiegel.de](http://www.spiegel.de)

<sup>18</sup> Cf. J. Szymańska, "Poland's Policy in the European Union," in this volume, p. 53#.

<sup>19</sup> J. Haszczyński, "Angela Merkel o Polsce," *Rzeczpospolita*, 30 August 2017, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

election was won by Emmanuel Macron, who did not hesitate to strongly criticise the decision of the Polish authorities, also called on Germany for a stronger response. In view of the growing conflict between Poland and the Commission, the Article 7 TEU procedure was finally initiated.

The relationship was exacerbated by the awkward statement made by German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen on a ZDF television programme at the beginning of November in which she spoke about supporting “healthy, democratic resistance of the young generation in Poland”. Minister Waszczykowski considered this interference in Poland’s internal affairs while the Ministry of National Defence called the German attaché to provide explanation.<sup>20</sup>

Under these circumstances, the attention of the Polish authorities was increasingly focused on convincing the German side of the dangers arising from promoting the concept of differentiated integration. The importance of this issue grew rapidly. Just before her visit to Warsaw, the Chancellor participated in a summit in Versailles with the leaders of France, Spain, and Italy, at which a declaration concerning differentiation of integration was made.<sup>21</sup> She tried to persuade her partners from the Polish government that Germany’s intention was not to create clubs in the EU, but various forms of cooperation. In the following months, Germany actually made fewer references to a “multi-speed Europe”. This, however, had something to do with circumstances beyond Poland’s control: the coming election campaign and the dissonance between Macron’s clear agenda and Germany’s cautious approach to strengthening the eurozone.

Migration policy was also an important issue in relations with Germany. Poland wanted to convince Germany to give up forcing quotas on the distribution of refugees and to generally tighten the EU’s approach to immigration from non-European countries. However, the dispute in this respect was losing its intensity as a result of policy correction in Germany itself. The new regulations included much greater restrictions on the reception of refugees. Nevertheless, some difficulties in mutual relations appeared occasionally. A speech by Szydło, who warned of the influx of refugees<sup>22</sup> on the 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first transport of prisoners to Auschwitz, was received very harshly in Germany. A tension between President Duda and President Steinmeier during the Arraiolos Group presidents meeting in Malta was also noted. Duda argued that the wave of immigration should be associated with terrorism, adding that the motive for receiving refugees

<sup>20</sup> “MON nie przyjął niemieckich wyjaśnień,” *Euractiv*, 7 November 2017, [www.euractiv.pl](http://www.euractiv.pl).

<sup>21</sup> “Szczyt w Wersalu: Francja, Niemcy, Włochy i Hiszpania za UE różnych prędkości,” *Dziennik.pl*, 6 March 2017, <http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl>.

<sup>22</sup> “‘Sueddeutsche Zeitung’ o przemówieniu Szydło w Auschwitz: ‘obrzydlive,’” *Rzeczpospolita*, 16 June 2017, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

cannot be “political correctness” and “naivety”. Steinmeier replied that Germany had decided to open its borders for humanitarian reasons and not because of political correctness.<sup>23</sup>

In the second half of the year, the points of disagreement became less apparent. This was undoubtedly influenced by the situation in Germany. The increasing support for right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD) made migration one of the most important electoral issues. The main political parties, including the CDU/CSU, had to strengthen rhetoric in this area. After the election, the situation did not change. The statement by Minister Gabriel, who called for understanding Poland’s position on migration and reception policy on a ZDF television programme, could be considered a presentation of the year’s summary.<sup>24</sup>

The issue of the development of Nord Stream also returned in German-Polish relations in 2017. In numerous declarations and speeches, representatives of the Polish government stressed the detrimental impact of this project for the security of the region and EU energy policy. However, the German government insisted on its interpretation that it was a purely economic project involving entities aimed at commercial success on the energy market. It was only at the European Council summit on 19-20 October that the Chancellor, in response to Szydło’s criticism, admitted that the project had a political dimension.<sup>25</sup>

Differences of opinion between Poland and Germany also persisted in the area of climate policy. The Polish government was in favour of greater flexibility in the energy transformation. In an interview for *Der Spiegel*, Minister Waszczykowski argued that “strict CO<sub>2</sub> limits affect the Polish economy because our energy is based on coal. We can’t afford to become a backward country with clean air. We need both: a chance for growth and a clean environment”.<sup>26</sup> With considerable difference in positions, the governments remained in dialogue. During a meeting in February 2017 in Warsaw, Prime Minister Szydło and Chancellor Merkel announced the establishment of a special working group to jointly analyse the European Commission’s “winter package”.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> “Andrzej Duda starł się z prezydentem Niemiec. ‘Nie jesteśmy naiwni,’” *Wirtualna Polska*, 15 September 2017, wiadomosci.wp.pl.

<sup>24</sup> “Niemcy złagodzą stosunek do Polski? Szef MSZ: Musimy zrozumieć Polaków,” *TVP Info*, 15 December 2017, www.tvp.info.

<sup>25</sup> “EU Observer: Merkel przyznała, że Nord Stream 2 to polityka,” *BiznesAlert.pl*, 21 October 2017, <http://biznesalert.pl>.

<sup>26</sup> “Polen: ‘Nächstes Mal ein Mexikaner,’” *Der Spiegel*, 25 March 2017, www.spiegel.de.

<sup>27</sup> *Premier Beata Szydło po spotkaniu z kanclerz Angelą Merkel: Polska i Niemcy mają ogromną rolę do odegrania przy zmianach w Unii Europejskiej*, 7 February 2017, www.premier.gov.pl.

## Security

In its security policy, the Polish government needed Germany to support the strengthening of NATO's Eastern Flank and the maintenance of sanctions against Russia as well as to strengthen transatlantic relations. The German-Polish cooperation in this area went well. Germany was apparently involved in deterrence on the Eastern Flank and implementing the decisions of the Warsaw NATO summit, for which Szydło thanked Chancellor Merkel during her visit to Warsaw in early February 2017.<sup>28</sup> There were no significant differences between the two countries in this respect.

From the Polish perspective, it was very important that Germany did not intend to depart from the sanctions policy against Russia. Moreover, German politicians saw the need to consult their actions with the Polish authorities on the issue of Eastern policy. On 19 October 2017, for example, President Steinmeier had a telephone conversation with President Duda before his visit to Moscow to discuss issues regarding the meetings. Relations with the U.S. were not the subject of much controversy in security policy either, although after Trump's election as president, anti-American sentiment increased significantly in Germany.<sup>29</sup> However, in this respect, Washington played too important a role for Germany to make a significant change.

## Economy

In 2017, a dynamic increase in trade with the western neighbour was recorded. Germany remained Poland's most important partner in the export of goods: its value amounted to €55.8 billion, an increase of 10.3% compared to 2016. A total of 27.4% of Polish exports went to Germany. Imports were also growing, with a value of €46.9 billion. This was an increase of 11.3% compared to the last year. This data also shows that Poland had a positive balance with Germany.<sup>30</sup>

Direct investment also increased, although it is—and will remain for a long time—asymmetrical in favour of Germany. According to the DIHK (German Chamber of Commerce and Industry), German capital has invested nearly €30 billion in Poland so far, which ranks Germany second among the countries of investment origin. There were about 6,500 German companies operating in Poland, which employed 340,000 people and had turnover of €70 billion.<sup>31</sup> Of the

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>29</sup> "New Pew study: Germans trust Putin more than Trump," *Welt*, 16 August 2017, [www.welt.de](http://www.welt.de).

<sup>30</sup> *Eksport towarów i usług według krajów*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2017, <http://swaid.stat.gov.pl>.

<sup>31</sup> "Polskie firmy w Niemczech: zadowolone, ale jeszcze nieliczne," *Deutsche Welle*, 14 February 2018, [www.dw.com](http://www.dw.com).

new undertakings in 2017, it is worth mentioning the construction of a Daimler engine plant in Jawor and the takeover of Polski Bus by Flixbus.

Polish investments in Germany are incomparably smaller, although it is worth mentioning that Polish companies enter the neighbour's market more and more courageously. According to DIHK, there were about 1,000 of them, employing 10,000 workers, and they obtained turnover of about €6.5 billion. One of the most important investments was Boryszew's enterprise: a newly opened plastic car parts factory in Prenzlau near Berlin, which will employ 350 people. What's more, the chemical concern Ciech S.A. took over a soda producer in Stassfurt, Saxony-Anhalt. On the German market, there is also Orlen with its own network of petrol stations, the LPP group, which opened its 17<sup>th</sup> Reserved clothing store in Germany, and the Polkowice shoe manufacturer CCC, which has more than 70 showrooms. Polish IT companies such as Asseco and Comarch are also increasingly active on the German market.<sup>32</sup>

From the point of view of the Polish authorities, the key factor in relations with Germany is the gradual advancement from the position of supplier of semi-finished and intermediate products to supplier of innovative goods. Therefore, cooperation in the field of new technologies is sought. An important signal in this respect was Poland's participation in international fairs in Hannover (Hannover Messe) as a partner country. Szydło and Merkel opened this event together.<sup>33</sup> In Hanover, in addition to the head of government, deputy prime ministers were present, Minister of Finance and Development Mateusz Morawiecki and Minister of Science Jarosław Gowin, as well as representatives of eight regions and several special economic zones.<sup>34</sup> The stands presented, among others, Solaris Bus&Coach (manufacturer of buses, including electric buses), Saule Technologies (manufacturer of semi-transparent photovoltaic cells), Eko Energetyka (manufacturer of electric vehicle charging equipment), and TMA Automation (designer of robotics and automation solutions). A startup zone featured presentations by 18 companies. In total, about 200 companies from Poland participated in the fair.

### Social and Historical Policy

Historical policy played a very important role in bilateral relations in 2017. The most important issue was lodging reparation claims against Germany. In July, Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of the ruling party Prawo i Sprawiedliwość

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<sup>32</sup> "Nowy zakład Boryszewa w Brandenburgii," *Deutsche Welle*, 19 April 2017, [www.dw.com](http://www.dw.com).

<sup>33</sup> *Premier Beata Szydło i kanclerz Angela Merkel na targach przemysłowych w Hanowerze*, 23 April 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>34</sup> *Premier Beata Szydło na targach „Hannover Messe 2017”...*, *op. cit.*

(PiS), announced that Poland would claim compensation for losses caused by Germany during World War II. Shortly afterwards, a special parliamentary group was formed to deal with the issue of claims, and the Sejm's Office of Analyses prepared an expert opinion confirming their legitimacy. However, there was no formal request from the Polish government to the German government regarding reparations.<sup>35</sup> The German side strongly rejected the possibility of payment, claiming that the issue had been politically and legally regulated.<sup>36</sup>

Reparations were not the only historical policy issue. Representatives of the government and diplomatic missions paid much attention to the incorrect phrase still appearing in some German media, namely "Polish death camps". Prime Minister Szydło even accused Merkel of never expressing unequivocal condemnation of this phenomenon.<sup>37</sup> Polish diplomatic missions intervened against so-called defective memory codes. For example, on 2 May, the Consulate General in Cologne reacted to a story published by *Nassauische Neue Presse* in which the incorrect term was used. Soon after, the newspaper posted a correction.<sup>38</sup> Similar measures were taken in 2017 after reports by *Schaumburger Nachrichten*, *Mittelbayerische Zeitung*, *Die Rheinpfalz*, and the public service television Südwestrundfunk (SWR), in all cases the media were relatively small outlets.

There were no official reactions on the German side; however, it is worth noting the appeal to the Bundestag to commemorate Polish victims of German war crimes. It was a citizens' initiative submitted at the beginning of November, signed by several dozen people. Among its promoters was the director of Deutsches Polen Institut in Darmstadt Dieter Bingen. The signatories postulated the construction of a monument on Askańska Square in front of the headquarters of the Escape, Expulsion, Reconciliation Foundation.<sup>39</sup> However, the initiative did not attract clear support. There were opinions in Germany that it would lead to the "multiplication" of national monuments commemorating the victims of World War II.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> "Reparacje wojenne od Niemiec. Waszczykowski: 'decyzja to kwestia tygodni lub miesięcy'" *Money.pl*, September 2017, [www.money.pl](http://www.money.pl).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*; S. Zerko, "Polska i Niemcy: problem reparacji," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 4 (71), 2017, pp. 14–20.

<sup>37</sup> "Beata Szydło: Angela Merkel nigdy nie potępiła sformułowania 'polskie obozy' w niemieckich mediach," *Rzeczpospolita*, 29 August 2017, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

<sup>38</sup> *Konsulat Generalny w Kolonii reaguje na wadliwy kod pamięci*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2 May 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>39</sup> Mr. Jendroszczyk, "Szansa na pomnik polskich ofiar w Berlinie," *Rzeczpospolita*, 15 November 2017, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

<sup>40</sup> S. Felix Kellerhoff, "Erinnerungspolitik: Braucht Berlin ein Denkmal für Polens Kriegsoffer?," *Welt*, 15 November 2017, [www.welt.de](http://www.welt.de).

The Polish government also wanted—as in previous years—to improve the situation of Poles living in Germany. This issue was raised in February during Merkel’s visit to Warsaw. The Chancellor explained that consultations with the Länder are being held to improve the conditions for learning Polish. It is worth mentioning, at the same time, that the German authorities started to respond to the Polish side’s demands by demonstrating support for Germans in Poland. The Chancellor met with representatives of minorities at the German embassy and also raised the issue of a change of borders of Opole with Szydło, which—as the Germans fear—will weaken the importance of their local government representations.<sup>41</sup>

In the following months, the postulate of recognising Poles in Germany as a national minority gained greater political significance. In May, just before the visit of the German president, the Speaker of the Senate Stanisław Karczewski announced that it would be one of the points of discussion. He assessed the German side’s actions to date very negatively, stating, among other things: “It’s different in various countries, but as bad as it is in Germany, is not anywhere in Europe. This is the kind of island where Poles are worst treated.”<sup>42</sup> Another opportunity to raise the issue of minorities was the adoption of the resolution of the Polish parliament to commemorate the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Union of Poles in Germany.<sup>43</sup> The organisation strongly demands minority status. In 2014, the union submitted a request to the German Ministry of the Interior, but it was rejected. Other Polish organisations were more cautious, focusing on ensuring that Poles have such rights as the German minority in Poland. The basis for such a claim is the Treaty between the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany on Good Neighbourhood and Friendly Cooperation, the provisions of which, in the opinion of Polish organisations, the German side does not fully implement (mainly in terms of language learning). This approach also has supporters among the politicians of the ruling party. For example, Szymon Szynkowski vel Sęk, a member of PiS, emphasized the need to recognise Poles in Germany as a minority, but he pointed out that it is of primary importance that they have the same rights as Germans living in Poland.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> “Beata Szydło: Angela Merkel...” *op. cit.*

<sup>42</sup> “Karczewski: Mniejszość polska w Niemczech jest nieuznawana, musimy to zmienić,” *Dziennik.pl*, 19 May 2017, <http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl>.

<sup>43</sup> *Projekt uchwały Sejmu RP w sprawie uczczenia 95. rocznicy powstania Związku Polaków w Niemczech*, Kancelaria Sejmu, 6 October 2017, <http://orka.sejm.gov.pl>.

<sup>44</sup> “Polacy ze statusem mniejszości narodowej w Niemczech?,” *Głos Wielkopolski*, 31 October 2017, [www.gloswielkopolski.pl](http://www.gloswielkopolski.pl).

## Assessment

The balance of policy towards Germany was below the expectations formulated in early 2017. The intensity of institutional contacts from the previous year could not be maintained. The Ambassador to Germany Andrzej Przyłębski said in an interview for *Deutsche Welle*: “Especially the second half of the year was marked by a slowdown in bilateral contacts, [...] there were no meetings at the highest level during this period.”<sup>45</sup>

Hopes for a common Polish-German reform plan of the European Union have not been fulfilled. Although the German voices in favour of a “multi-speed Europe” subsided, there were no initiatives for institutional reform or completion of the single market. This was primarily due to the conflict around the election of the president of the EC, then the outcome of the French presidential election, as well as the increasing importance of the dispute with the European Commission on the rule of law. From the point of view of Poland, it was positive that the dispute over the distribution of immigrant quotas was quashed. However, there was no concession from the government in Berlin on the expansion of Nord Stream. The Polish government did not have the political tools to make the German side change its position. The Weimar Triangle remained an unused platform, which, however, resulted from Polish-French rather than Polish-German relations.

The balance in security policy looks better: Poland was primarily interested in Germany maintaining its current policy, which was facilitated by the convergence of interests. The issues of strengthening NATO’s Eastern Flank, maintaining sanctions against Russia, or treating the U.S. as the most important partner in security policy were not disputed in bilateral relations. The economic balance is also positive, with the objective of further developing trade and investment and intensifying cooperation in new technologies. An important event was the Polish PM’s participation in the Hannover fair, a signal sent by both governments that even if there are political differences between them, economic cooperation will develop undisturbed.

The Polish authorities devoted much attention to historical and social policy. There were many interventions in the case of media using the wrong memory codes. If the evaluation criterion is to be that the problems were found among local broadcasters and not large national media, Poland’s efforts can be described as a success (although resulting from long-term action). What’s more, there was little progress on the issue of learning Polish in Germany while nothing new changed with regard to the granting of minority status to the Polish community. However, this became less important in view of the reappearance of the issue

<sup>45</sup> “Trudny rok w stosunkach polsko-niemieckich,” *Deutsche Welle*, 29 December 2017, [www.dw.com](http://www.dw.com).

regarding claims for damages during the Second World War in historical politics, although, for the time being, at the level of expert discussions and parliaments rather than intergovernmental relations. From a formal point of view, the chances of obtaining reparations are very low.<sup>46</sup> However, from the point of view of historical policy objectives, this step may prove effective. It was reminded—also on the international forum—of Germany’s responsibility and unfair treatment of Polish victims in terms of compensation by the post-war Federal Republic. It is possible that the continuous debate regarding this subject will induce the German authorities to make a symbolic reparation, for example, by establishing a foundation to finance the renovation of monuments destroyed during the war. It may also turn out to be a tool for political pressure on Germany to make concessions on matters important for Poland. For example, media reported that Germany was considering abandoning Nord Stream’s construction in exchange for Poland’s resignation from raising claims.<sup>47</sup> Such speculation shows that the problem of reparations is of great political importance and may become one of the most important issues in Polish-German relations in the coming years.

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<sup>46</sup> S. Prey, “Polska i Niemcy: problem reparacji,” *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 4 (71), 2017, pp. 14–20.

<sup>47</sup> “Germany revives Putin’s pipeline dream,” *Politico*, 13 December 2017, [www.politico.eu](http://www.politico.eu).

# Poland's Policy Towards France

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## Determinants

The main determinant of Polish foreign policy towards France in 2017 was the takeover of government by 39-year-old centrist Emmanuel Macron. First, this former minister of economy in the François Hollande administration unexpectedly won the presidential election (7 May). Then, he established the La République en Marche party (LRM) obtaining an absolute majority in the National Assembly (18 June). Macron's assumption to office then involved significant social-economic and political changes in one of Poland's key partner and allied countries. First, France entered in-depth structural reforms (labour market, improvement of public finances, etc.). Second, the successes of the presidential team marginalised existing mainstream parties, i.e., the Republicans and the Socialist Party, and sparked generational change in the French political class. From Poland's perspective, such radical transformations of the political situation in France were associated with uncertainty as to the direction of the foreign policy of the new administration.

An important policy background towards France was also the withdrawal by the Polish government from the contract for the purchase of 50 Caracal multipurpose helicopters manufactured by the French-German-Spanish military industry concern Airbus Helicopters. The crisis in relations caused by this decision had an impact on limiting bilateral contacts at the highest political level, thus the visits of the president of the Republic of Poland and his French counterpart were not exchanged. What's more, the Weimar Triangle *de facto* ceased to operate, leading to a reduction in cooperation with another key ally in the EU—Germany. This situation confirmed a conventional pattern: the crisis in Polish-French relations is the main factor in the dysfunction of the Triangle.

Another determinant of Poland's foreign policy in general, and policy towards France in particular, was the debate on the future of the EU carried out by individual Member States as well as EU institutions, mainly the European Commission. From Poland's perspective, the concept of “multi-speed Europe”,

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forced by Macron, whose core would be a French-German tandem and a more integrated eurozone with a separate budget and executive, grew into a significant challenge.<sup>1</sup> This perspective collided with the mainstream European policy of the Polish government, which was in favour of maintaining EU unity and postponing the decision on Poland's accession to the eurozone. Macron's effective striving to amend the EU Posted Workers Directive to reduce the "unfair competition" of a cheaper workforce was another factor triggering conflicts at the EU level.<sup>2</sup> Poland was not only the European leader of delegated work but also one of the greatest proponents of the four basic EU freedoms (movement of people, capital, goods, and services).

### Aims and Objectives

In the "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017," the head of Polish diplomacy, Witold Waszczykowski, stated: "Poland is interested in the best possible relations with France based on strong foundations of common values and distinguished history. We are connected not only by a common history, passion for democracy and commitment to the European process, but also by multi-billion economic and investment cooperation and conventional close contacts of our societies. The future of bilateral relations should not be dependent on a single commercial contract."<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the minister recognized the maintenance and full use of competitiveness within the single market as a priority of Polish European policy. He stressed Poland's opposition towards protectionist practices such as creating obstacles to free movement of people manifested by changes in the regulations on the posting workers.<sup>4</sup> Undeniably, these words referred to President Macron's diplomatic offensive with regard to the amendment of the EU directive.<sup>5</sup>

Prime Minister Beata Szydło in her speech at the 15<sup>th</sup> Foreign Policy Forum on 9 November stressed that one of the assumptions of Polish foreign policy at the European level is opposition towards the French concept of "multi-speed

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<sup>1</sup> Ł. Jurczyszyn, "French Presidential Candidate Macron's European Policy Concept," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 39 (979), 21 April 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Ł. Jurczyszyn, "Interview with Macron Shows He Seeks Further Integration of the Eurozone and Expects Difficult Relations with the Visegrad Group," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 30, 24 June 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>3</sup> "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017)," see p. 13 in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>5</sup> Ł. Jurczyszyn, "Pół roku aktywnej, lecz paradoksalnej prezydentury Emmanuela Macrona," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 1 (72), 2018 pp. 92–105, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

Europe". The prime minister declared that Poland's objective is to support the processes uniting the Union and to strengthen democratic trends guaranteeing prosperity and security to the region. One of the tools to achieve this objective was to increase the political role of national parliaments in the EU.<sup>6</sup> In his speech, Minister Waszczykowski expressed hope that: "Prime Minister Szydło's upcoming visit to Paris will provide an impetus to a serious discussion with France on European security."<sup>7</sup>

*The Polish foreign policy strategy for the years 2017–2021* mentions three interrelated priorities of the Polish diplomacy: security, development, and international authority. There is the following passage: "great potential for cooperation in the sphere of security we can see in the activation and development of cooperation with Germany and France within the Weimar Triangle."<sup>8</sup> Undeniably, one of the tasks of Polish European policy—going beyond security issues—is to make the Triangle more dynamic. In recent years, this format has not been used. One can say there was an impasse in its operation. In the *Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the tasks of Polish foreign policy*, the head of Polish diplomacy pointed out that "in relations with both Paris and Berlin, Poland will propose further steps to better use the Triangle for harmonious cooperation between our three countries."<sup>9</sup> He reasoned that without this cooperation it is difficult to imagine the future of the European project, given that Poland, Germany, and France constitute one-third of EU territory and more than a third of its population. The objective of Poland's policy is, therefore, the development of cooperation between the Weimar Triangle and the Visegrad Group allowing the political and economic union of two parts of Europe.<sup>10</sup>

## Political Relations

Although in 2016 Polish-French relations were in their most difficult moment since 1989, by 2017, however, there were several visits at the highest political level.

<sup>6</sup> Speech by Prime Minister Beata Szydło during the 15<sup>th</sup> Foreign Policy Forum: "Globalne wyzwania polskiej polityki zagranicznej w kontekście członkostwa w Radzie Bezpieczeństwie ONZ," 9 November 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>7</sup> Speech by Minister Witold Waszczykowski at the 15<sup>th</sup> Foreign Policy Forum: "Globalne wyzwania polskiej polityki zagranicznej w kontekście członkostwa w Radzie Bezpieczeństwie ONZ," Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 9 November 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>8</sup> *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, September 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl), pp. 5, 7.

<sup>9</sup> "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017..." *op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem.*

One of the most important events for these relations was the meeting of presidents Duda and Macron at the NATO summit in Brussels on 25 May. Macron had taken office only 11 days earlier. Before that (12 May), at Macron's initiative, the leaders had a phone conversation lasting several minutes during which the French president accepted an invitation to Poland. He also agreed to host the next Weimar Triangle summit "at the first suitable time".<sup>11</sup>

The visit of Minister Waszczykowski to Paris on 7 June was significant in improving the difficult relations between the countries caused by Poland's withdrawal from the purchase of the Caracal helicopters. He met with European and Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian who had served as defence minister in the government of François Hollande and was responsible for negotiating the contract for those helicopters.<sup>12</sup> It was the first Polish ministerial visit to France after Macron's swearing-in and an opportunity to discuss possible cooperation between the countries after the Caracals matter. However, the main issues of the meeting were EU institutional reform and the changing international order.

On Poland's initiative, on 23 June a meeting of the French president with the leaders of the Visegrad Group (V4) was held during the European Council summit in Brussels.<sup>13</sup> The meeting focused on the EU's internal market and issues with economic protectionism, including the amendment to the Posted Workers Directive. It is worth noting that the meeting was far from straightforward for both sides because of the pressure President Macron had been exerting on the countries of Central Europe just before the meeting. In the context of the amendment to the Directive, he said "the EU is not a supermarket".<sup>14</sup> This metaphor, used in an interview with eight European dailies on 22 June, indicated that he views the EU as a community of destinies in which states must comply with all principles and not only those that suit them best at the time.<sup>15</sup> The president thus made clear he opposed a vision of Europe as a platform for distributing money without respect for its values. Such a strong metaphor was meant to convey him standing up for a Western Europe motivated by EU reform, to its eastern part, which "turns its back" and does not want to participate in the proposed changes. Further, countries that do not respect the principles must face consequences.

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<sup>11</sup> *Spotkanie Duda–Macron na szczycie NATO*, 25 May 2017, [www.tvp.info](http://www.tvp.info).

<sup>12</sup> *Spotkanie ministrów spraw zagranicznych Francji i Polski*, 7 June 2017, <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

<sup>13</sup> *Premier: spotkanie V4 z Macronem dobre; umówiliśmy się na kolejne rozmowy*, [www.pap.pl](http://www.pap.pl).

<sup>14</sup> E. King, "Emmanuel Macron: 'Europe is not a supermarket,'" *politico.eu*, 22 June 2017, [www.politico.eu](http://www.politico.eu).

<sup>15</sup> Ł. Jurczyszyn, "Interview with Macron Shows..." *op. cit.*

However, the V4 leaders decided to meet again in a format offered by France because of the great interest of French business circles in the still rapidly developing Central European markets.

On 2 August, presidents Duda and Macron had another telephone conversation lasting almost an hour.<sup>16</sup> At the request of the French leader, President Duda presented the context of the judicial reform in connection with his decision to veto the laws regarding the National Council of the Judiciary (*Krajowa Rada Sądownictwa*) and the Supreme Court. Duda criticized the actions of the European Commission as not reflecting the real state of affairs. The presidents also discussed the state of tenders for the modernisation of the Polish army and new French offers.

One of the key visits to Poland involving the highest representatives of French diplomacy was undoubtedly the arrival of Nathalie Loiseau, the French European affairs minister, to Warsaw on 4 October.<sup>17</sup> She was received by Konrad Szymański, Poland's secretary of state for European affairs. The meeting mainly concerned discussion about the revision of the Posted Workers Directive as well as the European Commission's proceedings on the rule-of-law matter regarding Poland. During her stay in Poland, Minister Loiseau also held a conversation with Krzysztof Szczerski, the head of President Duda's cabinet and gave an interview to *Rzeczpospolita* in which she stated that: "France and Poland must strengthen the dialogue on both bilateral and European matters as well as on global security. We are members of the Atlantic Alliance, deeply convinced of its usefulness. But now, it is definitely necessary to strengthen the European pillar of NATO. We need to strengthen strategic autonomy within the alliance, since one cannot always count on others when it comes to our security".<sup>18</sup>

The climax of Polish-French relations in 2017 occurred in connection with the visit of Prime Minister Beata Szydło to Paris on 23 November. In discussions with the French president, the head of the Polish government raised issues that dominated the EU action plan at the time, such as EU reform and its future after Brexit, climate policy, cooperation in the field of security, energy and social affairs. The prime minister also expressed hope for close cooperation after Poland took up non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council. She emphasised that the guarantors of the success of EU reforms are European leaders and that the EU's decision-making process is the result of discussions involving all Member

<sup>16</sup> *Blisko godzinna rozmowa prezydentów Polski i Francji*, 2 August 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>17</sup> *Wizyta minister do spraw europejskich francuskiego rządu*, 4 October 2017, [French Embassy in the Republic of Poland](https://pl.ambafrance.org), <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

<sup>18</sup> "Nathalie Loiseau: Nie mówimy już o sankcjach wobec Polski," *Rzeczpospolita*, 4 October 2017, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

States, not just the largest ones. Nevertheless, “no reform of the European Union will succeed without cooperation between Poland and France”.<sup>19</sup> At the end of the visit, Prime Minister Szydło conveyed an invitation to the president of France to attend the centennial celebration of Poland regaining independence.

Shortly after the reconstruction of the Polish government on 7 December 2017, the new Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki met with President Macron on 15 December during the EU summit in Brussels.<sup>20</sup> They discussed bilateral cooperation and European policy, including the amendment to the Posted Workers Directive. As the French president was the main proponent of the changes, which Poland found to be unfavourable, Prime Minister Morawiecki tried to persuade him to change his position.

### Military Cooperation

The structures of the North Atlantic Alliance remained the primary area of military cooperation between the two countries. Defence Minister Antoni Macierewicz paid a visit to France on 13 September 2017.<sup>21</sup> He met with Florence Parly, the minister of national defence, as well as with representatives of the missile concern MBDA. The discussions concerned European security, battalion battlegroups as part of the French participation in NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence, Polish-French relations in the Alliance, including the functioning of the Multinational Command in Elbląg, and the possibility of France’s participation in this project. During the meeting, issues related to PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation) were also raised.<sup>22</sup> Minister Macierewicz expressed hope that joint defence would be focused on cooperation with Georgia, Moldova, and, above all, with Ukraine. Another topic of the discussion was the modernisation programme of the Polish naval fleet, “RP Orka”, worth PLN 10 billion and aiming at the purchase of three next-generation submarines. The offer by the French Naval Group (German and Swedish companies also submitted bids) concerned *Scorpène*-class ships integrated with long-range manoeuvring missiles (NCM). One of the components of the offer is the project of long-term economic cooperation that would allow for the assembly and manufacturing of ship components at the

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<sup>19</sup> *Premier Beata Szydło w Paryżu: Bez Polski i Francji reforma UE się nie powiedzie*, 23 November 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>20</sup> *Spotkanie premiera Mateusza Morawieckiego z prezydentem Francji Emmanuelem Macronem*, 15 December 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>21</sup> *Minister Macierewicz we Francji*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 13 September 2017, <http://mon.gov.pl>.

<sup>22</sup> Poland decided to join PESCO on 13 November 2017, which was initiated by France, Italy, and the Benelux countries.

shipyards of the Polish Armaments Group (PAG). Naval Group estimates that in the next 15 years, this cooperation in the manufacturing and then servicing of the *Scorpène* fleet would mean the creation and maintenance of up to 2,000 jobs in Poland.<sup>23</sup> During discussions with representatives of the MDBA group, which would take part in the construction of ships, the head of the French Ministry of National Defence emphasised that “what we saw [makes us] optimistic about the French potential and efficiency in operation. Poland wants the contract for the purchase of submarines to be signed as soon as possible.”<sup>24</sup>

With regard to the modernisation of the Polish Armed Forces, the French defence industry is already involved in some programmes and expressed interest in others. First, in February 2017, PGZ signed an agreement with the MBDA group on missile programmes included in the “Polish Armed Forces Technical Modernization Plan”, in particular the short-range anti-aircraft missile project codenamed “Narew”.<sup>25</sup> Second, Airbus Helicopters, again offering H225M Caracals, submitted a bid for a purchase order for helicopters capable of conducting rescue operations for the Navy and helicopters for Special Forces.<sup>26</sup>

An example of operational cooperation was the joint exercises of officers of the Special Operations Department of the Warsaw Special Unit of the Military Police and the elite French anti-terrorist unit RAID (fr. *Recherche, assistance, intervention, dissuasion*) on 11-23 September.<sup>27</sup> This is one of the most experienced police units fighting terrorism in the EU. The exercises were conducted at the Ground Forces Training Center in Wędrzyn and at facilities located in Warsaw, including the Rembertów district.

Another level of military cooperation in 2017 concerned the fight against global terrorism, which is one of the key threats to the security of EU citizens. Poland, like France, recognises the fight against contemporary terrorism as an absolute priority. Poland joining the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS (Polish soldiers are present in Afghanistan and Iraq) confirms the country's commitment to stabilising Europe's southern neighbourhood. What's more, the government considered returning to UN peacekeeping missions in Africa and the Middle East this year. Due to the large presence of French troops in the region in anti-terrorist operations, this may open new fields of bilateral cooperation, or facilitate reaching consensus on contentious issues.

<sup>23</sup> “Scorpene ściga się z U-Bootami,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 10 May 2017, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

<sup>24</sup> *Minister Macierewicz we Francji, op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> “Rakietowe porozumienie PGZ i MBDA,” *Defence 24*, 2 February 2017, [www.defence24.pl](http://www.defence24.pl).

<sup>26</sup> “Śmigłowce dla Wojsk Specjalnych. Ruszają negocjacje z trzema oferentami,” *Defence 24*, 8 May 2017, [www.defence24.pl](http://www.defence24.pl).

<sup>27</sup> *Wspólne ćwiczenia OSŻW i RAID*, 20 listopada 2017, [www.special-ops.pl](http://www.special-ops.pl).

## Economic Relations

France is the fourth-largest recipient of Polish goods.<sup>28</sup> The value of trade exchange in 2017 increased compared to the previous year from €17.4 billion to €19.4 billion.<sup>29</sup> In 2017, the value of exports from Poland to France amounted to €11.4 billion, or €1.27 billion more than in the previous year. In turn, French imports to Poland in 2017 were worth more than €7.9 billion, resulting in a trade surplus in Poland's favour of more than €3.5 billion.

The structure of Polish exports to France was conventionally dominated by highly processed industrial goods (mechanical devices, vehicles and transport equipment, yachts and boats, measuring instruments, tools, electrical equipment, defence equipment), additionally, agricultural-food (organic) products, wooden products and metallurgical products, automotive industry products, industrial machinery and equipment, electrical and electronic equipment as well as pharmaceutical and para-chemical products, organic chemistry, plastics and cosmetics. Electromechanical and chemical industry products account for almost 75% of the value of French exports to Polish market. Other commodity industries, such as metallurgy, fuel and energy, textiles and agricultural-food are less significant.<sup>30</sup>

France is also the fourth-largest behind the Netherlands, Germany, and Luxembourg in foreign direct investment in Poland, with about €17.8 billion.<sup>31</sup> French companies are interested in Poland because of lower production costs, high staff qualifications, investment allowances (in special economic zones), geographical location (helpful in expansion to eastern markets) together with membership of the Schengen area and potential for European funds. French investments were located mainly in the information and communications sectors (47.7% of the total French capital), manufacturing (17.4%), and trade and repair of motor vehicles (14.4%). France is also one of the largest foreign employers in Poland. In 2017, about 1,300 French enterprises operated on the Polish market, of which 10% were large capital companies. French enterprises provide a total of about 200,000 jobs. Over 75% of French capital is concentrated in the Mazowieckie Voivodeship. As many as 124 French companies of the largest foreign investors were on the list of the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency.

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<sup>28</sup> P. Lévy, "Niech żyje przyjaźń francusko-polska! Wystąpienie w dniu święta narodowego Francji," *Wszystko co najważniejsze*, 14 July 2017, <https://wszystkocoonajwazniejsze.pl>.

<sup>29</sup> *Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski styczeń–grudzień 2017 r. w mln euro*, Ministerstwo Rozwoju, Departament Strategii Rozwoju, Warszawa, August 2017, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> *Francja. Informacja o sytuacji gospodarczej i stosunkach gospodarczych z Polską*, Ministerstwo Rozwoju, Departament Współpracy Międzynarodowej.

<sup>31</sup> *Inwestycje zagraniczne*, Polska Agencja Inwestycji i Handlu, [www.paih.gov.pl](http://www.paih.gov.pl).

They operate in many sectors: trade and distribution (Auchan, Carrefour, Leroy Merlin, Intermarche), industrial production (Peugeot, L'Oréal, Total Fina Elf), construction (Bouygues, VINCI Construction), financial and insurance services (BGŻ BNP Paribas, Crédit Agricole, Société Générale), hotel industry and gastronomy (Accor, Sodexo Group), food sector (Bonduelle, Danone, Delifrance), telecommunications (Alcatel-Lucen, France Télécom), media (Canal Plus, Vivendi Universal), and energy (Electricité de France, EDF).<sup>32</sup>

From the point of view of economic relations, Macron's rise to the presidency in 2017 was associated with the Posted Workers Directive dispute, which significantly influenced the Polish government's policy towards France. Macron achieved his goal: an EU Council meeting was held in Luxembourg on 23 October in which Member State ministers of employment adopted a position on the amendment of the directive in a form close to France's demands.<sup>33</sup> In principle, the Council supported the European Commission's proposal for "equal remuneration for the same work in the same place," arguing that the revision would reduce so-called social dumping in the common market. It strengthened its position on the maximum period of posting in favour of the French proposal to limit it to 12 months with the possibility of extending it, in justified cases, by an additional half year. Only four countries voted against: Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, and Latvia. It is worth emphasizing that Poland is a leader in posted work in the EU (460,000 workers).<sup>34</sup> The amendment to the directive impacts the competitiveness of Polish companies due to the requirement to increase wages and the costs of adaptation to local labour markets, and it will also lead to losses for the state budget due to the reduction of contributions to the social insurance fund (up to PLN 8 billion per year).

A month and a half before voting in the Council (9 September), Elżbieta Rafalska, the minister of family, labour and social policy, together with her deputy, Stanisław Szwed, met with the French labour minister, Muriel Pénicaud, in Paris. The purpose of the meeting was to strengthen the message of the common position of the Visegrad Group in discussions with France on the topic of posted workers. At that time, Poland presided over the V4. Minister Rafalska emphasised that the issue of posted workers is a very important and sensitive topic for Poland and the rest of the region not only because of the number of employees delegated

<sup>32</sup> *Francja. Informacja o sytuacji ...*, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> Ł. Jurchyszyn, *Pół roku aktywnej, lecz paradoksalnej prezydentury Emmanuela Macrona*, op. cit., pp. 92–105.

<sup>34</sup> Ł. Jurchyszyn, Ł. Ogrodnik, "The French President's Meeting with the Heads of Government of the Slavkov Triangle," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 46, 25 August 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

by enterprises but also because these countries view the freedom to provide services as the foundation of the internal market.<sup>35</sup>

Conventionally, Poland and France have similar positions on increasing resources for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). At the initiative of France, a meeting of EU agriculture ministers on the future of the CAP after 2020 was held in Paris on 19 December 2017.<sup>36</sup> Due to the reduction of the CAP budget resulting from Brexit, the European Commission wants to introduce greater flexibility in its financing from the EU budget by 2020 by forcing a greater financial contribution on the Member States. Minister Krzysztof Jurgiel pointed to the need to maintain the two-pillar structure of the CAP, including direct payments and support for rural development, which requires ensuring a sufficiently strong budget required by France. Confirmation of this synergy of positions by the Polish government was related to the upcoming negotiations of the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2012–2027.

### Social and Cultural Relations

University and scientific cooperation play a historically significant role in Polish-French relations. The catalogue of double Polish-French diplomas of 2017 contains more than 70 faculties of study and 16 Erasmus-Mundus programmes in which universities in both countries take part.<sup>37</sup> Also in this year, the Polish-French Science Forum was held for the third time at the Staszic Palace in Warsaw on 6 June. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in cooperation with the French embassy in Poland and the French Institute in Warsaw. The organisers of the Science Forum aim to present Franco-Polish cooperation in the field of research and innovation and opportunities offered by the European framework programme for science and innovation “Horizon 2020”.<sup>38</sup>

The total number of Poles and people of Polish descent living in France is between 500,000 and a million.<sup>39</sup> There are numerous Polish institutions and organisations of various types. Paris remains the main cultural and intellectual

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<sup>35</sup> *Wizyta Minister Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej RP we Francji*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Paryżu, 20 September 2017, <https://paryz.msz.gov.pl>.

<sup>36</sup> *Minister Jurgiel o przyszłości europejskiego rolnictwa w Paryżu*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Paryżu, 19 December 2017, <https://paryz.msz.gov.pl>.

<sup>37</sup> *Katalog podwójnych dyplomów polsko-francuskich 2017/2018*, Campus France Polska, [www.pologne.campusfrance.pl](http://www.pologne.campusfrance.pl).

<sup>38</sup> The third Polish-French Science and Innovation Forum, [www.nauka.gov.pl](http://www.nauka.gov.pl).

<sup>39</sup> *Stosunki z państwami Europy—Francja*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

centre of the Polish community abroad.<sup>40</sup> The problem of homelessness among Poles residing in France is a big problem, affecting an estimated 10,000 people. This issue was discussed during a conference at the Polish embassy in Paris on 4 February 2017 with the participation of ombudsman Dr. Adam Bodnar.<sup>41</sup> The meeting was co-organised by the Pomost-Passerelle Association, which belongs to the most active entities in managing this problem.

In view of the upcoming centennial of Poland regaining independence, one cannot forget the French support given to the Polish nation on its way to the new state. Of special significance in this history is the establishment of the independent Polish Army in France under the command of General Haller in 1917, known as the “Blue Army” or “Haller’s Army”. On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this event, the French MFA organised a photo exhibition from archival material of the French Ministry of Defence on the wall of the French embassy in Warsaw on 8 June. The exhibition has been presented in many Polish cities since September. The event’s huge symbolism of Polish-French relationship was noted by the French ambassador to Poland, Pierre Lévy, during Bastille Day celebrations in France (14 July 2017) where he presented a replica of a 1907 French Renault FT tank, which was part of the equipment used by Haller’s army.<sup>42</sup>

September 2017 marks 50 years since General Charles de Gaulle’s visit to Poland. The president of the Republic of France, who became a symbol of French support for a young Polish nation during the Polish-Soviet War of 1919-1920. The then Captain de Gaulle received the Order of Virtuti Militari for his service to Poland. As president, on 9 September 1967, he visited Zabrze, where he said the famous words: “Long live Zabrze, the most Silesian of all Silesia, that is the most Polish of all Polish cities”.<sup>43</sup> On this occasion, the Café Silesia Gallery of the City Museum in Zabrze held an exhibition devoted to that visit, from 8 September to 29 October.

French culture conventionally enjoys the constant interest of Poles. In 2017, French holidays in Poland were celebrated for the third time (20 September–14 October)—the so-called *French Touch*, a major event promoting knowledge, skills and products from France.<sup>44</sup> The ceremonial *French Touch* gala was held on 14 October at the Grand Theatre (*Teatr Wielki*) in Warsaw. Misteria Paschalia,

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>41</sup> *RPO w Paryżu o sprawach bezdomnych Polaków we Francji*, 5 February 2017, [www.rpo.gov.pl](http://www.rpo.gov.pl).

<sup>42</sup> P. Lévy, “Niech żyje przyjaźń francusko-polska! ...” *op. cit.*

<sup>43</sup> *Do 29.10.2017 r. generał Charles de Gaulle na Śląsku. W 50. rocznicę historycznej wizyty*, Muzeum Miejskie w Zabrzu, 8 September 2017, [www.muzeum-miejskie-zabrze.pl](http://www.muzeum-miejskie-zabrze.pl).

<sup>44</sup> *#French Touch 2017, czyli Święto Francji w Polsce przez 2 tygodnie*, Instytut Francuski, [www.institutfrancais.pl](http://www.institutfrancais.pl).

a festival of early music in Cracow is also noteworthy. This year's edition (10-17 April) was entirely devoted to French artists.<sup>45</sup> France was also the guest of honour at the 21<sup>st</sup> International Book Fair in Cracow (26-29 October).<sup>46</sup>

One of the important cultural events in France was, undoubtedly, the premier of Andrzej Wajda's last film, *Powidoki*, on 22 February in French cinemas.<sup>47</sup> An important Polish accent in the cultural life of Paris was the meeting at the Shoah Memorial Museum devoted to two publications, *Souvenirs d'enfance et de Pologne* (L'Harmattan, 2016), by Larissa Cain, and the biography of Irena Sendler, *Juste parmi les nations* (Don Quichotte, 2017), by Gilbert Sinoué.<sup>48</sup>

### Assessment

In line with the objectives of Poland's policy towards France, multibillion-dollar trade exchange between the two countries increased. In 2017, it was worth an estimated €1.27 billion more than in the previous year.

Contrary to assumptions, attempts at revitalisation of the Weimar Triangle failed. Due to the impasse in Polish-French relations, ongoing since 2016, and because of the long wait for the formation of a new government in Germany, in 2017 the Triangle operated only at lower political levels: ministers and deputy ministers. As a result, its summit scheduled for August 2017 in Paris was not held. It's also significant that some of this was entirely out of Poland's hands. The political calendar and the involvement of President Macron in contacts with strategic partners for France, such as Germany or the U.S., turned out to be much more important than reviewing the past in Polish-French relations.

What's more, contrary to the assumptions of Polish policy towards France, there was no strengthening of defence cooperation, which was still affected by Poland's withdrawal from the contract for the purchase of Caracal helicopters. However, relations were not completely strained, as evidenced by the countries' cooperation within NATO, PESCO projects, and discussions on the possible Polish purchase of French weapons. France, thanks to the adoption of a new programme for modernisation of the arms industry for 2019-2025, will significantly expand its sales offer, which creates the possibility of further contracts in the future.

The change of government in France—instead of bringing a “new opening” in relations between the countries—contributed to maintaining the deadlock.

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<sup>45</sup> Misteria Paschalia 2017, 10–17 April, <http://karnet.krakow.pl>.

<sup>46</sup> France—the guest of honour, 26–29 October 2017, [www.ksiazka.krakow.pl](http://www.ksiazka.krakow.pl).

<sup>47</sup> *Les fleurs bleues (Powidoki), dernier film d'Andrzej Wajda*, 22 February 2017, [www.institutpolonais.fr](http://www.institutpolonais.fr).

<sup>48</sup> *L'Institut Polonais au Salon du livre du Mémorial de la Shoah*, 9 June 2017, [www.institutpolonais.fr](http://www.institutpolonais.fr).

Polish politics did not manage to breakthrough despite the high intensity of meetings. One of the main reasons was the political, ideological and cultural differences between the elites in the two countries—the liberal and federally minded authorities in France and the national and socially conservative, “Europe of homelands” concept-promoting government of the Republic of Poland.

# Poland's Policy Towards Russia

AGNIESZKA LEGUCKA\*

## Determinants

The key determinant of Poland's policy towards the Russian Federation in 2017 were the latter's aggressive actions, including the continued occupation of Ukrainian Crimea and military support of the so-called separatists in Donbas, which have destabilised Poland's neighbourhood. What's more, in autumn (14-20 September), Russia held joint military exercises in Belarus, *Zapad 2017* (*West 2017*) in which the scenario was a conventional war in Europe.<sup>1</sup> In November, the Russian authorities decided to deploy Iskander-M missiles to the Kaliningrad region from where they are capable of attacking land targets in NATO's Eastern Flank countries.<sup>2</sup> This led the Polish government to the conclusion that the country's military, energy, and information security should be increased further.

The premise of Poland's Russia policy that persisted in 2017 was its dependence on imports of Russian energy resources, mainly gas (65.6% of imports) and petroleum (79.9%).<sup>3</sup> Poland imported 11.1 billion m<sup>3</sup> (bcm) of gas via a pipeline from Russia and 3.5 bcm through other connections, and produced 3.5 bcm on its own.<sup>4</sup> Given the increase in domestic energy consumption this year, oil imports also increased from 95.3 million tonnes to 102.1 million tonnes.<sup>5</sup> According to Gazprom's mandatory "take-or-pay" clause in the 1996 Yamal contract, PGNiG must accept at least 8.7 bcm of natural gas per year.

Unresolved matters also affected Polish policy towards Russia, such as the retention of the wreckage of the presidential plane that crashed in 2010 at

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<sup>1</sup> A.M. Dyer, "The Importance of the *Zapad 2017* Exercises," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 86 (1026), 21 September 2017; J. Norberg, "Training to Fight—Russia's Major Military Exercises 2011–2014," FOI, November 2015.

<sup>2</sup> A.M. Dyer, "Russia Strengthens Military Presence in Kaliningrad," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 3, 15 January 2018, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>3</sup> *Monitorowanie bezpieczeństwa zaopatrzenia rynku w paliwa*, Ministerstwo Energii, Warszawa, December 2017, p. 3; *Sprawozdanie z wyników monitorowania bezpieczeństwa dostaw paliw gazowych*, Ministerstwo Energii, July 2018, p. 9, [www.gov.pl/web/energia](http://www.gov.pl/web/energia).

<sup>4</sup> *BP Statistical Review of World Energy*, ed. 67, June 2018, [www.bp.com](http://www.bp.com).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

Smolensk. The Russians claimed that the aircraft must remain on Russian territory until the end of their proceedings (and parts of the wreckage constitute evidence in that case). The investigation has been extended 16 times, once again in October 2017. The issues of the status of Russian diplomatic real estate in Poland and the liquidation by the Polish authorities of so-called “monuments of gratitude” placed by the USSR on the territory of the Republic of Poland.

Despite the Polish government's fears, the external determinants of its policy towards Russia have not deteriorated. There was no fundamental change in U.S. policy. The new president Donald Trump confirmed U.S. commitments to the Alliance during his visit in Warsaw in July. The maintenance and extension of the sanctions imposed on Russia by the U.S. was also important in Polish foreign policy. At the end of July, the U.S. Congress voted an act against “aggressive states that violate the security of their neighbours”, aimed at Russia, North Korea, and Iran. On 2 August, President Trump signed a bill that defined the Nord Stream 2 (NS2) gas pipeline project—which is unfavourable from Poland's point of view—as a threat to EU energy security.<sup>6</sup> This meant a continuation in American strategy of the rivalry with Russia, which is assessed positively from by the Polish government.<sup>7</sup>

The maintenance of the EU sanctions regime also affected Polish policy towards Russia. On the one hand, this meant a firm position by the Union regarding respect for the principle of the territorial integrity of states and non-recognition of the annexation of Crimea. Moreover, Poland still supported the project “Baltic Pipe” (gas connection with Norway). It made the list of European Commission priorities regarding the diversification of energy supply sources and should increase energy security in Central Europe.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the EU sanctions resulted in the extension of a Russian embargo on agricultural products from Polish producers.

The presidential campaign in Russia also had an impact on Polish policy towards this country. Anti-Western rhetoric has increased in Russian media, with Poland frequently targeted as an ally of Russia's greatest rival—the U.S.<sup>9</sup> The likely re-election of President Vladimir Putin meant that the chances were low for a

<sup>6</sup> A. Dąbrowski, A. Legucka, “U.S. Sanctions on Russia,” *PISM Bulletin*, no. 73 (1113), 31 July 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>7</sup> A. Waś-Turecka, “Krzysztof Szczerski: Prezydent jest konsultowany,” interview, 18 March 2017, [www.fakty.interia.pl](http://www.fakty.interia.pl).

<sup>8</sup> *PGNiG: Budowa Baltic Pipe może zakończyć się w 2022 roku*, 24 October 2016, [www.portalmorski.pl](http://www.portalmorski.pl).

<sup>9</sup> A. Legucka, “The International Aspects of Vladimir Putin's Re-election Campaign,” *PISM Bulletin*, no. 117 (1057), 28 November 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

change in Russian policy, and thus little prospect for improving Polish-Russian relations.

### Aims and Objectives

In 2017, Poland perceived Russia's policy as the main threat to its security as well as to the stability of the region of Central and Eastern Europe. Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski stated that "we observe with concern the aggressive policy of the Russian Federation in Eastern Europe".<sup>10</sup> He pointed out the expansion of capabilities in the Russian Western Military District and further militarisation of the Kaliningrad region such as the deployment of new types of weapons, including medium-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons. He announced that Poland would not accept such a vision of a political order in Europe and would not agree to divide the continent into so-called spheres of influence.<sup>11</sup> The Russian threat was deemed the most important to national security, based on a document developed by the Ministry of National Defence in May 2017—*Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland*. It states: "we are certain that by 2032 Russia will conduct an aggressive foreign policy [...] and will remain the major source of instability in the neighbourhood of NATO's eastern flank".<sup>12</sup> The objective of Poland's policy towards Russia, the document concludes, should be to limit its aggressive actions near the Polish borders as well as to deter the opponent, and thus reduce the possibility of an attack. The Polish defence concept of May 2017 assumed an increase in the size of military expenditures.<sup>13</sup> By 2032, the number of professional soldiers in the Polish armed forces should double to 200,000 (including about 50,000 territorial defence troops).<sup>14</sup> Also, a draft amendment to the act on the modernisation and financing of the armed forces of April 2017 provided for an increase in defence spending.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017)," see p. 13 in this volume.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> *Koncepcja obronna RP*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, [www.mon.gov.pl](http://www.mon.gov.pl).

<sup>13</sup> Poland is among a small group of countries (including the U.S., Greece, the UK, and Estonia) that fulfil NATO's obligations regarding the allocation of 2% of GDP to defence.

<sup>14</sup> T. Szatkowski, "Cena bezpieczeństwa," *Polska Zbrojna*, 4 April 2017, <http://polska-zbrojna.pl>.

<sup>15</sup> According to its content on Poland's defence needs, expenditures to be allocated must be not less than 2% of GDP in 2018, 2.1% of GDP in 2019, 2.2% of GDP over the period 2020–2023, 2.3% of GDP between 2024 and 2025, 2.4% of GDP in 2026–2029, 2.5% of GDP in 2030 and in subsequent years, *Ustawa o zmianie ustawy o przebudowie i modernizacji oraz finansowaniu Sił Zbrojnych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej oraz ustawy – Prawo zamówień publicznych*, draft as of April 2017, <https://legislacja.rcl.gov.pl>.

The second objective was to recover the 2010 presidential plane wreckage. As Minister Waszczykowski said: “We treat Russia seriously, just as one treats a large state and a neighbour. [...] We expect the return of the presidential plane TU-154 to its rightful owner, i.e., the Polish state. The case to take back the wreckage of the Tupolev lies at the heart of the government of *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* and especially to the head of Polish diplomacy. I will not cease my efforts to fulfil the will of Poles who have been waiting for this for almost seven years. We are currently considering submitting a complaint regarding the Russian investigation with regard to the Smolensk catastrophe to the International Court of Justice in The Hague”.<sup>16</sup>

The third objective of Poland's policy towards Russia resulted from the special treatment of the Polish diaspora and Poles abroad. The Polish authorities decided to fast-forward—as Minister Waszczykowski said—the process of repatriation of Poles from the East.<sup>17</sup> New legal solutions were to serve this purpose by significantly facilitating the assistance provided to compatriots settling in Poland. There are no dense clusters of Polish diaspora in Russia and, compared to other nationalities, Poles constitute a small ethnic group (47,000 according to Russian censuses, 300,000 according to Polish estimates).<sup>18</sup> Russian citizens of Polish descent have been eligible to receive a Polish Card (*Karta Polaka*) since 2008, which grants them the right to take up employment, education, and medical treatment in Poland, however, the Polish authorities wanted to fast-forward the procedure of their repatriation.

### Political Relations

In 2017, Polish-Russian political relations worsened. In comparison with 2016, the level of meetings was reduced and the intensity of contacts between government officials of both countries decreased.<sup>19</sup> Discussions were held at the level of the Polish deputy minister of foreign affairs with the Russian ambassador to Poland on 30 May and 29 August 2017, at the level of the Polish director of the territorial department with the Russian ambassador on 31 January, 5 April, and

<sup>16</sup> “Government Information on Polish foreign policy in 2017...”, *op. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>18</sup> Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Moskwie, [www.moskwa.msz.gov.pl](http://www.moskwa.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>19</sup> From the beginning of the rule of *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, such meetings were held at the level of the deputy ministers of foreign affairs of Poland and Russia (22 January and 12 July 2016), deputy minister with the Russian ambassador (28 December 2015, 17 February, 4 April and 21 September 2016), director of the territorial department with an ambassador (4 February and 4 April 2016). *Odpowiedź na interpelację nr 17222 w sprawie sprowadzenia wraku prezydenckiego samolotu TU-154M*. Responding person: Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Jan Dziędziczak, 14 December 2017, [www.sejm.pl](http://www.sejm.pl).

1 September 2017, and bilateral consultations of the directors of the territorial departments of the MFA of the RP and the RF on 19 April 2017.

Relations could not be revived despite the reactivation of the activity of the Group for Difficult Matters in connection with the proposal of the Polish Ambassador to the Russian Federation Włodzimierz Marciniak. The group was established in 2002 as an advisory initiative for the governments of Poland and Russia and consisted of scientists and experts dealing with complex issues in mutual relations, in particular those arising from the intertwined and differently perceived history.<sup>20</sup> After 2015, the activity of the Group was suspended after the resignation of the chairman from the Polish side, Adam Daniel Rotfeld. The Group's operations resumed on 9-10 March 2017, as representatives of Poland received nominations from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mirosław Filipowicz became chairman of the Polish part of the Group.<sup>21</sup> The composition of the Russian side did not change, with the position of chairman retained by MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov. The Group's activities were dominated by the issue of Polish-Russian historical disputes and incidents in mutual relations (e.g., the expulsion of Polish researcher Henryk Głębocki from Russia in November 2017).

In contacts with the Russian authorities, Polish diplomacy consistently raised the need to return the Tu-154 wreckage.<sup>22</sup> The government considered the retention of the destroyed aircraft unreasonable, devoid of rational premises, and a violation of the principle of good faith in international relations. The Polish MFA gathered materials covering several hundred pages for a draft complaint before the International Court of Justice. The project was ready at the end of 2017 and invoked the principle of respect for state property and the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters.<sup>23</sup> Deputy Minister Jacek Czaputowicz, at a meeting of the National Defence Committee in the Sejm on 12 December, said that no decision had yet been taken regarding the submission of the complaint.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> In recent years, Polish members of the group sought to disclose the so-called Augustów roundup, which was the liquidation of the Polish underground by the NKVD in 1945. Thanks to the Group for Difficult Matters, a historic meeting between the Metropolitan of Moscow and the chairman of the Polish Episcopal Conference, Archbishop Józef Michalik, was held. See: *Wznowienie działalności Polsko-Rosyjskiej Grupy ds. Trudnych*, 9 March 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>21</sup> *MSZ odnawia Polsko-Rosyjską Grupę ds. Trudnych. Ale nie wszyscy zaproszeni chcą współpracować*, 2 February 2017, <http://wyborcza.pl>.

<sup>22</sup> *Odpowiedź na interpelację nr 14135 w sprawie wraku samolotu Tu-154M*, Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Renata Szczęch 25 July 2017, [www.sejm.pl](http://www.sejm.pl).

<sup>23</sup> *Europejska Konwencja o pomocy prawnej w sprawach karnych*, Dz.U. [Journal of Laws], 1999, no. 76, item 854, <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl>.

<sup>24</sup> *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych pana Witolda Waszczykowskiego na temat: Planowanego złożenia skargi do Międzynarodowego Trybunału Sprawiedliwości w Hadze o „zagrabienie polskiego*

Another issue creating tension in mutual relations was the so-called war over monuments. On 22 June, the Sejm passed a law prohibiting the propagation of communism or other totalitarian systems, which involved the removal of certain symbolic memorials.<sup>25</sup> The Russians decried the removal of obelisks and monuments commemorating “Polish-Soviet friendship”.<sup>26</sup> There are 229 of these objects tagged for removal throughout the country (as of 2016).<sup>27</sup> The liquidation of these monuments does not apply to objects in cemeteries or memorial sites where soldiers are buried. These sacred places (1,876 in total) are protected under an agreement between Poland and the Russian Federation on graves and memorial sites of victims of war and repression of 22 February 1994.<sup>28</sup> It was later determined to be not possible to establish a special heritage park to preserve these objects as exhibits (the affected monuments, obelisks, tablets) and they were successively destroyed.

In turn, the Polish MFA expressed concern over the appearance in Katyn about information on soldiers of the Red Army who died in Polish captivity in the 1920s, which were included at a new museum complex. The Polish MFA stated that Poland is ready for an open discussion to avoid disputes with Russia and to solve existing problems.<sup>29</sup>

Another unresolved issue between Poland and Russia was the problem of ownership and payment for diplomatic missions. In 2015, the Arbitration Court of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region ordered the Consulate General of Poland to release property and settle debt in the amount of RUB 74.3 million (PLN 4.6 million), incurred as rental charges. The court also issued a writ of execution permitting bailiffs to conduct eviction. Poland has not recognised this ruling nor subsequent decisions issued by the court and treats them as incompatible

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*mienia” przez Federację Rosyjską w związku z przetrzymywaniem wraku samolotu Tu-154M na terytorium Federacji Rosyjskiej, 7 December 2017, <http://search.sejm.gov.pl>.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 2017 r. o zmianie ustawy o zakazie propagowania komunizmu lub innego ustroju totalitarnego przez nazwy jednostek organizacyjnych, jednostek pomocniczych gminy, budowli, obiektów i urządzeń użyteczności publicznej oraz pomniki oraz ustawy o zakazie propagowania komunizmu lub innego ustroju totalitarnego przez nazwy budowli, obiektów i urządzeń użyteczności publicznej.* Dz.U. [Journal of Laws], 2017, item 2495.

<sup>26</sup> *Posoł FR: „wojna s pamiatnikami” w Polsce może priobriesti massowyj charakter,* RIA Nowosti, 29 April 2017, <https://ria.ru/20170429/1493387866.html>.

<sup>27</sup> *Liczba miejsc pamięci (w tym pomników żołnierzy sowieckich) na terytorium RP,* Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, data from the Council for the Protection of Remembrance of Struggle and Martyrdom, [www.ipn.gov.pl](http://www.ipn.gov.pl).

<sup>28</sup> *Umowa zawarta między Rządem Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej a Rządem Federacji Rosyjskiej o grobach i miejscach pamięci ofiar wojen i represji z 22 lutego 1994 r.,* Dz.U. [Journal of Laws], 1994, no. 112, item 543.

<sup>29</sup> *Oświadczenie MSZ w sprawie tablic zamieszczonych na cmentarzu w Katyniu,* Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 7 April 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

with international law. The case goes back to intergovernmental agreements of the 1970s in which Poland transferred ownership to the Soviet Union real estate occupied by its missions. The agreement obliged the Soviet side—on a reciprocal basis—to transfer real estate for the needs of Polish diplomatic missions. The USSR, then Russia, however, did not do this. Therefore, in May 2017, a Warsaw District Court ordered the Russian Federation to release the property at 45 Kielecka Street in Warsaw and make payment of PLN 7.6 million for non-contractual use. It indicated that the Russians did not have legal title to the property. There is also a case pending before the court regarding the non-contractual use of real estate in Warsaw at 2b Bobrowiecka Street over the period 2009-2015.<sup>30</sup>

### Economic Relations

Despite bad political relations, trade turnover between Poland and Russia in 2017 increased by 26.26% compared to 2016 and amounted to PLN 82.6 billion.<sup>31</sup> The improvement was influenced by the better economic situation in Europe and Russia's recovery from the recent recession (achieving positive GDP growth of 1.5%). In total, Polish exports to Russia increased by 21.4%, mainly perfumes, cosmetics, medicines, heating and cooling equipment and parts thereof, machines and means of transport, products of the chemical industry, food and agricultural products,<sup>32</sup> products of the wood and paper industry, clothing and footwear, and mineral products.<sup>33</sup> Despite the embargo, agricultural-food products were still exported to Russia—most often via Belarus, which used forged documents from Serbia.<sup>34</sup> The Russian authorities often destroyed these transports, and this was often reported by the local press and television. Polish growers sought then other markets (EU, Egypt, Kazakhstan); however, 51% of Polish exports of apples still reached Belarus (2016).<sup>35</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Sud zabył istoriju*, 9 May 2017, <https://rg.ru/2017/05/09/varshava-nepravomerno-vystavila-rf-schet-za-ispolzovanie-dipobektov.html>.

<sup>31</sup> *Handel zagraniczny*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, <http://swaid.stat.gov.pl>.

<sup>32</sup> In addition to products subject to sanctions.

<sup>33</sup> *Handel zagraniczny Polski. I–IX 2017 r.*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 29 December 2017, <https://stat.gov.pl>; *Torgowla miezdu Rossiej i Polscej w 2016 g.*, „Wnieszniaja Torgowla Rossii”, 14 February 2017, <http://russian-trade.com/reports-and-reviews/2017-02/torgovlya-mezhdu-rossiej-i-polshey-v-2017-g>.

<sup>34</sup> A. Iston, “Polskoje jabłoko s sierbskim priwkusom,” *Vedomosti*, 6 September 2015, [www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/articles/2015/09/06/607762-polskoe-yabloko-s-serbskim-privkusom](http://www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/articles/2015/09/06/607762-polskoe-yabloko-s-serbskim-privkusom); Janusz K. Kowalski, “Jabłka na wariackich papierach. Czyli jak handel wygrał z polityką,” *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, 15 March 2017.

<sup>35</sup> *Where does Poland export Apples, fresh to? (2015)*, <https://atlas.media.mit.edu>.

In 2017, Russia was the sixth-largest recipient of Polish exports, and by volume of imports, remained third. In turn, Poland was Russia's 11<sup>th</sup>- largest trade partner in 2017, the same as in the previous year.

The negative trade balance, which amounted to PLN 30 billion, resulted from the structure of the trade exchange and still-high dependence on Russian energy resources (despite the fact that PGNiG managed to reduce Russian gas imports by 20% in 2017).<sup>36</sup> For example, the volume of coal bought from Russia increased. Imports to Poland, according to preliminary estimates, increased by about one-third, i.e., to 6.7 million tonnes (added to domestic production of 66 million tonnes).<sup>37</sup> The import of Russian coal was negatively assessed by experts, given the government's demands for independence from Russian raw materials,<sup>38</sup> however, Polish mining could not meet the demand for a high-calorie raw mineral.<sup>39</sup> In addition, hydrocarbons, chemical industry products, metals and derivatives, wood and paper industry products, machinery, equipment and vehicles, food and agricultural products dominated in imports from Russia.

Political conditions influence the changing interest in direct investments of Polish companies in Russia. In 2017, Poland invested PLN 2.9 billion in Russia, in 2016, PLN 67.2 million, and in 2015, PLN 200.6 million. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasising that Russian direct investments have still flowed into Poland since 2014 (2014—PLN 299.7 million, 2015—PLN 38.3 million, 2016—PLN 69.5 million, 2017—PLN 279,8 million).<sup>40</sup> These sums are not significant, although they may be higher because Russians often invest in EU countries through Cyprus. In 2017, direct investments from this latter country in Poland amounted to PLN 5.5 billion, although it is difficult to estimate how much of this amount was pass-through Russian investments.

In order to increase the safety of navigation in the Vistula Lagoon and make it independent of Russia, the Sejm adopted the Act on investments in the construction of a waterway connecting the Vistula Lagoon with the Gulf

<sup>36</sup> In 2016 Poland purchased 24.2% more gas compared to 2015, "Import gazu do Polski coraz rzadziej z Rosji," *Business Insider*, 1 March 2018, <https://businessinsider.com.pl>; „Gazprom” ublażył wszech jewropiejcew, kromie Polszy. Ustupki koncerna nie pomogut razrieszyt’ spory wokrug „Siewiernogo potoka-2” i gazoprowoda OPAL, 15 March 2017, [www.ng.ru/economics/2017-03-15/1\\_6948\\_gazprom.html?id\\_user=Y](http://www.ng.ru/economics/2017-03-15/1_6948_gazprom.html?id_user=Y).

<sup>37</sup> “Eksport rossijskogo ugla w Polsce uwieliczyła na tret’ w 2017,” *RiaNovosti*, 29 January 2018, <https://ria.ru/20180129/1513503169.html>.

<sup>38</sup> K. Baca-Pogorzelska, “Zasypie nas węgiel z zagranicy. Głównie od Putina,” *Dziennik.pl*, 31 August 2017, [www.dziennik.pl](http://www.dziennik.pl).

<sup>39</sup> I. Kacprzak, “Węgiel z Rosji na ratunek,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 27 June 2017, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

<sup>40</sup> *Inwestycje bezpośrednie polskie*, Narodowy Bank Polski, [www.nbp.pl](http://www.nbp.pl).

of Gdańsk on 24 February 2017.<sup>41</sup> Currently, the only way to reach the port of Elbląg is through the Piławska Strait controlled by the Russian Federation. About half of the Vistula Spit (in Russia, called the Baltic Spit) is the territory of this country. The Russian Baltic fleet is stationed in Baltiysk located on the headland forming the strait. So this is a strategic area and extremely important for Russia from a military point of view, with the so-called limited access for foreigners. Piercing would facilitate navigation independence. The contractor of the project was the Director of the Maritime Office in Gdynia. The shipping channel through the Vistula Spit is to be about 1 km long and 5 m deep and allow vessels with immersion of up to 4 m, length 100 m, width 20 m to enter the port in Elbląg. The investment cost is estimated at PLN 880 million. The shipping channel is to be built by 2022.

### Social and cultural relations

An important point of the programme of the Polish authorities was the issue of the return of Poles from the countries of the former USSR. On 7 April, the Sejm amended the Act on the repatriation of Poles from the East.<sup>42</sup> It aims to facilitate the return and settlement of people of Polish descent as well as their descendants in Poland. The amendment changes the definition of “repatriate” and the procedure related to the granting of a national visa to return to the country.

As a result of changes in regulations, the number of applications for repatriation visas submitted on the territory of the Russian Federation almost doubled. The new regulations introduce state financial assistance (PLN 25,000) for people returning to Poland. This is a qualitative change allowing for their more efficient support and will not burden financially the local governments.<sup>43</sup>

In the social sphere, Polish-Russian relations deteriorated. According to opinion polls from spring 2017, 65% of Poles considered the Russian Federation a threat.<sup>44</sup> It is a permanent trend of the mutual negative perception of both nations. In 2012, the attitude of Poles towards Russians was 40% unfriendly, 49% friendly;

<sup>41</sup> *Ustawa z dnia 24 lutego 2017 r. o inwestycjach w zakresie budowy drogi wodnej łączącej Zalew Wiślany z Zatoką Gdańską*, Dz.U. [Journal of Laws], 2017, item 820.

<sup>42</sup> *Ustawa z dnia 7 kwietnia 2017 r. o zmianie ustawy o repatriacji oraz niektórych innych ustaw*, Dz.U. [Journal of Laws], 2017, item 858.

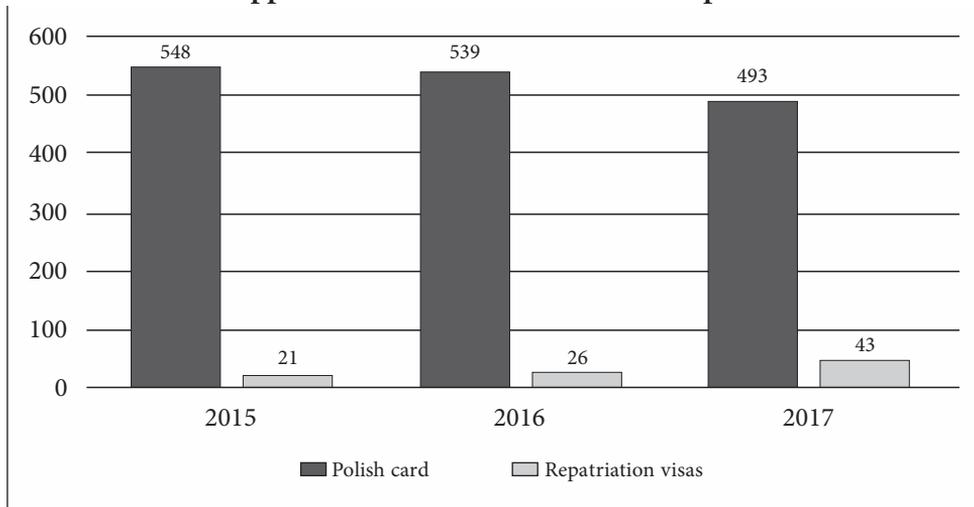
<sup>43</sup> The act states that a commune that assures housing to a repatriate will be granted a one-off subsidy from the state budget of up to PLN 25,000 per person (plus PLN 6,000 for renovation, for which the commune receives a targeted subsidy). The regulations also provide for assignment of a supporting person to the returning person by the commune in which they reside for a period not longer than two years.”

<sup>44</sup> Russia was considered a threat by 47% of respondents in the U.S., 45% in France, 28% in Hungary, 54% in Turkey, and 43% in the UK. D. Manevich, J. Poushter, “Globally, People Point

in 2014, it was 43% unfriendly and 41% friendly. The number of Russians with negative attitude to Poles also increased: in 2012, 61% were still friendly, but in 2014 only 46% had positive attitude. The Poles' negative opinions about Russians result from the assessment of the Russian state's actions on the international arena while Russians' bad opinion about Poles stems from the many television programmes in which Poland is portrayed as "an ungrateful nation" that destroys monuments to Soviet soldiers killed during World War II, and at the same time is a U.S. ally and hostile to Russia.<sup>45</sup>

Chart 1.

### Number of applications for a Polish Card and repatriation visas



Source: Data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland.

The number of Poles traveling to Russia decreased by one-third (691,451 compared to 985,745 people in 2016). Fewer Russian tourists came to Poland (by 16%).<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, despite the liquidation of local border traffic, residents of the Kaliningrad Region still eagerly came to Poland for shopping (increase in arrivals by 10% compared to 2016). What's more, they spent 50% more in

to ISIS and Climate Change as Leading Security Threats," Pew Research Center, 1 August 2017, [www.pewglobal.org](http://www.pewglobal.org).

<sup>45</sup> *Polsza budiet ruszyt' pamiatniki sowietskimi soldatami po zakonu*, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=-30q21gSqls](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-30q21gSqls).

<sup>46</sup> "Za god kolichestvo turpoezdok rossijan w Polsce sokratilos' na 16%," *NowyjKaliningrad.ru*, 16 March 2017, [www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/briefs/economy/12870517-za-god-kolichestvo-turpoezdok-rossijan-v-polshu-sokratilos-na-16.html](http://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/briefs/economy/12870517-za-god-kolichestvo-turpoezdok-rossijan-v-polshu-sokratilos-na-16.html).

stores in Poland and the EU than in the previous year.<sup>47</sup> The improvement of communication possibilities from/to the Kaliningrad Region was facilitated by the resumption of direct flights Warsaw-Kaliningrad by the Polish airline LOT (discontinued in 2012).<sup>48</sup> LOT in Kaliningrad became the only carrier from the EU and the only one that gave access to a wide and convenient network of air services. Still, the most attractive means of transport were cars, buses, and trains.

The Polish side, like in previous years, refused entry to its territory of the motorcycle group “Night Wolves”, whose members wanted to commemorate the victory of the USSR over Nazi Germany in World War II, but there were likely to be provocations. Participants of the rally, through their clothing and expressed views, demonstrate support for Putin’s policy (e.g., they supported the annexation of Crimea).

Polish Institutes (in Moscow and St. Petersburg) and Polish Culture Centres related to the Polish community played an important role in promoting Polish culture in Russia. They organised meetings with writers and artists, ran Polish language libraries and Polish language courses, and informed about Polish literary, film, and theatre events. The Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding acted in favour of the popularisation of Russia in Poland and Poland in Russia. In 2017, historical and contemporary Russia projects were continued, research on the destinies of Poles in the former USSR were conducted, the youth and student exchanges were organised (in 2017, 52 applications were submitted for the competition, of which 21 were co-financed in the amount of about PLN 1.1 million).<sup>49</sup> The centre organised two summer schools. A series of seminars, “Archipelag wspólnej pamięci”, was held in St. Petersburg, Medvezhyegorsk, Sandarmokh, and the Solovetsky Islands for researchers from Poland and Russia on 3-11 July 2017.<sup>50</sup> In Łękuk, Poland, on 19-27 August, an international summer school was held for doctoral students and young scientists from Poland, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine regarding “Memory and law: legal perspective in historical assessments”.

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<sup>47</sup> “S naczała 2017-go kaliningradcy potratili w magazinach Polszy i JES na 50% bolsze czem godom ranieje,” *NowyjKaliningrad.ru*, 10 May 2017, [www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/briefs/community/13519636-s-nachala-2017-go-kaliningradtsy-potratili-v-magazinakh-polshi-i-es-na-50-bolshe-chem-godom-ranee.html](http://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/briefs/community/13519636-s-nachala-2017-go-kaliningradtsy-potratili-v-magazinakh-polshi-i-es-na-50-bolshe-chem-godom-ranee.html).

<sup>48</sup> “Polskaja awiokompanija LOT naczała wypołniat’ riejsy Kaliningrad–Warszawa,” *NowyjKaliningrad.ru*, 5 June 2017, [www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/briefs/community/13795572-polskaya-aviakompaniya-lot-nachala-vypolnyat-reysy-kaliningrad-varshava.html](http://www.newkaliningrad.ru/news/briefs/community/13795572-polskaya-aviakompaniya-lot-nachala-vypolnyat-reysy-kaliningrad-varshava.html).

<sup>49</sup> *Polsko-rosyjska wymiana młodzieży*, Centrum Polsko-Rosyjskiego Dialogu i Porozumienia, [www.cprdip.pl](http://www.cprdip.pl).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*.

Screening of Polish films as part of the “Wisła” festival and Russian “Sputnik nad Polską” festival (since 2007 and 2008) is a permanent cultural event. Both events are very popular, although there is a lack of distribution of their respective cinematography—screenings are usually limited only to festivals. During the July screening of “Wisła” films in Russia, the premiere of Wojciech Smarzowski’s film *Wołyń* was held.<sup>51</sup> It was well received by the audience (usually anti-Ukrainian). During the Warsaw festival in November, 173 screenings of the latest Russian films as well as cinematography classics were held, including films for children.<sup>52</sup> A controversial historical drama by Alexei Uczitiel, *Matylda*, was also shown. It tells the story of the love affair between Tsar Nicholas II and the Polish ballet dancer Matilda Krzesińska. It triggered a scandal in Russia before the premiere.<sup>53</sup> In January 2017, the previously unknown organisation Christian State–Sacred Ruthenia sent letters to cinema directors requesting the cancellation of the film’s screenings. The movement Sorok Sorokov appealed for prayers in the churches of several cities in August against Uczitiel’s work. The campaign was supported by the prosecutor of Crimea and State Duma deputy Natalia Pokłońska, who claimed the film had dubious financing and argued the need to defend the reputation and honour of the Romanov family. The court dismissed the claim under the pretext of procedural deficiencies. The Russian Ministry of Culture issued a license for the film and the scheduled screenings were postponed to October.<sup>54</sup>

Polish cultural days were held, among others, in Arkhangelsk (13 April), in Zeleznovotsk (2 May) and in Bashkir (11 May). On the occasion of Polish cinema day, director Krzysztof Zanussi arrived in Irkutsk on 14 May. The premiere of the play *Gardenia*, based on the drama by Polish author Elżbieta Chowanecka and staged by Siemion Serezin, was presented on the stage of Moscow’s Pushkin Theatre.<sup>55</sup> In Samara, a drama by Tadeusz Słobodzianka, *Nasza Klasa*, was staged in April, telling the story of the burning of Jews in Jedwabne. Also in April, at the Dance Open festival in St. Petersburg, the Polish National Ballet performed pieces based on Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. In the same month, in Chelyabinsk, a chamber choir presented Polish sacred music. Subsequently, the artistic director of the choir, Olga Seleznewa, came to Poland where artists from Collegium Cantorum from Częstochowa performed sacred works by Russian composers.

<sup>51</sup> S. Chochriakowa, “Priemiera polskiego filmu „Wołyn” w Moskwie wyzwała miting w zale,” *Moskowskij Komsomolec*, 31 May 2017, [www.mk.ru/culture/2017/05/31/premera-polskiego-filma-wolyn-v-moskve-vyzvala-miting-v-zale.html](http://www.mk.ru/culture/2017/05/31/premera-polskiego-filma-wolyn-v-moskve-vyzvala-miting-v-zale.html).

<sup>52</sup> *Festiwal Filmów Rosyjskich Sputnik nad Polską*, 2-12 November 2017, [www.sputnikfestiwal.pl](http://www.sputnikfestiwal.pl).

<sup>53</sup> N. Bryzko-Zapór, “ISIS w prawosławnych szatach,” *Nowa Europa Wschodnia*, no. 6, 2017, pp. 145–153.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 147.

<sup>55</sup> “Polskaja rapsodia,” *Kommersant*, 11 May 2017, [www.kommersant.ru/doc/3293352](http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3293352).

The stand “Books of Russia”, which presented 15 leading Russian publishers, was featured at the Warsaw Book Fair in May after a two-year absence. Polish writer and visual artist Adam Wodnicki was hosted with his latest publication *Tryptyk Prowansalski* at the International Book Fair in Moscow in September.

### Assessment

Polish-Russian relations are in a deadlock and, as a consequence, the implementation of the objectives of Poland’s foreign policy towards this country is difficult. In 2017, political contacts were limited to lower-level bilateral meetings, working discussions, as well as consular work and assistance to people of Polish origin in Russia. Reactivation of the Group for Difficult Matters, though important for historical discussion, did not improve the political relations between the countries.

The implementation of the first objective, i.e., limiting Russia’s aggressive actions near the borders of the Polish state, was indirect and was based on building up Poland’s military potential and, in cooperation with allies, deterrence of the Russian Federation by strengthening NATO’s Eastern Flank. However, the efforts of Polish diplomacy and the Ministry of Defence for the permanent presence of American troops on Polish territory were interpreted by Russia as a threat to its national security and the Russian authorities tried to counteract this. They used various disinformation and propaganda methods to discredit NATO in Polish society (using social media), discouraging Poles from Euro-Atlantic structures. At the same time, they promoted anti-Ukrainian content, thus intending to reduce Poland’s support for Ukraine. Russia did not stop with the occupation of Crimea and conducts military operations on Ukrainian territory where it supports the so-called separatists in Donbas.

The second objective of Polish foreign policy, i.e., the return of the wreckage of the presidential airplane, has not been achieved. The investigation could not be internationalised because legal instruments that might justify Russia’s need to send back the wreckage and the possibility of enforcing this right, if a verdict favourable to Poland was issued, were not sufficient. Polish diplomacy did not—reasonably—submit the complaint to the International Court of Justice. It could not produce the desired effects since Russia would have to agree to this procedure and express it either before or after submission of the complaint, because it is not a party to such claims before the ICJ. It will be more difficult for Poland to get the wreckage back as years go by due to the low chance that political relations with Russia will improve.

The implementation of the third objective of Poland's foreign policy towards Russia, i.e., repatriation of Poles living there, began to produce results. It manifested in legal and organisational changes that increased the number of people seeking repatriation. With regard to social and cultural relations, Polish-Russian contacts were further restricted. Poles travelled to Russia less often and viewed its policy negatively. The undertakings that were to bring closer Polish artistic work, by means of the Polish Institutes in Moscow and St. Petersburg, were small in scope. Film festivals, theatre performances, language courses, summer schools, and student exchanges were regular cultural initiatives. However, limiting Polish cultural days to cities outside Moscow is evidence of increasingly rare artistic contact with the Russian audience. Declining social and cultural relations will deepen the negative mutual perception of the respective countries' populations. Russian propaganda in its pro-government media, in which Poland—a NATO member and ally of the United States—is portrayed as a state threatening Russia, it has become a disturbing phenomenon. This could lead to an increase in reluctance towards Poles staying in Russia and, at the same time, discourage people of Polish descent from returning to their homeland.

In 2017, the conditions of Poland's dependence on Russian energy resources did not change significantly. In this respect, the decisions to import Russian coal were surprising, especially since it is a raw material whose extraction from domestic sources the Polish government indicates as one of the pillars of energy security. Importing cheaper Russian coal made the Polish mining sector unprofitable. Poland tries to reduce this dependence on Russia.<sup>56</sup> The LNG gas terminal constructed in Świnoujście will help to a small extent. But independence, in this respect, will be possible only after diversifying the sources of gas to the Polish market. Production on the Norwegian continental shelf and transport via the Baltic Pipe gas pipeline across the North Sea, through Denmark and the Baltic Sea is planned for the end of 2022.<sup>57</sup> However, one should take into account that in the face of attempts to become independent of Russian energy resources, Poland will be exposed to Russian propaganda and disinformation activities. For several years, Poland has been a place of increased activity of Russian intelligence, especially in the energy industry.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017..." *op. cit.*

<sup>57</sup> P. Stępiński, "Rosja: Polska nie zrezygnuje szybko z naszego gazu," *Biznesalert*, 29 January 2018, <http://biznesalert.pl>.

<sup>58</sup> In March, the court convicted Stanisław Szypowski of espionage for Russia and using the collected information to discredit the Polish energy sector. *4 lata więzienia dla Stanisława Sz. za szpiegostwo na rzecz Rosji*, PAP, 20 March 2017, [www.pap.pl](http://www.pap.pl); *Sąd w Warszawie siegdnia wyniesiet prigowor rossijaninu, obwiniaiemomu w szpionazhe*, 20 March 2017, <https://echo.msk.ru/news/1947520-echo.html>.

Trade exchange with Russia improved slightly and foreign direct investment of both countries increased slightly. This was related to the improvement of the economic situation in Europe. Politics, however, conditioned mutual economic relations. The Russian authorities gave publicity in media, for example, to the destruction of Poland-origin apple transports that were subject to restrictions. Some Polish producers bypassed the Russian embargo, which showed that the Russian market still needed Polish agricultural products.

The diagnosis of Russia's confrontational foreign policy requires long-term actions from the Polish authorities. They should be focused on strengthening state security, including missile defence, as well as the ability to quickly transfer allied forces to Poland. Dialogue with Russia is possible and necessary, provided that it adheres to the basic standards and principles of international law, above all to such important issues as respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of its neighbours.

# Poland's Policy Towards Ukraine

DANIEL SZELIGOWSKI\*

## Determinants

Poland's policy towards Ukraine in 2017 was influenced mainly by the prolonged dispute over historical issues.<sup>1</sup> Its culminating point was the introduction of a moratorium on the search and exhumation of the remains of Polish victims of wars and conflicts on Ukrainian territory. The decision was made in response to the removal of the monument to the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in Hruszowice (Podkarpackie Voivodship) by local authorities and representatives of Polish national circles. The Ukrainian authorities demanded its reconstruction. The Polish side, however, announced that the monument had been erected without proper permits, that its removal had been carried out in accordance with the law, and demanded the moratorium to be lifted. The negative reaction of the Polish authorities was also aroused by the opening of a memorial complex at the Veretsky Pass (Lviv region) in October, devoted to the fighters of the Carpathian Sich, who were murdered (as alleged by the inscription) by Poles and Hungarians in March 1939. The execution order issued by the Polish authorities is not confirmed by any historical sources. Meanwhile, the facility was opened personally by Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic integration, who granted the theory on the Polish war crime the nature of an official interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

The negative atmosphere of relations between Poland and Ukraine was also caused by a number of anti-Polish incidents which took place in 2017 on

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<sup>1</sup> Historical tensions between Poland and Ukraine emerged with new force in 2015. In one of the “de-communisation” laws adopted at that time by the Ukrainian parliament, UPA members were recognised as fighters for Ukraine’s independence, making it a crime to publicly insult them or undermine the legitimacy of their actions. Despite the promise made to the Polish authorities by Poroshenko, this act was not amended. In response, in July 2016, the Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland adopted resolutions recognising the Volhynia slaughter as genocide committed by Ukrainian nationalists on the citizens of the Second Republic. Two months later, the Verkhovna Rada adopted a counter-resolution in which it condemned Polish actions and considered them a manifestation of politicising history.

<sup>2</sup> Ł. Jasina, “New Memorial on Verecke Pass Raises Tensions,” *PISM Spotlight*, no. 62/2017, 18 October 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

Ukrainian territory. In January, a monument to Poles murdered in 1944 in the village of Huta Pieniacka was destroyed, and the Polish military cemetery in Bykownia was devastated. In March, the building of the General Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Lutsk came under fire. In May, an attempt was made to set fire to a Polish school in Mostyska, and in December, a Polish bus was damaged by an explosive charge near Lviv. It was not possible to identify all the perpetrators of these incidents. They were probably Russian provocations aimed at creating additional tensions between Poland and Ukraine.<sup>3</sup>

In January, the Mayor of Przemyśl, Robert Choma, was refused entry to Ukraine on the grounds that he allegedly supported the anti-Ukrainian marches (anti-Ukrainian slogans were shouted during the *March of the Orleńta Przemyskie i Lwowskie* in Przemyśl in December 2016). The Polish authorities considered this attitude to be an “unfriendly decision”, and announced a boycott of the Europe-Ukraine Forum in Rzeszów (27–28 January). Although the Ukrainian Security Service soon revoked Choma’s ban on entry, the situation contributed to a further increase in distrust between the authorities of both countries.

Poland’s policy towards Ukraine continued to be determined by the Russian occupation of the Crimean Peninsula and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. In 2017, more than 400,000 violations of the ceasefire in Donbas were reported, and around 600 people died, including an OSCE observer (the first to be killed in the conflict). The Normandy format discussions (involving Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia) did not lead to settlement of the situation, and in the second half of the year they reached an impasse. At the same time, negotiations between Russia and the United States were resumed. They gained new momentum in autumn, when Russia and Ukraine proposed the introduction of UN peacekeeping forces in Donbas.<sup>4</sup> Poland, as a future member of the UN Security Council, announced its support for the Ukrainian initiative.

An important condition of Polish policy towards Ukraine was also the development of its relations with the European Union. In June, Ukrainian citizens were granted visa-free travel, while in September the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement entered into force. Both objectives had been goals of Polish diplomacy. The deepening of economic cooperation between Poland and Ukraine was influenced by the process of stabilisation of Ukraine, which for the second consecutive year recorded economic growth of 2.5%. On the list of Poland’s most important export

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<sup>3</sup> This is indicated by the fact that people detained by the Ukrainian services for attacking the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Lutsk were associated with activists of the Party of Regions.

<sup>4</sup> A. Dynier, D. Szeligowski, “Prospects for a UN Peacekeeping Mission to Donbas,” *PISM Bulletin*, no. 94 (1034), 5 October 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

and import partners in 2016, Ukraine was ranked 14<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, respectively, and the level of bilateral trade was less than PLN 24 billion.

### Aims and Objectives

In 2017, the Polish government continued its policy towards Ukraine. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Witold Waszczykowski considered the development of the Polish-Ukrainian partnership to be a key policy task, pointing out that a politically and economically strong Ukraine was a prerequisite for security in Europe.<sup>5</sup> The main goal was to strengthen Ukrainian stability and security in response to the continuation of Russian aggression.<sup>6</sup> The priority in this respect was to deepen cooperation between NATO and Ukraine at the political and military levels. At the same time, Poland aimed at reinforcing bilateral military cooperation with Ukraine, especially between the defence industries of both countries.<sup>7</sup> In December, new Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki announced his intention to deepen relations with Ukraine and give them a new quality.<sup>8</sup>

Poland declared its continued support for Ukraine's pro-European aspirations, consistently advocating in favour of granting Ukraine EU membership and visa-free travel. The Eastern Partnership was to play an important role. In connection with the EaP summit scheduled for November 2017, the Polish government announced steps to give new impetus to the initiative, so that it would bring practical benefits to citizens. Poland also intended to continue providing expert and technical support to the Ukrainian authorities in the reform process, especially in the areas of decentralisation and the fight against corruption.

In mid-2017, the Polish authorities announced that they would take additional steps towards a peaceful settlement of the situation in Donbas, in view of obtaining non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council in 2018–2019. They supported the deployment of the UN peacekeeping mission in the parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions under Russian control.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> W. Waszczykowski, "Warszawa chce sojuszu z Kijowem," *Rzeczpospolita*, 17 October 2017, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

<sup>6</sup> "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017)," for more, see p. 13 in this volume.

<sup>7</sup> *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, September 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>8</sup> "Exposé premiera Mateusza Morawieckiego—stenogram," 12 December 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>9</sup> *Wypowiedź Prezydenta RP dla mediów po spotkaniu z Prezydentem Ukrainy w Charkowie*, 13 December 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

Historical issues were to occupy an important place in Poland's policy towards Ukraine. The Polish government intended to continue its efforts to resolve these issues, stressing that the problems in this area resulted from the lack of goodwill of the Ukrainian authorities. In particular, the need for the Ukrainian side to lift the moratorium on search and exhumation was pointed out. At the same time, Waszczykowski announced that he would take steps to establish a Polish-Ukrainian Centre of Good Neighbourhood, which would serve the rapprochement of both nations.

### Political Relations

The prolonged dispute over historical issues led the Polish authorities to further tighten their position. In early February, just over a month after the visit of Ukraine's President Petr Poroshenko to Warsaw (in December 2016), Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of Poland's ruling party, told *Gazeta Polska* that "the level of ignorance by the authorities in Kyiv of the issues related to the genocide committed against our citizens in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia, and often falsification of their true course, glorifying the perpetrators, has exceeded the limits of acceptability".<sup>10</sup>

The negative reaction of the Polish side was aroused especially by the aforementioned moratorium. The Polish authorities unsuccessfully demanded its withdrawal. During his visit to Kyiv on 22–23 October, Piotr Gliński, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture, proposed to move the discussions from the level of the Institutes of National Remembrance of both countries to the level of the Intergovernmental Commission for the Protection and Return of Cultural Property. However, the idea was not accepted by the Ukrainian side. In response, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated work to ban Ukrainian officials "who remain extremely anti-Polish in their positions" from entering the territory of Poland.<sup>11</sup> In November, Sviatoslav Sheremeta, a secretary of the Ukrainian State Commission for Commemoration of War Victims and Political Repression, co-responsible for issuing the exhumation ban, was refused entry into Poland.

President Andrzej Duda visited Ukraine on 13 December. His discussions with Poroshenko were to "make the Ukrainian side aware of the negative state of today's Polish-Ukrainian relations".<sup>12</sup> The meeting was held in a tense atmosphere and was mainly devoted to attempts to break the deadlock in bilateral relations in

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<sup>10</sup> "Kaczyński o Ukrainie: z Banderą do Europy nie wejdziecie," *Polsat News*, 7 February 2017, [www.polsatnews.pl](http://www.polsatnews.pl).

<sup>11</sup> "Czarna lista Waszczykowskiego. Szef IPN nie wjedzie do Polski," *Dziennik*, 9 November 2017, [www.dziennik.pl](http://www.dziennik.pl).

<sup>12</sup> *Minister Szczerki o celach wizyty Prezydenta RP na Ukrainie*, 13 December 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

connection with the ban on exhumation. The presidents then agreed to continue discussions at the level of deputy prime ministers.

Despite historical tensions, contacts between the two countries' diplomatic ministries intensified. On 1 March, Waszczykowski and his British counterpart Boris Johnson visited Kyiv. Discussions with Poroshenko, Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodymyr Hroisman, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Ivanna Klymush-Tsintsadze, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Pavlo Klimkin, focused mainly on security issues and cooperation between the EU and Ukraine. Two weeks later, Klimkin visited Warsaw and discussed bilateral relations with Duda and Waszczykowski. It was then that the Polish-Ukrainian Partnership Forum, which was resumed after a four-year break, was inaugurated. Historical dialogue and security issues were then the subject of discussions between Deputy Foreign Minister Bartosz Cichocki, Deputy Foreign Minister Olena Zerkal, Deputy Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council Oleksandr Lytvynenko, and First Deputy Minister of Culture Svitlana Fomenko, in Kyiv on 19 September. Prospects for bilateral cooperation in connection with Poland's becoming a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council were discussed on 20 October in Kyiv, by Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister Joanna Wronecka and Ukraine's Deputy Foreign Minister Serhiy Kyslytsia.

Both ministries also conducted consultations at the level of departmental heads. On 18 May, bilateral relations were discussed, and on 14 September, security policy was discussed.

Waszczykowski paid a working visit to Lviv on 4–5 November. He held a discussion at the General Consulate of the Republic of Poland on the state of relations between Poland and Ukraine, and met representatives of the Polish community. He also entered into dialogue with local authorities, including the Mayor of Lviv, Andriy Sadovy. The visit aroused a number of controversies in Ukraine due to the Waszczykowski's strong rhetoric towards the authorities of that country and his alleged withdrawal from plans to visit the Museum of the Remembrance of the Victims of Occupation Regimes.<sup>13</sup>

Polish-Ukrainian discussions were also held on the occasion of multilateral events. Duda and Poroshenko discussed bilateral relations on 18 February at the Munich Security Conference, and on 19 September at the UN General Assembly in New York. The foreign ministers met on 31 March in Brussels, on the occasion of the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission, and on 31 August in Budapest, during the summit of the Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership countries.

<sup>13</sup> "Waszczykowski we Lwowie nie zwiedził Muzeum Pamięci Ofiar Okupacyjnych Reżimów," *Studium Europy Wschodniej UW*, 7 November 2017, [www.studium.uw.edu.pl](http://www.studium.uw.edu.pl).

Moreover, on 18 September, trilateral discussions between Poland, Sweden and Ukraine were held at the level of foreign ministers, on the occasion of the UN General Assembly in New York.

Active cooperation between parliaments also continued. In January, a delegation of deputies of the Supreme Council of Ukraine visited Warsaw at the invitation of the Polish-Ukrainian Parliamentary Group. Then, on 27–28 March, the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Polish, Lithuanian and Ukrainian Parliamentary Assemblies was organised. Regular contacts were maintained, especially between Marek Kuchciński, Speaker of the Sejm, and Andriy Parubiy, Head of the Supreme Council, who held a series of meetings devoted to bilateral relations and cooperation in the Carpathian region. Ukraine declared its support for the efforts of the Polish authorities to develop a macro-regional strategy for the region. What's more, the Speaker of the Senate, Stanisław Karczewski, visited Ukraine on 12–13 October and spoke to representatives of Polish communities in Kyiv and Kharkiv.

Despite the efforts of the Ukrainian side, the prime ministers of both countries did not meet. Morawiecki had only a short telephone conversation with Hroisman shortly after his inauguration.

Poland consistently supported Ukraine's European integration, advocating the fastest possible conclusion of ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and its inclusion in the visa-free travel regime with the EU. On 15 May, a meeting of the Friends of Ukraine Group was held in Brussels on the initiative of Poland.<sup>14</sup> The Polish authorities then actively engaged in preparations for the Eastern Partnership summit in Brussels, co-organising almost all related initiatives. Poland promoted the development of transport and energy connections within the EaP, support for youth from partner states, and increased funding for information activities conducted by the EU. The majority of Polish postulates were included in the final declaration of the EaP summit.<sup>15</sup> However, according to the Polish authorities, the declaration should be even more ambitious and do more to confirm the European aspirations of the EaP countries.<sup>16</sup>

In its policy towards Ukraine, the Polish government regularly stressed the importance of development aid. On 16 February in Kyiv, Wronecka discussed Polish development and humanitarian aid with representatives of the Ukrainian authorities. Then, on 27–28 July, she met representatives of organisations

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<sup>14</sup> *Minister Witold Waszczykowski na posiedzeniu Rady do Spraw Zagranicznych (FAC) w Brukseli, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Kijowie, 17 May 2017, [www.kijow.msz.gov.pl](http://www.kijow.msz.gov.pl).*

<sup>15</sup> "Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit," Brussels, 24 November 2017, [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu).

<sup>16</sup> *Premier Beata Szydło: Będziemy ambasadorami krajów Partnerstwa Wschodniego, 24 November 2017 r., [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).*

implementing projects financed by Polish development aid in Lviv. An agreement was signed with the United Nations Development Programme Office, concerning the second edition of the project promoting entrepreneurship among internally displaced persons in Ukraine. Until then, Poland had allocated PLN 5 million for this purpose. On 31 August, Cichocki participated in the opening of primary school No. 6 in Avdiivka (Donetsk region), which had been renovated and equipped with Polish funds. Ukraine was one of the 10 priority support directions for Polish development aid in the years 2016–2020. Poland helped the Ukrainian side to decentralise, fight corruption and develop crisis management systems. In 2017, a total of nearly PLN 230 million was allocated to projects for Ukraine.<sup>17</sup>

The Polish authorities were concerned about the new education law adopted by the Ukrainian parliament in early September, which changed the conditions for teaching in the languages of national minorities. Poland decided not to criticise it openly. On 17 October, the Minister of National Education, Anna Zalewska, visited Kyiv and held discussions on the subject with the Minister of Education of Ukraine, Liliia Hrynevych. As a result, a week later, a joint declaration was signed on ensuring the right of people belonging to national minorities (the Polish minority in Ukraine and the Ukrainian minority in Poland) to learn their mother tongue and be taught in their mother tongue. The existing provisions concerning teaching guarantees contained in bilateral agreements were confirmed. Ukraine also undertook to consult representatives of the Polish minority on the provisions regarding the new law. Poland rejected Hungary's proposal to send a joint letter to the Ukrainian authorities requesting withdrawal from the adopted legislation.

It is also worth noting that, on 29 March, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to temporarily close Polish consular missions in Ukraine. This was related to a shooting at the consulate in Lutsk on the night of 28 to 29 March. The Polish authorities made the reopening of the offices conditional on the Ukrainian side providing them with adequate protection. Eventually, they resumed their activities on 4 April.

### **Military Cooperation**

Security issues played an important role in Polish policy towards Ukraine. On 12 April, the Minister of National Defence Antoni Macierewicz discussed bilateral cooperation in the defence sector with the head of Ukrainian diplomacy, Pavlo Klimkin. On 22 June, a delegation of Ukrainian armed forces took part in a meeting of the Chiefs of Staff of the Visegrad Group in Kraków. Then, the Ukrainian Defence Minister Stepan Poltorak visited Warsaw on 14–15 August.

<sup>17</sup> Data of the Polish MFA's Development Cooperation Department.

The discussions concerned, among other things, the prospects for cooperation between the defence industries of Poland and Ukraine. A week later, Macierewicz participated in the celebrations of Ukraine's Independence Day. He held discussions with Poroshenko and Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine Oleksandr Turchynov. At the end of August, the Chief of General Staff of the Polish Army, General Leszek Surawski, visited Ukraine, where he took part in consultations in connection with the Russian-Belarusian *Zapad 2017* exercises scheduled for September. The ministers of defence met again on 5 October in Lublin on the occasion of the second anniversary of the establishment of the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian LITPOLUKRBRIG brigade.

At the same time, Poland sought to deepen practical cooperation with Ukraine in the field of defence. On 26 October, in Warsaw, the NATO-Ukraine platform for counteracting hybrid threats was initiated. Ukrainian units took part in DRAGON-17 exercises, on 25-29 September in Poland. Polish soldiers also continued to train Ukrainian troops at the training ground in Yavorovo near Lviv as part of the International Joint Training Group - Ukraine. During Macierewicz's visit to Kyiv, the decision was made regarding participation of Ukrainian Units in the EU Visegrad Battle Group, scheduled for 2019.

Great importance was attached to the development of cooperation between the defence industries of both countries. On 26 June, in Warsaw, an agreement was signed between the Industrial Optics Centre and Ukrainian armaments plant Ukrinmash for the supply of observation and targeting devices for Ukrainian combat vehicles. During the visit of the Ukrainian delegation to the International Defence Industry Exhibition in Kielce (5 September), a memorandum of cooperation between the Polish Armaments Group and the state-owned company Ukroboronprom was signed.

During the Weapons and Security 2017 exhibition in Kyiv, the Deputy Minister of National Defence Bartosz Kownacki, on behalf of the Polish Ministry of Defence, signed a "declaration of will to continue cooperation" between the defence ministries of both countries.<sup>18</sup>

### **Economic Relations**

The year 2017 was a breakthrough for economic cooperation between Poland and Ukraine. The continuation of economic growth in Ukraine and the deepening of its integration with the EU within the free trade area (DCFTA), initiated at the beginning of 2016, allowed an increase in trade to a record level of PLN 27.7

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<sup>18</sup> *Zacieśnienie współpracy z Ukrainą*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 10 November 2017, [www.mon.gov.pl](http://www.mon.gov.pl).

billion (the highest result before then had been PLN 25.6 billion, recorded in 2012). Polish exports to Ukraine increased by over 20% and reached PLN 18.2 billion, the highest level to date. However, only 2% of Polish exports went to the Ukrainian market. As a result, Ukraine maintained its low 14<sup>th</sup> position on the list of recipients of Polish goods. The dominating products among Polish exports were machinery and mechanical devices, vehicles, chemical industry products and plastics. Poland imported mainly base metals, mineral products, wood and wooden articles, and products of plant origin.

Table 1.

**Poland's Trade with Ukraine (PLN billion)**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total	25.6	25	20.1	19	23.7	27.7
Exports	17.2	18	13.1	12.4	15.1	18.2
Imports	8.5	7	7	6.6	8.6	9.5
Balance	8.7	11	6,1	5.8	6.5	8.7

Source: Central Statistical Office (data exclude trade of services; value of imports of goods by country of dispatch).

Despite unfavourable conditions for business performance (poorly functioning judiciary, excessive bureaucracy and the high level of corruption), the involvement of Polish entrepreneurs in the Ukrainian market also increased. According to data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the level of Polish direct investments in Ukraine reached \$815.5 million in 2017 and has increased by more than \$50 million since the beginning of the year. However, it still accounted for just over 2% of total FDI in Ukraine.<sup>19</sup> According to NBP data, Polish direct investments in this country accounted for less than 1% of all Polish investments abroad.

The political impulse to further deepen bilateral economic cooperation was given by the meeting of the Polish-Ukrainian Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation, organised for the first time after a five-year break. The meeting, chaired by Mateusz Morawiecki, the Minister of Development and Finance, and Stepan Kubiv, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, was held on 21 April in Warsaw. It concerned, among other things, trade and investments, energy and infrastructure cooperation and the development of entrepreneurship. In December, a meeting of Deputy Minister of Development Adam Hamryszczak and the Deputy Minister of Economic Development and

<sup>19</sup> Data do not include areas outside the Ukrainian government's control: the Crimean Peninsula annexed by Russia with the city of Sevastopol, and the territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions occupied by irregular Russian armed units.

Trade of Ukraine, Mykhailo Titarchuk, was held in Lviv. They participated in the meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine. The new edition of the programme had been inaugurated two months earlier in Rzeszów. The conference, chaired by Hamryszczak, was attended by representatives of the border regions of the three countries. The development of economic cooperation was also discussed during the international Ukrainian Business Day, on 18 May in Warsaw, with the participation of Deputy Minister of Development Jerzy Kwieciński.

In connection with the inclusion of Ukraine in the EU's visa-free travel regime, one of the main issues in bilateral relations, affecting economic issues and social contacts, was the development and modernisation of the common border infrastructure. In 2015, the Polish authorities granted €100 million tied aid credit to Ukraine for this purpose. The use of this credit was discussed by Morawiecki and Kubiv on the occasion of the April meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation. The credit was also the subject of discussions between the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Jakub Skiba, and the first Deputy Minister of Regional Development, Construction and Municipal and Housing Management Viacheslav Nehoda. These meetings were to help solve a significant problem of too few border crossings, relative to needs, between Poland and Ukraine, resulting in the long waiting time to cross the border.

The low capacity of border infrastructure contributed to the dynamic development of air and rail connections between Poland and Ukraine. Due to growing demand for transport services (resulting from, among other things, the increased inflow of Ukrainian economic migrants to Poland), the Polish national airline LOT became one of the largest carriers in Ukraine, serving several dozen flights between Poland and Ukraine every week. In 2017, it carried almost 400,000 passengers on this route, which was an increase of over 50% compared to the previous year.<sup>20</sup> The launch of the Przemyśl-Kyiv connection by Ukrainian state railways in December 2016 was also a success. In August 2017, an additional connection on this route was established. In December, a direct railway connection between Przemyśl and Odessa was launched. The two countries also intend to work together to expand road connections. In October, in Przemyśl, the ministers of infrastructure Andrzej Adamczyk and Volodymyr Omelian signed a memorandum of cooperation on the construction of the Via Carpathia route.

An important area of bilateral economic cooperation was the energy sector. In 2017, the Polish PGNiG company sold over 700 million m<sup>3</sup> of gas to the Ukrainian market, twice as much as in the previous year, which accounted for almost 5% of the

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<sup>20</sup> "LOT rośnie na Ukrainie," *Rynek Lotniczy*, 14 March 2018, [www.rynek-lotniczy.pl](http://www.rynek-lotniczy.pl).

total Ukraine's gas imports in that period (14.1 billion m<sup>3</sup>). PGNiG also concluded a contract with the Ukrainian transmission network operator Ukrtransgaz, for the storage and transmission of gas.<sup>21</sup> Both countries aim for expansion of their gas connections, the current capacity of which is approximately 4.4 billion m<sup>3</sup> (including approx. 1.5 billion m<sup>3</sup> from Poland to Ukraine). The discussion on this subject was held by the Government Plenipotentiary for Strategic Energy Infrastructure Piotr Naimski, and the First Deputy Minister of Energy and Coal Industry of Ukraine Halyna Karp. The cooperation agreement for the construction of the new Hermanowice-Bilche-Volytsia gas pipeline, with a planned capacity of approx. 5 billion m<sup>3</sup>, was signed at the end of 2016 by the transmission system operators of Poland and Ukraine (Gaz-System and Ukrtransgaz), but work has not yet started. What's more, discussions were held on the possible export of electricity through Ukraine to Poland as part of the energy bridge between the Khmelnytsky nuclear power plant in Netishyn and Rzeszów. In October, a Ukrainian delegation headed by the Minister of Energy and Coal Industry Ihor Nasalyk, visited Warsaw on this matter. In November, a Polish delegation, headed by the Deputy Minister of Energy Andrzej Piotrowski, went to Ukraine to visit the plant. However, the Polish side was sceptical about the Ukrainian proposal, arguing that it would be a long and complicated project.

### Social and Cultural Relations

An important element of relations between Poland and Ukraine are the contacts between societies. Despite the fact that Ukraine was included in the EU visa-free regime, the Polish consular and diplomatic posts issued over 1.15 million visas to Ukrainian citizens in 2017.<sup>22</sup> The presence of Ukrainians on the Polish labour market has increased steadily. In 2017, over 1.7 million declarations of intent to employ Ukrainian citizens were issued (an increase of about 500,000 compared to the previous year). Ukrainians also constitute the largest group of foreign students at Polish higher educational studies. In the academic year 2016/2017, more than 35,000 Ukrainians studied in Poland, which accounted for over 54% of the total number of foreign students.<sup>23</sup> The Polish-Ukrainian Youth Exchange Council continued its activity. Both sides allocated a total of about PLN 4 million for the implementation of joint projects. However, the growing number of interpersonal contacts was accompanied by a decrease in the sympathy of Poles

<sup>21</sup> PGNiG ma dostęp do ukraińskich magazynów gazu, PGNiG, 30 October 2017, [www.pgnig.pl](http://www.pgnig.pl).

<sup>22</sup> "1,15 mln wiz dla Ukraińców w 2017 mimo zniesienia obowiązku," *Rzeczpospolita*, 23 April 2018, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

<sup>23</sup> Study in Poland, "Studenci zagraniczni w Polsce 2017," October 2017, Fundacja Edukacyjna Perspektywy, [www.studyinpoland.pl](http://www.studyinpoland.pl).

for Ukrainians. In a CBOS survey of March 2018, only 24% of Poles declared a positive attitude towards Ukrainians, while 40% declared a negative attitude.<sup>24</sup> A year earlier, 36% of Poles declared sympathy, while 32% declared dislike.<sup>25</sup> This change was probably due to historical tensions.

Polish-Ukrainian cultural cooperation developed actively. In May, during the “Book Arsenal” fair in Kyiv, a Polish-British exhibition devoted to the work of Joseph Conrad, born in Berdychiv (Zhytomyr region), was opened. In September, the Polish Religious Song Festival was inaugurated in the Kamianets-Podilsky Cathedral. The subsequent editions of the Polish Theatre Spring (in Lviv) and the Review of the Latest Polish Films “Pod wysokim zamkiem” (in Lviv and Iwano-Frankivsk) enjoyed great interest. Moreover, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute started the Open Poland project, of which aim is to create a platform for cultural exchange. Ukraine is one of the priority countries within this undertaking.

An important area of cooperation is Polish support for the protection of cultural heritage facilities in Ukraine. In 2017 The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland allocated over PLN 4.5 million for this purpose, supporting, among other things, renovation works in the cathedral basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lviv and in the local Armenian Cathedral.<sup>26</sup>

The work of the Polish-Ukrainian Historians Forum, operating under the auspices of the Institutes of National Remembrance, was also continued. The fourth and fifth meetings (reactivated in 2015) were devoted to the Polish and Ukrainian issues in the programmes and ideologies of the underground of the times of war in both countries, and to events in the Chełm region in the years 1942–1944. Soon, however, there was also an impasse at this level. In November, Professor Waldemar Rezmer resigned from the position of the co-chairman of the forum, justifying his decision by claiming that the Ukrainian side relativised history and twisted it for political ends. Neither institute of national remembrance issued an official statement on this matter, although the President of the Polish Institute, Dr. Jarosław Szarek, stated a few days before this decision that the activities of the forum should be continued, but not at the expense of historical truth.

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<sup>24</sup> “Stosunek do innych narodów,” survey report of the Public Opinion Research Centre no. 37/2018, March 2018, [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl).

<sup>25</sup> “Stosunek do innych narodów,” survey report of the Public Opinion Research Centre no. 21/2017, February 2017, [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl).

<sup>26</sup> *Bryfing Posła Jana Piekło*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Kijowie, 17 April 2018, [www.kijow.msz.gov.pl](http://www.kijow.msz.gov.pl).

## Assessment

In its policy towards Ukraine, the main objective of Polish diplomacy remains to increase the stability and security of the country in the face of Russian aggression. In 2017, Poland made progress in achieving this objective, as deepening Ukraine's practical cooperation with NATO and striving to strengthen Ukraine's defence capabilities were successful. What's more, bilateral military cooperation developed dynamically, including between defence industries. So far, it has not been affected by a prolonged dispute over historical issues. It is also worth noting that the rapid growth of trade is maintained. Economic cooperation is not currently a priority in Poland's policy towards Ukraine, but its importance will grow steadily. In the medium term, it will be particularly important to increase the presence of Polish investors in Ukraine. Due to the short period of time, Morawiecki's announcements about injecting new momentum to bilateral relations, thereby confirming a willingness to strengthen cooperation despite the generally unfavourable atmosphere in political relations, have not been implemented.

Ukraine's relations with the EU have also been further deepened. The ratification and entry into force of the Association Agreement have been completed. What's more, Ukraine has been granted visa-free travel with the EU. The initiation of these instruments has been the subject of efforts by the Polish authorities at the EU forum for almost a decade. Although efforts to confirm the European aspirations of the countries of the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood in the declaration from the Eastern Partnership summit failed, practical cooperation issues such as transport, energy and people-to-people contacts have become more important than ever before. The achievement of this objective (especially the development of infrastructure links) will, however, depend on the level of funding allocated by the EU for cooperation with neighbouring countries under the new multiannual financial framework for 2021–2027.

However, successful examples of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation were overshadowed by a dispute over historical issues. The tightening of the Polish position again proved ineffective.<sup>27</sup> The moratorium on search and exhumation was not lifted, and the Polish-Ukrainian Centre of Good Neighbourhood was not established. The development of an action plan for Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation, on which work was undertaken within the Consultative Committee of the presidents of Poland and Ukraine, also failed. The dispute led to a further deterioration of political relations. They were not improved by symbolic gestures

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<sup>27</sup> For more see: D. Szeligowski, "Poland's Policy towards Ukraine," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2016*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2019.

such as the opening of a square named after the Ukrainian poet Vasyl Stus in Warsaw, John Paul II Street in Kyiv, or a plaque commemorating the late President Lech Kaczynski in Zhytomyr. The use of clear, firm rhetoric by both sides resulted in the public perception of relations between Poland and Ukraine being reduced to historical issues alone. This had a negative impact on mutual perceptions. In the coming years, historical issues will continue to be the subject of dispute between Poland and Ukraine.

# Poland's Policy Towards Belarus

ANNA MARIA DYNER\*

## Determinants

The factors that conventionally determine Polish policy towards Belarus are the common border, the security situation in the region, respective minorities living in both countries, historical, cultural and linguistic ties, and the shared neighbourhood with Russia, whose international activities have a significant impact on Polish-Belarusian political and economic relations.

In 2017, the improvement of relations between the EU and Belarus, the policy of Belarusian authorities aimed at maintaining proper relations with European partners, including active participation in the work of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and commitment to a peaceful solution to the situation in Ukraine, were also highly significant.

Poland also used its presidency of the Visegrad Group to conduct policy towards the EaP countries including Belarus. According to the assumptions of the Polish presidency, the Eastern Neighbourhood countries were a priority area of cooperation.

The joint Russian-Belarusian *Zapad 2017* military exercises did not alter Polish-Belarusian relations, although the manoeuvres scenario in which there was an attack against Belarus conducted from Polish, Lithuanian, and Latvian territory and a retaliatory strike jointly by the Russian-Belarusian forces, gave pause. Nevertheless, these manoeuvres once again showed that Russia treats Belarusian territory in the military sphere as its own, which is important for the ongoing debate within NATO on the security of the Eastern Flank countries, including Poland.<sup>1</sup>

The sanctions on Russia and countersanctions remained an obstacle for economic contacts. The impediments in particular affected trade in imported food products from EU countries, which Russia embargoed. The Russian side often accused Belarus of re-exporting goods from the EU, questioning whether

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<sup>1</sup> See more: E. Ferris, “The True Purpose of Russia’s Zapad Military Exercises,” *Foreign Affairs*, 4 October 2017, [www.foreignaffairs.com](http://www.foreignaffairs.com).

they had been processed in that country as claimed. Additional quotas on imports from Poland were introduced for phytosanitary reasons by Belarus. Cases of avian influenza in January 2017 in Poland led Belarus to limit the import of poultry from Dolnośląskie Voivodship. In February, positive tests for African Swine Fever (ASF) gave rise to a temporary ban on imports of pork from three Polish Voivodships: Mazowieckie, Podlaskie and Lubelskie.

In 2017, to a lesser extent than in previous years, Poland's policy towards Belarus was determined by the internal situation in that country, specifically the relative improvement with regard to opposition circles (among them, the authorities had practically stopped punishing participants of even unregistered demonstrations) and the Polish minority living in that country.

### **Aims and Objectives**

According to the assumptions of Polish foreign policy presented by Minister of Foreign Affairs Witold Waszczykowski in a speech in the Sejm on 9 February 2017,<sup>2</sup> the most important goal of Poland's policy towards Belarus was to maintain the status quo in bilateral relations, which translated into Polish diplomacy maintaining the level and intensity of contacts achieved in 2016. As in previous years, the objectives of Polish policy were to rectify the situation of the Union of Poles in Belarus and the development of cross-border and economic cooperation. Poland declared its readiness to continue work as part of the Polish-Belarusian Historical Commission. A further task of Polish diplomacy was to supplement the bilateral legal and treaty base, primarily with regulations related to the functioning of the common border.

At the same time, the catalogue of aims and objectives with regard to Polish actions towards Belarus was significantly limited by the undemocratic political system in Belarus and Russia's policy towards that country. Both of these overarching factors mean that Poland had limited capabilities of achieving its objectives, which still remain to regulate the situation of minorities in Belarus, develop cross-border cooperation, and support civil-society institutions. What's more, cooperation in the area of security, but also with respect to historical issues, is significantly hindered by Belarus remaining in close alliance with Russia, which raises questions about the degree of independence in actions by the Belarusian side.

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<sup>2</sup> "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017)," see p. 13 in this volume.

## Political Relations

In 2017, the dynamics of visits at intergovernmental and ministerial levels and meetings of the ambassadors of both countries with representatives of the authorities of the host countries were maintained.

On 16 January in Warsaw, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Marek Ziółkowski and Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus in Poland Aleksandr Awiarjanau discussed political, economic, and cross-border cooperation. The meeting also served to summarise the results of the first official visit of the Belarusian group of parliamentarians in Poland, which was held in Warsaw in December 2016, as well as to discuss the possibilities of greater involvement in mutual relations with regard to business circles and local governments. On 19 January, the chairman of the Council of the Republic (the upper house of the Belarusian parliament), Mikhail Miasnikovich, met with the Polish ambassador, Konrad Pawlik. They discussed the possibilities of improving economic relations and regional cooperation.

Consultations at the level of the directors of the respective MFAs' territorial departments were held on 27 February in Warsaw. On the other hand, on 15 March, Deputy Minister Ziółkowski visited Minsk and participated in a meeting of deputy ministers of the Eastern Partnership countries and the Visegrad Group (V4). During a press conference summing up the meeting, Ziółkowski indicated that the EaP countries and V4 should strengthen cooperation. During the visit, he also discussed the preparation of an agreement on cooperation in information and media with the Minister of Information of Belarus Lilia Ananicz. The signing of the pact was proposed by the Belarusian side, and its purpose was to, among other things, increase the share of Polish and Belarusian mass media in each other's media markets. On 12 April during a meeting in Warsaw of the foreign ministers of the V4 and EaP countries, a discussion was held between Waszczykowski and his Belarusian counterpart Uladzimir Makiej on relations between Belarus and the EU, among other topics.

On 20-21 April, Polish Minister of Health Konstanty Radziwiłł visited Belarus. Together with Belarussian Minister of Health Walery Małaszka, they signed an intergovernmental memorandum on cooperation in health care.

Further Belarusian-Polish bilateral consultations of the MFAs at the level of the directors of territorial departments were held in Minsk on 22 September, and consultations between the justice ministries of the two countries took place on 27 September, during which cooperation possibilities for 2018-2019 were discussed.

As in previous years, parliamentary contacts were also of great importance. From 30 January to 2 February, a delegation of Belarusian parliamentarians visited Poland. They met with representatives of the Sejm, the Senate, and members of the Polish-Belarusian parliamentary group. Representatives of the Council of the Republic and Polish Senate signed a cooperation agreement between the institutions. The Belarussian deputies also met with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Krzysztof Jurgiel and Deputy Minister Ziółkowski. Visits of Polish MPs and senators in Belarus were very intensive. On 10-13 April, a delegation of Polish parliamentarians was hosted in Belarus, headed by Adam Andruszkiewicz, chairman of the Polish-Belarusian interparliamentary group. Polish MPs met with Bolesław Pirsztuk, the chairman of the Belarusian working group for contacts with the Polish parliament. In May, the Speaker of the Belarussian House of Representatives participated in discussions of the presidents of Central and Eastern European parliaments that were held in Warsaw. On the other hand, another delegation of Polish parliamentarians visited Belarus on 29-31 August. The delegation was headed by Sejm Deputy Speaker Ryszard Terlecki, who emphasised the importance of cooperation between Poland and Belarus, pointing out that both countries have a common history and culture. The delegation of Polish parliamentarians also took part in a series of meetings with the Polish minority largely inhabiting the Grodno region. In November, a meeting of the interparliamentary committee of the Central European Initiative was held in Minsk.<sup>3</sup>

A march in honour of Romuald Rajs, a Polish post-war partisan codenamed “Bury”, organised by nationalist circles on 26 February 2017 in Hajnówka, provoked hostile reactions. Belarusian deputies wrote in their statement that “glorifying the persons who were responsible for murdering Belarusians may cause Polish-Belarusian tensions”. The Belarusian MFA also expressed its concerns with regard to the destruction of monuments of the Red Army in Poland, stressing that some of the fallen soldiers commemorated were Belarusians.

In 2017, Belarus’ efforts to increase military cooperation with Poland had a positive impact on the dynamics of mutual relations. This included meetings of Ministry of Defence officials with Polish diplomats,<sup>4</sup> as well as actions taken by Belarusian diplomacy before the *Zapad 2017 (West 2017)* exercises—Belarus fulfilled all international obligations related to conducting manoeuvres of this scale

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<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting the growing activity of the Belarusian parliament on the international arena as a consequence of Belarus applying for observer status in the Parliamentary Assembly of Baltic Sea States Organisations.

<sup>4</sup> *Biélarus’ i Polska obsudili pierspiektivy wzaimodiejstwija w wojennoj sferie*, Biéłta, 27 March 2017, [www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-polsha-obsudili-perspektivy-vzaimodejstvija-v-voennoj-sfere-239546-2017](http://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-polsha-obsudili-perspektivy-vzaimodejstvija-v-voennoj-sfere-239546-2017).

and nature on its territory. In July, Belarus invited observers from OSCE countries. Belarusian diplomacy also fully informed relevant countries about the planned course of the exercises, emphasising they were defensive in nature. However, much controversy arose concerning the manoeuvres scenario, which assumed an attack on Belarus from the territory of Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, and a counterattack against arbitrary opponents. The exercises were also accompanied by discussions both in Poland and in other Alliance countries regarding the possibility of Belarus maintaining independence in the event of a possible conflict between Russia and NATO members.<sup>5</sup> The manoeuvres themselves, however, had no negative impact on the political and military relations between Poland and Belarus.

In 2017, the Belarusian military participated in specialist training courses in Poland and Germany in fulfilling obligations arising from arms-control agreements. Within the framework of military cooperation resulting from OSCE Vienna Document resolutions on confidence and security building measures of 1999,<sup>6</sup> the inspectors from Poland and Czechia visited the 336<sup>th</sup> Missile-Artillery Brigade on 12 January. What's more, the inspector from Poland joined a multinational group (Germany, Italy, the U.S., Ukraine, Czechia, Canada) inspecting selected units of ground forces on 16-19 January. A similar inspection in May 2017 was carried out by Belarusian military personnel in Poland. A meeting of representatives of the armed forces of Poland and Belarus was held in July in Warsaw in which the main topic was cooperation on arms control. Delegations from Poland, Italy, and the UK also supervised the operational readiness of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Independent Guards Air Assault Brigade, which Belarus appointed to participate in UN peacekeeping operations. In accordance with the Treaty on Open Skies, a Polish-Italian inspection team carried out an observation flight over the territory of Belarus. On 11-13 September, based on provisions of the Vienna Document, a military inspection was carried out by a Polish delegation in Belarus. In turn, observers from Belarus monitored the course of the *Dragon-17*

<sup>5</sup> See more: "Zapad 2017 and Euro-Atlantic security," *NATO Review Magazine*, 14 December 2017, [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int). See also: M. Świerczyński, "Czemu służą manewry wojskowe Zapad-17?," *Polityka*, 12 September 2017, [www.polityka.pl](http://www.polityka.pl).

<sup>6</sup> The Vienna Document on confidence and security building measures was signed on 16 November 1999. It supplements and develops the previous editions of this agreement of 1990 and 1994. It provides for transfer of annual information on conventional armed forces, including their organisation and armament as well as defence planning. It also introduced a system of early notification of specific types of military activities and verification mechanisms through evaluation visits to military units as well as inspections and observations of military manoeuvres. What's more, it provides for consultation mechanisms to dispel fears of states about unusual activity of conventional armed forces. Apart from the agreement binding on a European scale, it contains a system of regional and bilateral agreements on CSBMs (Poland has agreements for additional CSBMs with Ukraine and Belarus). C.f.: *Kontrola zbrojeń konwencjonalnych oraz środki budowania zaufania i bezpieczeństwa*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, <https://www.ms.gov.pl>.

exercises that took place in Poland. Moreover, on 18-22 December 2017, they carried out an inspection of military units indicated in Poland.

### **Economic Relations**

In 2017, there was both an increase in trade between Poland and Belarus as well as greater interest of Polish companies in investing in Belarus.

According to data from the Central Statistical Office (GUS) in 2017, the trade volume of both countries reached PLN 10.432 billion.<sup>7</sup> Belarus was the 24<sup>th</sup> trade partner of Poland in terms of exports and 30<sup>th</sup> in terms of imports. Exports amounted to PLN 5.640 billion (about 0.65% of total exports), and compared to 2016, its nominal value increased by 6.2%. Imports grew by 41.6% and reached a record PLN 4.792 billion (about 0.55% of total imports). The most important products bought from Belarus were potassium fertilisers, petroleum products, and wood, while Poland sold primarily medicines and food.

On 28 March 2017, the Polish-Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Belarusian National Agency for Investment and Privatisation signed a bilateral agreement facilitating an increase of economic contacts between the two countries. On 25 October, the fifth meeting of the Belarusian-Polish working group for trade and investment was held in Minsk.<sup>8</sup> One of the subjects addressed during the meeting was cooperation between the countries in the banking sector. The Belarusian side also encouraged Polish companies to invest in the creation of logistics centres—50 locations were designated for the construction of facilities of this type.

In 2017, Polish companies began several significant investments in Belarus. On 11 May, a factory for the Polish company Modern Expo, mainly producing equipment for stores, was opened in Vitebsk. The Belarusian branch of the company employs 200 people, and the Polish investor has already announced the expansion of the branch in Belarus. On the other hand, the Polish company Unibep signed a contract for the establishment of a logistics centre in Bołbasów in 2017 (an investment of €12.8 million) and began its construction. The contract for the construction of a railway loading terminal at the crossing in Bruzgi for

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<sup>7</sup> *Obroty handlu zagranicznego według krajów*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, October 2019, <http://swaid.stat.gov.pl>.

<sup>8</sup> On the Polish side, the group's chairman is the deputy minister of development, Tadeusz Kościński, and from the Belarusian side, the deputy minister of foreign affairs, Jauhen Szastakou. This group is part of the Polish-Belarusian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation established in 1992 on the basis of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on the main principles of cross-border cooperation.

€15 million was signed by OT Logistics Bel, a member of the Polish capital group OT Logistics.

In March 2017, the Polish-Belarusian IPO Centre (Initial Public Offering) inaugurated its activities. Its task is to prepare specialists will introduce Belarusian companies to the stock exchange. On 14 November 2017, the 21<sup>st</sup> Belarusian Economic Forum, Good Neighbourhood, was held in Lublin. The proceedings focused on cooperation in the fields of transport and logistics, modern technologies, export of goods, and services.

### Regional Cooperation

An important component of bilateral relations remained cross-border and regional cooperation. In an interview published on 1 March 2017 by Belarusian news agency Biełta, the Belarusian Ambassador to Poland Awiarjanau expressed hope that the two countries would make the common border an asset. He emphasised the importance of European funds for the development of joint projects. He also pointed out that cooperation between the Grodno region and Podlaskie Voivodship and Brest region with Lubelskie Voivodship has been developing very actively.<sup>9</sup> The subject of cross-border cooperation was also discussed at the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Polish-Belarusian Subcommittee for Border Cooperation, which was held on 2 June 2017 in Lublin. On the Polish side, its chairman is the Voivode of Podlaskie Voivodship and on the Belarusian side, the deputy minister for emergency situations. The subcommittee operates within the Polish-Belarusian Intergovernmental Coordination Committee for Cross-border Cooperation.

Over the 25 years of Polish-Belarusian relations, 83 agreements on partner relations between Belarusian and Polish cities and regions have been signed.<sup>10</sup> In 2017, the cooperation was extended by the Vitebsk region and Łódzkie Voivodeship. The fourth meeting of partner cities from Belarus and Poland was held in Baranawicze on 5–7 October, attended by representatives of 16 Belarusian and 12 Polish cities. In its course, both sides stressed the growing importance of local government diplomacy for the development of political and economic relations between states.

<sup>9</sup> *Intierwju Czriezwyczajnogo i Połnomocznogo Pośła Riespubliki Bielarus' w Polsce A. Awerjanowa informacyonnomu agienstwu BiełTA, Ministerstwo inostrannyh dzieł Riespubliki Bielarus', 1 March 2017, <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/f247df4969db2386.html>.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem.*

Polish self-governments and Belarusian local authorities also actively benefited from the programme “Poland–Belarus–Ukraine”.<sup>11</sup> As part of it, in 2017 the Belarussian parliament approved the implementation of three projects on the Belarusian-Polish border: the construction of an additional bridge for cars over the Świsłocz River at the Bieriestowica- Bobrowniki border crossing (EU funding amounted to €4 million), support for fire services (EU funding of more than €4 million) and aimed to improve the functioning of transport on the Polish-Belarusian border, and modernisation of road R16 linking Tuchenicze near Brest with the Polish border (EU funding of more than €4.6 million). At the same time, the Belarusian side sought additional assistance from the EU with regard to financing infrastructure projects located on the Belarus-EU border. Terespol and Brest, on the other hand, submitted an application for co-financing of the project Tur-Info-Most, which would facilitate tourists visiting the two cities. At the same time, Brest authorities sought the introduction of visa-free travel to the Brest region on similar terms as in the Grodno region. The cooperation was also carried out conventionally as part of the Euro regions “Puszcza Białowieska”, “Niemen”, and “Bug”.

Regional cooperation also included support for bilateral economic relations, evidenced by the Belarusian-Pomeranian regional economic forum held on 4 September in Minsk. The possibilities of developing cooperation in the area of IT, radio electronics, and oil processing were discussed during the meeting.

The development of cross-border cooperation, especially in the sphere of tourism, in terms of the possibility of visa-free entry to the part of Grodno region will, however, require changes in the Agreement between the Government of the RP and the Government of the Republic of Belarus with regard to border crossings.<sup>12</sup> This applies to, among others, the Lipszczany-Sofijewo border crossing, as both countries have to agree to change it to a year-round border crossing for vehicles with a maximum weight of 3.5 tonnes. Currently, the border crossing operates as a walking and cycling route and is open from the end of April to the beginning of October, with opening hours of 8:00–20:00. The border crossing of Lesnaja-Rudawka has already been changed: in 2017, it became possible to cross by ferry, as well as on foot or by bike. In 2017, the border was crossed by 2,600 persons, compared to only 200 in 2016. The Belarusian-Polish working group is also planning the development of the Augustów region.

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<sup>11</sup> For more see: A. Skorupska, “Cross-Border Cooperation: An Opportunity to Strengthen the Eastern Partnership,” *PISM Bulletin*, no. 4 (1077), 8 January 2018, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>12</sup> “Umowa między Rządem Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej a Rządem Republiki Białoruś w sprawie przejść granicznych,” *Monitor Polski*, 2003, no. 37 item 518, <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl>.

In 2017, another meeting of the Belarusian-Polish group on water resources was held in Belarus. The purpose of its work is the signing by Belarus and Poland of an intergovernmental agreement on the protection and utilisation of transboundary waters.

### **Social and Cultural Relations**

In 2017, social and cultural contacts were increasingly important in the cooperation between the countries. Poland participated in the Minsk Book Fair, held in February 2017, and Belarus was one of the exhibitors at the Warsaw Book Fair on 18-21 May. The theatres from Poland participated in Belarusian “Slavic Theatre Meetings”, a festival organised in Gomel in May 2017 and in the festival “The White Tower”, which took place in September 2017 in Brest. The Polish-Belarusian sailing school “Wind of friendship” was inaugurated in May in Brasław. It was funded by Polish Development Aid. In total, Poland allocated more than PLN 102 million to aid activities for Belarus, and 63 initiatives were implemented with these resources.<sup>13</sup>

According to a declaration by the respective Belarusian and Polish deputy ministers of culture, Vasily Czernik and Paweł Lewandowski, who met in Minsk in March 2017, both countries plan a joint birth anniversary celebration of Ferdynand Ruszczyc—painter, graphic artist, cartoonist, stage designer and teacher.

The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Polish-Belarusian Intergovernmental Committee for Cooperation in the field of Science and Technology was held in Warsaw on 28 November 2017 and attended by, among others, representatives of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and a delegation of the State Committee for Science and Technology of the Republic of Belarus. The competition for the implementation of joint Belarusian-Polish scientific and technical projects was decided during its course. Subsidies were obtained by 11 applications in the field of electronics, machine construction, and modern agricultural technologies. Also, an agreement was signed on scientific cooperation between the Institute for Nuclear Studies of the Belarusian State University and the Polish National Centre of Electromagnetic Radiation SOLARIS. Entities from both countries concluded over 50 cooperation agreements and memoranda.

Poland and Belarus also carry out joint conservation works in many churches located mainly in the Grodno region. In turn, the Belarusian-Polish Consultative Commission for Historical and Cultural Heritage responded positively to the

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<sup>13</sup> Data from the Development Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

issue of the inclusion of the park “Kanał Augustowski” to the UNESCO World Heritage List at a meeting in Minsk on 27 June 2017. Thus, both countries began preparations for submitting a second application in this case (the first application got to UNESCO in 2010 but at that time the experts assessing the documentation concluded that it required adjustment by the applicants).

The importance of people-to-people contacts is also worth emphasising. According to data from the Polish Border Guard, in 2017 the Polish-Belarusian land border was crossed 8,269,087 times (an increase of 17% compared to 2016).<sup>14</sup> All Polish consular offices in Belarus issued visas totalling more than 418,000 in 2017 (an increase of 5.1% compared to 2016).<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, Polish citizens numbered two on the list of those enjoying the right of visa-free entry to the territory of Belarus, both in the Grodno region and through the Minsk-2 airport.<sup>16</sup>

### Assessment

In 2017, the main objective of Polish policy towards Belarus was achieved. The frequency of meetings between representatives of the authorities of both countries was maintained and contacts at the local level as well as economic and cultural relations were developed. It is likely that this dimension of bilateral relations will also be significant in the coming years. The improvement of political relations had a positive impact on scientific and social relations.

At the same time, Polish policy towards Belarus was not affected by the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations—no event or meeting of high-ranking politicians of the two countries was organised to commemorate it.

The issues that are important for the Polish side, such as the entry into force of the agreement on small border traffic or registration of the Union of Poles in Belarus, recognised by the Polish authorities, remained unresolved. Despite the declaration by Minister Waszczykowski, these issues were not the subject of serious Polish-Belarusian debate. Postponing this discussion is conducive to Belarus, as it is not interested in any decision, mainly for financial, and to a lesser extent, political reasons. On the other hand, Polish diplomacy and politicians adopted the tactic of not discussing disputed issues with Belarusian partners, although the completion of the ratification procedures of the local border traffic

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<sup>14</sup> *Statystyki SG styczeń–grudzień 2017*, Straż Graniczna, [www.strazgraniczna.pl](http://www.strazgraniczna.pl).

<sup>15</sup> Data from the Polish embassy in Minsk.

<sup>16</sup> *Czисло priesiekajuszczich bieloruskuju granicu wyroslo na 15% w 2017 godu*, Belta, 22 January 2018, [www.belta.by/society/view/chislo-peresekajuschih-beloruskuju-granitsu-vyroslo-na-15-v-2017-godu-285594-2018](http://www.belta.by/society/view/chislo-peresekajuschih-beloruskuju-granitsu-vyroslo-na-15-v-2017-godu-285594-2018).

agreement by the Belarusian side would be a factor strengthening the regional partnership with Belarus and people-to-people contacts. It would also allow for raising additional funds for the development of border infrastructure, as was the case with other agreements of this type signed by EU countries. Also, the status settlement of both Unions of Poles would be beneficial for both countries and especially for the Polish minority living in Belarus. This would facilitate teaching of Polish language and organising various events allowing access to Polish culture.

Despite the fulfilment of obligations arising from international treaties by the Belarusian side (Vienna Document, Open Skies treaty), one of the major challenges for Polish policy towards Belarus may be security, in particular the Russian aggression against Ukraine raises questions about Belarus' security policy—forming a federal state and remaining in close military, political and economic alliance with Russia concerns Poland. The most important of them is the degree of Belarus' independence in foreign policy, above all, the shaping relations with the EU or NATO. As a result, the possibilities of military cooperation that could also be used by Poland and Belarus in bilateral relations, remain limited.

The year 2017 in Polish-Belarusian economic relations should be viewed positively. The increase in trade exchange and the volume of Polish investment shows that both countries have significant potential for further development of economic cooperation. However, as in the sphere of security, Russian policy also negatively affects the possibilities of developing economic cooperation between Poland and Belarus. Also, historical issues, including the liquidation of monuments that honour the Red Army and the glorification of some “*żołnierze wyklęci*” (“cursed soldiers”) such as Rajs, codenamed “Bury”, although not directly harming relations between Belarus and Poland, may in the future be part of bilateral disputes.

# Policy Towards the People's Republic of China

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## Determinants

The imbalance of economic potential and international position remained continuous determinants of Poland's policy towards the People's Republic of China (PRC). Poland pursued its interests in foreign policy in 2017, mainly by an attempt to find its place and role in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).<sup>1</sup> The BRI grew to be China's most important foreign policy instrument, including due to the organisation of the first forum of countries participating in BRI in Beijing in May. This was also connected with Poland's efforts to implement the agreements concluded during President Xi Jinping's visit (in June 2016), especially the declaration on raising relations to the rank of a comprehensive strategic partnership.<sup>2</sup>

The Polish government's plans for cooperation with China were harmonised by the Inter-Ministerial Team for Coordination of Actions for the Development of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Poland and the People's Republic of China. It brings together representatives of the ministries responsible for the development of these relations, and its proceedings are chaired by the undersecretary of state in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A novelty affecting Polish policy towards China in 2017 was the progressive impatience of representatives of the Polish authorities with the lack of tangible results of cooperation. Increasingly, they expressed the conviction that a strong political commitment to relations with China did not reduce the trade deficit or increase Chinese investments (especially greenfield) in Poland. This negative assessment covered all aspects of the relationship in the bilateral dimension, and in participation in the BRI and the 16+1 initiative.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The flagship initiative of President Xi Jinping since 2016 has been translated into English (the Chinese name has not changed) into "Belt and Road". "Pas i Szlak" is currently used by the Polish authorities.

<sup>2</sup> *Wspólne oświadczenie w sprawie ustanowienia wszechstronnego strategicznego partnerstwa między Rzeczpospolitą Polską a Chińską Republiką Ludową*, 21 June 2016, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>3</sup> China's cooperation initiative with 16 Central and Eastern European countries was launched in Warsaw in 2012.

At the same time, EU-China disputes intensified in 2017. The main problem concerned the EU's position on the growing number of Chinese investments in the European Union,<sup>4</sup> especially the acquisition of majority shareholdings in the high-tech sector. The allegations made against China by the EU institutions and some Member States (Germany, France, the Netherlands and Italy) were strengthened. They concerned the imbalance in access to the Chinese market (closure of some sectors to EU companies, obstruction of business activities), dumping practices by the Chinese authorities, and protection of intellectual property rights. The need to respond to this issue also determined Polish policy towards China in 2017.

### Aims and Objectives

The main objective of Polish policy towards China in 2017 was to pursue economic interests, including increasing Polish exports and attracting Chinese investments. Maintaining a high level of political contacts with representatives of the central government and individual Chinese provinces were helpful in this regard. Also important was the promotion of Poland as an attractive tourist destination, which was to be served, among others, by presenting its culture and achievements. Such objectives were presented by Witold Waszczykowski in February 2017, in the government's *Information on the Tasks of Polish Foreign Policy*. The Strategic Partnership with China was to be a sustainable element of opening up to cooperation with Asian countries. Poland also aims for further development of cooperation in the 16+1 format.<sup>5</sup> The *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017 to 2021*, prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, takes a marginal view of bilateral relations with China, referring more to the activities of Polish diplomacy in the face of Chinese-American competition and the growing importance of Asian countries. The authors of the strategy also pointed to the "Belt and Road" initiative as a factor that can positively influence the regional integration of Central Europe and the development of infrastructure.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In 2017, the Chinese entities invested approx. €29.8 billion in EU countries (€28.5 billion in mergers and acquisitions and €1.3 billion in *greenfield* investments). In 2010, it was €1.6 billion, T. Hanemann, M. Huotari, *Chinese FDI in Europe in 2017. Rapid recovery after an initial slowdown. An update by Rhodium Group and the Mercator Institute for China Studies*, [www.merics.org](http://www.merics.org).

<sup>5</sup> "Government Information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a Sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017)," see p. 13 in this volume.

<sup>6</sup> *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, September 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

Similarly, the objectives of Poland's policy towards China were defined by President Andrzej Duda in a speech to members of the diplomatic corps in September 2017. "[...] it is undoubtedly extremely important to revive Polish economic diplomacy, which we have been dealing with recently. ... I mean the intensification of cooperation with Asian countries [...] among which I would like our relations with economic powers such as China to become particularly dynamic [...]"<sup>7</sup>

The President formulated similar theses regarding the "Belt and Road" initiative: "We count on the measurable and mutually beneficial results of the Polish-Chinese partnership. To increase trade between our countries, to increase Chinese investments in Poland, to raise capital to support ambitious projects, especially under the Responsible Development Strategy. It is good that there are already the first examples of joint initiatives that fit into the concept of the new Silk Road [...]"<sup>8</sup>

## Political Relations

**Bilateral dimension.** The first important interaction, due to the status of the interlocutors, was a visit to China (Beijing, Hunan and Zhejiang Provinces) by the Deputy Speaker of the Senate, Grzegorz Czelej, in February 2017. He was received by Zhang Dejing (President of the Chinese Parliament and member of the Standing Committee of the Central Political Bureau), Wang Jiarui (Vice-chairman of the National Committee of the People's Political Consultative Council) and Jin Liqun (the president of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank).

The most important event, however, was the official visit of Prime Minister Beata Szydło in May, related to participation in the first international "Belt and Road" forum in Beijing.<sup>9</sup> Szydło met her counterpart Li Keqiang, as well as Xi Jinping and Zhang Dejiang. The discussions focused mainly on economic issues, such as removing barriers to the entry of Polish food to the Chinese market and opportunities for Chinese investments in Poland. Two documents were signed: on cooperation in tourism, and a memorandum on resources and water management. In November, Szydło met Li again at the "16+1" summit in Budapest.

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<sup>7</sup> *Prezydent o priorytetach dyplomacji: bezpieczeństwo i monitorowanie sytuacji na Wschodzie*, 4 September 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>8</sup> *List Prezydenta RP z okazji Międzynarodowej Konferencji Polsko-Chińskiej*, 25 April 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl)

<sup>9</sup> The first "Belt and Road" forum took place on 14 to 15 May 2017 in Beijing. It was attended by 29 leaders of countries interested in actively participating in the Chinese initiative. It was intended by China to strengthen its position on the international scene. Also important was the internal promotion of Xi Jinping's success as the author of the initiative.

Zhang Dejiang visited Poland in July. He met Marek Kuchciński, Speaker of the Sejm (the lower house of parliament), as well as Szydło and Duda. During the visit, a memorandum of cooperation between the Chinese parliament and the Sejm was signed.

Also in July, Deputy Foreign Minister Marek Magierowski participated in a meeting of national coordinators of the “16+1” initiative, in China.<sup>10</sup> In September 2017, he visited China again to chair (together with PRC Deputy Foreign Minister Wang Chao) the fifth session of the Polish-Chinese Strategic Dialogue. This is the most important working forum for information exchange and political communication between Poland and China. In 2017, the meeting focused on the development of tourism, investment, infrastructure, trade, climate and energy policy and cooperation at the regional and local levels. Discussions also concerned the “16+1” initiative, regarding preparations for the leaders’ summit in Budapest (November) and transport ministers in Warsaw (October). The Chinese deputy minister congratulated Poland on its election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, and declared his readiness to cooperate, among other things, on climate protection. A September visit to Beijing by the Secretary of State at the Ministry of Environment, Paweł Sałek, was also devoted to climate issues. He met Xie Zhenhua, the Chinese government’s special plenipotentiary for climate change, and the dialogue concerned, among other things, preparations for COP 24 in Katowice.

However, in 2017 there was no further session of the Polish-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee (chaired by the ministers of foreign affairs), which inaugurated its activities in 2015 in Beijing and was scheduled to meet regularly every two years to agree on current affairs. Neither did the Forum of Poland-China Regions (gathering representatives of Chinese cities and provinces with delegations of Polish local governments, held every year since 2013) meet in 2017.

The climate of bilateral political relations in 2017 was negatively affected by Poland’s critical assessment of results regarding cooperation with China to date. Such opinions were expressed by Szydło and Waszczykowski.<sup>11</sup> This attitude was strengthened at the end of the year when Mateusz Morawiecki became Polish prime minister. He presented the context of Poland’s policy towards China in 2017 as concerning strategic competition between the U.S. and China, and thus

<sup>10</sup> In each of the countries participating in the “16+1” initiative, a national coordinator function was established. In Poland, in the beginning, it was the ambassador to China, and now it is the undersecretary of state for Asian politics in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>11</sup> *Premier Beata Szydło w Pekinie: Polska wiąże duże oczekiwania z projektem „Pasa i Szlaku”, 12 May 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl); Premier Beata Szydło: Duże zainteresowanie współpracą z Polską, 15 maja 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).*

between Poland and the United States. In an interview, he said: “[...] political correctness requires to reprimand the United States for its slogan ‘America first’ and to praise the Chinese for [...] openness. When I see our balance of trade with China, [...] I wonder if we are not putting certain issues on our heads”.<sup>12</sup> This reserved approach by the Polish authorities was noticed by the Chinese analytical circle. Experts from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (the largest and oldest analytical centre in the country, advising the Chinese president and government) described Poland’s policy towards the “Belt and Road” as neutral.<sup>13</sup>

**The regional dimension.** In 2017, five years had passed since the “16+1” initiative was launched. The November leaders’ summit in Budapest, attended by Szydło, was not only devoted to new cooperation plans, but also to a summary of previous contacts. Two documents were adopted: the Budapest Guidelines, containing priorities for cooperation in 2018, and a summary of the “16+1” achievements. Szydło said: “China is a demanding and large partner, but the one that wants to pursue economic cooperation in our region”.<sup>14</sup> However, Poland did not decide to take advantage of the offer of the new investment fund presented by China during the summit, nor did it declare the will to organise any of the planned events of the Budapest Guidelines. Such a stance was an expression of Poland’s growing impatience with the “16+1”, the uncertainty of its future (especially in the context of the “Belt and Road”), and a lack of clarity about China’s real intentions. With Poland’s involvement, the final document of the “16+1” summit in Budapest included a declaration of support for the Three Seas Initiative and infrastructure projects concerning the Adriatic Sea and the Baltic Sea.

As part of “16+1,” Poland organised two meetings of transport ministers in October 2017 in Warsaw, dedicated to the development of seaports and coastal areas as well as inland waterways. Szydło expressed her interest in this subject, and the policy direction was also reflected in the official inauguration in Warsaw in February of the “16+1” Maritime Coordination Secretariat, established under the provisions of the previous Riga Summit.

In 2017, the Visegrad Group was also an instrument of Poland’s policy towards China, partly because of the Polish V4 presidency. These activities included organising meetings of V4 diplomats in Beijing, with the local media

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<sup>12</sup> B. Godusławski, *Morawiecki: Polexit jest tak samo możliwy jak Germanexit. Polska jest i pozostanie częścią UE*, 28 January 2018, [forsal.pl](http://forsal.pl).

<sup>13</sup> Liu Zuokui, *Europe and the Belt and Road Initiative: Responses and Risks (2017)*, Pekin, 2017, pp. 18–19.

<sup>14</sup> *Premier Beata Szydło na szczycie państw Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej i Chin: to ważny format, chcemy zacieśniać współpracę*, 27 November 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

and with representatives of the Secretariat for China's Cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**The EU Dimension.** In 2017, EU-China relations gradually deteriorated. Issues of human rights protection, protectionist practices and restrictions on the functioning of EU companies were supplemented by China's investment policy in the EU. In February, Germany, Italy and France sent a request to the European Commission to consider the possibility of introducing additional rules for evaluating investment proposals. Poland took an ambiguous position on this issue. It did not openly support the proposals of the three countries for fear of restricting the relatively small Chinese investments in Poland.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, the Polish government expressed its understanding of the need to formally regulate them in the EU. The dispute between the EU and China was reflected in the "Belt and Road" forum in Beijing in May. Some Western leaders (such as Chancellor Angela Merkel) refused to participate as a sign of concern about the real objectives of the Chinese initiative. The EU's concerns were confirmed by their attempt to force the forum participants not to adopt a trade declaration that is contrary to EU principles, where only the EC has the competence to conduct trade policy. On the one hand, Poland showed its respect for the forum's hosts by sending a high-level delegation (head of government), but on the other hand, it did not sign the disputed declaration, thus confirming the primacy of EU policy.

## Economic Relations

**Trade and investments.** According to the Central Statistical Office in 2017, Poland exported goods to China worth more than PLN 8.7 billion, with imports worth more than PLN 102 billion, which resulted in a deficit of over PLN 90 billion.<sup>16</sup> The dissatisfaction of the Polish authorities with this balance was evidenced, among other things, by Morawiecki, who said in November: "Although Poland's cooperation with China has been developing very well, the difference in trade turnover that is unfavourable for our country must change [...]"<sup>17</sup>

The improvement of the trade balance was not supported by the ongoing reorganisation of foreign offices of PAiH, and the establishment of Foreign Trade Offices (ZBH) of the Polish Investment and Trade Agency in 2017. This also applied to China. The WPHI operating at the Polish Embassy in Beijing went into

<sup>15</sup> M. Kalwasinski, "Unia traci cierpliwość. Szykuje blokadę chińskich inwestycji," *Bankier.pl*, 29 June 2017, [www.bankier.pl](http://www.bankier.pl).

<sup>16</sup> Imports of goods and services by country; exports of goods and services by country, 26 April 2017, [swaid.stat.gov.pl](http://swaid.stat.gov.pl).

<sup>17</sup> "Morawiecki: chcemy wykorzystać potencjał Bałtyku w handlu z Chinami," *PAP*, 23 November 2017, [www.pap.pl](http://www.pap.pl).

liquidation on 1 December 2017. The WPHI from Shanghai was transformed into the ZBH. The establishment of another office was also announced in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province.

The 20th anniversary of contacts between KGHM and its Chinese trading partner Minmetals, held in Beijing in December, was symbolic of the Polish-Chinese trade relations. KGHM Polska Miedź has for many years been one of the largest Polish exporters to China,<sup>18</sup> and copper is the main Polish export product to this market.

There was no significant improvement in the export of Polish food to China. The agreement to import Polish fruit (mainly apples), confirmed during the Chinese president's visit to Poland in 2016, met with limited interest of Polish fruit growers the following year. The embargo on exports of poultry was lifted (at least partially) in 2017, but remained in place for pork, due to the presence of African swine fever in Poland.

Chinese investments in Poland in 2017 mainly referred, in line with the European and regional trend, to the M&A sector.<sup>19</sup> In November, Chinese entities ranked first in terms of the value of FDI projects supported by the Polish Investment and Trade Agency.<sup>20</sup> According to the Rhodium Group, the main Chinese investments in Poland in 2017 included the acquisition of Pini Polska and Hamburger Pini meat plants and Royal Chicken by Smithfield Foods Group, owned by the Chinese giant WH Group. Another investment was the acquisition of shares in the Polish branch of Schürholz automotive company by Jiangsu Olive Sensors High-Tech, and LiuGong moved its European headquarters from Amsterdam to Warsaw and opened a new production line for construction machinery and a spare parts distribution centre at its plant in Stalowa Wola. At the same time, at the end of 2017, Zhonglu Fruit Juice announced that it would take over the main Polish producer of apple concentrate - Appol company for PLN 68 million (approx. \$20 million).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> KGHM – *dwie dekady na miedziozym szlaku do Chin*, KGHM Polska Miedź, 27 November 2017, [kgm.com](http://kgm.com).

<sup>19</sup> According to the National Bank of Poland's data in 2017, the companies registered in China invested in Poland a total value of less than \$60 million. However, this sum does not include investments of companies originating from China but registered in other countries. *Zagraniczne inwestycje w Polsce – 2017 r.*, Narodowy Bank Polski, [www.nbp.pl](http://www.nbp.pl).

<sup>20</sup> PAIH: *rok 2017 był przełomowy w zakresie projektów inwestycyjnych*, 9 January 2018, [www.portalspozywczy.pl](http://www.portalspozywczy.pl); PAIH *kończy 2017 r. ze znaczącym wzrostem wartości portfela*, Polska Agencja Inwestycji i Handlu, 4 January 2018, [www.paih.gov.pl](http://www.paih.gov.pl).

<sup>21</sup> M. Kalwasinski, *Chińskie inwestycje w Polsce: cisza przed burzą*, 26 January 2018, [www.pbp.pl](http://www.pbp.pl); *Guo tou zhong lu guozhi gufen youxian gongsi guanyu shougou bolan Appol jitan 100% guquan de gonggao* (Announcement of SDIC Zhonglu Juice Co. Ltd concerning the acquisition of 100% of shares in the Polish Appol group), 15 December 2017, [static.sse.com.cn](http://static.sse.com.cn).

There was no other major transaction in 2017. The Chinese bidder (China Security&Fire), after initial declarations and obtaining the OCCP's approval, declared the acquisition of Konsalnet, the main Polish company on the security services market (with a turnover of over €50 million and dealing with security of state offices). Eventually, due to China's policy of limiting foreign investment and Poland's fear of losing control of information important for the security of the Republic of Poland, the Chinese company considered the project uncertain and withdrew from it.

In 2017, speculation continued on the possible involvement of Chinese entities in the construction of the first Polish nuclear power plant. The speculation was confirmed by the signing of a memorandum concerning cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy in July, in Beijing, by Deputy Minister of Energy Andrzej Piotrowski. In the same month, the China General Nuclear Power Corporation announced its willingness to participate in the possible construction of a nuclear power plant in Poland.

In 2017, the involvement of Chinese entities in the Central Communication Port project became an important element of Polish-Chinese relations. The Government Plenipotentiary for the CPK, Mikolaj Wild, confirmed (during his visit to Beijing in May) the possibility of cooperation with Chinese entities, but he stressed that everything depended on "equivalence of benefits",<sup>22</sup> i.e. on China meeting Polish expectations. The then head of the Standing Committee of the Council of Ministers, Henryk Kowalczyk, said "we would like to avoid a situation where investments in infrastructure, such as the Central Communication Port, would be fully financed by China; this must be supported, but under our control".<sup>23</sup> One sign of Polish distrust towards Chinese investments was the decision of the Military Property Agency in January to withdraw a plot of land in Łódź from a tender of interest to a Polish-Chinese investor. A logistics centre was to be built there to handle rail freight traffic.

## Social Relations

**Culture.**<sup>24</sup> The year 2017 was a busy period of promoting Polish culture in China. Most of the projects were created at the initiative of the Polish Institute in Beijing (in cooperation with the consulates in Shanghai, Canton and Chengdu) as well as the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, as part of the "Asia" programme. In July,

<sup>22</sup> "Centralny Port Lotniczy wybudujemy z Chińczykami?", *TVP Info*, 13 May 2017, [www.tvp.info.pl](http://www.tvp.info.pl).

<sup>23</sup> "Inwestycje w infrastrukturę nie mogą być w całości finansowane przez Chiny," *PAP*, 1 June 2017. [www.pb.pl](http://www.pb.pl).

<sup>24</sup> A list of events prepared based on information available at [www.pekin.msz.gov.pl](http://www.pekin.msz.gov.pl).

the Deputy Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Paweł Lewandowski, paid an official visit to China. In Shanghai and Beijing he promoted Polish industry and creative solutions in the computer games industry.<sup>25</sup>

The Polish image in China was shaped by historical policy projects, including screenings of the film *Azyl, Życie za życie i Historia Ireny Sendlerowej*, in Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing and Chengdu. It reminded of the Polish Esperanto tradition with a lecture by Prof. Zhang Zhongmin, a historian from the Fudan University in Shanghai, who in April talked about the influence of this language on Chinese language policy.

**Exhibitions.** In 2017, exhibitions promoting Polish artists and their achievements were held. In October and November, Polish days were organised in Chengdu, where, in addition to jazz concerts and educational programmes, an exhibition of photographs of Polish sites from the UNESCO World Heritage List was presented. In April, a photographic exhibition was opened, entitled: *Poles in Harbin*. More than 300 photographs illustrating the contribution of Poles to the development of this city at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were presented. The exhibition *Kultura plakatu. Polski plakat z Poznania* was opened in Shenzhen in May, including more than 100 posters by artists associated with the University of Arts in Poznań. In June, during the third Central and Eastern European Culture and Art Exhibition, together with the Czech Republic and Hungary, shows were organised for the third time under the slogan “**Polish Culture in Ningbo**”.

**Film.** In May 2017, a retrospective of Krzysztof Zanussi’s films was held in Beijing (as part of the Asian continent tour). The following films were screened: *Barwy ochronne*, *Obce ciało*, *Życie za życie* and *Brat naszego Boga*. **Polish animation was shown at Shanghai International Film Festival 2017 (June)**, as part of the project “Contemporary Polish Short Animations” prepared for the 70th anniversary of Polish animation.

**Literature.** In August 2017, The Polish Institute in Beijing made possible the publication and promotion of Janusz Korczak’s book *Jak kochać dziecko* and the volume *legendy Polskie*. In March and April, workshops for Chinese translators of Polish literature were held in cooperation with the Beijing University of Foreign Languages and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute. Based on their success to date, Aleksandra and Daniel Mizieliński, publishers of renowned children’s books, also promoted their books in China.

**Music.** In 2017, Polish bands and orchestras performed in China. In January, a concert of symphonic music performed by the Beethoven Academy Orchestra

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<sup>25</sup> *Polskie gry komputerowe w Szanghaju*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej w Pekinie, 4 August 2017, [www.pekin.msz.gov.pl](http://www.pekin.msz.gov.pl).

conducted by Krzysztof Penderecki was held in Canton. At the turn of March and April, the Baltic Neopolis Quartet played in Mudanjiang, Dalian, Jilin, Liuzhou, Fuzhou and Nanchang. In August, concerts in China (Chongqing, Canton, Shenzhen and Shanghai) were performed by the National Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra conducted by one of the most famous Chinese pianists, Li Yundi, winner of the first prize of the 2000 Chopin Competition. Leszek Możdżer (September) played solo concerts in Beijing and Canton. As part of the “16+1 Season” project, jazz artists performed in Beijing, Hangzhou, Xi`ana and Shanghai. They included the Rafał Sarnecki Sextet, the Marek Napiórkowski Sextet, the Kuba Cichocki Quartet, the Stanisław Sowiński Quintet and Kielce Dance Theatre. In May, at the “Meet in Beijing” festival, the band Dagadana played. There was also a concert tour by the MOA band to promote cooperation between Polish Radio and Chinese radio stations.

**Theatre.** The most important theatrical event of 2017 in Beijing was the August premiere of *Tristan and Isolde* on the stage of the National Grand Theatre in Beijing, directed by Mariusz Trelński.

**Tourism.** In September 2017, the 100,000<sup>th</sup> visitor from China arrived in Poland, and the number of tourists steadily increased to a total of over 130,000 by the end of the year.<sup>26</sup> The increase compared to the previous year was 58.6%.<sup>27</sup> Information on the number of arrivals from China is complemented by Hong Kong tourist indicators. In 2017, almost 10,000 people from this region visited Poland.

**Science and education.** In 2017, 953 people from China studied in Poland (107 more than in the previous year).<sup>28</sup> Polish language courses at university level in China also increased. In October, one such course was created by the Shanghai University of International Studies. This, with the existing similar courses at universities in Beijing (two), Harbin, Canton and Zhaoqing, makes a total of five institutions with Polish language courses in China. In the academic year 2017 to 2018, 58 government scholarships were granted to Polish students.

## Assessment

Polish policy objectives regarding China, related to the reduction of the trade balance and the increase of investments, were achieved to a moderate extent in 2017. This was largely due to the lack of an interesting offer for Chinese

<sup>26</sup> *Turystyka w 2017 roku*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 1 August 2018, [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl).

<sup>27</sup> M. Kalwasiński, “Chińczycy odkrywają Polskę. I zostawiają tu miliony,” *Bankier.pl*, 15 February 2018, [www.bankier.pl](http://www.bankier.pl).

<sup>28</sup> *Raport. Studenci zagraniczni w Polsce 2017*, [www.studyinpoland.pl](http://www.studyinpoland.pl).

consumers, who do not know the brands of Polish producers and can select from products (such as food) from Germany, Australia or the United States, among others. The investment and commercial interests of China are currently focused mainly on acquiring modern technologies, and there is a lack of such offers in Poland compared to Western Europe.

High-level political dialogue gradually weakened. Once again, no session of the Intergovernmental Committee was held, mainly due to China claiming that there was no convenient date. Poland was also cautious about further cooperation under the “16+1” initiative, in which Hungary had started to play a greater role. Regional cooperation continued, but mainly on a bilateral basis, due to the determination of individual local governments (mainly the Łódzkie, Pomorskie and Śląskie Voivodships). However, it was not possible to bring about another session of the Poland-China Regions Forum.

The lack of results in political relations and poor indicators in the economy made the Polish authorities increasingly emphasise the importance of developing interpersonal and cultural contacts. The objectives of reducing the trade deficit and attracting investments remained valid, but, because of the failures, the lack of Chinese initiatives and the structural differences between the two economies, the Polish authorities realised that it was practically impossible to achieve these goals within a short period.

The problem of Polish policy towards China in 2017 remained primarily the incompatibility of the objectives of both countries. The inter-ministerial team for the coordination of activities, established, among others, to develop a coherent offer of cooperation, largely failed to play its integrating role. It focuses mainly on current issues, and the problem lies in the lack of a specific, long-term strategy. To ensure success in Polish-Chinese relations, the strategy needs to be developed at the government level so that, on the Polish side, cooperation does not focus ad hoc on randomly selected joint projects. Such a document, adopted at government level, would also help to integrate and coordinate the ministries' existing actions towards China. In the economic context, the strategy should not only include a selection of specific industries whose products Poland wishes to offer; it should also indicate the tools with which Poland is ready to support entrepreneurs on the Chinese market. It must describe the need and framework for possible Chinese investments. It is also important that it takes account EU policy priorities towards China. In the event that the growth of the Polish economy becomes more dependent on its relations with EU partners than on cooperation with China, the strategy should include Polish actions supporting EU initiatives in this region. These could refer to, for example, the investment evaluation procedure, WTO reform negotiations or the development of connectivity. The economic priorities

should be supported by focusing Polish-Chinese relations on the bilateral dimension, with less involvement in the “16+1” or “Belt and Road” initiatives, in which China’s attention (and economic offer) is primarily focused on other partners, such as the Balkan countries. Poland’s strategy towards China in 2017 was not developed. The Polish authorities constantly declared cooperation in the framework of the “Belt and Road” (as during Szydło’s visit to Beijing), not wishing to alienate Chinese partners. On the other hand, they also took into account the concerns of the EU (as well as the U.S.), such as the unfair competition of Chinese companies. These factors made Poland’s policy towards China reactive rather than coherent and consistent.

# Poland's Policy in the Visegrad Group

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## Determinants

In 2017, the Visegrad Group (V4) continued to be the most significant tool for the Polish government in terms of regional and, to a large extent, European Union policy. The white paper presented at the beginning of March by the European Commission<sup>1</sup> on the future of Europe intensified discussions on potential changes in the EU. Additional encouragement to debate the future of the EU was brought by the May elections results in France. President Emmanuel Macron's approach to EU reforms was to strengthen the supporters of a "multi-speed Europe". On the other hand, the ongoing coalition discussions after another victory for Chancellor Angela Merkel's party in the October parliamentary elections in Germany meant that the approach of the largest EU country to Macron's has not been clarified. Additional challenges for the V4 countries were to be negotiations on Brexit, finding solutions to resolve the migration crisis, and the amendment of the 1996 directive on the posting of workers.

The good economic situation of the V4 countries in 2017<sup>2</sup> strengthened Poland's perception of the group as part of the EU with a strong mandate to speak in the discussion on the future of European integration.<sup>3</sup> However, Polish partners from the region were cautious about formulating common positions in fear of being perceived as those who deepen divisions in the EU.

In the second half of 2017, there was a change of two heads of government in the V4 countries. In Poland, Beata Szydło being replaced by Mateusz Morawiecki was an internal move by the ruling United Right coalition. In Czechia, Social

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<sup>1</sup> *Biała księga w sprawie przyszłości Europy Refleksje i scenariusze dotyczące przyszłości UE-27 do 2025 r.*, Komisja Europejska, 1 March 2017, <https://ec.europa.eu>.

<sup>2</sup> In 2017, GDP growth in Czechia amounted to 4.4%, in Poland to 4.6%, in Slovakia to 3.4%, and in Hungary to 4%, with the average for the 28 EU Member States at the level of 2.4%.

<sup>3</sup> At the July Global Forum conference of the Polish Institute of International Affairs and the Atlantic Council, in a panel devoted to Visegrad cooperation, the Secretary of State for European Affairs Konrad Szymański stated that Central Europe was free of any European crises, emphasising that this is its asset.

Democratic Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka was replaced by Andrej Babiš when the latter's party, Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO), won that year's general election.

The Polish presidency of the V4 (July 2016 to June 2017) encouraged the more effective promotion of national interests within the group. This was continued in many areas (such as migration policy, innovation and infrastructure development) by the Hungarian presidency (July 2017 to June 2018). From the very beginning, greater emphasis was placed on cooperation with non-European partners. This approach was associated with, among others, the use of the V4 by Hungary to implement its own foreign policy.<sup>4</sup>

Good relations were facilitated by Poles' favourable perception of partners from the Visegrad Group. In a survey conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre, the Czechs (59% of respondents declaring sympathy), Slovaks (57%) and Hungarians (54%) were among the five most-liked nations.<sup>5</sup>

### Aims and Objectives

The Visegrad Group continued to be an important instrument of Polish foreign policy in achieving EU objectives. It mainly served to strengthen Poland's voice in the debate on reform and on the future shape of the EU by attracting partners from the region to the Polish concept of European policy. This was a vision of "EU sovereign states", a community defending and confining itself to its greatest, basic achievements, including the Schengen area and the EU single market. Such an approach was to prevent the EU from developing towards a political union and protectionism, and to stop it making decisions mostly at the behest of Germany and France with regard to the future of the community. The Polish government's ambition was to represent the interests of medium and small Member States from the region of broader Central Europe,<sup>6</sup> in addition to the V4 and also based on other regional cooperation formats, including the expanded Visegrad Group (V4+). Poland also needed allies to support it in the dispute with the European Commission after the launch of the procedure under Art. 7 TEU.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> V. Józwiak, "Hungarian Presidency of the Visegrad Group," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 77 (1017), 8 August 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>5</sup> "Stosunek do innych narodów," *Komunikat z Badań CBOS*, no. 21/2017, February 2017, [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl).

<sup>6</sup> Speech by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Beata Szydło during the 15<sup>th</sup> Foreign Policy Forum in Warsaw, 9 November 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>7</sup> For more, see: J. Szymańska, "Poland's policy in the European Union," see p. 53 in this volume.

Polish intentions related to V4 were determined by the programme of the Polish presidency of the Visegrad Group. The European issues most frequently raised by Poland at the V4 forum were the EU single market, the digital market, the development of innovation in V4 countries, cohesion policy and the review of the multiannual financial framework 2014 to 2020.<sup>8</sup> In the area of security, Poland's main goal was to obtain support from V4 partners in implementing the provisions of the Warsaw NATO summit of 2016. What's more, Poland promoted joint infrastructure and energy projects extending north-south, although increasing the region's coherence was increasingly formulated as one of the main objectives of the Three Seas Initiative. Poland also tried to make the V4 a brand that stood out in the EU with their capacity for innovation.<sup>9</sup>

### Multilateral Cooperation

An important area of the Visegrad Group's activities in 2017 was European policy. The position of the Polish government in the debate on the future of European integration was based on rejection of further integration, including by means of changing EU treaties.<sup>10</sup> However, these proposals were mitigated after the V4 countries adopted a common position in March 2017, entitled "Strong Europe: A Union of Action and Trust."<sup>11</sup> This document was a contribution to the Rome Declaration adopted by the EU Member States on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of signing the EEC and EURATOM Treaties. In response to French initiatives to strengthen political integration around the Eurozone, the V4 countries indicated the need to maintain community unity by, among other things, deepening the common market and increasing the EU's competitiveness. However, they did not rule out the possibility of establishing treaty-enhanced cooperation between individual Member States if that were to be open to all EU countries.

The non-specificity of the contents was a manifestation of differences in the positions of the Visegrad countries, especially in the area of institutional reforms of the EU and in the sphere of security. The document indicated solely the need

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<sup>8</sup> *Polska zakończyła roczne przewodnictwo w Grupie Wyszehradzkiej*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 30 June 2017, <http://msz.gov.pl>.

<sup>9</sup> *Premierzy Grupy Wyszehradzkiej podpisali Deklarację Warszawską*, Chancellery of the Prime Minister, 28 March 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>10</sup> Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2017 (Presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a Sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017), see p. 13 in this volume.

<sup>11</sup> *Joint statement of the prime ministers of the Visegrad Group countries*, 2 March 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

to increase the legitimacy of the EU decision-making process by strengthening national parliaments. It also confirmed the key role of the European Council in this process. It did not, however, refer to the restriction of the competences of the European Commission (EC) postulated earlier by Poland, and security issues were discussed only in the context of the migration crisis.

An important issue for the Polish presidency was social rights as a pillar of the EU single market. Poland, as a leader in the posting of workers in the EU (460,000), was particularly keen on gaining allies in stopping the amendments to the directive on posted workers of 1996, announced by the European Commission. In May, the group succeeded in reaching a unified position in this matter, underlining the freedom to provide services and criticising protectionism.<sup>12</sup> Despite this, on 23 October, during the meeting of the EU Council, the V4 countries voted differently on the position with regard to the amendment of the Posted Workers' Directive.<sup>13</sup> Only Poland and Hungary (together with Lithuania and Latvia) maintained their opposition to the project.

In the European discussion on the migration crisis, the V4 countries maintained their opposition to the mandatory relocation of refugees. The common approach was fully in line with the Polish position. These countries argued that solutions to the crisis should be sought outside the EU. They drew attention to the need to secure its external borders and to support transit countries. Therefore, they emphasised the external dimension of the migration crisis and the need to help refugees in regions of their origin.<sup>14</sup> During the meeting with Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker (14 December), the V4 prime ministers declared financial support for Italy, worth €35 million, to stop illegal migration from Libya. What's more, Poland transferred €50 million to the European Investment Bank of Economic Strengthening Initiative for assistance in the southern neighbourhood of the EU, and more than €7 million for cooperation mainly in North Africa.<sup>15</sup> Although the V4 countries influenced the shaping of European political discourse on migration, they were still under pressure to accept refugees. This was due to, among other things, the rejection of a complaint submitted by Slovakia and Hungary to the Court of Justice of the

<sup>12</sup> *Joint Statement of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group on the Amendment of Posting of Workers Directive*, 11 May 2017, [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu).

<sup>13</sup> J. Szymańska, "Council of the EU Position on the Posted-Workers Directive," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 64/2017, 25 October 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>14</sup> See, for example: *Joint statement by the Prime Ministers of V4 countries on migration*, 19 July 2017, [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu).

<sup>15</sup> *Premier Mateusz Morawiecki: Będziemy przedstawiali nasze podejście do polityki relokacji i uchodźców*, 14 December 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

European Union regarding the relocation mechanism.<sup>16</sup> In this case, Poland acted as an intervening party in support of the applicants' claims.

The Visegrad Group continued its cooperation in combating double standards of food quality in the EU. It appealed to the European Commission to conduct research and analysis of the scale of the problem. The group emphasised that there was a suspicion of double standards being used by Western European entities towards the Central European region.

The V4 countries competed to take over two EU agencies being moved from the UK as a result of Brexit. Czechia tried to adopt the European Banking Authority (EBA), Slovakia requested the European Medicines Agency (EMA), and Poland sought to host both. Eventually, it was decided to transfer EBA to Paris, and EMA was relocated to Amsterdam.

Meetings in the V4+ format continued. On 19 June, the prime ministers of the V4 and Benelux countries met for the first time since 2001.<sup>17</sup> Foreign ministers of the V4, Baltic and Nordic countries (V4 + NB8) met in Sopot on 30 May, where issues regarding the future of the EU were supplemented by discussions on security, energy and transport issues. With the prospect of the United Kingdom leaving the EU, Poland sought closer cooperation with these countries, especially in the area of security.<sup>18</sup> Poland also sought rapprochement between Central and Northern Europe through joint energy and transport projects.

Poland, as the largest beneficiary of EU subsidies, joined regional partners to emphasise the importance of cohesion funds for its further development. This was reflected at the March meeting of the V4 + Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Croatia, which was focused on EU cohesion policy after 2020.<sup>19</sup> Meetings were held in Budapest with the President of Egypt, Abdel Fatah al-Sisi (4 July), and with the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu (19 July), as part of the Hungarian presidency of the V4, which used the V4 + format intensively for contacts with countries outside Europe. The meeting with the V4 was used by the Israeli prime minister to criticise the EU for the excessive attention it pays to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> J. Szymańska, "CJEU Dismisses Complaints by Slovakia and Hungary on Refugee Relocation," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 50/2017, 7 September 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

<sup>17</sup> Ł. Ogrodnik, "Meeting of Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group and Benelux," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 28/2017, 20 June 2017.

<sup>18</sup> "Government Information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 ...," *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> *Joint Paper of the Visegrad Group, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia on Cohesion Policy after 2020*, 3 March 2017, [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu).

<sup>20</sup> M. Wojnarowicz, Ł. Ogrodnik, "V4+Israel Summit in Budapest," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 42/2017, 20 July 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

The Warsaw Congress of Central and Eastern Europe Innovators, held in Warsaw on 28 March, was used to popularise the region's innovativeness. During the congress, the prime ministers of the V4 states signed the Warsaw Declaration,<sup>21</sup> which announced, among other things, strengthening cooperation in the fields of research, technology, innovation and digitisation.

Poland, together with its V4 partners, is considered to be an advocate for European integration of the Western Balkan countries and for bringing the Eastern Partnership countries closer to the EU. This approach was reflected by meetings of foreign ministers of the V4 and Eastern Partnership in Budapest (31 August),<sup>22</sup> and the V4 and the Western Balkans (11 October).<sup>23</sup> The V4's presidents were also in favour of faster integration of the Western Balkan countries with the EU during the October meeting in the Hungarian city of Szekszárd.<sup>24</sup>

All V4 countries supported the strengthening of the EU's common security and defence policy, notifying in October the implementation of permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) in the area of security and defence. However, Poland approached PESCO with caution, noting the possible negative impacts on NATO of tensions between some European Allies and the United States. Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary, on the other hand, perceived themselves less as part of the Alliance's Eastern Flank, and welcomed this initiative. By joining it, they saw the possibility of confirming their positive attitude towards strengthening European integration.

The meetings of the V4's defence ministers in Niepołomice (2 February) and in Warsaw (13 July) were manifestations of the continuation of Visegrad cooperation in the field of defence. Neither meeting brought new declarations regarding strengthening of the V4's engagement on the North Atlantic Alliance's Eastern Flank. An important format for Poland within NATO became the "Bucharest Nine", with the participation of the V4 countries, the Baltic States, Romania and Bulgaria. The second meeting of foreign ministers of the "Bucharest Nine" was held in Warsaw on 9 November.

Poland consistently argued for the diversification of energy supplies and the development of energy infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe. However, the construction of energy and infrastructure connections on the north-south

<sup>21</sup> *Joint Declaration of Intent of Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group on Mutual Co-operation in Innovation and Digital Affairs*, 28 March 2017, [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu).

<sup>22</sup> *Joint Statement of the Ministers of the V4 and the Eastern Partnership Countries*, 31 August 2017, [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu).

<sup>23</sup> *V4 Foreign Ministers' Joint Statement on the Western Balkans*, [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu).

<sup>24</sup> *Deklaracja prezydentów państw V4: Unia Europejska musi się rozszerzać*, 15 October 2017, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

axis, as a permanent objective of the V4, was made a pillar of broader cooperation in the Three Seas Initiative (TSI), bringing together 12 EU Member States. The second TSI summit was held in Warsaw in July 2017, with the participation of U.S. President Donald Trump. From the V4 countries, Slovakia and Hungary were represented at the summit by their presidents while Czechia sent the chairman of its parliament. Polish partners from V4 showed moderate interest in this initiative. This can also be justified by the fact that, apart from the announcement of the establishment of a business forum and strengthening energy cooperation with the United States, the summit did not bring measurable results. It was agreed in Warsaw that Romania would host of the next TSI summit.

### **Poland's Relations with the Visegrad Countries**

**Political relations.** In relations with Czechia in 2017, there was a regression in bilateral visits at the highest level. There was no visit by the Polish president or prime minister to Czechia, and the Czech head of state did not visit Poland. There was not such visit in connection with the Summit of the Three Seas countries in Warsaw with the participation of Trump. Czechia was presented by the chairman of the Chamber of Deputies, Jan Hamáček. This does not mean, however, a deterioration in bilateral intergovernmental relations. Rather, it was caused by election campaigns in Czechia at that time (in October 2017, elections to the Czech Chamber of Deputies were held, and a presidential elections was scheduled for January 2018). Another reason was focusing cooperation on the Visegrad format where the prime ministers of both countries met relatively frequently, including during EU summits. As part of parliamentary diplomacy, the Speaker of the Polish Sejm (the lower house of parliament), Marek Kuchciński visited Prague and the head of the Czech Senat (the upper house), Milan Štěch, visited Warsaw.

Czech President Miloš Zeman's support for the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline during his visit to Moscow proved a serious issue in bilateral relations. However, the president's words were not supported by the new Czech government under Andrej Babiš. In a statement of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>25</sup> in response to the president's statement, a letter by Central European countries from the spring of 2016 was cited. This letter was addressed to the European Commission, and pointed to the threat associated with the construction of Nord Stream 2.

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<sup>25</sup> *Prohlášení MZV k výstavbě plynovodu Nord Stream II*, Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí České republiky, 24 November 2017, [www.mzv.cz](http://www.mzv.cz).

The Polish and Czech governments continued sectoral cooperation. Parallel expansion of the road infrastructure continued, with work on route D11 on the Czech side and route S3 on the Polish side. One of the sections of D11 was opened by the Polish Minister of Transport, Andrzej Adamczyk.<sup>26</sup> In the field of higher education, a new bilateral agreement was concluded between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Culture of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Poland.<sup>27</sup>

There were changes on both sides regarding staff at the level of heads of diplomatic missions. In November, Ivan Jestráb began to serve as the Czech ambassador in Warsaw, while in December, Grażyna Bernatowicz completed her mission in the Czech capital. Her successor was not appointed before the end of the year.

EU-related issues played a key role in contacts between Poland and Slovakia. Both countries, however, had a different approach to European integration. Slovakia wanted to gain Poland's support for its initiative to combat double-quality food products. On 13 October, Szydło participated in the Consumer Summit in Bratislava, which was also attended by representatives of governments, the European Parliament and consumer and manufacturer associations.

In May, Polish-Slovak intergovernmental consultations were held in Warsaw. The meeting was attended by the prime ministers of both countries, as well as their ministers of development, national defence, justice, energy, environment, family, labour and social policy, and deputy ministers from several departments. An unofficial meeting between the PiS Chairman Jarosław Kaczyński and the prime minister and chairman of the Smer-SD party, Robert Fica, took place in Stary Smokovec (Slovakia) at the beginning of February. The topics discussed included bilateral issues, and V4 and EU cooperation. As part of parliamentary cooperation, a meeting of the presidiums of the Sejm and the National Council of the Slovak Republic was held in Tatrzańska Łomnica in Slovakia,<sup>28</sup> and Andrej Danko, Chairman of the National Council, visited the Polish parliament.<sup>29</sup>

The meeting of heads of states at Kasprowy Wierch at the beginning of March was a demonstration of good relations between Poland and Slovakia. President

<sup>26</sup> "Adamczyk: Zależy nam, żeby realizacja dróg D11 i S3 odbywała się równolegle," *Gospodarka Morska*, 22 August 2017, [www.gospodarkamorska.pl](http://www.gospodarkamorska.pl).

<sup>27</sup> *Podpisanie Protokołu o współpracy w dziedzinie szkolnictwa wyższego*, Embassy of the Czech Republic in Warsaw, 4 August 2017, [www.mzv.cz](http://www.mzv.cz).

<sup>28</sup> *Tatrzańska Łomnica: wspólne posiedzenie prezydiów Sejmu i Rady Narodowej Republiki Słowackiej—relacja*, 7 November 2017, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>29</sup> *Marszałek Karczewski: Musimy powtarzać, że Grupa Wyszehradzka nie jest przeciwko UE*, 6 March 2017, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

Andrzej Duda and President Andrej Kiska discussed, among other things, cooperation within the Three Seas Initiative, and the development of road and energy infrastructure. Kiska laid the foundation stone for the Warsaw skyscraper Varso, to be constructed by the Slovak company HB Reavis, emphasising the presence of Slovak investments in Poland.

The development of infrastructure connections with southern neighbours was perceived by Poland more broadly as regional development on the north-south axis. The meeting of Adamczyk with Slovak parliamentarians served for discussions on coordination of an international road route Via Carpatia.

Among the V4 countries, the government continued to maintain the closest relations with Hungary. The nature and dynamics of this cooperation have not changed. PiS and Fidesz shared programme similarities, mainly in internal politics. Relations were, however, affected by the launch of the Art.7 TEU procedure against Poland. Hungary was the only Member State to declare its support for Poland in the event that the EU Council voted on sanctions. It was a circumstance that forced Poland to treat relations with Hungary as a priority. What's more, the dispute between the Polish government and the EC favoured Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, whose concessions in disputes with the EU institutions gained more significance. It strengthened his position in the region and made it easier for him to further the agenda for his European ambitions.

Many high-level bilateral meetings were held in 2017. Duda and President János Áder met, as every year since 2008, on the occasion of Polish-Hungarian Friendship Day, this time in Piotrków Trybunalski (24 to 25 March). The Chairman of the Hungarian Országgyűlés (parliament) László Kövér, visited Warsaw from 18 to 19 April, and Orbán followed suit on 22 September. The speakers and deputy speakers of the Sejm and Senat held six bilateral consultations with their counterparts. Heads of individual ministries held regular discussions. Polish Minister of Justice Zbigniew Ziobro met his Hungarian counterpart László Trócsányi four times, discussing, among other things, changes in the Polish and Hungarian judiciary, the migration crisis and the fight against terrorism. Demographic and family policy issues were consulted at ministerial level more frequently than in previous years. On the other hand, foreign ministers met bilaterally only once, on 12 June in Warsaw. Awarding the Prize of Sándor Petőfi<sup>30</sup> to Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, and the coronation of a copy of the icon of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa in the presence of representatives of the

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<sup>30</sup> This award was established by a government foundation in 2009. Its winners include American historian Anne Applebaum, Slovak political scientist Miroslav Kusý and Estonian politician Mart Laar.

authorities of both countries in St. Stefan Cathedral in Budapest both served as indications of Hungarian conservative gestures.

The leaders of both countries emphasised a common approach to many EU matters, including the migration crisis and the next EU budget.<sup>31</sup> However, bilateral consultations did not translate into the establishment of a Polish-Hungarian tandem at EU level. This resulted from different strategies used in these countries' approach to European policy. In the case of Hungary, it was based on seeking compromise with the EC and Germany, while Poland was less willing to give in to the EC's reservations regarding reforms of the Polish judiciary.

Poland did not change its principle of giving priority importance to relations with Hungary after the latter supported Donald Tusk in the vote for the President of the European Council on 9 March (which meant Orbán did not keep his promise made to Kaczyński). As a result, Poland was the only country not to supported an extension of Tusk's term of office.

Difficult issues, including Hungary's close relations with Russia, continued to be overlooked in Polish-Hungarian relations. Reservations on the Polish side were raised as a result of two visits by President Vladimir Putin to Hungary in 2017, and of Hungary watering down the opposition of the Visegrad Group to the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline.<sup>32</sup> The Hungarian authorities maintained that the most important thing was for Russian gas to end up safely on the Hungarian market, regardless of political direction and circumstances. Also against Polish interests was Hungary's transfer of their dispute with Ukraine (concerning the language law adopted by Ukraine in September 2017) to the NATO forum. Hungary decided to suspend all meetings at ministerial level in the NATO-Ukraine formula until the act is withdrawn entirely.

## Economic Relations

In 2017, the value of Poland's trade turnover with Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary further increased, with a positive balance on the Polish side. In all cases, exports and imports increased. In comparison with the previous year, the value of exports to Slovakia showed the most dynamic growth (by 12%), with imports from Czechia rising most (by 11%).<sup>33</sup> The dynamics of the inflow of Polish direct

<sup>31</sup> Premier Beata Szydło: *wspólne stanowisko Warszawy i Budapesztu w sprawach bezpieczeństwa i radzenia sobie z kryzysem migracyjnym*, 22 September 2017, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>32</sup> For example, "Waszczykowski: Orbán musi wybrać między gazem z Polski i Rosji," *Energetyka* 24, 19 October 2017, [www.energetyka24.com](http://www.energetyka24.com).

<sup>33</sup> *Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski. Styczeń-grudzień 2017 r. w mln euro*, Ministerstwo Przedsiębiorczości i Technologii, February 2018, [www.gov.pl](http://www.gov.pl).

investments to Hungary and Slovakia decreased on an annual basis (in 2017, €130.9 million was invested in Hungary, compared to €838 million in 2016; in Slovakia, the figures were €60.8 million and €67.7 million, respectively). On the other hand, in the case of Czechia, investments of €135.2 million were recorded (in 2016, the inflow of Polish direct investments to Czechia amounted to €102.9 million). This decrease was mainly due to the sale of debt instruments. Despite the decrease, the cumulative value of Polish direct investments in Czechia increased in 2017 by over €800 million (up to €2.74 billion) compared to the previous year. This was primarily the result of changes in the valuation of shares held by Polish enterprises. Czechia ranked second among the largest recipients of Polish direct investments (behind Luxembourg).<sup>34</sup>

Table.

**Poland's Trade Exchange with the Visegrad Group Countries (in € billion)**

Country	Trade flow	2015	2016	2017
Total (V4)	exports	21.29	21.6	23.54
	import	12.27	13.4	14.41
	balance	9.02	8.2	9.13
Czechia	export	11.91	12.15	13.04
	import	6.17	6.55	7.3
	balance	5.74	5.6	5.74
Slovakia	export	4.61	4.55	5.12
	import	3.22	3.61	3.62
	balance	1.39	0.94	1.5
Hungary	export	4.77	4.9	5.38
	import	2.88	3.24	3.49
	balance	1.88	1.66	1.89

Source: Author's compilation based on: Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zagranicznego, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl); Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski, Ministerstwo Przedsiębiorczości i Technologii, [www.mpit.gov.pl](http://www.mpit.gov.pl).

<sup>34</sup> *Polskie inwestycje bezpośrednie za granicą—2017 (EUR)*, Cykliczne materiały analityczne NBP ("Cyclical NBP analytical materials"), Narodowy Bank Polski, [www.nbp.pl](http://www.nbp.pl).

Polish-Czech trade exchange amounted to €20.3 billion in 2017. In 2017, Czechia ranked second (behind Germany) among the most important Polish export markets with a share of 6.4%, thus recording a rise by one position compared to 2016.

Trade exchange with Slovakia increased by 7.1%, amounting to €8.76 billion.<sup>35</sup> Thus, Slovakia ranked 14 with a share of 2.1% in total foreign trade turnover of Poland. Conventionally, the trade exchange of both countries was based on metal industry products, automotive and electronics industries products.

Polish-Hungarian trade turnover in 2017 amounted to €8.87 billion. Trade exchange increased by 8% compared to 2016. Polish exports to Hungary represented 2.6% of total Polish exports (the same as in 2016), and total turnover with Hungary was 2.1% of Polish trade turnover. Poland remains the third largest exporter to Hungary (behind Germany and Austria).<sup>36</sup> In turn, Hungary was the 10th partner in terms of the value of Polish exports, and the 14th partner in terms of the value of imports to Poland.

### Social and Cultural Relations

The year 2017 in the social and cultural relations of the Visegrad countries was marked by the continuation of joint ventures and new initiatives. The traditional Visegrad Cycling Race took place for the fifth time, consisting of four one-part sections. The Polish part took place in Lower Silesia.<sup>37</sup> For the first time, the V4 countries had a joint stand at the International Book Festival in Budapest,<sup>38</sup> and under the 60th International Contemporary Music Festival “Warszawska Jesień” a concert was held on 15 September, entitled “Nowe utwory z krajów Grupy Wyszehradzkiej”<sup>39</sup>

The weekly programme of Polish Radio “Visegradio”, broadcast in Poland since 1 January 2017, contributed to the popularisation of topics related to the

<sup>35</sup> *Polsko-słowacka współpraca gospodarcza w 2017 r.*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Bratysławie, 12 April 2018, [www.bratyslawa.msz.gov.pl](http://www.bratyslawa.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>36</sup> *A külkereskedelmi termékforgalom értéke euróban és értékindexei a fontosabb országok szerint*, Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, [www.ksh.hu](http://www.ksh.hu).

<sup>37</sup> *Ruszył V Wyszehradzki Wyścig Kolarski—we wrześniu zapraszamy do Sobótki*, 26 May 2017, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>38</sup> “*Czytajmy się nawzajem!*”—*sukces krajów wyszehradzkich na Międzynarodowym Festiwalu Książki w Budapeszcie*, 25 April 2017 r., [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>39</sup> *Koncert “Nowe utwory z krajów Grupy Wyszehradzkiej,”* Embassy of the Czech Republic in Warsaw, 15 September 2017, [www.mzv.cz](http://www.mzv.cz).

V4.<sup>40</sup> On International Visegrad Day (15 February,) Polish Television broadcast special programmes.<sup>41</sup> The coordination of cultural policy was served by the cyclical meeting of the V4's ministers of culture, held on 1 to 2 June 2017, in Gdynia.<sup>42</sup>

Polish-Hungarian relations in the cultural sphere were directed mainly at strengthening the symbolic dimension of bilateral relations. They more frequently served political purposes than the popularisation of art and science. This was demonstrated by, among others, establishing institutions in both countries devoted to bilateral relations (with an annual budget of approx. €1 million) and the announcement of their permanent financing.<sup>43</sup> Allocating such a large amount of money to “strengthening Polish-Hungarian friendship and cooperation”<sup>44</sup> did not, however, indicate specific objectives.

The Polish Institute in Budapest became a popular centre for the popularisation of Polish contemporary art among Hungarians. Hungarian Culture Year in Poland contributed to maintaining close cultural relations. Exhibitions were organised in Warsaw Royal Castle (on Hungarian modernism), and at the National Museum (on Hungarian photography). Hungary was also the guest of honour of the third Silesian Book Fair in Katowice. Thanks to several translators, important works of Hungarian contemporary literature, including *A Book of Memories* (“*Pamięć*”) by Péter Nádas, the next part of *Diaries* (“*Dziennik*”), by Sándor Márai, and *Diabolina*, by György Spiró, continued to be published in Polish. Translations of some of them were co-financed by Poland, mainly by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. The publication of Polish books in Hungary is supported by the Book Institute.

Due to various anniversaries in 2017, Poland was promoted in Czechia by popularising history, among other things. For example, on the 150th anniversary of the birth of Marshal Józef Piłsudski, the Polish Institute organised historical debates in Ostrava and Prague, entitled “Piłsudski i Masaryk”. Cultural events promoting Polish history included the first screening of the film *Śmierć Rotmistrza Pileckiego* (2006) in Czechia, organised by the Polish Institute and the Polish embassy in cooperation with the Polish association the Centre of Political Thought.

<sup>40</sup> Wyszehradio, Polskie Radio, <https://www.polskieradio.pl/7/5744>.

<sup>41</sup> *Międzynarodowy Dzień Wyszehradzki na antenach TVP*, Centrum Informacji TVP, 14 February 2017, <http://centruminformacji.tvp.pl>.

<sup>42</sup> *Spotkanie ministrów kultury państw Grupy Wyszehradzkiej*, Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego, 1 June 2017 r., [www.mkidn.gov.pl](http://www.mkidn.gov.pl).

<sup>43</sup> In Poland, this institute was established pursuant to the Act of 8 February 2018 on the *Wacław Felczak Institute of Polish-Hungarian Cooperation*, <http://orka.sejm.gov.pl>.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*.

The 40th anniversary of signing Charter 77 became one of the priority issues of the competition announced by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the implementation of the public task “Polish-Czech Forum for the rapprochement of societies, strengthening cooperation and good neighbourhood 2017”.

The 19<sup>th</sup> edition of the Cieszyn festival “Kino na Granicy”, held at the turn of April and May by Polish and Czech local associations Kultura na Granicy and the Association of Friends of Cieszyn Silesia, contributed to popularisation of Polish, Czech and Slovak cinema. In October, in Polish and Czech Cieszyn, the annual international theatre festival “Bez Granic” was also held. Polish culture in Moravia was celebrated with “Polish culture days in Brno”, held in March and April. Traditionally, the Polish-Czech Scientific Society, Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity and the Polish-Czech Forum support Polish-Czech and regional relations.

The 226<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Polish Constitution 3 May was given special treatment in Slovakia. Representatives of the Slovak elite, including former President of Slovakia Ivan Gašparovič, participated in celebrations in Bratislava. The Polish Institute in Bratislava remained an active centre promoting Polish culture and history in Slovakia. Its actions included, among others, a concert by the Wałasi band in one of the Bratislava churches, the promotion of the biography of Jerzy Trzanoski (Renaissance religious writer operating in the area of today's Poland, Czechia and Slovakia), and the organisation of an “evening with Joseph Conrad Korzeniowski”.

For the inhabitants of Bratislava, such events as “Z Polską na Ty”, organised in June by the Association of Poles and Their Friends in Slovakia, was a chance to get to know Polish music and cuisine. The inhabitants of Žilina and the surrounding area also had such an opportunity during the April Days of Polish Culture at Budatín Castle. Among the projects promoting painting was the initiative of the academies of fine arts in Wrocław and Bratislava, “Bratysława dla Wrocławia/ Wrocław dla Bratysławy” at which works of Slovak artists were exhibited in Wrocław galleries, and vice versa.

### Assessment

Poland's activity in the Visegrad Group was determined by priorities in European policy. The Polish government proved its ability to formulate joint postulates in cooperation with other Visegrad countries and present them at the EU forum. Most often, however, they did not go beyond general suggestions, as in the case of emphasising the role of national parliaments in the debate on the future of the EU in the joint V4 declaration of Rome. Regarding the debate on the future of the EU and attempts by the V4 to influence it effectively, Poland has not

been able to introduce more precise postulates for EU reform as a consequence of various Visegrad countries' approaches towards European integration.

In the vote to extend Tusk's term as the President of the European Council, the Polish government failed to win the votes of the V4 prime ministers, including Orbán. Poland also failed to obtain a clear veto declaration from its V4 partners (apart from Hungary) in the event that the EU Council votes on imposing sanctions under Art. 7 TEU. These examples, as well as the vote in the EU Council on the directive on posted workers, proved Poland's expectations towards its V4 partners regarding regional solidarity wrong.

The V4 successfully sought to abandon refugee relocation at EU level as a permanent mechanism. Although Poland did not initiate joint actions, they were consistent with the Polish point of view. In December 2017, the President of the European Council argued that the issue of mandatory quotas was given disproportionate attention in relation to its effects, saying that in this sense it proved to be ineffective.

Conventional areas of Visegrad cooperation, including infrastructure, were further developed in 2017. In line with the efforts of Poland, among others, this partly included the Three Seas Initiative, launched in 2016. However, due to the short period of its operation, synergy between TSI and V4 has not been created.

Thanks to the organisation of the Congress of Central and Eastern European Innovators and the adoption of the Warsaw declaration, Polish presidency of the V4 managed to focus attention on innovation as an indispensable condition for the region's competitiveness. However, no significant progress was made by V4 members in the Global Innovation Index ranking<sup>45</sup> (in 2017, Czechia ranked 24<sup>th</sup>, with Slovakia 34<sup>th</sup>, Poland 38<sup>th</sup>, and Hungary 39<sup>th</sup>) suggesting moderate results of Visegrad cooperation in this area.

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<sup>45</sup> *The Global Innovation Index 2017*, Cornell SC Johnson College of Business, [www.wipo.int](http://www.wipo.int).

# Poland's Policy Towards the Western Balkans

TOMASZ ŻORNACZUK\*

## Determinants

Poland's policy towards the Western Balkans<sup>1</sup> in 2016 to 2017<sup>2</sup> was determined by its increased involvement in the transformation processes in the region, which began after the EU Council presidency (in the second half of 2011) and were particularly apparent in 2014 to 2015. Poland continued its activities within the framework of new initiatives, which, in the middle of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, began to complement the earlier forms of presence, especially military and police.<sup>3</sup>

Poland's policy towards the Balkans was determined by its membership of NATO and the EU, which translated into a commitment to improve security in Europe. Poland participated in all stabilisation missions in the region. Since the beginning of its time in NATO and the EU, it supported, sometimes unconditionally, the admission of the Balkan states to these organisations.

Another significant determinant was Poland's membership of the Visegrad Group (V4). The other countries within the group (Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary) were conventionally involved in the Balkans due to historical ties, among other things. From July 2016 to June 2017, Poland held the presidency of V4 and was responsible for its policy in the region.

The factor determining Polish foreign policy in 2016 to 2017, including with regard to the Balkans, was the change of president and government in 2015. In August, the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice, PiS) candidate, Andrzej Duda, became president replacing Bronisław Komorowski, the Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform, PO) candidate. In November, after two terms of the PO and the Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Polish People's Party, PSL) government,

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo (under the resolution of the UNSCR 1244 and the Opinion of the ICJ on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence) and Serbia. Croatia has been a member of the EU since July 2013, which excluded it from the Western Balkans as the countries of the region aspiring for membership.

<sup>2</sup> The compilation concerns Poland's policy towards the Western Balkans in 2016 to 2017.

<sup>3</sup> For more see: T. Żornaczuk, "Poland's policy towards the Western Balkans," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2011–2015*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2020.

PiS and other right-wing parties formed a government.<sup>4</sup> Beata Szydło became prime minister and Witold Waszczykowski was appointed minister of foreign affairs. They held these positions until December 2017.

The EU enlargement to include the Balkans enjoyed high public support in Poland. In the autumn of 2015, 56% of respondents were in favour, which was the fourth highest result in the European Union, with an average of 38%.<sup>5</sup> At the end of 2017, this percentage was identical in Poland, but the country's ranking fell to eighth as the EU average increased to 42%.<sup>6</sup>

### Aims and Objectives

In the Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017 to 2021 and the Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012 to 2016, the government advocated an open-door policy to NATO and the EU. However, unlike in the Priorities document, where the Western Balkans emerged in the context of the enlargement of both the EU and the North Atlantic Alliance,<sup>7</sup> NATO was not mentioned in the Strategy. It indicated that, in the face of the EU's struggle with, among other things, the economic and migration crisis, various concepts of the European project, Brexit, and Russia's activities, "it will be more difficult to implement ambitious enlargement plans."<sup>8</sup> Once again, the Western Balkans were not included in Poland's development cooperation programme for 2016 to 2020.<sup>9</sup>

In January 2016, in the government's information on Polish foreign policy, Waszczykowski did not take into account the issue of EU enlargement and did not refer to either the Western Balkans or any individual country in the region. This was the first such omission in a decade. The minister supported maintenance of the Alliance's open-door policy, "as long as the enlargement process serves to strengthen NATO's defence functions."<sup>10</sup> For the first time, it was expressed

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<sup>4</sup> The Prawo i Sprawiedliwość Parliamentary Club was formed by PiS, Polska Razem (Poland Together; since November 2017, Porozumienie, i.e., Agreement) and Solidarna Polska (United Poland).

<sup>5</sup> *Autumn 2015, Public opinion in the European Union*, Standard Eurobarometer 84, [www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu).

<sup>6</sup> *Autumn 2017, Public opinion in the European Union*, Standard Eurobarometer 88, [www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu).

<sup>7</sup> *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl), pp. 11–12 and 15.

<sup>8</sup> *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, September 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl), p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Wieloletni program współpracy rozwojowej na lata 2016–2020*, [www.polskapomoc.pl](http://www.polskapomoc.pl).

<sup>10</sup> *Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2016 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 29 January 2016)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

unambiguously in Polish diplomacy that enlargement was only conditional on the interests of the Alliance and not on the need to increase security in its immediate neighbourhood.

On the other hand, the government's similar information in 2017 devoted more attention to the Western Balkans than in previous years. The minister mentioned Montenegro's planned accession to NATO that year and expressed his hope for further enlargement of the Alliance.<sup>11</sup> He also confirmed Poland's support for EU enlargement and justified this position.<sup>12</sup> He declared further sharing of the accession experience, and announced plans to take initiatives with the aspiring countries. For the first time in such a document, all the countries of the region were mentioned.<sup>13</sup>

### Political Relations

**Security and NATO enlargement.** In 2016 to 2017, Poland continued to participate in all three international stabilisation missions in the Balkans. The Polish president annually extended the mandate of the Polish military contingent (consisting of up to 300 troops) in the International Forces in Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2016, 246 Polish troops served in Kosovo bringing the total number of troops participating in missions to 4,700. In the following months, the Polish contingent increased slightly, although the size of the entire KFOR mission was reduced (in May 2017, 262 Polish troops out of a 4,350-person mission served in Kosovo).

In late 2017, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Polish civilian-military contingent of about 40 people was involved as part of the EU mission *Althea*, which included about 760 people in total (at that time, it was the sixth-largest in

<sup>11</sup> “W bieżącym roku powitamy wśród pełnoprawnych członków Sojuszu Czarnogórę. Potwierdza to utrzymanie przez NATO dotychczasowej polityki – gotowości do przyjęcia do swojego grona państw, które kierują się podobnym rozumieniem bezpieczeństwa europejskiego oraz podzielają te same wartości. Mamy nadzieję, że nie będzie to ostatni etap rozszerzania Sojuszu”; “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017),” see p. 13 in this volume.

<sup>12</sup> “Polska pozostanie orędowniczką procesu rozszerzania UE. Uważamy, że drzwi Europy powinny pozostać otwarte dla państw podzielających wizję współpracy demokratycznych krajów. Wolimy wyciągnąć dłoń w geście powitania niż pożegnania, tak jak ma to miejsce w przypadku Wielkiej Brytanii,” *ibidem*.

<sup>13</sup> “Pragniemy w dalszym ciągu dzielić się swoimi doświadczeniami akcesyjnymi z państwami Bałkanów Zachodnich. W tym roku planujemy serię inicjatyw skierowanych do sześciu krajów kandydujących do UE z tego regionu, czyli Serbii, Macedonii, Albanii, Bośni i Hercegowiny, Czarnogóry oraz Kosowa,” *ibidem*.

terms of numbers). It performed training and advisory operations.<sup>14</sup> What's more, at the end of 2017, just over 100 police officers served in a mission as part of EULEX in Kosovo, and although the size of the Polish contingent has decreased slightly in recent years, it remains one of the most numerous in the mission of about 1,200 people. In February 2016, Waszczykowski spoke about the possibility of relocating Polish police officers stationed in Kosovo "to one of the EU's external borders".<sup>15</sup> Eventually, Poland did not withdraw the contingent serving as part of the EU mission, and sent border guards to help protect the Macedonian border.

More clearly than in the case of the previous NATO enlargement in the Balkans (including Albania and Croatia in 2009), Poland became involved in supporting Montenegro on its path to membership.<sup>16</sup> This support was confirmed by Waszczykowski in discussion with ambassador Ramiz Bašić in February 2016.<sup>17</sup> In June, three weeks after the signature of Montenegro's NATO accession protocol in Brussels and less than a month before the Alliance Summit in Warsaw, the minister made an official visit to Podgorica. He declared that Poland would ratify the protocol "as soon as possible".<sup>18</sup> It finally did so in late November 2016.

Poland declared its support for Macedonia, which expressed an interest in NATO membership. Waszczykowski confirmed this support in July 2017, in discussion with Foreign Minister Nikola Dimitrov,<sup>19</sup> one month after the new government of the country was sworn in. Dimitrov was in Warsaw due to the visit of U.S. President Donald Trump on the occasion of the Three Seas Initiative Summit.

Security cooperation was the subject of discussions during the longest visit of the Polish Minister of National Defence to the Balkans in recent years. In early October 2017, Antoni Macierewicz visited four countries within three days. He began with a meeting with Minister Damir Krstičević in Croatia, whose soldiers were to strengthen the Battalion Group stationed in Poland within several days.

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<sup>14</sup> Expenditures on the Polish military contingent in Kosovo in 2016 amounted to approx. PLN 36 million, and to approx. PLN 40 million in 2017. Expenditures related to the Polish participation in the mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina amounted to approx. PLN 7.5 million in 2016 and approx. PLN 8 million in 2017.

<sup>15</sup> "Szef MSZ: należy rozważyć przesunięcie polskich policjantów z Kosowa na granice UE," *TVN24*, 6 February 2016, [www.tvn24.pl](http://www.tvn24.pl).

<sup>16</sup> For more on the Polish activities to support Montenegro on its path to NATO in previous years, see the section: "Political Relations", T. Żornaczuk, "Poland's policy towards the Western Balkans," *op. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> *Spotkanie ministra Witolda Waszczykowskiego z ambasadorem Czarnogóry*, MSZ, 8 February 2016, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>18</sup> *Vasčikovski: Poljska će što prije ratifikovati Protokol*, „*Vijesti*”, 25 May 2016, [www.vijesti.me](http://www.vijesti.me).

<sup>19</sup> "Waszczykowski: Polska wspiera starania Macedonii o wejście do UE i NATO," *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, 7 July 2017, [www.gazetaprawna.pl](http://www.gazetaprawna.pl).

During the meeting in Podgorica with Minister of Defence Predrag Boskovic, Macierewicz expressed his gratitude to Montenegro for its readiness to join the Battalion Group in Poland. During the meeting in Tirana with Defence Minister Olta Xhaçka, he thanked Albania for its participation in strengthening NATO's Eastern Flank. Albanian military forces were stationed in a battlegroup in Latvia, together with Polish troops. In Sarajevo, Minister Marina Pendeš was promised Euro-Atlantic support in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Pendeš expressed her hope that a memorandum of cooperation would be signed between the two countries' defence ministries.<sup>20</sup> Earlier (in April 2017), Macierewicz paid a pre-Easter visit to Polish soldiers in Kosovo.<sup>21</sup> This was part of the tradition high-ranking politicians visiting Kosovo to mark Polish religious holidays.

### Enlargement of the EU

Poland supported the accession of the Balkan countries to the EU and remained a member of the informal group "Friends of Enlargement".<sup>22</sup> Such a position resulted, among other things, from the awareness of the benefits of EU membership. This was stressed by Szydło in an interview with *Le Figaro* in September 2017, when she pointed out that "because of our past, we understand that countries that want to join the EU will be guaranteed security". She also noted that, if the countries of the Western Balkans remained outside the EU, Russian influence would increase in the region.<sup>23</sup> In fact, such influence became increasingly apparent and unfavourable to the enlargement process.<sup>24</sup> Duda also declared his support for the accession of the Balkan countries to the EU.

Poland remained in favour of the principle of conditionality (maintaining the technical nature of EU enlargement) without being burdened with slowing down political factors. In principle, Poland did not object to the European Commission's recommendations aimed at enabling the Balkan States to progress in their integration with the EU. Poland's political and expert activities in the Western Balkans within the framework of bilateral and regional cooperation,

<sup>20</sup> *Szef MON na Balkanach*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 2 October 2017, [www.mon.gov.pl](http://www.mon.gov.pl).

<sup>21</sup> *The visit of the Head of the Ministry of National Defence in Kosovo*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 11 April 2017, [www.mon.gov.pl](http://www.mon.gov.pl).

<sup>22</sup> It includes Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Working level meetings were held twice a year. They served to exchange information on bilateral relations with the Balkan countries and views on EU enlargement.

<sup>23</sup> L. Mandeville, "Beata Szydło : 'Non à une Europe à plusieurs vitesses qui creuse les divisions,'" *Le Figaro*, 28 September 2017, [www.lefigaro.fr](http://www.lefigaro.fr).

<sup>24</sup> See, for example: T. Żornaczuk, "Forever on the Periphery? The Return of Geopolitics to EU Enlargement to the Balkans," *PISM Policy Paper*, no. 6 (147), February 2016, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

based on the transfer of pre-accession experience, were to facilitate the European integration of these countries.

### **Bilateral relations**

Poland had good or very good relations with all the Western Balkan countries.<sup>25</sup> However, as in previous years, bilateral meetings at high level were occasional. Duda did not visit the region until the end of 2017, in the first half of his term. During her first two years in office, Szydło paid one visit to Albania, and Waszczykowski paid two visits, to Serbia and Montenegro.

In September 2016, during his official visit to Belgrade, Waszczykowski<sup>26</sup> spoke to Prime Minister Aleksander Vučić and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dačić about bilateral relations, economic cooperation, security, migration and support for European integration with Serbia. Poland proposed to its Serbian partners a new format of bilateral cooperation, the Belgrade Conference.<sup>27</sup> The aim was to share experience in the area of European integration, similar to Polish cooperation with Macedonia within the framework of the Skopje Conference, which has been operating since 2010. The first meeting of experts from Poland and Serbia within the Belgrade Conference was held in May 2017, in Warsaw.<sup>28</sup> In October, the Serbian Minister of European Integration Jadranka Joksimović met, among others, the Secretary of State for European Affairs Konrad Szymański in Warsaw. In June, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Marek Magierowski was one of the few representatives of EU countries to participate in the inauguration of Vučić as President of Serbia in Belgrade.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> This also applied to Kosovo, with which Poland, however, did not establish formal diplomatic relations. In this respect, it remained an exception among those EU countries that recognised Kosovo's independence.

<sup>26</sup> Waszczykowski was also in Belgrade in December 2015, when he chaired the Polish delegation to the XXII Session of the OSCE Ministerial Council. The main topics of discussion were the situation in Ukraine and migration. See: *XXII Sesja Rady Ministerialnej OBWE w Belgradzie*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 3 December 2015, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>27</sup> *Minister Witold Waszczykowski z wizytą w Republice Serbii*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 20 September 2016, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>28</sup> The discussions concerned, among other things, cooperation between national administrations and EU institutions, security, reforms in the field of internal and migration policy and accession negotiations in the area of agriculture. On the Polish side, the conference was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration, and the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the National Security Bureau, the Border Guard and the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture; *I Konferencja Belgradzka*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 17 May 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>29</sup> *Wizyta wiceministra Marka Magierowskiego w Belgradzie*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 25 June 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

Poland continued to strengthen its relations with Montenegro, which became more dynamic in connection with developing expert cooperation on European integration and in support of the country on its path to NATO. During his two-day visit to Podgorica in June 2016, Waszczykowski met President Philip Vujanovic, Deputy Prime Ministers Duško Markovic and Petar Ivanovic and acting Speaker of Parliament Milutin Simovic.<sup>30</sup> Prime Minister Milo Đukanović participated as an observer at the NATO summit in Warsaw, in July 2016. After Montenegro's accession to the Alliance in June 2017, cooperation was again focused primarily on European integration. This was the main topic of Waszczykowski's discussions with Minister of Foreign Affairs Srdjan Darmanovic during his visit to Warsaw in October 2017.<sup>31</sup>

Cooperation between Poland and Macedonia decreased slightly in 2016 to 2017, mainly due to events in Macedonia such as the anti-government protests in 2016, the early parliamentary elections in December of that year, and the appointment of a new government only in late May 2017. The prospect of a change in the composition of the Council of Ministers resulted in the cancellation of the Skopje Conference in the autumn of 2016 for the first time since its inauguration in 2010. After the formation of the new government, a conference in Skopje was to be organised with the participation of Waszczykowski. This was to be the first such meeting at this level since its establishment, when Minister Radosław Sikorski participated in the inauguration. The conference, however, was not held in 2017 either.<sup>32</sup> During a meeting with Minister Dimitrov in Warsaw in July 2017, Waszczykowski declared his support for the new government not only in its efforts to become a member of the EU and NATO, but also as it attempted to stabilise the country. What's more, as part of works aimed at strengthening the EU's external border with regard to the migration crisis, 30 Polish border guards have been stationed in Macedonia since 2016 on a rotating basis. By the end of 2017, there were 10 two-month rotations.<sup>33</sup>

In December 2016, Szydło visited Tirana. During meetings with Prime Minister Edim Rama and President Bujar Nishani, she supported Albania's EU

<sup>30</sup> *Wizyta Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych p. Witolda Waszczykowskiego w Czarnogórze*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 10 June 2016, [www.podgorica.msz.gov.pl](http://www.podgorica.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>31</sup> One of the objectives of the visit was to see the match at the National Stadium in Warsaw between the teams of Poland and Montenegro as part of the elimination rounds for the football World Cup in Russia in 2018.

<sup>32</sup> This time, due to events in Poland, including the announcement of a change of government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs postponed the date of the conference at least twice, the second time to early 2018.

<sup>33</sup> *X zmiana misji Straży Granicznej w Macedonii*, 31 October 2017, [www.strazgraniczna.gov.pl](http://www.strazgraniczna.gov.pl).

aspirations. She also participated in the Polish-Albanian Economic Forum.<sup>34</sup> Potential areas of cooperation included agriculture, tourism, energy, mining and environmental protection. A cooperation programme for 2016 to 2019, between the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Ministry of Culture of Albania, was signed.<sup>35</sup> A cooperation agreement was also concluded between the National Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania, and another was signed between the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency and the Albanian Investment Development Agency.<sup>36</sup>

In December 2017, Rama visited Warsaw and participated in the Polish-Albanian Economic Forum along with Szydło. Again, attention was focused on the potential for development of economic relations and tourism. The meeting was also an opportunity to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Poland proposed extending cooperation with the launch of the Tirana Conference the following year (the conference is a bilateral consultation forum with expert support for EU accession, similar to the Skopje and Belgrade conferences). Not only did Rama accept the proposal, but also indicated that “Poland is [...] a model as a country that has gone through political transformation”.<sup>37</sup> On 30 May, the sixth meeting of the Polish-Albanian Commission for Economic Cooperation was held in Warsaw.

In March 2016, three weeks after Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted its application for EU membership, the country’s foreign minister, Igor Crnadak, visited Warsaw. He met Waszczykowski, who informed him about Polish support for Bosnia and Herzegovina’s accession efforts.<sup>38</sup> During President Duda’s visit to Slovenia in March 2017, he participated in a tripartite meeting with Slovenian President Borut Pahore and Chairman of the Bureau of Bosnia and Herzegovina Mladen Ivanić. Duda assured them of Poland’s support for Bosnia and Herzegovina on its path to EU and NATO accession “if the will of the Bosnian people was to belong to the North Atlantic Alliance”.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> This was the first visit by a Polish prime minister to this country since 2004.

<sup>35</sup> *Premier Beata Szydło w Tiranie: Polska wspiera europejskie aspiracje Albanii*, 9 December 2016, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>36</sup> *Premier Beata Szydło w Tiranie: Będziemy eliminować bariery dla polskiego eksportu*, 9 December 2016, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>37</sup> B. Bodalska, “Polska wesprze Albaniją w drodze do UE,” *EurActiv*, 7 December 2017, [www.euractiv.pl](http://www.euractiv.pl).

<sup>38</sup> *W Warszawie o integracji Bośni i Hercegowiny z UE*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 10 March 2016, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>39</sup> “Polska wesprze starania Bośni o członkostwo w Unii Europejskiej,” *TVP Info*, 26 March 2017, [www.tvpinfo.pl](http://www.tvpinfo.pl).

Poland continued the activities initiated in 2015 under the Enlargement Academy initiative. During the second edition, in September 2016, 23 employees of the ministries of foreign affairs, European integration, agriculture, justice and other offices from six Western Balkan countries participated in training courses lasting several days in Kraków and Podkarpackie Voivodship. The initiative aimed to transfer experience regarding reforms, in particular those related to Poland's membership of the EU.<sup>40</sup> The third edition of the Academy was held in May 2017, and training was attended by 24 representatives of ministries from all countries of the region.<sup>41</sup>

The new initiative for the Western Balkans concerned the issue of reconciliation, which is an important EU postulate for the region. In October 2017, the MFA, together with the German Embassy in Warsaw and the "Krzyżowa" Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe, organised a seminar for young people entitled "Reconciliation and Remembrance". The objective of the meeting of 18 students from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia was to share the experience of reconciliation between Poland and Germany.<sup>42</sup> The project included, among other things, a presentation of the Polish-German history handbook *Europe. Our history*, since such textbooks were a recurring problem in the multinational Balkan countries. The MFA expressed the will to continue the project in the following years. It also indicated that the project was a response to the expectations of the Balkan countries, and that it fit within the framework of supporting their European aspirations, aiming to show the process of Polish-German reconciliation, while "the perception of the Krzyżowa conference in the context of war reparations is an abuse and unjustified criticism of the MFA".<sup>43</sup> A statement reflecting this was issued by the ministry after criticism of the initiative by Arkadiusz Mularczyk from PiS. In autumn 2017, he became chairman of the newly established (at the request of his party members) Parliamentary Group for the Assessment of the Compensation Amount due to Poland from Germany for the Damage caused during World War II. Mularczyk pointed out that some Balkan countries "may be blackmailed by this reconciliation in the process of joining the EU", and that they "may be Poland's

<sup>40</sup> For more, see: *Druga edycja Akademii Rozszerzeniowej*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 26 September 2016, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>41</sup> For more, see: *Urzednicy z Bałkanów Zachodnich szkoleni w Warszawie w ramach Akademii Rozszerzenia*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 22 May 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>42</sup> For more, see: *Rusza polsko-niemieckie seminarium dla młodych ludzi z Bałkanów Zachodnich „Pojednanie i pamięć”*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 9 October 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>43</sup> „MSZ: w związku z doniesieniami medialnymi w sprawie polsko-niemieckiego seminarium 'Pojednanie i Pamięć' (komunikat),” Polska Agencja Prasowa, 12 October 2017, [www.centrumprasowe.pap.pl](http://www.centrumprasowe.pap.pl).

allies on the international arena in terms of reparations”, by which he questioned the legitimacy of the MFA initiative.<sup>44</sup>

**Regional cooperation.** Poland participated in the undertakings of the Visegrad Group to support the efforts of the Balkan countries in European integration. During the Polish Presidency of the V4, the main event with the participation of partners from the region was the meeting in Warsaw in November 2016 in the V4+ format, which included representatives of the MFAs of the countries aspiring to membership, as well as those from Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Romania and Slovenia, and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy Federica Mogherini. The main topics of the discussions were security, EU enlargement and problems of reconciliation and regional cooperation in the Balkans.

During the meeting, Waszczykowski pointed out that “the European integration process contributes to security and development in the whole continent”.<sup>45</sup> In a joint declaration, the Visegrad countries supported the admission of the countries of the region to the EU, based on conditionality and individual assessments of progress. They defined the EU’s enlargement policy as “an invaluable tool for achieving security, stability and prosperity in the Western Balkan countries”. At the same time, they stressed that “a credible enlargement policy, as part of the EU’s global strategy, is a strategic investment in Europe’s security and prosperity”.<sup>46</sup> The meeting was held in a broader group than in 2012, also during the Polish presidency of V4, when only representatives of Bulgaria and Romania were present in addition to those of the Visegrad countries and the Western Balkans.<sup>47</sup>

A similarly strong message on EU enlargement to include the Balkan countries was heard at the Visegrad meetings during the Hungarian presidency. In July 2017 in Budapest, Waszczykowski participated in the V4+ meetings in Austria, Croatia and Slovenia. The ministers called for the acceleration of enlargement in

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<sup>44</sup> Mularczyk, referring to the “Reconciliation and Remembrance” initiative, stressed that “the reconciliation project was aimed at not addressing the issue of war reparations”. He claimed, among other things, that “if the MFA uses such instruments as organizing joint seminars with the German embassy, it does not pursue the policy of the Polish state, but the policy of our neighbour.” For more, see: “NASZ WYWIAD. Mularczyk o nowych tropach w sprawie reparacji, niemieckiej kontrakcji i konieczności jedności w tej sprawie,” *wPolityce*, 12 October 2017, [www.wpolityce.pl](http://www.wpolityce.pl).

<sup>45</sup> *Ministrowie SZ V4 i Mogherini o wyzwaniach łączących UE i Balkany Zachodnie*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 29 November 2016, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>46</sup> *Wspólna deklaracja Grupy Wyszehradzkiej w sprawie Balkanów Zachodnich*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 29 November 2016, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>47</sup> The meeting was left by the Serbian minister Dačić after Kosovar minister Enver Hoxhai accused his country of “provoking all wars in the Balkans” and of genocide. “Dačić: Napustio sam skup u Varšavi zbog uvreda Hođžaja,” *b92*, 30 November 2016, [www.b92.rs](http://www.b92.rs).

the Balkans, in particular, the negotiated membership of Montenegro and Serbia, as noted by international news agencies.<sup>48</sup>

Waszczykowski also participated in the V4+ Western Balkans meeting organised by the Hungarian presidency in October 2017, with the participation of Bulgarian and Romanian ministers and representatives of Croatia, Slovenia and the Estonian presidency of the EU Council.<sup>49</sup> With regard to the need for EU enlargement to include the Balkans, the minister referred to the arguments about a “free, united and democratic Europe”, and pointed out that it is necessary to “encourage the countries that are already members of the EU to continue to expand, because this is in everyone’s common interest”.<sup>50</sup> Apart from Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Péter Szijjártó, who hosted the meeting, Waszczykowski was the only Visegrad representative with a minister rank to attend. In previous years, at V4 meetings that included representatives from the Western Balkans, it was not rare for Poland to be the only country that sent a secretary of state, despite the presence of foreign ministers from Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary.

### Economic Relations

Polish trade with Western Balkan countries remained at a low level in relation to Poland’s total turnover, but it maintained a clear upward trend. Between 2015 and 2017, imports grew by almost half, and exports by one-third. In 2017, Poland’s exports to the countries of the region exceeded 1% of total Polish exports for the first time. For comparison, in 2015 this percentage was 0.85%, and in 2010 it stood at approx. 0.6%. In 2017, imports from Western Balkan countries to Poland accounted for 0.35% of total Polish imports, compared to 0.25% in 2015 and 0.14% in 2010.<sup>51</sup>

The largest trade partners of Poland in the region were Serbia and Croatia. In 2017, Serbia was the 31<sup>st</sup> destination for Polish exports (compared to 36<sup>th</sup> in 2015), and Croatia was the 34<sup>th</sup> (compared to 39<sup>th</sup> in 2015). Among the countries from which Poland imported goods, Serbia occupied 55<sup>th</sup> position (compared to 59<sup>th</sup>), and Croatia was 65<sup>th</sup> (compared to 63<sup>rd</sup>). Serbia, which played a more

<sup>48</sup> “Central European states urge EU to speed up enlargement in west Balkans,” *Reuters*, 10 July 2017, [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com).

<sup>49</sup> *Minister Witold Waszczykowski na spotkaniu szefów dyplomacji Grupy Wyszehradzkiej i państw regionu Bałkanów Zachodnich w Budapeszcie*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 11 October 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>50</sup> “Chcą poszerzyć Unię o nowe kraje z południa Europy,” *TVN24*, 12 October 2017, [www.tvn24.pl](http://www.tvn24.pl).

<sup>51</sup> For more on the trends in Poland’s trade with the countries of the Western Balkans in recent years, see the section Economic relations in: T. Żornaczuk, “Poland’s policy towards the Western Balkans,” *op. cit.*

important role than Croatia in Polish trade since 2012, has begun to record greater trade with Poland in the last two years. For Polish economic relations with the Balkans, the dominance of these countries remained clear (approx. 73% in 2017), but decreased slightly compared to approx. 75% in 2016 and almost 80% in the previous few years. The reason was the increasing dynamics of trade with Macedonia and Montenegro. Although the level of this trade was still low, it more than doubled within two years. In 2017, Poland's trade with all the Western Balkan countries maintained an upward trend and, apart from a minimal negative balance with Macedonia, it remained positive in each case.

Table 1.

**Poland's Trade with the Western Balkans in 2015 to 2017**  
(EUR million)

		2015	2016	2017	Change 2015 to 2017
Serbia	Import	210.4	254.3	325.5	55%
	Export	615.0	698.1	808.1	31%
Croatia	Import	171.3	180.4	169.8	-1%
	Export	550.1	606.4	709.3	29%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Import	54.9	48.5	62.2	13%
	Export	185.9	199.7	244.1	31%
Macedonia	Import	33.9	71.1	127.5	276%
	Export	61.7	71.5	123.5	100%
Montenegro	Import	8.1	12.0	17.7	119%
	Export	19.3	42.0	45.2	134%
Kosovo	Import	4.2	2.3	6.5	55%
	Export	57.2	57.0	59.9	5%
Albania	Import	6.9	9.7	14.4	109%
	Export	40.7	45.6	51.4	26%
Western Balkans	Import	489.7	578.3	723.6	48%
	Export	1529.9	1720.3	2041.5	33%
Total Polish trade	Import	177232.9	180924.6	203250.9	15%
	Export	179578.2	184842.9	203688.5	13%

Source: Data from the Ministry of Development and the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> *Synteza informacji o eksporcie i imporcie Polski, styczeń–grudzień 2016 rok* and *Synteza informacji o eksporcie i imporcie Polski, styczeń–grudzień 2017 rok* are available from the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology, [www.mpit.gov.pl](http://www.mpit.gov.pl). Data for 2017 are preliminary.

Goods exported from Poland to Western Balkan countries included internal combustion engines, car parts, electrical machinery products, cigarettes, agricultural-food products, furniture and personal hygiene products. The main imports included paper products, metallurgical and chemical industry products, metal ores (especially zinc), agricultural-food products, footwear, and, in the case of Serbia, passenger cars.<sup>53</sup>

Polish foreign direct investments in the region are insignificant. In Serbia and Croatia, they exceeded EUR 100 million in 2016. In Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia, there were no or only marginal Polish investments.<sup>54</sup>

### Cultural and Social Relations

The Polish community in each of the Balkan countries is small, comprising several hundred people at most. Poles are connected via Polish organisations, of which there are several in some countries. So far, Poland has not opened a Polish Institute in the Western Balkans.

Polish embassies promoted Polish culture in the region through Polish Days, Polish books presented at book fairs, theatre shows and music concerts, and tourism. In 2017, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Ryszard Kapuściński's death, an international scientific conference entitled "Kapuściński: Reality, Fiction and Legend" was held in Belgrade.<sup>55</sup>

Polish culture became increasingly accessible in the Balkans thanks to cyclical events. These included, among others, the International Fryderyk Chopin Festival in Belgrade, and Chopin's music was also presented during concerts in other capitals of the region. In 2016, Belgrade hosted screenings as part of the Polish Film Autumn, which, however, was not organised the following year. Polish films were also shown at film festivals in other regional capitals.

The culture of the Balkan nations remained popular in Poland and was more and more accessible. In 2016 and 2017, after a 17-year break, Kayah and Goran Bregović, the biggest performers of Balkan music in Poland, made two concert tours. The concerts included songs from their 1999 album, which sold more than any other record in the history of Polish music, and were popular. Moreover,

<sup>53</sup> For more about goods in the trade between Poland with individual countries of the region, see: *Informacja o stosunkach gospodarczych Polski z krajami Europy*, Ministerstwo Przedsiębiorczości i Technologii, [www.mpit.gov.pl](http://www.mpit.gov.pl).

<sup>54</sup> *Polskie inwestycje bezpośrednie za granicą – 2016*, Narodowy Bank Polski, [www.nbp.pl](http://www.nbp.pl).

<sup>55</sup> Detailed information on cultural events can be found on the websites of Polish embassies in individual countries of the region.

legendary Yugoslav-era band Bajaga i Instruktori and Parni Valjak gave concerts in Poland. Festivals promoting, among other things, music from the Balkans, included the Pannonica Folk Festival in Barcice. Balkan films were again screened at the Warsaw Film Festival, and at festivals in other cities. Sometimes they were also distributed more widely, especially in art-house cinemas.

Conventionally, the Balkans occupied very little space in Polish media. Only the protests in Macedonia, Montenegro's accession to NATO and sentences in the trials before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia attracted some attention.

All Balkan countries became increasingly popular among Polish tourists. In 2017, the largest number of Poles visited Croatia (934,000 compared to 675,000 in 2015, an increase of over 38%). The highest growth rate (approx. 128%) was seen in trips to Albania (visited by 114,600 Poles in 2017, compared to 50,300 in 2015). In 2017, 56,000 Poles visited Montenegro (compared to 50,500 in 2015), 45,300 Poles visited Serbia (41,200 in 2015), 39,800 Poles visited Bosnia and Herzegovina (31,600 in 2015) and 22,000 Poles visited Macedonia (17,000 in 2015).<sup>56</sup>

### Assessment

In 2016 to 2017, the Western Balkans enjoyed great interest in Poland, especially at the expert level of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This was apparent from the fact that the Polish representation at Visegrad meetings concerning the region was raised to ministerial level. The fact that it remained an area of no significant importance in high-level contacts within the framework of bilateral cooperation made it possible to believe that this was due to the new government's different perception of Central European cooperation, not strictly the Balkan matters

Poland's policy towards the Balkans was not based on a strategy, although the number of individual initiatives in the region in the last few years justified the need for a comprehensive approach taking into account the objectives and the instruments required to achieve them. It would, therefore, be worth updating the Guidelines of the Republic of Poland's Policy towards the Western Balkans of May 2014, on the basis of which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has drawn up an inter-ministerial report every year on activities in specified areas. In recent years, this resulted in a better flow of information to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the activities related to the Balkans carried out by individual ministries and other public administration units. Updating the document would be beneficial for practical reasons, as it would allow coordination of future cooperation between

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<sup>56</sup> Based on data from statistical offices and tourist organisations of Balkan countries. No reliable data for Kosovo.

Poland and partners from both the region and the EU. It could also be important in, among other things, the context of applying for the organisation of the Berlin Process Summit in 2019, supporting the development of the Western Balkan countries, and such aspirations were indicated by the MFA at the end of 2017.

Poland maintained the dynamically developing expert activities initiated mostly in connection with the Polish Presidency of the EU Council in 2011. Such activities were so apparent in the years 2014 to 2015 that moving away from the conventional Polish perception of the Balkans, mainly from the perspective of security, became a fact. In 2016 to 2017, Poland continued consultations within the framework of memoranda on cooperation in the field of European integration with Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, signed several years earlier. In addition to the Skopje Conference, Poland's activity regarding EU enlargement in the region included the Belgrade Conference, and in late 2017 the MFA also announced the initiation of the Tirana Conference. The Balkan addressees of Polish memoranda on integration cooperation and the institutionalisation of activities with Serbia and Albania in the form of expert conferences confirm the tendency in Polish foreign policy to transfer experience to countries most advanced in the process of integration with the EU.

Moreover, in 2016 to 2017, the practice of undertaking comprehensive expert activities in relation to all the Western Balkan countries became consolidated in Poland. After initiation of the Enlargement Academy in autumn 2015, its two subsequent editions were held in the following years and the programme is expected to continue. Activities directed towards the entire region were extended in 2017 with the "Reconciliation and Remembrance" project, and the MFA announced the continuation of this initiative.

In the last two years, as in the previous ones, Polish policy towards the Balkans has been inconsistent. Examples include criticism of the "Reconciliation and Remembrance" initiative by Mularczyk, addressed to young people from the Balkans, and Waszczykowski's statement on the possibility of transferring Polish police officers from the EU mission in Kosovo to the EU's external border.

Over the last few years, Poland's activities in the Balkans under the V4 format have complemented its own initiatives towards the region. This represents a different approach to that of a decade ago, when Poland's activity in the Western Balkans was stimulated by its operations in Central European regional structures,<sup>57</sup> or from the period just after the end of its EU Council Presidency, when Polish diplomacy was increasingly aware of the need for "at least goodwill to

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<sup>57</sup> T. Żornaczuk, "Poland's policy towards the Western Balkans," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2010*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2011, p. 238.

V4's involvement in supporting the integration efforts of the Western Balkans".<sup>58</sup> Moreover, Poland's increased activity in the Balkans could be influenced by the reduction of activities directed at the Eastern Partnership countries after Russian aggression in Ukraine and the reduction of cooperation with some EU Member States, primarily Germany and France, also in regional formats.

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<sup>58</sup> M. Gniazdowski, "Polska polityka w Grupie Wyszehradzkiej: paradoksy skali," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 2 (64), 2012.

# Poland's Policy Towards the Middle East and North Africa

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## Determinants

The years 2016 and 2017 in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)<sup>1</sup> were characterised by five main processes: the war in Syria, the fight of the international coalition with the terrorist organisation, the so-called Islamic State (ISIS), fluctuations in migration in the region and to Europe, qualitative changes of governments in Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, as well as a rivalry of regional powers. Each of these processes had non-regional implications.

Since autumn 2015, Syria has become an area of growing Russian influence. Thanks to it, with the intensive involvement of Iran, President Bashar al-Assad strengthened to such an extent that in 2016 and 2017 he regained the urbanised belt of western Syria, with the exception of Da'ara and Idlib, and was close to defeating the opposition. The international coalition against ISIS, formed in 2014, succeeded over the period 2016-2017 in radically reducing the area under the group's control in Syria and Iraq (by 98% compared to 2015), thanks to cooperation with the Syrian and Iraqi Kurds and the Iraqi army.<sup>2</sup> During this period, the number of illegal migrants to Europe from or through MENA decreased from 1.8 million in 2015 to 511,000 in 2016 and to 205,000 in 2017 (a decrease of 89%).<sup>3</sup> The authorities of key countries in the region have been strengthened. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan extended his prerogatives by amending the constitution and repressing political opponents he accused of attempting the coup d'état in 2016. King Salman of Saudi Arabia who has been in power since 2015, allowed his son, later heir to the throne, Muhammad bin Salman, to change the Kingdom's foreign policy to a more aggressive and confrontational stance towards Iran and more friendly towards

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<sup>1</sup> In the article, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region includes, in addition to Arab states and Israel, Iran and Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> “Briefing B. McGurka, of the president's special envoy for global coalition against Daesh,” 21 December 2017, [www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/12/276746.html](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/12/276746.html).

<sup>3</sup> “Risk Analysis for 2018,” Frontex, 2018, [www.frontex.europa.eu](http://www.frontex.europa.eu).

Israel. In Egypt, the largest country in the European neighbourhood, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi strengthened his office as president. Global changes have also affected the region and its relations with European countries. Since early 2017, the new U.S. president, Donald Trump, has improved relations with Saudi Arabia and Israel, undermined by his predecessor Barack Obama, giving them free reign to operate in the region. However, despite the rhetorical tightening of the policy towards Iran and the announcement of breaking the international agreement on its nuclear programme, by the end of 2017, Trump has not abandoned its commitments in this regard. He departed, however, from the previous policy line of the United States, deciding in December 2017 to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to move the American embassy there.

One of the important determinants of Poland's foreign policy in 2016-2017 was the change of government after eight years of governance by the coalition Platforma Obywatelska (PO) and Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (PSL). The party Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS), which has been in power since autumn 2015, did not refer to the southern neighbourhood of the European Union or the MENA in its programme of 2014 (Section V on "Poland's foreign policy"). The region remained largely an area towards which both PiS (within the coalition Zjednoczona Prawica, or United Right), and earlier PO had pursued a similar policy. The exception concerned the rhetoric related to the inhabitants of Arab states, and above all to Muslims and their role in terrorist attacks and the migration crisis in Europe in 2015. So far, this determinant has not affected bilateral relations with the MENA countries, but has changed the perception of their inhabitants in Poland and, to a lesser extent, Poland in this region.<sup>4</sup>

### **Aims and Objectives**

In the information by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the tasks of Polish foreign policy in 2016, Witold Waszczykowski mentioned the "neighbourhood crisis" as one of the three crises affecting Europe. By devoting much more space to discussing the situation in the MENA than his predecessors, the minister considered Poland's main objective in the southern neighbourhood to take an active part in solving its problems:

"In the South of Europe, the biggest problems today are armed conflicts, terrorism and the disintegration of state structures. A growing problem is the huge wave of economic migration and refugees. It is necessary to adapt the Polish foreign and security policy to these challenges as well. However, I would like to stress that Polish diplomacy, also using the development aid instrument and

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<sup>4</sup> More on this subject [in this volume: "Social and cultural relations."](#)

actively participating in solving the problems of Africa and the Middle East, will strive to maintain a proper balance between the involvement of our partners, allies from NATO and the European Union, in preventing and resolving problems in the eastern and southern neighbourhood.”<sup>5</sup>

The Minister's specific objectives included further support for the coalition fighting ISIS and providing humanitarian aid to the victims of terrorism in the MENA. He explicitly pointed to a need to protect minorities, especially Christians. He mentioned Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq as partner countries in the NATO neighbourhood with which Poland wants to develop cooperation and whose sense of security will strengthen as a result. The region also appeared in the context of migration to Europe from the south—Poland takes the stance that the best way to withstand the flow of migration to Europe is to help the victims on the spot (outside Europe). Financial support for the November 2015 agreement with Turkey to reduce uncontrolled migration was announced.

Due to their size, the countries of the region were considered an important objective of Polish diplomacy in 2016-2017, seeking support for Poland's candidacy as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Due to the financial and energy resources of the MENA, important for Polish policy towards the region was to develop economic relations, especially the acquisition of direct investments from the Persian Gulf states (Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iran, United Arab Emirates, or UAE). The reopening of missions in Baghdad, Damascus, and Tripoli was announced, also in Iraq, Syria, and Libya, depending on the situation. Egypt, Tunisia (as the target countries of Polish tourism), Algeria, Morocco and Jordan were to enjoy particular interest in the scope of political and economic relations. Polish-Israeli relations were only mentioned.

The assumptions of the policy towards the region for 2017 coincided with those of the previous year and reflected the position of the MENA in the newly adopted *Strategy of the Polish Foreign Policy for 2017–2021*, by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland.<sup>6</sup> The objectives were slightly modified. Minister Waszczykowski combined the task of opening more intensively to the countries of the region with a “deep turn” in the non-European policy of Poland in general.<sup>7</sup> This was to translate into much closer cooperation with the

<sup>5</sup> *Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2016 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 29 January 2016)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>6</sup> *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, September 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>7</sup> “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017),” see p. 13 in this volume.

countries of Africa and the Middle East. Invariably, it was intended to maintain the commitment to counter-terrorism, including the fight against ISIS. Again, an increase in aid for migrants and refugees was announced, this time in Jordan and Lebanon. The development of economic relations with the Gulf States remained important. Slightly more attention was paid to relations with Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, however, no specific objective was formulated. Many visits to MENA have also been announced.

President Andrzej Duda agreed with the information on the government's foreign policy presented in 2016 and 2017. He considered the assumptions presented in 2016 to be "factual and peaceful", and in line with the goals set earlier to be achieved.<sup>8</sup> In the following year, with regard to the MENA region, the president paid special attention to the supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar and building a coalition supporting Polish membership in the UN Security Council.<sup>9</sup> At the UN forum, he emphasised Polish aid for refugees in the Middle East.

### Political Relations

In 2016-2017, Poland continued its close cooperation with **Israel**. The intensity of relations was confirmed by the frequency of meetings between politicians from both countries. In April 2016, Israel was visited by Minister of National Defence Antoni Macierewicz and in June the first visit was paid by Minister of Foreign Affairs Witold Waszczykowski, who met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Minister of National Defence Avigdor Lieberman, and the **Palestinian Authority**.<sup>10</sup> The discussions focused on security issues (including the war in Syria, the migration crisis), economic cooperation (including cooperation between defence industries), and the future of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. In November 2016, further Polish-Israeli intergovernmental consultations (previous ones were held in 2011 and 2013) took place in Israel. Prime Minister Beata Szydło and representatives of the Ministry of National Defence, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Ministry of Development, Ministry of Sport, Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy participated in the consultations.<sup>11</sup> The discussions

<sup>8</sup> "Prezydent o exposé Waszczykowskiego: Spokojne i rzeczowe, tak jak polska polityka zagraniczna," *Wprost*, 9 February 2017, [www.wprost.pl](http://www.wprost.pl).

<sup>9</sup> *Wzmacniamy naszą pozycję w regionie i w UE*, 9 February 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>10</sup> *Minister Witold Waszczykowski spotkał się z premierem Benjaminem Netanjahu*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 15 June 2016, [www.ms.gov.pl](http://www.ms.gov.pl).

<sup>11</sup> It appeared from conversations between the authors and the observers of the consultations that sympathy between Szydło and Netanyahu distinguished their relations in comparison to previous consultations at the same level.

focused on cooperation in the field of innovation and economy as well as on historical issues. During the visit, an agreement on social protection was signed guaranteeing the coordination of social security systems enabling the aggregation of insurance periods as a result of work in Israel and Poland, and the transfer of benefits for people living in the other country (e.g., pensions from Poland to Israel). In July 2017, another meeting between Prime Minister Szydło and Prime Minister Netanyahu took place at a joint summit of the V4 countries and Israel in Budapest. The discussions of the heads of governments focused on the issues of development (e.g., advanced technologies and digitalisation) and security (e.g., cybersecurity and border protection). The creation of working groups on counter-terrorism and support for technological cooperation was announced.<sup>12</sup>

President Andrzej Duda acted for the benefit of Polish-Israeli and Polish-Palestinian relations. In September 2016, he participated in the funeral of Shimon Peres, the former president and prime minister of Israel. President Mahmoud Abbas also visited Poland in September. Issues of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process were discussed as well as the possibility of cultural cooperation and the creation of a Polish-Palestinian economic zone in the PA.<sup>13</sup> An important event in the mutual relations was the three-day visit of President Duda to Israel and Palestine in January 2017. The President met his Israeli and Palestinian counterparts. Discussions were held on political, economic, and military cooperation. During his visit, the president awarded the Order of the White Eagle to Szewach Weiss, a former Israeli ambassador to Poland, who contributed to the development of Polish-Jewish relations.<sup>14</sup>

The issue of the reprivatisation law and the proposed amendment to the Institute of National Remembrance law, which involves penalisation for accusing the Polish state of participation in Nazi crimes, were discussed in the current political dialogue with Israel. Protests by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs were triggered by incidents during the Independence March in 2017.<sup>15</sup>

With respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the United Right coalition maintained its traditional line in Polish foreign policy, which assumes support for the two-state solution developed in direct negotiations between the two sides. This position was repeatedly stressed by Polish politicians, including President Duda during his visits or Minister Waszczykowski at a conference in Paris in

<sup>12</sup> M. Wojnarowicz, Ł. Ogrodnik, "V4+Israel Summit in Budapest," PISM Spotlight, no. 42/2017, 20 July 2017.

<sup>13</sup> *Wizyta prezydenta Palestyny*, 15 June 2016, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>14</sup> *Wizyta Pary Prezydenckiej w Izraelu i Palestynie*, 16 January 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>15</sup> "Israel Calls for Poland to Take Action After 'Dangerous' and 'Racist' March on Independence Day," *Haaretz*, 13 November 2017, [www.haaretz.com](http://www.haaretz.com).

June 2016 devoted to the Middle East peace process.<sup>16</sup> In January 2017, in a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland expressed its concern about the Israeli government's decision to expand the settlements in the West Bank by an additional 6,000 units.<sup>17</sup> The Polish authorities also referred to the U.S. decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to move its embassy there in December 2017, declaring that the status of Jerusalem can only be established in the final peace agreement.<sup>18</sup>

Cooperation with the **Kingdom of Jordan** was also developed during this period. Minister Waszczykowski visited Jordan twice, in July and December 2016.<sup>19</sup> In August, King Abdullah II of Jordan and Queen Rania visited Poland unofficially,<sup>20</sup> and in November 2016, President Duda paid a three-day visit. The subject matter of the meetings focused on security issues, economic cooperation, and support for Jordan's actions towards the Syrian refugee crisis. Apart from humanitarian issues, an important topic discussed during the visits was the cooperation of defence industries, e.g., President Duda participated in a seminar in Amman on the cooperation of armaments industries.<sup>21</sup> Just like in the case of Jordan, cooperation with **Lebanon** concerned the issue of the refugee crisis, Polish humanitarian support and economic cooperation. In November 2017, the head of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, Beata Kempa, visited Lebanon.<sup>22</sup>

The Middle East countries are an important recipient of Polish development aid (ODA). In the Multiannual Development Cooperation Plan for 2016-2020, the priority countries include Palestine where Polish aid is to focus on supporting human capital, entrepreneurship, the private sector, and the development of agriculture and rural areas. In 2016, the largest ODA recipients in the region were Syria (PLN 110.81 million), Iraq (PLN 6.36 million), and Palestine (PLN 4.76 million).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Minister Witold Waszczykowski na konferencji poświęconej bliskowschodniemu procesowi pokojowemu*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 3 June 2016, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>17</sup> *Komunikat MSZ w sprawie decyzji parlamentu Izraela dot. osadnictwa na terenach palestyńskich*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 14 February 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>18</sup> *Komunikat MSZ w związku z uznaniem przez USA Jerozolimy jako stolicy Izraela*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 7 December 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>19</sup> *Wizyta szefa polskiej dyplomacji w Jordańskim Królestwie Haszymidzkim*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 25 July 2016, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>20</sup> *Prezydent spotkał się z królem Jordanii*, 28 August 2016, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>21</sup> "Prezydent Duda w Jordanii: Polska ma dobrą ofertę uzbrojenia," *TVP Info*, 7 November 2016, [www.tvp.info](http://www.tvp.info).

<sup>22</sup> *Wizyta Szefowej KPRM Pani Minister Beaty Kempy w Libanie*, 11 September 2017, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Bejrucie, [www.bejrut.msz.gov.pl](http://www.bejrut.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>23</sup> "Pomoc w liczbach – rok 2016," [www.polskapomoc.gov.pl](http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl).

A new element of the Polish foreign policy towards the Middle East was an increase in the scope of humanitarian aid for victims and refugees of conflicts in Syria and Iraq. In 2016, Szydło's government adopted a package of humanitarian aid in the Middle East for 2017.<sup>24</sup> The Polish government's strategy was to increase the assistance provided to refugees in the receiving countries—Jordan and Lebanon—and in Iraqi Kurdistan. The total government humanitarian aid increased from PLN 12.8 million in 2015 to PLN 120 million in 2016<sup>25</sup> and almost PLN 160 million in 2017<sup>26</sup> (including compulsory contributions and independent decisions of the government). It should be noted that assistance to Syrian refugees was the only manifestation of Poland's relations with **Syria**. Consequently, contact with the regime in Damascus remained at the lowest level, although diplomatic relations were not formally broken (in 2012, the activity of the Polish embassy in Syria was suspended).

The majority of contacts with the **Arab states of the Persian Gulf** in 2016-2017 was related to Poland's participation in the coalition against ISIS, military cooperation, or economic relations. They are also aimed at the political objective of maintaining the highest level of political relations with important partners. In 2016, the Polish Minister of National Defence visited Kuwait twice and Qatar once, where he visited the Polish Military Contingent. Ibrahim al-Dżafari, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, talked to his counterpart in Warsaw about support for the anti-terrorist coalition. In November 2016, after a two-year break, the Polish embassy in Baghdad resumed its activities. An important visit at the highest Polish-Qatari level was held on 4-5 May 2017, when Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, paid an official visit to Warsaw. He met with the president and prime minister, participated in plenary consultations, and signed agreements on economic cooperation in the field of health and culture. In August 2017, Qatar abolished the visa requirement for Poles in connection with the blockade imposed on this country by the coalition led by Saudi Arabia. In May 2016, the third meeting of the Polish-Saudi Arabian commission for bilateral cooperation at the deputy ministerial level was held in Warsaw. On this occasion, more than 170 Polish and Saudi companies participated in the economic forum. Only the programme of further cooperation was agreed. Consultations at the level of deputy ministers were also held with Kuwait and UAE.

<sup>24</sup> *Pakiet pomocy humanitarnej na Bliskim Wschodzie w roku 2017*, 26 July 2016, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>25</sup> "Pomoc uchodźcom „na miejscu” – ile rząd na nią przeznaczą," *TVN24*, 21 June 2017, [www.tvn24.pl](http://www.tvn24.pl).

<sup>26</sup> "Rzeczpospolita: 'Czy Polska otworzy korytarze humanitarne dla uchodźców?'" *Interia*, 4 January 2018, [www.fakty.interia.pl](http://www.fakty.interia.pl).

In 2016, efforts were made to obtain support from Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Yemen for Polish membership of the UN Security Council. It was served by the participation of Minister Waszczykowski in the EU-LPA summit in Cairo (December 2016) and Deputy Minister Joanna Wronecka in the EU-Gulf Cooperation Council summit in Brussels (July 2016).

Poland's policy towards **Iran** in 2016-2017 was most strongly influenced by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and the so-called P5+1 group (permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany) concluded in July 2015.<sup>27</sup> As a result, economic sanctions imposed by the EU on Iran were lifted. Emphasising this fact in the information on the tasks of Polish foreign policy in 2016, Minister Waszczykowski pointed to the great potential of relations with Iran.<sup>28</sup> This led to the dynamic development of bilateral relations. It was most clearly reflected in numerous bilateral visits. The most important include: the visit of the Iranian Vice President Ali Akbar Salehi in November 2016, who met with President Duda; the visit of Deputy Minister Wronecka in August 2017 to Tehran, who participated in the inauguration of President Hasan Rouhani, re-elected to a second term, and in Polish-Iranian political consultations; and the visit of Vice President of the Iranian Parliament Ali Mottahari in September 2017.<sup>29</sup> Deputy Minister Marek Magierowski, who chaired the Polish delegation, commemorated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of Poles in Iran during the Second World War, discussed the prospects for strengthening economic cooperation with the Iranians, and expressed support for the opening of the EU Delegation in Tehran.

In **North Africa (Algeria)**, contacts were particularly intensified in 2016-2017. In 2016, it was visited by the deputy minister of foreign affairs (February), the deputy minister of finance (November) and the deputy minister of energy (September). In November 2016, the first meeting of the Polish-Algerian Joint Defence Committee was held in Warsaw. In November 2017, the Poland's foreign minister visited Algiers where he signed an agreement on the establishment of a Joint Intergovernmental Commission for economic, trade, scientific, and technical cooperation. Also in November, Minister Waszczykowski visited Tunisia to indicate support for democratic transformations in that country despite its difficult neighbourhood and regional challenges. However, the cooperation with Egypt, the largest Arab state and an EU neighbour (with about 100 million

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<sup>27</sup> The agreement was concluded in July 2015. For more, see: M.A. Piotrowski, "Effects of the P5+1 Nuclear Deal with Iran," PISM Bulletin, no. 74 (806), 23 July 2015.

<sup>28</sup> *Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2016...*, op. cit.

<sup>29</sup> *Spotkanie Prezydenta RP z wiceprezydentem Iranu*, 9 November 2016, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl); *Polsko-irańskie konsultacje polityczne w Teheranie*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 7 August 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl); *Wiceprzewodniczący Parlamentu Iranu Ali Mottahari w Warszawie*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 21 September 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

inhabitants), was not intensified. Although political consultations at the level of deputy ministers held in Cairo in March 2017, President Duda, despite the invitation of the Egyptian side and the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations at that time, did not visit Egypt. The president was represented by the Secretary of State in his Chancellery, Krzysztof Szczerski.

Poland's policy towards **Turkey** in 2016-2017 was influenced primarily by security issues, including the migration crisis. Polish politicians repeatedly expressed their support for the EU-Turkey agreement as regards migrants and appreciated the country's contribution to the fulfilment of the agreement.<sup>30</sup> The tripartite format of security consultations between Poland, Turkey, and Romania played an important role in Polish-Turkish cooperation. The meetings of Minister Waszczykowski with his counterparts in this formula were held in June (Warsaw), in August 2016 (Ankara) and in August 2017 (Warsaw). The first meeting, which took place a month before the NATO summit in Warsaw, was particularly important for the Polish government. It resulted in a common position on the strengthening of the Alliance's Eastern Flank. The second meeting of the triangle had special determinants—a month earlier a failed coup d'état had taken place in Turkey. Minister Waszczykowski described the summit as a “reconnaissance mission” during which he intended to find out what approach the Turkish authorities would take to the EU, NATO (including the provisions of the Warsaw summit), and Russia.<sup>31</sup> The third consultation served to prepare for the NATO summit in 2018. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Turkey and Romania also met with Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. What's more, on the occasion of the NATO summit in Warsaw in July 2016, the national defence ministers of both countries, Antoni Macierewicz and Fikri Işık, signed a letter of intent concerning multinational cooperation in the development of radio-electronic combat capabilities.<sup>32</sup>

Apart from security, Polish-Turkish political relations also developed in other areas. Two visits by Turkish politicians to Poland in 2017 can serve as an example: Minister for European Affairs Ömer Çelik in February and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in October. During the first meeting, representatives of the Polish government expressed their support for the accession negotiations between Turkey and the EU and for the modernisation of the EU-Turkey Customs Union. Similar declarations were made during President Erdoğan's visit. At that time, five

<sup>30</sup> See: e.g., *Wizyta Prezydenta Turcji*, 17 October 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>31</sup> “Misja rozpoznawcza: Trójstronne rozmowy Polska–Turcja–Rumunia. Tematem bezpieczeństwo, NATO, Syria, Ukraina,” *Polskie Radio*, 25 August 2016, [www.polskieradio.pl](http://www.polskieradio.pl).

<sup>32</sup> *Polska i Turcja chcą razem rozwijać zdolności walki radioelektronicznej*, Polska Agencja Prasowa, 8 July 2016 r., [www.pap.pl](http://www.pap.pl).

intergovernmental agreements were also signed, mainly concerning culture and military matters.<sup>33</sup>

A separate platform for Poland's contacts with MENA countries in 2016-2017 was parliamentary diplomacy. Polish parliamentarians met with representatives of Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Israel, Algeria, and Kuwait. A Polish-Oman Senate group (February 2016) and a Polish-Algerian parliamentary group (November 2016) were established.

### Military Cooperation

In 2016, the Polish armed forces returned to the Middle East.<sup>34</sup> The Polish government decided to join the coalition against ISIS as part of operation *Inherent Resolve*. President Duda signed a decision to create two military contingents on 17 June: PMC<sup>35</sup> mission *Kuwait* comprises about 150 troops and civilian employees serving four F-16 aircraft on reconnaissance missions; PMC mission *Iraq*, also operating in Jordan and Kuwait, performing tasks related to consultancy and training of local armed forces. The force number of the latter increased from 60 troops in 2016 to 130 in 2017. In the first half of 2017, the ship *ORP Kontradmiral Xawery Czernicki* operated as part of the PMC mission *Sophia* in the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>36</sup> What's more, Polish soldiers participated in international exercises in the Middle East—in May 2017 in Jordan in the mission *Eager Lion-17* and in November in Israel at the air manoeuvres *Blue Flag 2017* (six aircraft and 120 troops).<sup>37</sup>

The Middle East is an important destination for the export of Polish arms. In 2016, exports to this region in total amounted to more than €95 million (compared

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<sup>33</sup> Memorandum of agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey on cooperation in the field of diplomatic archives; Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Turkey; Agreement on social security between the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Turkey; Agreement and administrative provisions regarding the application of the Social Security Agreement between the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Turkey; The implementation of the Agreement between the Government of the Polish Republic and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on cooperation in the field of science, education and culture for the years 2017–2020, "Wizyta Prezydenta Turcji," 17 October 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>34</sup> In 2009, Poland completed its participation in UN missions in the region. See: P. Sasnal, "Poland's Policy towards the Middle East and North Africa," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2010, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2011.

<sup>35</sup> PMC, Polish Military Contingent.

<sup>36</sup> *PKW Czernicki*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 29 December 2016, [www.mon.gov.pl](http://www.mon.gov.pl).

<sup>37</sup> "Polskie F-16 na manewrach 'Blue Flag,'" *Polska Zbrojna*, 4 November 2017, [www.polska-zbrojna.pl](http://www.polska-zbrojna.pl).

to €77 million in the previous year).<sup>38</sup> An increase resulted mainly due to the completion of the UAE's order for the delivery of 40 chassis for Rosomak wheeled armoured transporters. The value of the contract was about PLN 170 million.<sup>39</sup> Among the largest importers of Polish arms from the region (apart from UAE) were also Jordan (about €30 million) and Algeria (€15 million). Israeli armaments companies showed continued interest in the Polish market—on 17 December 2015, a contract was signed with Rafael for another delivery of Spike missiles worth about PLN 600 million.<sup>40</sup> Israeli companies, Israel Military Industries (IMI), and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) participated in the tender for the delivery of a missile system for the Homar programme.<sup>41</sup> Despite the initial rejection of the Israeli offer, negotiations with Israeli consortia resumed at the end of 2017.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, in 2017 the Polish Armaments Group (PAG) signed a cooperation agreement with IAI and Elta Systems on the development of advanced weapon systems.<sup>43</sup>

### Economic Cooperation

In the period discussed, the Polish trade with MENA was characterised by a variable dynamic with individual partners, but growth overall was maintained. In 2017, it reached the value of about PLN 26.5 billion (excluding Turkey), or PLN 4 billion more than in 2015. However, it was still less than 2% of total Polish foreign trade. Adopted in February 2017, the Strategy for Responsible Development (the so-called Morawiecki Plan) mentions Algeria, Turkey, Israel, Iran, and the UAE as the main non-EU export directions for 12 priority industries in the Middle East.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Exports of arms and military equipment from Poland. Raport za rok 2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>39</sup> "Kontrakt na Rosomaki dla Emiratów zrealizowany," *Defence24*, 21 June 2016, [www.defence24.pl](http://www.defence24.pl).

<sup>40</sup> "Izraelska broń w polskiej armii," *Jewish.pl*, 18 December 2015, [www.jewish.pl](http://www.jewish.pl).

<sup>41</sup> "IMI, Lockheed face off over massive Polish arms deal," *Globes*, 8 February 2016, [www.globes.co.il](http://www.globes.co.il).

<sup>42</sup> "Izrael chce zacieśniać współpracę wojskowo-przemysłową z Polską. Państwowy concern zbrojeniowy walczy o kontrakt na rakiety," *Biznes Newseria*, 21 June 2017, [www.biznes.newseria.pl](http://www.biznes.newseria.pl).

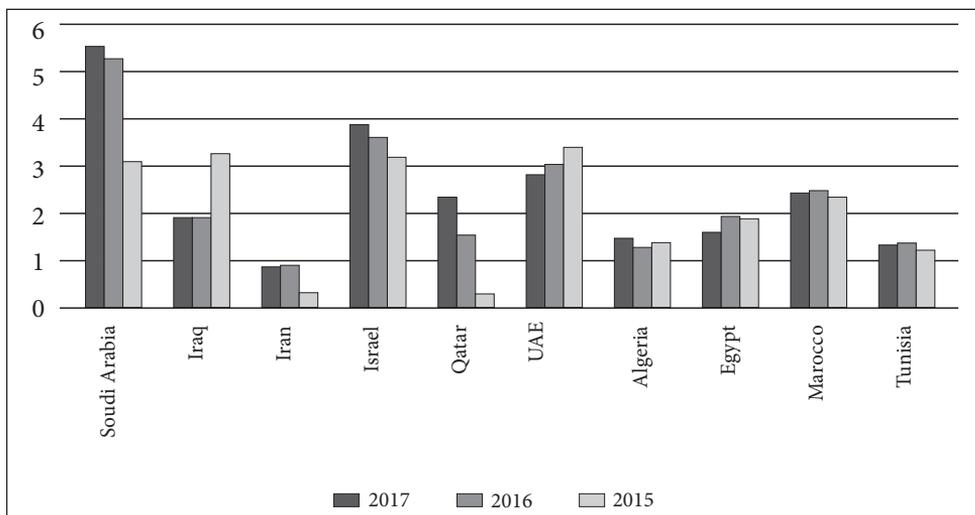
<sup>43</sup> "Polska Grupa Zbrojeniowa podpisała porozumienia o współpracy z Israel Aerospace Industries oraz ELTA Systems," *Polska Grupa Zbrojeniowa*, 20 July 2017, [www.pgza.pl](http://www.pgza.pl).

<sup>44</sup> These industries are: (1) medical equipment (2) machines and equipment (3) cosmetics, (4) IT / ICT, (5), biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, (6) Polish fashion, (7) Construction and building finishing, (8) yachts and boats, (9) furniture, (10) Polish food specialties, (11) health-services sector, (12) car and aviation parts, see: "Strategia na rzecz odpowiedzialnego rozwoju; Plan na rzecz odpowiedzialnego rozwoju," [www.miir.gov.pl](http://www.miir.gov.pl).

Additionally, in the middle of 2016 the Ministry of Development listed Algeria and Iran among prospective markets for the Polish economy.<sup>45</sup>

Figure 1.

**Trade Exchange with the Largest Partners from the MENA Region in 2015–2017 (in PLN billion)<sup>46</sup>**



Source: author's compilation based on data from swaid.stat.gov.pl.

A significant increase in turnover should be associated with the import of energy resources, mainly from Saudi Arabia. As recently as in November 2015, PKN Orlen arranged a supply of petroleum through a single, short-term (spot) contract with Saudi Aramco.<sup>47</sup> In 2016, both companies concluded a supply contract of petroleum, which was subsequently extended until the end of 2017.<sup>48</sup> As a result, in 2016 and 2017, the share of Middle Eastern suppliers in petroleum imports to Poland increased to over 12%.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> “Ministerstwo Rozwoju wskazało 5 perspektywicznych rynków dla polskiej gospodarki,” *Polskie Radio*, 19 July 2017, www.polskieradio.pl.

<sup>46</sup> With the exception of Turkey.

<sup>47</sup> “Saudyjska ropa naftowa dla PKN Orlen dotarła do portu w Gdańsku,” *WNP.pl*, 9 November 2015, www.nafta.wnp.pl.

<sup>48</sup> “PKN Orlen przedłużył umowę na dostawy saudyjskiej ropy,” *Biznes Alert*, 2 November 2016, www.biznesalert.pl.

<sup>49</sup> Data from the Polish Organisation of the Oil Industry and Trade, www.popihn.pl.

Table 1.

**Middle East Countries' Share in Petroleum Supplies to Polish Refineries  
(2014–2017)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Iraq	1%	6.3%	5.8%	4.3%
Saudi Arabia		1.4%	6%	7%
Iran			1.1%	1%

Source: author's compilation based on POPiHN data.

The increase in trade with Qatar is a result of supplies of LNG to Poland. In December 2015, the first batch of LNG from a Qatar contractor, necessary for the start-up of the entire installation, arrived at the Świnoujście gas terminal, and in June 2016 the terminal accepted the first commercial transport. In total, in 2016 the imports from Qatar amounted to 963.57 m<sup>3</sup>, which accounted for 5.3% of Polish gas imports.<sup>50</sup> In March 2017, PGNiG signed an additional agreement with Qatar Liquefied Gas Company Limited (Qatargas), which assumed an increase in the volume of imported LNG up to 2 million tonnes annually.<sup>51</sup> In May 2017, during the aforementioned visit of the Emir of Qatar, Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, the Poland-Qatar Economic Forum was held. Several bilateral agreements were signed, including an economic cooperation agreement.<sup>52</sup> The diplomatic crisis that broke out in June 2017 between Qatar and Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia raised concerns about the continuity of supplies.<sup>53</sup> Despite the sanctions and blockades introduced by the Arab coalition it did not have a negative impact on Qatar's cooperation with Poland, including LNG supplies.

The increase in trade with Iran was closely related to the JCPOA. This was fostered by, among other things, the defining of Iran by the Polish Ministry of Development as a promising market for the economy.<sup>54</sup> In 2016, mutual turnover increased more than threefold, from PLN 312 million to PLN 914 million. Economic issues were the subject of visits by the Iranian authorities to Poland in May (Foreign Minister Mohammad Zarif) and in November 2016 (Vice President Ali Akbar Salehi). In June 2017, a bilateral economic cooperation agreement signed in 2015 entered into

<sup>50</sup> *Sprawozdanie z wyników monitorowania bezpieczeństwa dostaw paliw gazowych za okres od dnia 1 stycznia 2016 r. do dnia 31 grudnia*, Ministerstwo Energii, July 2017, [www.me.gov.pl](http://www.me.gov.pl).

<sup>51</sup> "PGNiG podpisało strategiczny kontrakt z Qatargas, PGNiG," 14 March 2017, [www.pgnig.pl](http://www.pgnig.pl).

<sup>52</sup> "Katar, Informator Ekonomiczny MSZ," [www.informatorekonomiczny.msz.gov.pl](http://www.informatorekonomiczny.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>53</sup> P. Sasnal, "Arab Diplomatic Crisis," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 22, 6 June 2017.

<sup>54</sup> "Ministerstwo Rozwoju: 5 perspektywicznych rynków dla polskiej gospodarki," *Puls Biznesu*, 19 July 2016, [www.pb.pl](http://www.pb.pl). The new government's activities were part of a trend initiated by the PO-PSL government, and as early as in 2015, the Ministry of Economy had inaugurated the "Go Iran" programme.

force. What's more, Polish energy companies, mainly PGNiG, which were qualified by the Iranian government to apply for production licences, were interested in investing in Iran.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, in 2016 and 2017, Iranian petroleum, purchased by PKN Orlen and Lotos Group, was brought to Gdańsk.<sup>56</sup> The strengthening of economic cooperation as well as between Polish and Iranian businesses was to be facilitated by the opening of an office of the Polish Investment and Trade Agency in Tehran in April 2017.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, in 2017, trade with Iran dropped as a result of the worsening investment climate after the election of President Trump, an opponent of the nuclear agreement with Iran.

There were no sudden changes in cooperation with other countries in the region. Turkey remains the largest trading partner, accounting for over half of Poland's trade with the Middle East (about PLN 13.4 billion). In 2017, the increase in imports from Turkey resulted in a negative trade balance. The economic relations with Israel are accompanied by stable growth in which Poland has recorded a trade surplus for the past seven years—Polish exports in 2017 amounted to PLN 2.3 billion. Fluctuations in trade statistics should be attributed to the decline in exchange with the UAE: from PLN 3.4 billion in 2015 to PLN 2.8 billion in 2017. The commodity structure of Polish exports to the Middle East was dominated by food products, mechanical and electrical equipment, means of transport, and products of the chemical and metallurgical industry.

### Social and Cultural Relations

The issues of Jewish cultural heritage in Poland and the dialogue on common historical memory play an important role in Polish-Israeli relations. An important event in this context was the opening of the Markowa Ulma-Family Museum of Poles Who Saved Jews in World War II. In 2017, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the partnership between Tel Aviv and Warsaw was celebrated.<sup>58</sup> Tourism developed favourably: According to the Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism, more than 167,000 Israelis came to Poland in 2016 while data from the Israeli Central Statistical Office in 2016 indicates Israel was visited by more than 60,000 Poles, and as many as 85,000 a year later.<sup>59</sup> The intensification in tourism was facilitated

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<sup>55</sup> B. Bielszczuk, "Iran: A Challenge for Polish Diplomacy and Energy Companies," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 78 (1018), 10 August 2017.

<sup>56</sup> "Ropa z Iranu płynie do Polski. Oprócz Grupy Lotos zakontraktował ją także PKN Orlen," *Biznes Alert*, 2 January 2017, [www.biznesalert.pl](http://www.biznesalert.pl).

<sup>57</sup> "Polska Agencja Inwestycji i Handlu uruchomiła biuro w Teheranie," *Rzeczpospolita*, of 12 April 2017, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

<sup>58</sup> "Warszawa i Tel Awiw partnerami od 25 lat," *Jewish.pl*, 27 June 2017, [www.jewish.pl](http://www.jewish.pl).

<sup>59</sup> "Record 3.6m tourists visit Israel in 2017," *Globes*, 27 December 2017, [www.globes.co.il](http://www.globes.co.il).

by the increase in the number of air connections. In 2017, LOT Polish Airlines initiated flights to Israel from Gdańsk, Lublin, Poznań, and Wrocław. In 2017, the Polish carrier transported a total of 200,000 passengers—twice as many as in 2016.<sup>60</sup> Increasing the frequency of flights was possible, among other things, thanks to subsidies from the Israeli Ministry of Tourism for airlines providing a fixed network of connections.<sup>61</sup>

Conventionally, a cultural programme was implemented in Arab countries: high-level visits were organised (e.g., Deputy Prime Minister Piotr Gliński, who is also the minister of Culture, National Heritage, participated in a conference in Abu Dhabi on the protection of cultural heritage in conflict areas in December 2016), exhibitions and concerts related to Polish culture, although such relations with no other country in the region are comparable to Poland's intensive relations with Israel. Polish tourism to the MENA countries remains a significant resource for the improvement of social relations, although Turkey and Egypt (ranked 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, respectively, in Polish holiday destinations<sup>62</sup>) fell in favour of European destinations in the rankings.

The end of 2015 and 2016 were characterised by a change in the opinion of Poles about the inhabitants of the Middle East and *vice versa*. Despite a lack of reliable research on these perceptions, surveys, articles in mainstream media, as well as opinions on social media in Poland and MENA, allow us to assume that the migration crisis of 2015 and the tone of the accompanying debate contributed to this. The lack of distinction between migrants and refugees, showing both groups as culturally strange and hostile and emphasising only the negative effects of migration were reflected in the social attitude. Although even before the crisis Poles considered the presence of three nations in Poland—Africans, Turkish and Arabs—to be unfavourable (40%, 52%, 62%, respectively),<sup>63</sup> the majority (56%) were in favour of receiving refugees.<sup>64</sup> As a result of the debate on migration in 2015, opinions about Arabs worsened: according to an IPSOS survey, in 2016 only 12% of respondents had confidence in the inhabitants of Arab countries (in 2015, 18%).<sup>65</sup> At the same time, the support for accepting refugees in Poland

<sup>60</sup> "LOT: Ogromne zainteresowanie połączeniami do Izraela, Rynek Lotniczy," 3 January 2018, [www.rynek-lotniczy.pl](http://www.rynek-lotniczy.pl).

<sup>61</sup> "LOT zabierze pasażerów z regionalnych lotnisk do Izraela?," [Turystyka.wp.pl](http://Turystyka.wp.pl), 2 February 2017, [www.turystyka.wp.pl](http://www.turystyka.wp.pl).

<sup>62</sup> "Zagraniczne wakacje Polaków 2017," PIT, [www.pit.org.pl](http://www.pit.org.pl).

<sup>63</sup> "Przybysze z bliska i daleka, czyli o imigrantach w Polsce," Komunikat z badań CBOS nr 93/2015, CBOS, June 2015, [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl).

<sup>64</sup> *O uchodźcach w przededniu unijnego szczytu poświęconego kryzysowi imigracyjnemu*, Komunikat z badań CBOS nr 133/2015, CBOS, October 2015 r., [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl).

<sup>65</sup> "Badanie na temat postaw wobec cudzoziemców w Polsce," IPSOS dla IOM, Warszawa, September 2016, [www.poland.iom.int](http://www.poland.iom.int).

was decreasing, which was directly related to views of the inhabitants of Arab countries, who constituted the majority of the refugee population in 2015. The CBOS survey confirmed that “a significant increase in the number of opponents of accepting refugees took place between May and August”<sup>66</sup> and again in autumn, i.e., at the peak of the political debate before the presidential and parliamentary elections. What’s more, two of the Paris terrorists passed along the route used by migrants and refugees from Turkey to Greece in November 2015. This could have affected public opinion’s connection concerning migration between the refugees from the Middle East and the terrorist threat in Europe, although statistics and analytical literature do not confirm this connection.<sup>67</sup> In Poland, this connection was strengthened by the message of politicians, which gradually developed since 2015, and as a result led to the damaging image of the “Muslim” and “Arab” in Poland. In an interview from July 2016, Prime Minister Szydło said: “There is no price for the safety of Poles. We won’t give up. This does not mean we do not want to help, we do, but beyond our borders. Shortly, there will be another transport of humanitarian aid for refugees in the Middle East.”<sup>68</sup> This referred to the Prime Minister’s conviction that it was impossible to separate refugees from terrorists,<sup>69</sup> so migration from the Middle East to Poland must not be allowed. After the terrorist attack in Nice, Minister of the Interior Mariusz Błaszczak also portrayed the residents of MENA as posing a terrorist threat.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Science and Higher Education Jarosław Gowin stated he believed that the admission of Christians from the Middle East could be supported, but not Muslims.<sup>71</sup> Major press agencies reported on Poland’s associating the EU’s migration policy with terrorism.<sup>72</sup> The position of the Polish authorities was noted in leading titles in the Arab and Turkish press.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>66</sup> *O uchodźcach...*” *op. cit.*

<sup>67</sup> *European citizens, not refugees, behind most terrorist attacks in Europe*, Danish Institute for International Studies, 21 June 2017, [www.diis.dk](http://www.diis.dk); *Refugees and terrorism: ‘No evidence of risk’*, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org).

<sup>68</sup> *Premier Beata Szydło we ‘wSieci’ w sprawie imigrantów: ‘Nie ma ceny za bezpieczeństwo Polaków. Nie cofniemy się,’ wPolityce*, 25 July 2016, [www.wpolityce.pl](http://www.wpolityce.pl).

<sup>69</sup> “Premier Beata Szydło była gościem ‘Jeden na jeden,’ TVN24, 23 July 2017, [www.tvn24.pl](http://www.tvn24.pl).

<sup>70</sup> “Mariusz Błaszczak: Polska znalazłaby się w takiej sytuacji, jak Francja, gdyby nie zmiana rządu,” TVN24, 15 July 2016 [www.tvn24.pl](http://www.tvn24.pl).

<sup>71</sup> “Gowin: Polska powinna przyjąć uchodźców: to mogą być chrześcijanie, jazydzi, ale nie muzułmanie,” *wPolityce*, 7 September 2015, [www.wpolityce.pl](http://www.wpolityce.pl).

<sup>72</sup> For example, see: “Polish PM draws link between London attack and EU migrant policy,” *Reuters*, 23 March 2017 r., [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com).

<sup>73</sup> For example, see: *Katszinski: Bulanda lam tuda’ al-ladzi’in wa juhaq laha rafduhum* [Kaczyński: Poland will not accept refugees, it has the right to refuse them], 1 July 2017, [www.alhayat.com](http://www.alhayat.com); *Hal taqum Bulanda bi-insza „gittu ta’alimi” liladzi’in?* [Is Poland introducing a bench ghetto for refugees?], 28 February 2018, [www.aljazeera.net](http://www.aljazeera.net); *Hukumat Bulanda al-džadida: lan nataradza’ an rafd istiqlal al-ladzi’in* [New Polish government: we will not withdraw the refusal to accept

## Assessment

The degree of implementation of the objectives of Polish policy towards the MENA in 2016-2017 should be considered positive. A high level of bilateral contacts was maintained and, as a result of Poland's involvement in the activities of the coalition fighting ISIS, the intensity of relations with the Arab states of the Persian Gulf increased, especially with Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. Economic exchange also increased. As a result of developing cooperation in the field of energy, raw materials were purchased not only from Qatar but also from Saudi Arabia and Iran. Particular efforts were made in the MENA to ensure support for Polish membership of the UN Security Council. However, Arab direct investment was not substantial. A number of visits did not take place, for example, to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Sudan or Egypt. The economic ministries under the leadership of Deputy Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki did not organise meetings of mixed commissions with MENA countries scheduled for 2017. The high level contacts with Egypt, the EU's largest neighbourhood country, was not maintained either. If Poland did indeed make a "profound turn" in non-European politics, the MENA was a small part of it.

The increased interest in the living conditions of refugees in the region and transfer of substantive funds for them is positive, as most of the more than 60 million refugees and displaced persons are now in Africa and the Middle East.<sup>74</sup> The debate on migration and its association with terrorism and refugees from the Middle East and Africa, on the other hand, had a negative impact on the image of Muslims, Arabs, Africans, and Turks in Poland and, certainly, although on a smaller scale, Poland in the Middle East. This may, in the future, hinder effective policy towards the MENA countries. The opinion that Poles are unfavourable to Arabs and Muslims may have negative impact on contacts with countries of key economic importance for Polish interests, i.e., Saudi Arabia and the closely associated United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia, as the guardian of two sacred places of Islam and the leader of the Arab world, is particularly sensitive to stigmatising opinions of Muslims and Arabs.

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refugees], 18 January 2018, [www.elwatannews.com](http://www.elwatannews.com); "Poland's stance on migrants unchanged despite EU court ruling: PM," *YeniŞafak*, 6 September 2017, [www.yenisafak.com](http://www.yenisafak.com); "13 EU countries yet to admit migrants from Turkey despite agreement," *Daily Sabah*, 2 October 2017, [www.dailysabah.com](http://www.dailysabah.com).

<sup>74</sup> Figures at a Glance, [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org).



**III.**  
**SELECTED PROBLEMS**  
**OF POLAND'S FOREIGN POLICY**



# Poland's Foreign Economic Relations

DAMIAN WNUKOWSKI\*

Poland's economic situation in 2017 was very good. This was mainly due to the favourable economic situation in the world economy, including Poland's most important trade partners. The result was a considerable acceleration of the export growth rate as compared to 2016. The situation on the labour market was systematically improving, which, together with elements of the government's economic policy (especially social expenditure), contributed to the increase in consumption, one of the main drivers of the economy in 2017. Public finances also improved significantly, thanks to higher budget revenues linked to growing domestic consumption, a favourable international environment and the tightening of the tax system. However, the low level of investment expenditure remained a challenge both in the public sector (which included delays in the implementation of EU-funded projects) and in the private sector. Moreover, despite the dynamically developing economy and solid macroeconomic foundations, in 2017 the dynamics of the inflow of foreign direct investments (FDI) to Poland declined, being a result of, among others, disinvestments, including the reduction of capital shares in Polish enterprises.

## The Macroeconomic Situation

According to data of the Central Statistical Office (GUS), Poland's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017 increased (after taking into account the increase of prices) by 4.8% compared to 2016, which was one of the best indicators in the EU. This result was by 1.7 percentage points higher than in 2016, when annual GDP growth amounted to 3.1%. Gross value added to GDP increased the most in the following sectors: accommodation and catering (15.1%), administration and support activities (10.6%) and professional, scientific and technical activities (9.6%). Domestic demand reached a real growth of 4.9% year on year,<sup>1</sup> resulting from a good situation on the labour market<sup>2</sup> and the implementation of social

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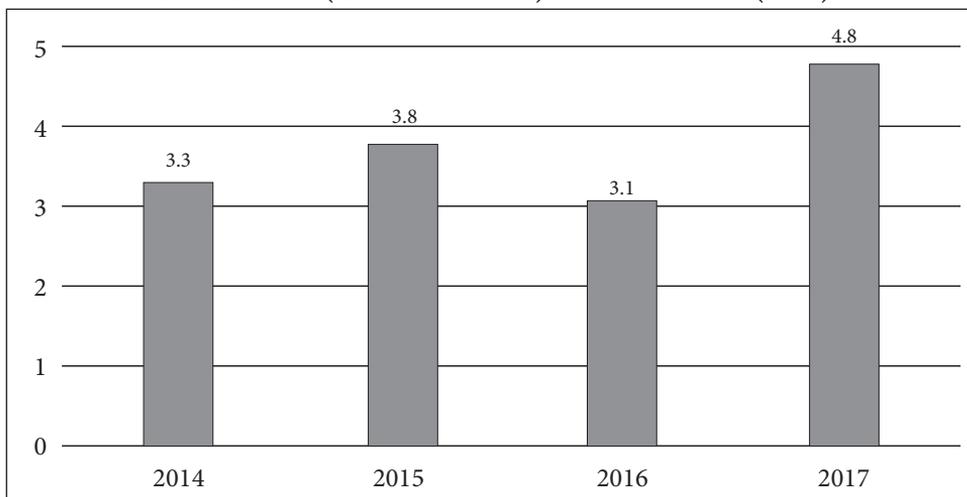
<sup>1</sup> *Informacja Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego w sprawie skorygowanego szacunku produktu krajowego brutto za 2017 rok*, 3 October 2018, <https://stat.gov.pl>.

<sup>2</sup> The reported unemployment rate at the end of December 2017 was 6.6% (by 1.6 percentage points over than in December 2016) and was the lowest since 1989. See: *Bank danych makroekonomicznych*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, <https://bdm.stat.gov.pl>.

programmes (including 500+). Despite increasing wage pressure, inflation remained below the NBP's threshold.<sup>3</sup> In December 2017, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by 2.2% year on year, and, after excluding food and energy prices ("core inflation"), by only 0.9%.<sup>4</sup>

**Chart 1**

**GDP Growth (Constant Prices) in 2014 to 2017 (in %)**



Source: Central Statistical Office (GUS).

The good condition of the Polish economy translated into positive results of public finance. According to GUS data, in 2017 the state budget revenues amounted to PLN 350.4 billion (the Budget Act assumed that it would be PLN 325.5 billion), while expenditures were PLN 375.8 billion (the Budget Act assumed almost PLN 385 billion). The budget deficit was lower than expected, at PLN 25.4 billion, which was only 42.7% of the level provided for in the Act (PLN 59.4 billion) on account of increased income compared to assumptions (among others, thanks to economic activity and enhancing tax collection, especially VAT). The government and self-government institutions sector deficit in relation to GDP amounted to just 1.4% (compared to 2.2% in 2016), which was the best indicator since 1995, when comparable data were first published. The good budgetary situation translated into lower borrowing needs and a decrease in the public finance sector's debt, the

<sup>3</sup> That is, 2.5%, with the possibility of deviating up to one percentage point up or down. See: *Polityka pieniężna*, Narodowy Bank Polski, [www.nbp.pl](http://www.nbp.pl).

<sup>4</sup> *Statystyka i sprawozdawczość. Inflacja bazowa*, Narodowy Bank Polski, [www.nbp.pl](http://www.nbp.pl).

relation of which to GDP amounted to 48.3% in 2017, which represents a decline of 3.6 percentage points compared to 2016.<sup>5</sup>

The level of investment, which determines long-term economic growth, remains a challenge for the Polish economy. In 2017, the revival in investments was noticeable, as proved by the increase in expenditures by 6.5%. However, a good result in this area was related, among others, to the base effect, i.e. the reference to the indicators from 2016, when this indicator dropped by 11.2%.<sup>6</sup> The increase in investment activity was particularly noticeable at the end of the year, which could have resulted from the gradual implementation of projects, including infrastructure projects supported by EU funds. Despite the relative revival of activity, the investment rate in the Polish economy in 2017 amounted to 17.7%, ranking Poland only 23rd among the EU Member States. This indicates difficulties in implementing one of the Polish government's announcements to increase the level of investments to 25% of GDP in the coming years.<sup>7</sup> What's more, the Polish economy will soon face other long-term challenges, such as unfavourable demographic changes. In 2017, the first related problems appeared, such as the decrease in the labour force, which is considered to be one of the elements limiting the development opportunities of Polish companies.<sup>8</sup>

## Foreign Trade

The results of Poland's foreign trade were influenced by the good economic situation in the world economy. As a result of solid economic growth of the largest trade partners (EU countries inside and outside the Eurozone), it amounted to 2.4%,<sup>9</sup> the best result for the zone since 2007, and domestic demand was growing, also for imported goods.

In 2017, Poland's foreign trade turnover amounted to €412.7 billion, almost €47 billion higher than in 2016 (an increase of 13%). In 2017, the value of exports of goods from Poland amounted to €206.6 billion, almost €22 billion higher than in 2016 (11.8%), while imports to Poland brought €206.1 billion, up by more than €25 billion (13.9%) compared to the previous year. Due to the faster pace of import growth compared to exports, which could be a result of growing consumption,

<sup>5</sup> *Bank danych makroekonomicznych*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, <https://bdm.stat.gov.pl>.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> "Polska w ogniu unijnego rankingu. Do realizacji zapowiedzi Morawieckiego bardzo daleko," *TVN24 BiS*, <https://tvn24bis.pl>.

<sup>8</sup> Staff shortages were filled by, among others, the inflow of foreign workers, mainly from Ukraine. However, the reduction in retirement age in force since October 2017 (from 67 for women and men to 60 for women and 65 for men), may increase the outflow of people from the labour market.

<sup>9</sup> *Real GDP growth rate—volume*, Eurostat, <https://ec.europa.eu>.

the surplus in the goods trade of Poland decreased in 2017 to about €560 million compared to €3.9 billion in 2016.

As in previous years, the highest value of trade turnover was recorded in trade with European countries. Goods worth a total of €183.2 billion (over 88% of total exports) were exported from Poland to these markets, an increase of 12.4% year on year, of which exports to the EU Member States amounted to €165.4 billion (80% of total exports), an increase of 12.1% compared to 2016. Imports from European countries in 2017 were worth €145.3 billion (70.5% of the value of imports), up 13.7% on an annual basis, of which €124.4 billion worth of goods were imported from the EU (equivalent to 60.4% of Polish imports), representing annual growth of 12.3%. The increase in sales to the EU markets was caused not only by growing consumer and investment demand, but also by Poland's connections with the economies of other EU countries (especially Germany, the UK, France and Italy) within global value chains of supply (GVC). Non-European countries still have a small share in Polish exports. In 2017, this group of countries accounted for slightly more than 11% of the value of goods sold.<sup>10</sup> The situation in imports is different, where non-European countries accounted for almost 30% of the value of goods imported to Poland, of which more than 23% originated in Asian countries (mainly China, Japan and South Korea).

Table 1.

### Directions of Polish Exports and Imports by Continent

Continent	2017		2016		Dynamics (2016=100)		Share in 2017 (%)	
	Exports (€ billion)	Imports (€ billion)	Exports (€ billion)	Imports (€ billion)	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports
Europe	183.2	145.3	163	127.8	112.4	113.7	88.67	70.51
Asia	11.5	47.7	11.1	41.5	103.8	114.8	5.58	23.14
Africa	2.3	1.55	2.3	1.58	100	100.2	1.10	0.77
North America	6.7	6.5	5.6	5.4	119.3	119.1	3.23	3.15
South and Central America	2	3.8	1.8	3.4	113.4	112.4	0.99	1.84
Australia and Oceania	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.4	82.7	136.1	0.38	0.28

Source: Author's own compilation based on data from Ministerstwo Przedsiębiorczości i Technologii, Ministerstwo Finansów and Główny Urząd Statystyczny. Uneven results may be influenced by rounding of numbers.

<sup>10</sup> *Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie polski, styczeń–grudzień 2017 roku, w mln euro (dane ostateczne)*, Ministerstwo Przedsiębiorczości i Technologii, [www.mpit.gov.pl](http://www.mpit.gov.pl).

In 2017, Poland recorded the largest trade turnover with Germany (over €104.5 billion), China (€26.3 billion), Italy (€21.1 billion), Czechia (€20.7 billion), France (€19.6 billion) and Russia (€19.3 billion each). The most important recipients of exports of goods from Poland were Germany (€56.8 billion), Czechia (€13.3 billion), the UK (€13.3 billion), France (€11.6 billion) and Italy (€10.1 billion). The highest imports came to Poland from Germany (€47.7 billion), China (€24.3 billion), Russia (€13.1 billion), Italy (€11 billion) and France (€8 billion). The biggest surplus was recorded in trade turnover with Germany (€9.1 billion), the UK (€8.3 billion), Czechia (€5.9 billion), France (€3.6 billion) and Ukraine (€2.1 billion), while the biggest deficits were with China (€22.2 billion), Russia (€6.9 billion), Japan (€2.9 billion), South Korea (€2.8 billion) and Vietnam and India (€1.5 billion).<sup>11</sup>

Table 2.

**Poland's Largest Trading Partners in 2017**

Country	Value (€ billion)	Change compared to the previous year (2016=100)	Share (%)
Trade turnover			
Germany	104.5	112.7	25.3
China	26.3	112.4	6.3
Italy	21.1	111.7	5.1
Czechia	20.7	110.7	5
France	19.6	112.7	4.7
Russia	19.3	123.7	4.7
Exports from Poland			
Germany	56.8	112.2	27.48
Czechia	13.3	109.5	6.44
Great Britain	13.3	108.1	6.44
France	11.6	114.3	5.63
Italy	10.1	114.8	4.9
Imports to Poland			
Germany	47.7	113.1	23.14
China	24.3	112	11.78
Russia	13.1	125.4	6.35
Italy	11	109.1	5.33
France	8	111.1	3.88

Source: Author's own compilation based on data from Ministerstwo Przedsiębiorczości i Technologii, Ministerstwo Finansów and Główny Urząd Statystyczny.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem.*

In the case of European countries, it is worth noting that exports to Russia and Ukraine are significantly higher than in 2016, by 18.4% (to €6.2 billion) and 23.1% (to €4.26 billion), respectively, which may, however, be the result of a low base from previous years.<sup>12</sup> Imports from these directions also increased, including from Russia by 25.4% (reaching the level of €13.1 billion) caused by, among other things, by the increase in coal imports,<sup>13</sup> and from Ukraine by almost 17% (to €2.14 billion), which could have been the result of full entry into force the EU-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement in September.<sup>14</sup> The value of exports from Poland to Central European countries, including Romania, also increased (by 16.7%, reaching the level of €3.8 billion), to Hungary (by 11.4%, to €5.5 billion) and to Czechia (by 9.5% to €13.3 billion).

A significant deficit was recorded in relations with developing countries, amounting to €38.9 billion (exports from Poland were €27.6 billion and imports were €66.5 billion), with the largest share of the deficit in trade with China (as much as €22.2 billion). Trade relations with some developed non-European countries, especially the United States, developed dynamically (an increase in exports from Poland by 26.3%, to €5.5 billion, and imports by over 15%, to approx. €5.9 billion). However, exports to some developed non-European markets, including Japan and Canada, also declined (by 6.5% to €500 million and €1.2 billion, respectively). Growing imports from non-European developed countries contributed to the increase in the deficit with this group, to €2.1 billion from €1.3 billion in 2016.

The most important groups of products in exports from Poland in 2017 were products of the electrical machinery industry (with a sales value of €81.9 billion, 39.65% of total exports), products of the chemical industry (€29.6 billion, 14.33%), agricultural and food products (€27.8 billion, 13.46%) and metallurgical products (€20.5 billion, 9.9%). The group of goods with the highest value in imports also included products of the electrical machinery industry (€78 billion, 37.84% of the total value of imports), products of the chemical industry (€36.7 billion, 17.83%), metallurgical products (€22.1 billion, 10.74%) and agricultural and food products (€19.3 billion, 9.36%).

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<sup>12</sup> For example, in 2016, the sale of Polish goods to Ukraine reached the level of 2013, before the Revolution of Dignity. See: A. Tycner, *Imponujący wzrost polskiego eksportu na Ukrainę*, 12 October 2017, [www.polskieradio.pl](http://www.polskieradio.pl).

<sup>13</sup> “W 2017 roku znacznie urósł import węgla, którego większość pochodzi z Rosji,” *Business Insider*, 19 February 2018, <https://businessinsider.com.pl>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ukraina krok bliżej UE. Umowa stowarzyszeniowa w pełni wchodzi w życie*, TVN24 BiS, 1 September 2017, <https://tvn24bis.pl>. The agreement was partially applied from the beginning of 2016, but its fuller use required time to adapt to new conditions, especially for Ukrainian companies.

Table 3.

**Poland's Trade Turnover in 2017 by Product Groups**

Product group	Value (€ billion)	Change compared to the previous year (2016=100)	Share (%)
Exports from Poland			
Electro-machinery industry products	81.9	108.9	39.65
Chemical industry products	29.6	114.4	14.33
Agri-food products	27.8	114.3	13.46
Metallurgical products	20.5	117.3	9.9
Miscellaneous products	15.8	115.2	7.65
Wood and paper products	10.1	111.1	4.89
Light industrial products	9.1	111.2	4.43
Mineral products	5.4	109.4	2.62
Ceramic products	5.1	106.9	2.45
Leather	1	97.8	0.49
Imports to Poland			
Electro-machinery industry products	78	110	37.84
Chemical industry products	36.7	112.7	17.83
Metallurgical products	22.1	117.3	10.74
Agri-food products	19.3	111.5	9.36
Mineral products	16.1	133.1	7.82
Light industrial products	12.6	111.4	6.11
Wood and paper products	7.1	110.2	3.46
Miscellaneous products	6.8	129.4	3.3
Ceramic products	3.1	114.6	1.5
Leather	1.4	103.4	0.67

Source: Author's own compilation based on data from Ministerstwo Przedsiębiorczości i Technologii, Ministerstwo Finansów and Główny Urząd Statystyczny. Uneven results may be influenced by rounding of numbers.

### Foreign Direct Investments

In terms of investment cooperation, 2017 was marked by a decline in the dynamics of FDI inflow to Poland. The National Bank of Poland (NBP) data based on a methodology taking into account the implemented investment projects shows that in 2017, the value of FDI amounted to €8.15 billion, a decrease of 42% compared to 2016, when it amounted to €14.05 billion. According to the NBP, this was caused by disinvestments, mainly one-off transactions of selling

foreign assets to Polish entities.<sup>15</sup> In this respect, the largest operations in 2017 were the implementation of the agreement for the sale of Pekao Bank's shares by Italian Unicredit to a consortium of PZU and PFR (worth PLN 10.6 billion, or more than €2.5 billion<sup>16</sup>) or the purchase of shares of the French EDF company in Poland (worth approx. PLN 4.5 billion, €1.1 billion). In 2017, the largest number of investments was made in Poland by entities from European countries (€7.34 billion). The largest share in the inflow of FDI were reinvestments of profits of companies already present in Poland, amounting to €8.95 billion. In 2017, the total value of foreign capital invested there amounted to just over €199 billion (of which European entities accounted for €191.2 billion).

Data on the inflow of FDI to Poland provided by the NBP strongly contrasts with the estimates provided by the analytical company fDi Markets, which is affiliated with the Financial Times Group.<sup>17</sup> They show that in 2017, 338 FDI projects worth \$14.8 billion were earmarked for Poland, an increase of 49% in comparison with 2016. According to fDi Markets, in terms of investment value, Poland was ranked third in Europe (behind the UK, \$33.2 billion and Russia, \$15.9 billion).<sup>18</sup> However, the fDi Markets' survey covers FDI announced in a given year, but it is not a foregone conclusion that these projects will be implemented. In 2017, the activity of Polish investors on foreign markets also dropped significantly. The NBP's data indicate that they invested €1.9 billion abroad at that time, compared to €10.5 billion in 2016. Polish FDI may, however, result not so much from the foreign expansion of domestic companies as from striving for tax optimisation.<sup>19</sup>

One of the largest investments in Poland in 2017 was the commencement of construction of a factory for lithium-ion batteries for electric cars by the Korean concern LG Chem in Kobierzyce near Wrocław (to be the largest plant of this kind in Europe). This project is part of the strategy announced by the government to develop electro-mobility and attract innovative investments of high added value to Poland. The involvement value of LG Chem's is to reach €1 billion, and the factory should employ over 800 people. For the project in Kobierzyce, LG Chem received an award from the Polish Investment and Trade Agency (PAIH) in the

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<sup>15</sup> "Przegląd wydarzeń ekonomicznych," *Newsletter Związku Banków Polskich*, 14 May 2018, <https://zbp.pl>.

<sup>16</sup> According to the exchange rate of the NBP of 29 December 2017, 1 euro=4.17 PLN.

<sup>17</sup> The company's calculations are based on summing up the value of investments announced in a given year, but not on their implementation, as the NBP's methodology assumes.

<sup>18</sup> A. Woźniak, "Polska jak magnes dla inwestorów z zagranicy," *Rzeczpospolita*, 2 May 2018, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

<sup>19</sup> M. Grzegorzczak, "Można spodziewać się spadku zagranicznych inwestycji za 2017 r.," *Obserwator Finansowy*, 23 January 2018, [www.obserwatorfinansowy.pl](http://www.obserwatorfinansowy.pl).

category “Investment Value” for 2017. Other nominees included the American company Amazon, which plans to build another logistics centre in Poland, and the Chinese company Hongbo Clean Energy, which invested in a plant to supply IKEA with household lamps.<sup>20</sup> What's more, in 2017, plans were announced to open one of the operating centres of the American bank J.P. Morgan in Warsaw, where approximately 2,500 people are to be employed.<sup>21</sup> The company's activities resulted in obtaining the PAIH's award in the “Employment” category for 2017. Nominated companies in this category included Luxoft Poland, a manufacturer of IT infrastructure that plans to recruit a total of 1,350 employees in Kraków and Wrocław, and Kongsberg Automotive, which implements a project in Brześć Kujawski to manufacture massage, ventilation and heating systems for car seats (1,000 people will be employed).<sup>22</sup> Among other large investments in Poland in 2017, it is also worth mentioning commencement of construction of a factory for four-cylinder engines of a new generation for hybrid and combustion passenger cars by the German concern Daimler AG, worth approx. €500 million.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the decline in FDI, which might be affected by one-off transactions, Poland is considered to be an increasingly attractive place to invest. A survey of the investment conditions in Poland, conducted jointly by PAIH, HSBC bank and Grant Thornton consulting company, shows that 92% of the companies that invested here are satisfied with this decision and would do so again. In the overall assessment, the survey scored 3.7 points on a five-point scale. Poland's main assets were economic stability (4.01 points), the size of the internal market (3.94 points), the availability of materials and components for production (3.89 points) and cooperation with local administration (3.79 points). High marks were also given to the competences of Polish employees and the development of infrastructure. It was indicated that the stability and predictability of law should be improved (only 2.75 points), the effectiveness of economic judiciary (2.84 points) and bureaucracy related to the tax system (2.91 points). The growing competition for qualified employees was considered an increasing challenge in running a business in Poland.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, in the ranking of freedom of economic activity, *Doing business 2018*, prepared by the World Bank, Poland was ranked 27<sup>th</sup> (down from 24<sup>th</sup> in the previous year). Thus, it was ranked fifth among the countries of Central

<sup>20</sup> *Nagrody PAIH rozdane!*, Polska Agencja Inwestycji i Handlu, 12 December 2017, [www.paih.gov.pl](http://www.paih.gov.pl).

<sup>21</sup> The Polish government granted PLN 20.2 million for this investment, the largest for financial institution in history. For more, see: “JP Morgan z rekordową rządową dotacją,” *Business Insider*, 6 March 2018, <https://businessinsider.com.pl>.

<sup>22</sup> *Nagrody PAIH rozdane!*, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> “Daimler rozpoczyna budowę fabryki Mercedes-Benz w Jaworze,” *PAP*, 19 June 2017, [www.pap.pl](http://www.pap.pl).

<sup>24</sup> “Nine in ten foreign investors see Poland as a good choice – PAIH,” *PAP*, 9 January 2018, [www.pap.pl](http://www.pap.pl).

Europe.<sup>25</sup> Procedures for starting a business (120th place), as well as lengthiness and costs of enforcing contractual obligations (55<sup>th</sup> place) were considered Poland's main problem. It received high marks for freedom of trade, registration of property and solving the issues of insolvency.<sup>26</sup> From the perspective of investors, Poland's other assets include its high economic growth rate, strategic location in the centre of Europe, EU membership, access to the EU market and relatively low labour costs.

Government policy is also important for the presence of foreign investors in Poland. Foreign investments, especially those related to innovative sectors such as ICT and automotive industry, are an element of the *Strategy for Responsible Development*, which sets out the directions of Poland's economic policy until 2020 (with a perspective until 2030). Changes are being introduced to the functioning of business, such as the adoption by the government of the "constitution for business" in November 2017, which is to facilitate the functioning of foreign companies in Poland, and the announcement of creating a single economic zone throughout the country (which is related to new rules for granting tax exemptions).<sup>27</sup> The PAIH plays an important role in attracting to and servicing investors in Poland. In December, the Agency serviced 174 investments with a total value of €5.5 billion, thanks to which over 54,000 jobs are to be created.<sup>28</sup> However, government actions aimed at taking over companies in strategic sectors ("repolonisation"), such as finance and energy, may contribute to reducing the presence of foreign entities in them, as indicated by preliminary data for 2017.

## Appraisal

In 2017, GDP growth rate (4.8%) accelerated significantly compared to 2016 (3.1%) and was one of the best in the EU. The development of the Polish economy was facilitated by the good global economic situation. As a result, and due to increasing tax revenues, the macroeconomic situation of Poland was also favourable, which manifested itself in the reduction of the budget deficit and public debt, and in low inflation (despite the wage pressure related to low unemployment). In the Polish economy in 2017, however, problems of long-term development were increasingly noticeable: limited access to employees (the effect

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<sup>25</sup> The following have been classified higher: Republic of Macedonia (11), Estonia (12), Lithuania (16) and Latvia (19), See: *Doing Business 2018. Reforming to Create Jobs*, Bank Światowy, [www.doingbusiness.org](http://www.doingbusiness.org).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, ps 186, [www.doingbusiness.org](http://www.doingbusiness.org).

<sup>27</sup> For more see: B. Krzyżaniak, "Cała Polska specjalną strefą ekonomiczną. Projekt Morawieckiego trafił do konsultacji," *Money.pl*, 20 October 2017, [www.money.pl](http://www.money.pl).

<sup>28</sup> *Nagrody PAIH rozdane!*, *op. cit.*

of worsening demographic situation and government policy, such as lowering the retirement age), which will force an increase in labour productivity, which in Poland is one of the lowest in the EU,<sup>29</sup> and difficulties in increasing the share of investments in GDP (which may deepen after 2020, when it is probable that the stream of EU funds will decrease). Further improvements in the regulatory environment, its predictability and stability are needed. Measures taken in this respect, including the adoption of the so-called constitution for business is to facilitate economic activity (including foreign companies), should be considered a step in the right direction.

In 2017, Poland's foreign trade turnover increased, and the value of Polish exports exceeded €200 billion for the first time. Polish entrepreneurs are increasingly willing to enter new foreign markets or strengthen their presence there. The challenge is still the small degree of diversification of trade directions. Poland's most important partners are still the EU countries, which receive about 80% of exports and account for about 60% of the value of imports. Therefore, Poland's trade exchange is, mainly due to exports, strongly dependent on the economic situation in the European Union. Moreover, despite the increasing trade exchange, one can still notice a small degree of internationalisation of Polish enterprises, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which constitute 99% of all companies in Poland.<sup>30</sup> It is worth mentioning that exports from Poland are to a large extent carried out by companies with foreign capital (in 2013 they accounted for over 60% of the export value<sup>31</sup>). Moreover, Poland still occupies a relatively low position in global supply chains (GVC), so the share of Polish added value in exports of other countries is relatively small.<sup>32</sup> The assistance in the internationalisation of Polish business and diversification of trade directions is to be provided by the government, mainly through the implementation of economic diplomacy and the development of a new system of support for entrepreneurs, in which the main role is played by the Polish Development Fund and PAIH, which operates within its framework.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *GDP per hours worked*, OECD, <https://data.oecd.org>.

<sup>30</sup> SMEs produce over 60% of GDP and employ 70% of the total number of employees. See: A. Pałasz, "Małe i średnie firmy to główna siła polskiej gospodarki," *Rzeczpospolita*, 22 May 2017, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

<sup>31</sup> "Eksport: polskie firmy u progu ekspansji kapitałowej," *Puls Biznesu*, 6 February 2018, [www.pb.pl](http://www.pb.pl).

<sup>32</sup> M. Chądzyński, J. Kapiszewski, "Eksport jest naszym narodowym bohaterem. Ale to kolos na glinianych nogach," *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, 4 August 2017, <http://gospodarka.dziennik.pl>.

<sup>33</sup> PAIH undertakes numerous informational and promotional activities, for example through a network of foreign offices, which by the middle of April 2018 had already numbered around 30 (by 2019 there will be almost 70 of them). These offices replace the Trade and Investment Promotion

In 2017, a significant decrease in the value of FDI inflow to Poland was noted in relation to the previous year. The main reason for this can be considered large, value-added one-off transactions of the purchase of assets of foreign companies by Polish entities. In the future, apart from dynamic economic development and a stable macroeconomic situation, investors may also be attracted by other advantages of Poland that are important from their point of view, such as relatively low labour costs, qualified staff and improving infrastructure. The objective for the coming years is to establish cooperation with a growing group of investors operating in innovative sectors and offering products and services with high added value, which are part of Poland's long-term development goals. An example of such a project is LG Chem's investment in factory producing lithium-ion batteries for electric vehicles, started in 2017, which is also to support plans for the development of electro-mobility in Poland.

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Sections of the Embassies of the RP. For more, see: D. Wnukowski, "Economic Diplomacy in Poland's Foreign Policy," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2016, no. 1, pp. 214–229.

# Local Government Diplomacy

ADRIANA SKORUPSKA\*

## Determinants

The increase in the international activity of Polish local governments after 1989 was influenced by external and internal factors. The global process of decentralisation of international relations and European integration were of particular importance. Legal regulations concerning foreign cooperation of local governments were initially created within the Council of Europe and then in the European Union. An important role was played by the establishment of the Committee of the Regions in 1994 on the basis of the Treaty on European Union and numerous international associations bringing together territorial authorities from various parts of the world. Local authorities had access to forums to discuss and present positions regarding issues of concern to them. The principle of subsidiarity in the EU assumes the implementation of European tasks not only at the level of individual Member States, but also by local and regional structures.

The most important internal determinants were the political transformation and local government reforms in the 1990s, leading to decentralisation and the development of local democracy. In the first years of transformation, many of the international activities undertaken by local governments were of a random nature. What's more, local governments were focused on gaining experience from partners of countries with well-established local democracy. Over time, the areas and scope of cooperation began to change. The periods of Poland's preparation for accession to the EU and then of membership itself were important in this context. This concerned intense learning by self-government from partners of Western European countries, and access to financial resources. Opening up to the world and foreign contacts were accompanied by growing awareness of the benefits of such activity for local development and the need to strengthen the position of cities/regions in the country and abroad. Specialised units with well-prepared experts responsible for external contacts emerged in the structures of local government, especially in larger cities and marshal's offices.

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Although local governments cannot and do not conduct foreign policy, as this is the prerogative of central authorities, the international position of Poland and the current foreign policy of the state translate into initiatives of local government units (LGU). This was particularly apparent in the pre-accession period and in the first years of EU membership. Local governments prepared to use EU funds, learnt from their western partners, and tightened cooperation with partners from countries that were also preparing for membership. Access to EU funds and financial programmes became an important stimulus for a number of activities.

Over time, contacts became increasingly pragmatic. Activities and objectives were better thought out, and new directions and areas of cooperation emerged. Local and regional authorities were included in the new public diplomacy of Poland, not only in the sphere of implementation but also at the stage of programming activities.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the international activity of local governments became an important tool of Polish foreign policy.

In terms of institutional support, the establishment of the Department for Local Government and Civil Dimension of Polish Foreign Policy in the Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy MFA in 2012 was particularly important. Many tools and platforms for discussion on this subject were developed for local governments undertaking foreign initiatives. Since then, Regional International Debate Centres (RIDC) have been established in each voivodeship as a result of competitions. Their task is, on the one hand, to familiarise local communities with the issues of Polish foreign policy and, on the other, to strengthen channels of cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and local entities, especially local governments. Moreover, annual grant competitions are organised for local governments and non-governmental organisations.

National conferences of international cooperation of local governments and cyclical consultations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with representatives of international cooperation departments from regions and larger cities were an important meeting place for central and local government administrations. Although the self-government department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was reorganised in 2016 and not all activities continue, the RIDC still operates and grant competitions are held.

The importance of the international activity of local governments was also appreciated by other central entities. Polish experience in the development of local democracy has become an “export-oriented product”, especially to the Eastern Partnership countries. A significant strengthening of this message was

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<sup>1</sup> For more, see: B. Ociepka, *Dyplomacja samorządowa w polskim modelu dyplomacji publicznej*, [www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net).

the announcement of 2015, the “year of self-governance”, by President Bronisław Komorowski. Numerous international events and projects were held under this banner, with the participation of regional and local authorities of various countries. Support for decentralisation reform in Ukraine with the participation of central and local government authorities appeared in the subsequent annual speeches of foreign ministers in the Sejm (the lower house of parliament) of the Republic of Poland.

At the end of 2016, more emphasis was put on involving local governments in creating the image of Poland. A task force for the promotion of the country at the local government and civil level was established as one of the specialised forces of the Inter-Ministerial Force for the Promotion of Poland abroad. The president of this body is, *ex officio*, the secretary of state in the Ministry of Interior and Administration, and the members are representatives of government administration and central offices. The meetings are attended by representatives of local governments, local government corporations and experts. The first meeting was held in September 2016. Apart from regular meetings (in 2017, a total of eight were held), conferences, seminars and workshops for local government officials are also organised.

Foreign contacts of local governments with partners from a given country depend on the state of intergovernmental relations. This is particularly apparent in the case of relations with Russia and Ukraine. After the annexation of Crimea by Russia, many Polish-Russian initiatives at the local level were cancelled or postponed, for example the Forum of Regions Poland-Russia, held annually since 2009. On the other hand, the war in Ukraine caused the suspension of cooperation with the regions covered by military activities. In the case of China, as state relations intensified, the contacts at the level of regional and local authorities intensified too.

The scale of international involvement of local authorities is very diverse and depends on many factors, such as the size of a given local government unit, its geographical position in relation to the borders, its history or the specificity of the place. Local government diplomacy also takes various forms. The most common are bilateral partnerships, but an increasing number of LGUs see the benefits of membership of various types of international associations. Some regions and large cities have their own representation in international institutions or in partner regions. What’s more, apart from activities within formalised relations, there are many activities related to international and one-off projects.

### **Aims and Objectives**

Despite a certain freedom in undertaking international activity by local government units at all levels, the condition for any action is to move within the limits of their own competences and in accordance with the priorities of

Polish foreign policy. Detailed legal regulations apply to the activities of regional governments. In accordance with the Act of 5 June 1998 on the Local Government of the Voivodeship, the Assembly adopts the priorities of the voivodeship's foreign cooperation, specifying its main objectives, geographical preferences and intentions as regards membership in international regional associations. All activities must comply with Poland's internal law, its foreign policy and international obligations, and remain within the limits of the voivodeship authorities' powers. Resolutions on the priorities of international cooperation of the region, and all foreign initiatives, must have the approval of the minister competent for foreign affairs.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of local government diplomacy was recognised in the documents and speeches of the representatives of central authorities. *The Strategy of Polish foreign policy 2017 to 2021* states:

“The success of Polish foreign policy depends not only on the effectiveness of Polish diplomacy or government administration bodies in general. Poland must make use of the potential and involvement of both local governments and non-governmental organisations, which undertake activities both in the immediate vicinity and in remote regions of the world”<sup>3</sup>

In his exposé delivered in February 2016, Minister Witold Waszczykowski pointed to specific instruments of cooperation available in the local government dimension: “The Ministry of Foreign Affairs intends to develop a mechanism to support the local government and civil dimension of Polish foreign policy. As a result of this mechanism, cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and regions improves, which on the other hand brings the priorities of foreign policy closer to local communities contributing to the development of civil society. We shall continue to provide citizens with direct access to information on foreign affairs and Poland's activity on the international forum through the network of Regional Centres for International Debate”<sup>4</sup>

In another exposé, in 2017, apart from general support for international activity of local governments, Waszczykowski announced his support for Łódź's efforts to organise the EXPO exhibition in 2022.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For more see: A. Skorupska, “Dyplomacja samorządowa. Efektywność i perspektywy rozwoju,” *PISM Report*, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy. 2017 to 2021*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>4</sup> *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2016 (Presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a Sitting of the Sejm on 29 January 2016)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, September 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>5</sup> “Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2017 (Presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a Sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017),” see p. 13 in this volume.

The international activity of local governments has several dimensions. The first concerns local and regional development. Almost every activity is connected with the exchange of experience, whether in local government or in other areas, depending on the subject matter. Foreign contacts are a way to promote a city or region from the cultural, historical and economic points of view. It is also an opportunity for various social groups, including youths, to meet with foreign partners. Local governments try to initiate actions, which then become part of the international relations of other local entities such as companies or schools. In the economic dimension, the most important objectives are to promote local entrepreneurs (especially small and medium-sized enterprises) and their products, and to attract foreign investors. It is also important to involve local universities and other scientific institutions in international projects initiated by local authorities.

### **Bilateral Relations**

Bilateral operations are still the most frequent form of international activity of LGUs. All Polish voivodships, large cities and numerous smaller local government units have foreign partners. Analysis by the Polish Institute of International Affairs shows that the geographical directions of cooperation of Polish regions are dominated by partners from EU countries (62%) and neighbouring countries (52%). However, more and more voivodeships establish relations with more distant partners (China, Georgia, Brazil and India).<sup>6</sup>

The most numerous group of foreign partners of Polish voivodships are Ukrainian regions. Fourteen Polish voivodeships have at least one partner in Ukraine. However, there are Polish regions that cooperate with four Ukrainian regions. Moreover, Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship has inactive cooperation with the Mykolaiv region, and the partner of the Podlaskie Voivodeship for years has been the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The voivodeships also have active cooperation with partners from Germany. Only the Świętokrzyskie and Lubelskie voivodships do not maintain permanent relations with the western neighbour. The western regions of Poland have the most partners in Germany (three to four each).

In the statistics of active partnerships, France and China are the next countries. Joint actions with French departments are declared by 14 voivodeships. Most of them have one active relationship in France, with only the Małopolskie Voivodeship declaring two. Recently, due to French territorial reform, in some

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<sup>6</sup> For more, see: A. Skorupska, "Geograficzne kierunki międzynarodowej aktywności polskich województw," *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, no. 3, 2016. It should be noted that there is a lack of systematically collected data on the international activity of LGUs.

cases the parties have reached the stage of signing new agreements or establishing new terms for cooperation.

Cooperation with Chinese territorial authorities is currently declared by 13 Polish regions.<sup>7</sup> Most of them have one partner there, and only the Śląskie i Mazowieckie Voivodeships have developed cooperation with two. The Świętokrzyskie, Podlaskie and Wielkopolskie Voivodships have not established such relations so far.

Polish regions also have many active partnerships in Sweden and the Czech Republic (11 in each case),<sup>10</sup> in Croatia and nine in Slovakia. Cross-border contacts dominate in cooperation with local governments from neighbouring countries. Dolnośląskie has four partners in the Czech Republic, and Opolskie has three (six voivodeships have partners in this country). Małopolskie and Podkarpackie each have two partnerships in Slovakia (in total, seven voivodeships have partners there). According to information collected in 2014, Italy, Austria and Belarus are other countries where contacts are maintained with Polish regions.

Among the new contacts established in 2017, there are partnerships with states in India. Mazowieckie and Podkarpackie voivodships signed an agreement on economic cooperation with the government of the Gujarat State during the eighth economic summit of Vibrant Gujarat. The delegation promoting Polish economy was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Piotr Gliński, and the participants included Polish entrepreneurs.

The Małopolskie Voivodeship established a relationship with the Autonomous Republic of Adjara in Georgia, and intends to sign a cooperation agreement.<sup>8</sup> It is worth noting, however, that the Polish region has already cooperated with the authorities of Adjara, implementing projects from Polish development aid.

This has also been the case with contacts of Dolny Śląsk with China. In September 2017, during the Anhui-Dolny Śląsk Partnership Forum, the region signed a cooperation agreement with the Anhui province. The Chinese proposed an initiative to renew relations from 20 years ago, with the Wrocław Voivodeship at that time. The planned areas of cooperation include economy, science and technology, education, culture, health, tourism, agriculture, cooperation between chambers of commerce and industry, universities in both regions and youth exchange. Apart from universities, the Confucius Institute in Wrocław was also involved in the renewed relationship. Among the new, geographically distant contacts of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship is also the city of Surabaya, in

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<sup>7</sup> For more see: A. Skorupska, "Paradyplomacja Polska-Chiny. Współpraca polskich województw z chińskimi prowincjami," *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, no. 2, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> The agreement is to be signed in 2018.

Indonesia. The Ambassador of Indonesia took the initiative of cooperation during his visit to the Polish region. The first contacts are planned for 2018.

Not all the new partners of the Polish regions were so geographically distant. For example, the Lubelskie Voivodeship has started cooperation with its fifth Ukrainian partner.<sup>9</sup>

Other studies at the level of individual regions and nationwide show that the geographical directions of cooperation of local governments at all levels (especially among the most popular partners) are similar to those at the level of regions.<sup>10</sup> Lower-level local governments found the highest number of partners in Germany and Ukraine. Contacts with local authorities of neighbouring countries, the EU countries and the Eastern Partnership countries dominate.

### Review of Selected Forms of Self-government Diplomacy in 2017

Due to the large number of various types of initiatives of LGU, only selected activities of 2017 will be presented, especially those undertaken by regional local governments.

**Cyclical events.** Some issues or geographical directions of foreign cooperation of LGUs were undertaken in a form of regular meetings by interested local governments and other local entities. Examples are the forums of regions which gather partners from given countries. In October 2017, the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship hosted the sixth Forum of Polish and Croatian Regions. At meetings held alternately in Poland and Croatia, a lot of attention is paid to EU cohesion policy. Cooperation at the level of regional governments is currently maintained by 10 Polish voivodships.<sup>11</sup>

Also important are the flagship events for a given region and the activities of cities bringing together not only representatives of local governments but also other types of entities interested in a given geographical direction or subject matter. One example is the Congress of Eastern European Initiatives, organised every autumn in Lublin. The international conference, which was held for the seventh time in September 2017, is a discussion platform for representatives of local governments, scientific circles and culture from the countries of the region.

<sup>9</sup> Lubelskie Voivodship signed agreements with the Volyn, Lviv, Odessa and Lugansk regions. The latter partnership is currently inactive.

<sup>10</sup> The results of quantitative study were presented in, among others: J. Taczyńska, *Współpraca polskich jednostek samorządu terytorialnego z władzami regionalnymi i lokalnymi oraz innymi podmiotami z państw objętych inicjatywą Partnerstwa Wschodniego*, Uniwersytet Łódzki, 2013; A. Fuksiewicz, A. Łada, Ł. Wenerski, *Współpraca zagraniczna Polskich samorządów. Wnioski z badań*, Instytut Spraw Publicznych w Warszawie, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> The data collected among Polish voivodships are updated at the end of 2017.

During the last congress, a lot of attention was paid to security, and to innovations including the development of sustainable transport and urban mobility.

In the north of Poland, many events are connected with the Baltic Sea region. The Forum of South Baltic Parliaments is organised cyclically and hosted by voivodship assemblies and regional parliaments. On the Polish side, Pomorskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodships participate; from Germany, three federal states take part (the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein), and from Russia, the Kaliningrad region is involved.<sup>12</sup> In May 2017, the 15th Forum was hosted by the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship. For the first time, the meeting was also attended by representatives of the Association of Local Governments of Klaipeda district. It was focused on “European cultural routes in the South Baltic region: development, creation and promotion in Europe and in the world and activation of youth entrepreneurship”.

**Cross-border Cooperation.** Cross-border cooperation is of a daily contact nature. It is made possible by geographical proximity and the necessity of resolving problems. At the same time, it is also the most socially perceptible form of international activity by local governments.

Euro-regional cooperation, bilateral relations and financial programmes supporting social and economic development of border areas cover the entire Polish border. Traditional spheres of cooperation include culture, ecology, near border/border infrastructure, science and social issues.

Programmes for partners from EU countries in the 2014 to 2020 financial perspective are financed from the European Territorial Cooperation funds. There are six cross-border programmes in operation (one each on the borders with Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Lithuania, three on the border with Germany, and two regional programmes covering the southern Baltic Sea and the Baltic Sea region as well as neighbouring countries). The budgets of the individual programmes range from €53 million to €264 million.<sup>13</sup>

Programmes on the EU’s external borders are funded by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. The first call for applications under the “EIS Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine” was held in October 2016.

The last programme, which was launched under the financial perspective 2014 to 2020, was the “Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Russia”.<sup>14</sup> It was

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<sup>12</sup> The Swedish region of Skania is also an observer.

<sup>13</sup> In 2017, the first projects were already implemented, and calls for subsequent projects were announced including micro projects for which Euroregions are responsible.

<sup>14</sup> In the previous financial perspective, there was no separate Poland-Russia programme, only Lithuania-Poland-Russia.

officially approved for implementation on 27 December 2017. The programme's budget amounts to €62.47 million (€41.65 million from European Union funds and €20.82 million from the Russian Federation's budget).

On the Polish side, local entities from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Podlaskie and Pomorskie Voivodships will benefit from it, and on the Russian side, the Kaliningrad Region.<sup>15</sup> The first calls for applications are planned for 2018.

In 2006, the European Union made a new tool available in the form of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), to enable LGUs and other entities (such as universities and hospitals) to conduct more effective cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. A higher level of institutionalisation (legal personality and legal capacity) in comparison with other forms of cooperation gives an opportunity to create permanent cooperation structures.

Four EGTCs were established with the participation of Polish LGUs, three in the south of Poland and one on the western border. The groupings operating on the southern border of Poland (EGTC TATRY, EGTC TRITIA and EGTC NOVUM) focus on traditional areas of cross-border cooperation such as tourism, environmental protection, culture and infrastructure. For example, in 2017 the EGTC TRITIA started a project aimed at 3D digitisation of selected historical objects of the Polish-Slovak borderland. The 3D models created will be used to archive historical buildings.<sup>16</sup>

In the same year, a project in the field of environmental protection began, in which TRITIA is one of the partners. Its aim is to create an air quality management system in the areas covered by the EGTC through the development of common databases, management and forecasting tools and air quality strategies. The founders of the grouping established in 2013 was from the Czech Republic's Moravian-Silesian region, from Slovakia's self-governing region of Žilina, and from Opolskie and Śląskie Voivodships in Poland. However, in 2017 the Opolskie Voivodeship withdrew from this group.

For years, the flagship activity on the Polish-Slovak borderland has been a project entitled "Historical, cultural and natural trail around the Tatra Mountains". Work on the first plans began in 2004 in the Euro-region Tatra Mountains. Eventually, there is to be a trail running more than 250 km around the Tatra Mountains, with bicycle, ski and cross-country trails. In the years 2014 to 2015, the first stage of construction was completed (93 km of trails). In May 2017, the

<sup>15</sup> See: *Serwis programów Europejskiej Współpracy Terytorialnej i Europejskiego Instrumentu Sąsiedztwa*, [www.ewt.gov.pl](http://www.ewt.gov.pl).

<sup>16</sup> For more, see: A. Skorupska, "EGTCs: Assessment and Prospects," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 59 (999), 20 June 2017.

second stage of the project started with 10 partners on the Polish and Slovak sides. The partner conducting this activity is the EGTC TATRA.

Similar projects, both cultural-historical and energy-efficient, are carried out by the EGTC NOVUM, whose members are local government units from the Polish-Czech borderland and associations forming Euro-regions in this area. In June 2017, a three-year project called “Boostee\_CE” started, with the main objective of increasing energy efficiency in public buildings and reducing energy consumption. The project is implemented by means of Interreg Central Europe with the participation of 13 partners from seven countries.

The Central European Transport Corridor EGTC is of a different nature, and its members are regions from Sweden, Poland, Hungary and Croatia. The EGTC promotes transport accessibility and dynamic development along the intermodal transport axis from the Baltic Sea to the Adriatic Sea. It co-works with the European Baltic-Adriatic corridor coordinator on the preparation of the EU action plan for this initiative. The grouping is also involved in three transport projects from the European Territorial Cooperation funds. Two of them, TENTacle and NSB CoRe, were identified as crucial for the implementation of the “EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region”. The third project, TalkNET, is part of the development of cooperation with stakeholders from the southern part of the corridor.<sup>17</sup>

**Committee of the Regions, international networks, representations.** Membership of international associations and organisations and representation in other countries is another form of external activity. Promotion, lobbying, positioning among cities and regions all over the world and the possibility to represent one’s interests are the main benefits of such activity beyond the traditional goals (exchange of experience and new contacts). European integration and the establishment of the Committee of the Regions (CR) have played a particular role.<sup>18</sup> Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament have been obliged to consult the Committee about their opinions.

The past year was marked by discussions on the next EU financial perspective and cohesion policy. In March 2017, at the invitation of the Marshal of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship Adam Struzik, an outgoing meeting of the European Committee of the Regions’ Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER) Committee was held in Warsaw. The EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Corina Cretu, was also present at the meeting. At the same time in Warsaw, the

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<sup>17</sup> Information obtained from the Marshal’s Office of the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship.

<sup>18</sup> Among 350 representatives of local and regional communities of the EU countries, there are 18 from Poland (plus 16 deputies).

Ministers for Development of the V4 countries and Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia discussed cohesion policy. A joint debate with the participation of the EU Commissioner, members of the Committee of the Regions Commission and development ministers of the V4+4 countries took place on 2 March. The COTER members approved the opinion draft on the post-2020 cohesion policy, which was then discussed and adopted by the CR at its plenary session on 10 May.

The position of the Polish government and local governments on the future of cohesion policy after 2020 was also presented in October, at the European Week of Regions and Cities at the Committee of the Regions. The meeting was attended by the Secretary of State at the Ministry of Development, Jerzy Kwieciński, and Marshal Olgierd Geblewicz (acting as President of the Union of Voivodeships of the Republic of Poland).

During the European Day of Regions and European Cities, the Committee of the Regions and major European associations of cities and regions announced the conclusion of an alliance for a strong cohesion policy after 2020 (the Cohesion Alliance). Among the signatories are the largest associations (including Polish local governments), such as the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), the Assembly of European Regions (AER), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (KPRNE), and EURO CITIES. One of the objectives of the alliance is to draw attention to how cohesion policy translates into the quality of life of the EU citizens.

The topics often addressed by international associations include environmental protection and innovation, sustainable development and smart cities. In recent years, the importance of local governments in the discussion on environmental protection has increased. The rapporteur for the Committee's mid-term opinion on the EU LIFE Programme (actions for environmental protection and counteracting climate change) in February 2017 was Witold Stępień, the Marshal of the Łódzkie Voivodeship.

The development of the debate, counteracting climate change and improving air quality are the main objectives of many international associations of local governments. The largest local climate and energy movement in the world at the level of cities is the Covenant of Mayors established 10 years ago. The signatories of the Covenant include 40 local governments from Poland, representing large cities such as Warsaw, Wrocław, Toruń, Gdynia and Częstochowa as well as smaller municipalities of several thousand inhabitants. The membership of several municipalities in the vicinity of Bielsko-Biała is particularly noteworthy.

Wrocław was a city particularly active in such activities in 2017. It became a member of the ICLEI association (Warsaw was already a member). Once again, it also applied for the title of European Green Capital. Wrocław has introduced

low-emission public transport, and was the first Polish city to activate an urban electric car-sharing (October 2017). Making electric cars available as a service hosted by the city is an important element in promoting electromobility in Poland and innovation in Polish cities.<sup>19</sup>

The international movement *Cittaslow*, popular among Polish cities, is of a slightly different nature. The idea of the movement is to promote a culture of good, harmonious life in smaller towns, alternative to urban haste and progressive globalisation. The associated cities, in accordance with the assumptions of sustainable development, strive for a reasonable urban policy, ensuring appropriate balance between economic growth, care for the environment and improvement of residents' quality of life. There are currently about 300 cities from 30 countries in the network. With 28 members, Poland has the second highest representation in *Cittaslow*. In November 2017, a branch of the International *Cittaslow* Office was opened in Olsztyn.

All Polish regions have their own representative offices in Brussels, either independent or shared by several regions (the House of Eastern Poland and the House of Southern Poland).<sup>20</sup> The offices perform the functions of information, lobbying, promotion and networking. They also support regional authorities in their contacts with EU institutions. Additionally, some voivodships have their representations in partner regions. An example is the office of the Łódzkie Voivodeship in the partner region in China, Chengdu.

**Participation in government and international projects and fairs.** Local governments are also involved in the government's activities indicated as objectives of Polish foreign policy. LGUs may participate in annual competitions run by Polish development aid, supporting the countries of the Eastern Partnership. Although the partners from these countries are among those local governments more frequently selected in the international activity, they consider development aid projects difficult and only few LGUs decide to take part in a grant competition. One of the most efficient regions in applying is Podkarpackie Voivodeship. For several years it has implemented projects in Ukraine. In 2017, it implemented a one-year project to strengthen the crisis management system of the Ivano-Frankivsk region by increasing the operational capacity and competence of rescue services, including in mountainous terrain.

Local governments also act to motivate Poles living outside the borders of the country. With the support of the Marshal's Office in Olsztyn, the Polish Culture

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<sup>19</sup> For more, see: [A.](#) Skorupska, "Car-sharing: A Step towards Electromobility," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 59 (1130), 20 April 2018.

<sup>20</sup> B. Surmacz, *Ambasady regionów – przedstawicielstwa polskich województw w Brukseli*, [www.pan-ol.lublin.pl](http://www.pan-ol.lublin.pl).

Association in the Rówieńszczyzna region organises the Days of Polish Culture (held for the 18th time in September 2017), for residents of Polish origin.

Another form of local government activity is participation in international events and economic missions. On the occasion of Poland's participation in EXPO-type exhibitions, regional days/weeks are organised. In 2017, during the exhibition in Astana (Kazakhstan), the Świętokrzyskie and Dolnośląskie Voivodships presented their offer. The presentation of regional products is an integral part of the promotion of the state, emphasising its richness and diversity.

The year 2017 was also marked by the promotion of the city of Łódź, the Polish candidate for the organisation of the international specialist exhibition Expo 2022. The main slogan of Łódź was "City Re: Invented". The theme for the transformation of the post-industrial city referred to the successful transformation of Poland and other Central European countries. The city and the state presented themselves as innovative, using new technologies to manage development. Although Łódź did not win the competition to host the exhibition, the preparation stage, promotion of the city and its transformations by representatives of central and local government had a positive impact on the image of Łódź and the whole Poland.<sup>21</sup>

In sharing experiences from transformation and decentralisation, a large number of projects implemented especially among partners from the EaP countries still refer to the transfer of local government experience. The Marshal's Office of Małopolska organised study visits for representatives of local authorities from Ukraine in several cities in the Voivodeship. The guests got to know more about environmental protection, waste management and passive construction.

In September 2017, a study visit to Podkarpacie region was held in connection with the OECD project "Supporting Decentralisation in Ukraine." Representatives of Ukrainian local governments met their counterparts from Polish local and regional authorities in the Voivodeship. The topics of Polish experiences regarding regional and urban planning, public finance management and local services, investment and decentralisation dominated.

The activities of local governments are also part of large international projects. An example is the Chinese initiative of "Belt and Road," which local governments can fill it as a project with content. A special case is the cooperation of Łódź with the Sichuan province and the railway connection between Chengdu and Łódź. The Opolskie Voivodeship is also very active. In April 2017, a conference on the "Belt and Road" initiative was held in Opole with the participation of

<sup>21</sup> A. Skorupska, "Łódź, EXPO 2022 Candidate: Opportunities for Poland and Central Europe," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 79 (1019), 16 August 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl); "Expo 2022: For Łódź, a Failed Campaign but Still a Success," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 69/2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

representatives of local governments, economic entities and academic institutes (the Confucius Institute). What's more, in March 2017, Hongbo, a well-known manufacturer of semiconductors, urban lighting and LED lighting, inaugurated the investment in Opole. A technologically advanced research and production centre for lighting is to be established there.

Local governments and smaller local companies also participate in economic missions and fairs, organised either by central entities (ministries or PAIH), or by local governments themselves. It is an opportunity to present the local offer, culture, monuments of particular regions and cities. For example, in October 2017, in accordance with the regional operational programme for 2014 to 2020, the Wielkopolskie Voivodship took part in the investment fair Expo Real 2017 in Munich (the most important event of the real-estate market in Europe) in the category of internationalisation of the regional economy. Representatives of LGUs selected in the competition searched for partners for investment projects related to historic buildings in Wielkopolska.

Local governments themselves are also organisers of international fairs, which makes it easier for them to promote the region and its specialisations. The Podkarpackie Voivodship and the promotion of the Aviation Valley is the example. In May 2017, the region organised the international aviation fair "Aerospace and Defence Meetings Central Europe-Rzeszów", with the participation of nearly 200 companies from all over the world.

## Assessment

In recent years, the international activity of local governments has played an increasingly important role in Poland's foreign policy. Almost every foreign initiative has promotional significance for the whole country. Local governments are involved in development aid projects and support Poland's economic diplomacy. Representatives of local communities know best the potential of their cities, regions and local entrepreneurs. Through their experience in local development, local democracy and management, they can share their know-how and promote Polish solutions. Due to contemporary challenges such as climate change, cities and regions are becoming important participants in international debates. Active participation in the work of the Committee of the Regions, in the events accompanying, for example, climate summits, has promotional and lobbying significance.

Local authorities, especially regional ones and representatives of large cities, have experience in international contacts and are effectively involved in initiatives supporting the objectives of Polish foreign policy. They can become partners

of government representatives in the implementation of its priorities thanks to broad contacts all over the world and experienced specialists. Therefore, all activities within the framework of such partnerships, the organisation of major international events and networking, which have been developed in the last few or several years, can be described as local government diplomacy.

The effective use of the potential of local communities depends on the flow of information, which has not always been efficient of late. This concerns relationships between central and local governments, mutual information on initiatives taken, and connections between local governments. The activity of local governments at different levels, and of other local entities, is so common that its coordination becomes important. Among the problems one should also mention the lack of constant monitoring of this activity. The Central Statistical Office (CSO) could collect basic data (an appropriate form addressed to municipalities, counties and marshal offices in Poland), by the “Programme of Public Statistics Surveys”. This would allow regular analysis of changes in directions and forms of cooperation, and would be a good starting point for more in-depth studies.

Since the competition for Polish community projects was transferred to the Senat (the upper house of parliament), LGUs have been excluded as entities that can implement projects aimed at activating Poles and Polish communities abroad. This has, in turn, limited support for their activities in partner regions.

The EGTC remains an underestimated instrument, which, especially in the perspective of the development of the Three Seas Initiative, could become an important tool in the implementation of projects, such as transport development.<sup>22</sup> Another major challenge will be the organisation of the climate summit in Katowice (COP24) in December 2018. Local governments have been very active in the implementation of low-emission transport projects, and support for electromobility could become a promotional topic during the conference. The innovativeness of local governments could help to break the stereotype of Poland associated with coal and smog.

Efficient communication, use of knowledge and foreign contacts with LGUs and their inclusion in international initiatives at the earliest possible stage of programming activities would increase the effectiveness of implementation of the objectives regarding Polish foreign policy.

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<sup>22</sup> B. Wiśniewski i in., “Trójmorze – nowy instrument w polskiej polityce zagranicznej,” *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 4 (71), 2017.

# Latin America in Poland's Foreign Policy since 2004

BARTŁOMIEJ ZNOJEK\*

## Determinants

Geographical distance, lack of strong ties and low level of mutual knowledge are the basic reasons that Latin America has not so far gained a significant position in Poland's foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> Neither have relations with the region become part of a broader public debate on Poland's international involvement. Successive governments turned their attention towards selected Latin American partners mainly based on their economic potential. The number of inhabitants of Polish origin was also a factor, especially in Brazil (according to various estimates reaching 2 million) and Argentina (approx. 500,000).<sup>2</sup>

The focus on developing relations with partners in the EU, NATO and the eastern neighbourhood did not encourage greater interest in the Latin America region. Poland's accession to the EU in May 2004 did not have the expected impact on change in the hierarchy of directions for cooperation, although it created a favourable framework for the development of relations with Latin American countries.<sup>3</sup>

In particular, the Polish authorities gained the opportunity to have regular contacts with the region's highest representatives at summits of EU and Latin American and Caribbean heads of state and government. At a similar level, regular meetings were held with delegations from Brazil and Mexico, EU strategic partners since 2007 and 2009, respectively. Representatives of the Polish government also participated in consultations and shaping EU Latin American

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<sup>1</sup> Poland maintains diplomatic relations with 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this article I refer mainly to 20 Latin American countries with official Romance languages: Spanish, Portuguese and French. This group includes Poland's main partners and the largest countries of the region, such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, El Salvador, Uruguay, Venezuela.

<sup>2</sup> In other countries of the region it is several hundred to between 3,000 and 4,000 people, as in Mexico and Venezuela.

<sup>3</sup> See: J. Spyra, "Stosunki Polski z krajami Ameryki Łacińskiej," in: M.F. Gawrycki (ed.), *Ameryka Łacińska we współczesnym świecie*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2006, pp. 383–391.

policy in the framework of such mechanisms as the Latin America Working Group at the EU Council (COLAT).<sup>4</sup>

Poland became a party to EU trade agreements with the region. Preferential market access conditions for Mexico (since 2000) and Chile (2003) were already in force.<sup>5</sup> The EU later signed trade liberalisation agreements with Central America (in 2012), Colombia and Peru (in 2013), and Ecuador (in 2016). From Poland's perspective, discussions on the EU association agreement with Mercosur, the largest economic cooperation bloc in Latin America, established in 1991 by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, were particularly important. Negotiations of the agreement lasted on and off since 2000, and one of the main points of disagreement was the opening of the EU market to agri-food products from Mercosur. The EU also wanted to improve access to industrial products, especially in the markets of Brazil and Argentina, the two largest (but considered to be among the most closed) South American economies.

Preferential conditions of EU trade with partners in Latin America were not a sufficient incentive for Polish companies. Their increased interest in this direction was mainly due to the new conditions brought by the global financial crisis of 2008. In the Polish government's concepts on economic promotion there was an increasing belief that a greater official support for the involvement of Polish entities on less recognised non-European markets was needed. Their choice resulted from analysis of economic potential (obviously, the largest economies aroused interest), but was also a response to the opportunities emerging in Latin America. An example of the latter was the Pacific Alliance, a grouping of economic integration created in 2012 by Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. An additional factor encouraging the authorities to take initiatives for the benefit of Polish business was the systematically growing trade deficit. Nevertheless, the challenge for Poland was the increasingly shifting attention of Latin American countries from their traditional partners (the United States and the EU) towards Asia and the Pacific. For the Pacific Alliance, this was a priority direction of cooperation. For many Latin American countries, China has become one of the main trade partners (and for Brazil, Chile and Peru even the largest) in the last decade. The

<sup>4</sup> For extensive information on the Europeanisation of Poland's policy towards Latin America, see: P.M. Kaczyński, "Poland: download and the development of a policy," in: L. Ruano (ed.), *The Europeanisation of National Foreign Policies Towards Latin America*, Routledge, 2013. See also: B. Wojna, "Polska polityka wobec Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów – bilans i możliwości rozwoju stosunków z perspektywy członkostwa w Unii Europejskiej," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 4 (32), 2006, and B. Wojna, *Rediscovering Latin America? Central European Perceptions and Perspectives*, w: *Conference Papers. The Future of the Americas in Global Governance. Panelists' Memos*, Council of Councils, 23–25 November 2013, www.cfr.org.

<sup>5</sup> In 2016 the EU and Mexico started negotiations on the modernisation of the agreement. Similar discussions between the EU and Chile started in 2017.

EU's position in Latin American trade is comparable to that of China, but this is mainly due to the strong presence of its traditional European partners (Spain, France, Italy and Germany).<sup>6</sup> It is difficult for Poland to compete with them for the interest of Latin American countries that look towards the largest EU markets.

Institutional resources remain a limitation to greater Polish involvement in Latin America. In 2004, Poland had 11 embassies there (in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela), but this number fell over the following decade. In 2008, the embassies in Uruguay, Panama and Costa Rica were closed. There were three general consulates in Brazil, but after the liquidation of those in Rio de Janeiro in 2008 and in São Paulo in 2013, only an outpost in Curitiba remained.<sup>7</sup> Access to consular protection was to be ensured by an increasing number of honorary consuls (51 in 2017). Moreover, a defence attaché's office was created in Brazil in 2010, covering all of Latin America. Until 2017, two Promotion and Trade Departments (WPHI) in Buenos Aires and São Paulo were the main centres of economic promotion of Poland in the region. They had diplomatic status, but were subordinated to the Ministry of Economy. Overlapping competences of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy in Poland's official economic promotion did not contribute to cohesion of activities in this sphere. Within the network of Polish Institutes that deal with shaping the image of Poland abroad, including cultural promotion, no institution has ever been established in Latin America. Therefore, these tasks were performed by diplomatic and consular representations.

In analysis and dissemination of knowledge about Latin America, the academic community played a major role, although its influence on increasing the importance of the Latin American direction in Polish foreign policy and on the content of policy towards the region was limited. Established in 1988, the Centre for Latin American Studies (CESLA) at the University of Warsaw has been undertaking initiatives to support the development of Polish cooperation with Latin American partners since the early 1990s. Following Poland's accession to the EU, the intensity of these attempts decreased.<sup>8</sup> No analytical institution has yet been established in Poland that would deal comprehensively with current Latin American political issues, and the group of experts in this field is small.

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<sup>6</sup> B. Wojna, "Implikacje polityki UE wobec Ameryki Łacińskiej dla Polski," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 60 (305), 18 August 2005.

<sup>7</sup> *Wyzwania dla polityki zagranicznej RP wobec Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów (2015–2020 i po 2020 roku)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, May 2015, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>8</sup> In September 2017, CESLA was dissolved and incorporated into the American Studies Centre of the University of Warsaw. For CESLA's activities after 1990, see: A. Dembicz, "Ameryka Łacińska w polskiej polityce," *Dokumenty Robocze CESLA*, 2009.

## Foundations and Objectives

In their presentations of foreign policy programmes, the foreign ministers of successive Polish governments since 2004 have not usually gone beyond general declarations of interest in cooperation with Latin America. More information can be found in official documents containing long-term plans for Poland's international involvement. In January 2004, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, indicated that Poland's accession to the EU would foster the development of cooperation with non-European countries. Among the main Latin American partners, he mentioned Chile, Brazil, Argentina and Mexico, and declared Poland's readiness to develop political contacts with them at the highest level. He also announced work on a public document defining the main objectives of Poland's policy towards African, Latin American and Asian countries.<sup>9</sup>

In November 2004, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published *Poland's Strategy for non-European developing countries*. This contained extensive analysis of the conditions and possibilities of fostering cooperation with various partners from this group. In addition to the countries mentioned in Cimoszewicz's January declaration, Colombia and Venezuela were also included due to their economic attractiveness. The main objectives of Poland's policy towards the region were to develop political dialogue and economic cooperation. Their implementation was to take place on three levels: bilateral, within the EU, and on other multilateral forums (mainly the UN). The authors of the document pointed out that it was necessary to convince Latin American partners about the positive effects of EU enlargement on the development of their relations with Poland. According to the *Strategy*, the basis for cooperation were civilisation ties and cultural traditions (including the Catholic religion), similar structures of democratic institutions, and the comparable nature of reforms carried out in Poland and in these countries. The list of connecting points also included close relations with the European Union and a similar level of economic development.

The declarations of governments created by the conservative coalition of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS), Liga Polskich Rodzin and Samoobrona in 2005 to 2007 did not deviate from the general objectives of developing cooperation with Latin America. In 2007, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Anna Fotyga, mentioned concern about the situation in Cuba,<sup>10</sup> but this did not reflect a change of attitude

<sup>9</sup> *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2004 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz at the sitting of the Sejm on 21 January 2004)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.msz.gov.pl.

<sup>10</sup> *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2007 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Anna Fotyga at the sitting of the Sejm on 11 May 2007)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, www.msz.gov.pl.

towards this country. Rather, it reflected the general position of Poland on the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights.

The main objectives of Poland's policy towards Latin America were developed during the last years of the centre-right Civic Platform (PO) and Polish People's Party (PSL) coalition governance (2007 to 2015). In 2012, the Council of Ministers adopted the *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012 to 2016*. The document included a declaration on the need to increase Poland's presence beyond traditional areas of engagement. In the plans regarding Latin America, climate and energy policies were to be important areas of cooperation. The group of main partners, apart from those defined in 2004, included Peru.<sup>11</sup>

In the programme presentations of Radosław Sikorski (foreign minister from 2007 to 2014), cooperation with Latin America was not highlighted. An exception was the speech of 2013, when he spoke about the increasing presence of Polish companies on less recognised, non-European markets. He argued that this was a reason for the government to strengthen relations with countries that were the object of interest for Polish business. He pointed to the tools with which the government wanted to support entrepreneurs: the development of the treaty base, promotional activities of the Ministry of Economy, maintaining contacts with companies and entrepreneurs' missions on the occasion of official travels of foreign government representatives.<sup>12</sup> During his visit to São Paulo in 2012, the minister pointed out, for example, energy and science as possible areas for developing relations with Brazil, but he put more emphasis on EU cooperation with this country. In particular, he supported the conclusion of negotiations on the EU-Mercosur association agreement.<sup>13</sup>

Grzegorz Schetyna, who took over from Sikorski in August 2014, expressed interest in relations with the Pacific Alliance in April 2015, including a plan to apply for observer status in the organisation. For the first time since 2004, the Minister of Foreign Affairs used the term "Poland's strategic partner" in relation to a Latin American state (Brazil).<sup>14</sup>

In May 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published *Challenges in Poland's Foreign Policy towards Latin America and Caribbean 2015-2020 and after 2020*.

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<sup>11</sup> *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl)

<sup>12</sup> *Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2012 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 29 March 2012)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>13</sup> *EU–Brazil relations*, speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski at the University of São Paulo, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 28 November 2012., [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl)

<sup>14</sup> *Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2015 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Grzegorz Schetyna at a sitting of the Sejm on 23 April 2015)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl)

The text was not an official position, but was de facto the most serious attempt by Polish diplomats to show the prospects and define the goals in Poland's policy towards Latin America.<sup>15</sup> The topics of cooperation included, apart from the economy, climate change and environmental protection, implementation of sustainable development objectives, security of communication on the Internet and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The importance of the Latin American states for Poland was to result from their status as natural partners in the exchange of support for candidates for positions in the UN system, for example a non-permanent member of the Security Council (UNSC). In principle, the development of contacts was to be facilitated by the absence of disputes in political dialogue (with the exception of relations with Cuba and Venezuela, due to Poland's reservations regarding the violation of human rights and democracy). Development aid was mentioned as an important tool for strengthening the Polish presence in the region. Among the promising directions of engagement, apart from the largest partners the document included Central America (with a postulate to re-establish the embassy in Panama with accreditation in the remaining countries of the region) and four South American countries: Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay. In line with the document's recommendations regarding relations with Latin America, the EU tools, especially trade agreements, should be used to a greater extent.

After the victory of PiS in the November 2015 election, Latin America policy was revised. In the presentation of the foreign policy programme of the new government in January 2016, Minister Witold Waszczykowski declared that there would be an increase in the Polish presence there by re-establishing the embassies in Panama and Ecuador. In the following year, he emphasised the forward-looking nature of relations with the Pacific Alliance countries, but most importantly he announced the government's intention to give a strategic nature to relations with Mexico on the occasion of President Andrzej Duda's planned visit.<sup>16</sup>

In July 2017, the government published the *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017 to 2021*, indicating Latin America as a direction for further geographical diversification of Polish economic activity in the world. It did not refer to specific partners, but among the goals of cooperation with non-European countries it listed Poland's efforts to reduce barriers to trade including favourable regulations in agreements negotiated by the EU. It also stressed the willingness to cooperate with Latin American partners in the field of scientific research and innovation and to promote tourism to Poland.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See: *Wyzwania...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>16</sup> "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017)," see p. 11 in this volume.

<sup>17</sup> *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, September 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

## Political Relations

Poland's cooperation with Latin American partners was characterised by a small number of meetings at the highest level, and the opportunity for such meetings was mainly provided by EU summits with partners from the region.<sup>18</sup> From 2004, the highest-profile visit of those by Polish representatives to Latin America was made by Duda, to Mexico in April 2017. It was the first official visit of a Polish President to this country during nearly 90 years of bilateral diplomatic relations.<sup>19</sup> Duda and his Mexican counterpart Enrique Peña Nieto signed a declaration announcing the pursuit of a strategic Polish-Mexican partnership. Additionally, cooperation memoranda were signed by representatives of various institutions of both countries, including trade and investment promotion agencies: the Polish Investment and Trade Agency (PITA) and ProMéxico; credit support institutions: Polish National Development Bank (BGK) and its Mexican counterpart; and national space agencies.

Participation in the 2008 Lima summit of both regions was an opportunity for Prime Minister Donald Tusk to talk to Mexican President Felipe Calderón and to make official visits to Peru and Chile. During the 2009 session of the UN General Assembly, President Lech Kaczyński met Colombian President Álvaro Uribe. In 2010, Sikorski visited Colombia, Peru and Brazil. In 2013, he participated in the EU-CELAC summit in Santiago de Chile, where he signed the Polish-Chilean defence cooperation agreement. In December 2016, the first EU-CELAC meeting at the level of foreign ministers was held in Santo Domingo (in preparation for summits of heads of state and government of both regions). The Polish government was represented by Waszczykowski, who sought, among other things, Latin American votes for Poland's candidacy as a non-permanent UNSC member. In June 2017, the minister went to Cuba as the first Polish representative of this rank for 30 years. The visit was part of the process of opening up the EU and the U.S. to cooperation with the Cuban authorities, initiated in 2014.

The highest-ranking visits of Latin American representatives to Poland since its accession to the EU were made by the Mexican President Vicente Fox in May 2004 and the President of Panama, Juan Carlos Varela, in July 2016. Varela visited Poland during World Youth Day in Kraków, since Panama was to take over the responsibilities of hosting the next meeting. Also noteworthy is the visit of the

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<sup>18</sup> Since 2004, six EU and Latin America and Caribbean summits have been held: in Guadalajara (2004), Vienna (2006), Lima (2008), Madrid (2010), Santiago de Chile (2013) and Brussels (2015). Following establishment of Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in 2011, the meetings have been held under the EU-CELAC formula since 2013.

<sup>19</sup> In May 2004, President Aleksander Kwasniewski was in Mexico, but as a participant in the EU-Latin America and Caribbean Summit in Guadalajara.

Vice-president of Brazil, Michel Temer, in September 2015. This was the first such high-level visit since the arrival of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 2002, and was important due to the discussions on economic cooperation, with the participation of Brazilian ministers responsible for mining and energy, civil aviation, tourism, science and technology.

In 2010, representatives of the Brazilian government visited Poland. They included the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Celso Amorim, and the Minister of Defence, Nelson Jobim. During the visit of the latter, a military cooperation agreement was signed with Brazil. In 2012, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, María Ángela Holguín, visited Warsaw. In April 2015, José Antonio Meade Kuribreña, the Mexican Foreign Minister, came to Poland. Schetyna handed him a letter of intent requesting that Poland be granted observer status in the Pacific Alliance. In November 2017, the Salvadorian Foreign Minister, Hugo Martínez, arrived in Poland. He participated in intergovernmental consultations, but the importance of his visit was primarily due to the fact that he was a formal representative of the entire region because of the ongoing rotating presidency of El Salvador in CELAC.

The main mechanism for bilateral dialogue with the countries of the region is consultation between the foreign ministries at the level of deputy ministers or heads of departments. They serve to monitor and define the plan of cooperation. They have been operating with some partners since the 1990s.<sup>20</sup> An example of the longest use of this format is the cooperation between Poland and Chile. In April 2017, during the IX political consultations, the parties signed a memorandum of scientific and logistical cooperation in the Antarctic and an agreement on the “Work and Explore” programme.<sup>21</sup> In May, the VII Polish-Peruvian consultations were held, important in connection with both countries' bid for nomination as non-permanent members of the UNSC.<sup>22</sup> In November, in Buenos Aires, the VII Polish-Argentinian consultations at the level of deputy foreign ministers were an opportunity to sign another memorandum on scientific and logistical cooperation in the Antarctic. At the same time, the V Polish-Uruguayan consultations discussed the use of the experience of Uruguay as a non-permanent member of the UNSC in 2016 to 2017.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See: B. Wojna, “Polska polityka...,” *op. cit.*

<sup>21</sup> *Polsko-chilijskie konsultacje polityczne w Warszawie*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 28 April 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>22</sup> *Polsko-peruwiańskie konsultacje polityczne w Warszawie*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 8 May 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>23</sup> *Wiceszef polskiego MSZ Marek Magierowski z wizytą w Argentynie*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 10 November 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl); *Polsko-urugwajskie konsultacje polityczno-gospodarcze w Montevideo*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 10 November 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

Among other formats of cooperation, the consultation mechanism between government economic experts, officially called “think tank”, deserve attention. It has operated since the middle of the last decade in relations with Mexico and Chile, but currently remains inactive. The parliamentary dimension of cooperation, manifested in the creation of groups of Polish friendship with individual Latin American countries, should also be mentioned. In November 2017, the Sejm (the lower house of parliament) hosted the first Latin America Day organised jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM). The discussion panels were attended by, among others, representatives of four bilateral groups.<sup>24</sup> Attention should also be paid to the activities of the Polish Senate (the upper house), which acts as the main institution supporting the Polish diasporas abroad. For example, in April 2007, a delegation headed by Senate Marshal Bogdan Borusewicz visited Chile and Brazil and met representatives of the community of Polish descendants. An attempt to institutionalise cooperation was also made via cooperation between the Visegrad Group (V4) and Brazil in the field of defence, in Bratislava in 2013. In October 2015, political consultations with V4 representatives were held in Brazil. Another meeting in this format was held in Budapest in November 2017.<sup>25</sup>

Dialogue with individual Latin American partners was dominated by issues of economic cooperation and the development of the treaty base (for example, agreements on the fight against organised crime, the transfer of sentenced persons, scientific cooperation and the promotion of culture). One of the most visible results of the efforts to increase Poland’s presence in Latin America was to obtain observer status in the Pacific Alliance in July 2015. In 2016, representatives of the Polish government presented an offer of cooperation with the Alliance’ members to the Chilean Presidency of the bloc. The proposal included sharing experience in innovation, internationalisation of small and medium-sized enterprises, and urban revitalisation.

Although Poland participated in the processes of shaping EU policy towards the region, it did not stand out as an initiator of the decisions. Relations with Cuba were an exception, as it was important for the Polish authorities to link their policy towards this country with the EU’s approach to Belarus, in terms of the uniform treatment of

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<sup>24</sup> The MP Piotr Apel (vice-chairman of the Polish-Brazilian Parliamentary Group), the MP Sylwester Chruszcz (vice-chairman of the Polish-Mexican Group), the MP Andrzej Halicki (chairman of the Polish-Cuban Group) and the MP Józef Leśniak (chairman of the Polish-Peruvian Group).

<sup>25</sup> See: *Ministrowie obrony V4 w Bratysławie*, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, 29 September 2013, [www.mon.gov.pl](http://www.mon.gov.pl); *Defesa vai ampliar cooperação com países europeus*, 13 October 2013, [www.brasil.gov.br](http://www.brasil.gov.br); *V4-Brazil meeting in Budapest*, 21 November 2017, [www.kormany.hu](http://www.kormany.hu). The possibilities of cooperation between V4 and Brazil were analysed by the authors of the PISM report: P. Kugiel (ed.), *V4 Goes Global: Exploring Opportunities and Obstacles in the Visegrad Countries’ Cooperation with Brazil, India, China and South Africa*, PISM Report, March 2016.

authoritarian regimes.<sup>26</sup> However, the situation was changed by the normalisation of EU relations with the Cuban authorities in 2014. The EU initiatives concerning Latin America, requiring additional (voluntary) costs, were not supported by the Polish authorities. For example, they did not decide to contribute to the Trust Fund for Colombia established in 2016 in response to the government's peace agreement with FARC, the largest guerrilla movement in the country.

### Economic Relations

In the years 2004 to 2017, the share of Latin American countries in Poland's trade exchange ranged from 1 to 1.24%.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the value of trade in goods, except for in 2009, systematically increased: from nearly PLN 6.8 billion in 2004 to PLN 21.4 billion in 2017. At the same time, the trade deficit on the Polish side was growing, from PLN 3.5 billion to PLN 8 billion.

In 2004, Poland's six largest trading partners included Brazil (PLN 2.43 billion), Argentina (PLN 1.26 billion), Panama (PLN 0.79 billion), Mexico (PLN 0.78 billion), Ecuador (PLN 0.30 billion) and Venezuela (PLN 0.23 billion). In 2017, Brazil remained in first position (PLN 6.11 billion), followed by Mexico (5.15 billion), Argentina (3.72 billion), Chile (1.18 billion), Colombia (0.96 billion) and Ecuador (0.82 billion). In 2004, Brazil and Argentina were responsible for over 60% of Poland's exchange with the region. In 2017, it was just over 50%. At that time, Mexico's share doubled (from 12% to 24%), which is particularly apparent in Polish exports. Since 2011, with a break between 2013 and 2014, Mexico has been strengthening its position as the main Latin American recipient of Polish goods.<sup>28</sup>

Poland's imports from Latin America in 2004 were dominated by agri-food goods, motor vehicles, electrical equipment and raw materials. In 2017, this order changed, as vehicles and electrical equipment moved down. In Polish exports to the region in 2004, machinery and electrical equipment and products of the chemical industry occupied the first position. In 2017, vehicles and transport equipment took the position of chemical products. A significant part of turnover concerns trade in automotive and electrical parts within global supply chains (such as Volkswagen). Some Polish products reach Latin America through intermediaries (for example, milk powder through the Netherlands).<sup>29</sup>

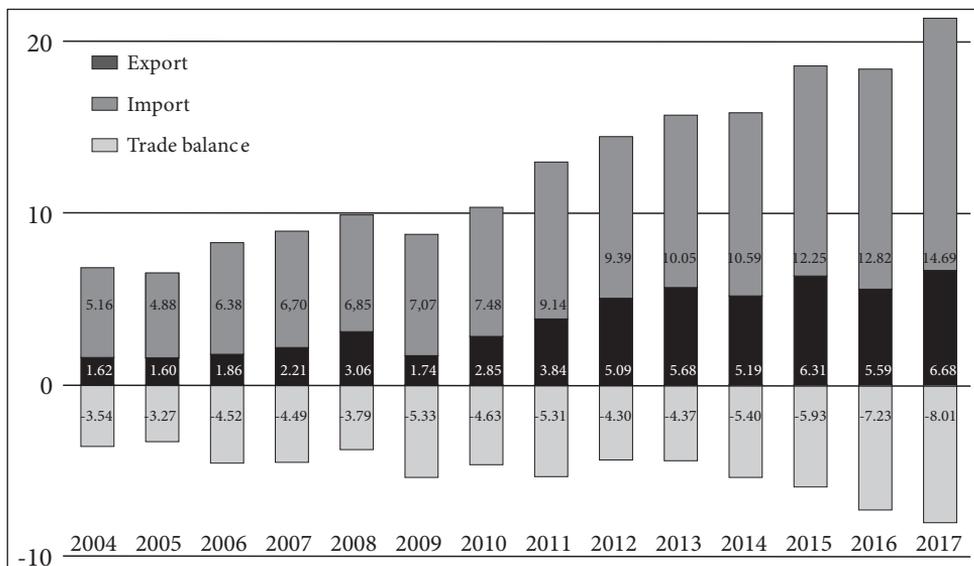
<sup>26</sup> See: B. Wojna, "Polska polityka..." *op. cit.*

<sup>27</sup> Including also the Caribbean countries (mainly the Bahamas and Antigua and Barbuda), it oscillated between 2.5% and 3.5%.

<sup>28</sup> Trade data based on SWAID and DBW databases of the Central Statistical Office, [swaid.stat.gov.pl](http://swaid.stat.gov.pl).

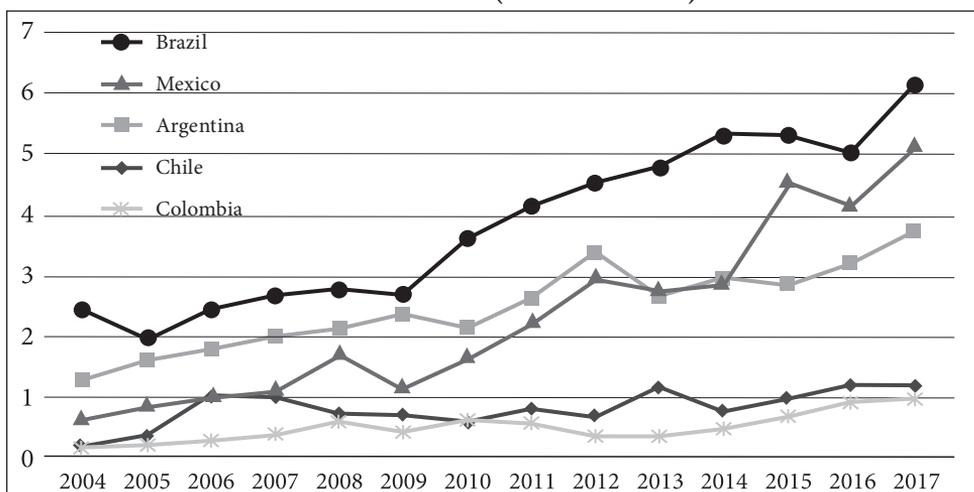
<sup>29</sup> For more, see: K. Brudzińska, M. Rostowska, *Latin America and the Caribbean countries and Central-Eastern Europe – Potential for economic cooperation: Polish case study*, EU-LAC Foundation 2014, [www.eulacfoundation.org](http://www.eulacfoundation.org).

Figure 1.  
**Poland's Trade Exchange with Latin American Countries in 2004 to 2017**  
 (in PLN Billion)



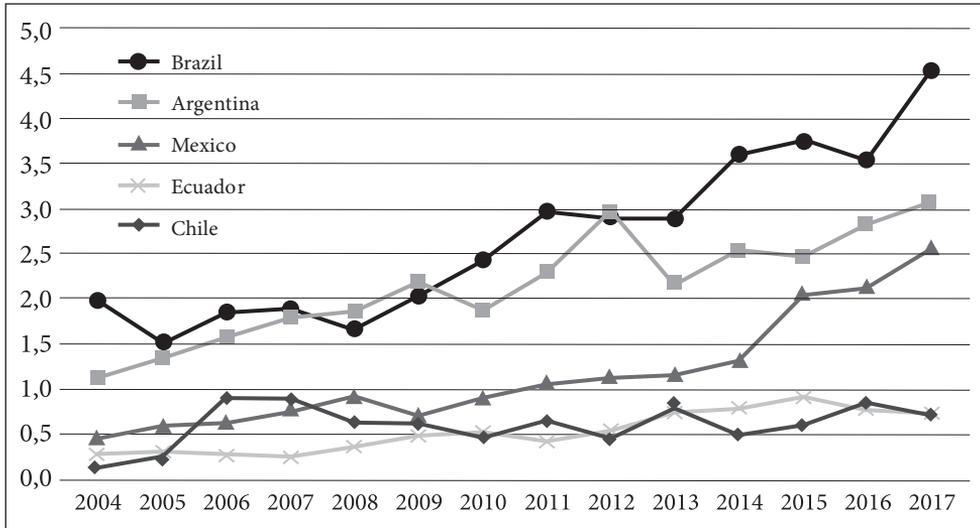
Source: Author's own compilation based on SWAID GUS.

Figure 2.  
**Poland's Trade Exchange with Major Latin American Partners**  
 in 2004 to 2017 (in PLN Billion)



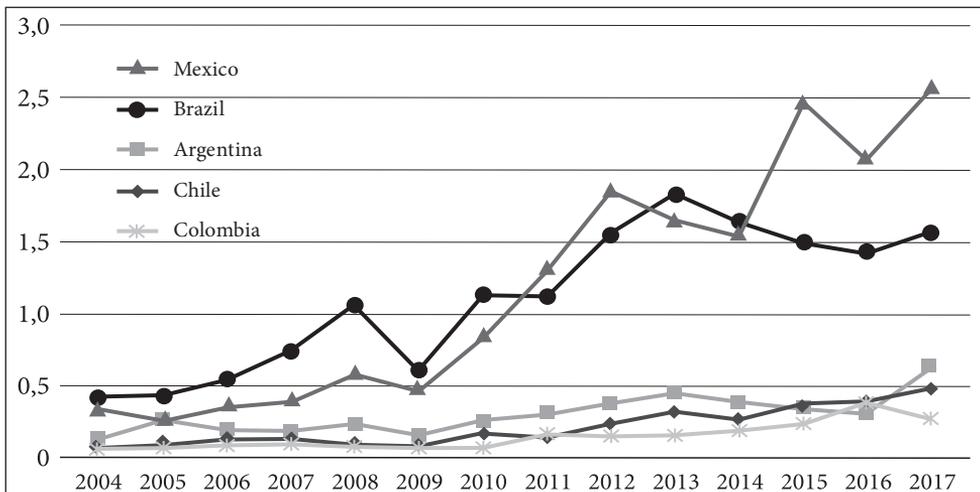
Source: Author's own compilation based on SWAID GUS.

Figure 3.  
**Poland's Imports from its Main Latin American Markets in 2004 to 2017**  
 (in PLN Billion)



Source: Author's own compilation based on SWAID GUS.

Figure 4.  
**Largest Recipients of Polish Goods in Latin America in 2004 to 2017**  
 (in PLN Billion)



Source: Author's own compilation based on SWAID GUS.

In the area of foreign direct investments (FDI), mutual involvement remains low, especially on the side of Latin American entities. The value of investments in the region does not exceed 2% of total Polish FDI. Nevertheless, since the beginning of the current decade, the activity of Polish investors has increased significantly.

In 2011, KGHM became the majority shareholder in the Sierra Gorda exploration project in Chile. It was also the largest ever Polish foreign investment. In 2014, the company launched a copper and molybdenum open-pit mine. Since 2010, the Boryszew Group has operated on the Brazilian market, providing components for car factories in Brazil and Argentina. In the years 2011 to 2012, eSky (an Internet company from the tourism industry) and Medcom (a manufacturer of electronic power devices for, among others, public transport vehicles) opened their offices in Brazil. In 2012, LUG Light Factory launched its trade office in São Paulo, and in April 2017 it signed an agreement with the authorities of the Argentinean province of Misiones on the construction of a factory. Work started in the same year and production was scheduled to begin in 2018.

The most important examples of Latin American investments in Poland are two Mexican companies: CEMEX purchased two cement factories, and Nemark, a producer of car parts, took over the Polish TK Aluminium plant in 2006. The only Brazilian direct investment was made by Stefanini, an IT services company.

Economic missions accompanying official visits by government representatives are among the main tools in the promotion of economic cooperation. This was the case during Sikorski's trip to Brazil in 2012, the visit made by Deputy Foreign Minister Beata Stelmach to several Latin American countries in 2012 and 2013, Duda's visit to Mexico, and the trip made by Deputy Foreign Minister Marek Magierowski to Argentina in 2017. Business meetings such as the Polish-Mexican Business Forum in April 2017 in the Mexican capital and the Poland-Brazil Business Forum during Vice-president Temer's visit to Poland in 2015 were held on the occasion of some top-level visits. Economic missions to Latin America were organised by, among others, the Polish Chamber of Commerce (KIG) and the Polish-Portuguese Chamber of Commerce supporting entrepreneurs interested in the Brazilian market. "Doing Business" seminars, organised by the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency (PAIiIZ), were also quite common. In March 2012, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Think Tank analytical centre, organised a seminar on South American markets at the Warsaw Stock Exchange, with special focus on Brazil and Chile. The meeting was attended by over 200 guests representing mainly business, government

administration and Latin American diplomatic missions.<sup>30</sup> In recent years, KIG was involved in the organisation of meetings promoting selected markets. For example, in 2017, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it hosted seminars on the markets of the Pacific Alliance and Central America, with the participation of representatives of business circles.<sup>31</sup>

The involvement of Polish companies in selected countries was supported by government programmes. In 2012, the Ministry of Economy inaugurated the prospective markets programme, which covered Brazil, Algeria, Canada, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. In 2013, this list was supplemented by Mexico. Brazil was not included in the 2017 to 2019 edition owing to difficulties for Polish companies (primarily in connection with non-tariff barriers). The programme provided, for example, financing for participation in trade fairs and economic missions.

In the official support structures of Polish enterprises, the most important were WPHI, for a long time. In 2016, the government decided to reform the economic promotion system. Instead of PAIiIZ, PAIH was established and the liquidation of WPHI began, along with the creation of a network of foreign trade offices (ZBH), which, unlike the replaced establishments, had no diplomatic status. The first ZBH in Latin America was opened in the Mexican capital in April 2017, on the occasion of Duda's visit. In the following months, an office in Buenos Aires was opened, and the next planned location was the capital of Colombia.<sup>32</sup>

In the EU, Polish governments pointed out the importance of EU trade agreements in increasing access to Latin American markets for Polish companies. In principle, they supported the mutual liberalisation of EU trade with the region, including Mercosur. However, fears of competition from the Mercosur agri-food sector and the reluctance of the bloc countries to open up to industrial products were the main reasons for some EU Member States (including Poland) to resist signing the agreement.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> MSZ wspiera polskich przedsiębiorców na rynkach Ameryki Południowej, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 19 March 2012, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl); O. Kuncik, "Kierunek Ameryka Południowa," eBiuletyn NewConnect, [www.ncbiuletyn.pl](http://www.ncbiuletyn.pl).

<sup>31</sup> See: Seminarium "Sojusz Pacyfiku – gospodarcze wyzwanie dla Polski," KIG, 20 June 2017, [www.kig.pl](http://www.kig.pl).

<sup>32</sup> M. Grzegorzczak, "Rewolucja w gospodarczej dyplomacji," *Puls Biznesu*, 4 July 2017, [www.pb.pl](http://www.pb.pl).

<sup>33</sup> *Odpowiedź podsekretarza stanu w Ministerstwie Gospodarki – z upoważnienia ministra – na interpelację nr 12695 w sprawie umowy o bezcłowym handlu z Federacyjną Republiką Brazylii*, Sejm RP, 7 January 2013, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl)

## Social and Cultural Relations

The cultural promotion of Poland by diplomatic representations is mainly in the form of single events related to the promotion of Polish artists, such as exhibitions, concerts of classical and jazz music, or screenings of Polish films. Some of the undertakings resulted from official initiatives to commemorate famous Poles around the world. Examples include the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Fryderyk Chopin's birthday in 2010, and the celebration of Janusz Korczak's year in 2012.

In October 2012, Polish Days were held in Mexico. Poland was an honorary guest of the 40th edition of the international cultural festival Cervantino, which provided an opportunity for one of the largest presentations of Polish artists' achievements in Latin America. The festival was inaugurated by a music show (*Rock Jazz Chopin*), with the participation of, among others, jazz singer Anna Serafińska, pianists Leszek Możdżer and Karol Radziwonowicz, and choreography by Folies Dance Company. Polish participation in the event also included Macbeth, as interpreted by Teatr Pieśni Kozła, an exhibition of opera posters by Rafał Olbiński, and a screening of Polish films (including those by Jerzy Kawalerowicz, Jan Jakub Kolski and Juliusz Machulski). There was a presentation of an anthology of short stories by Polish authors (from Bolesław Prus to Andrzej Stasiuk) entitled *Elogio del cuento polaco* and prepared by Mexican writer Sergio Pitol.<sup>34</sup>

The only official long-term promotional initiative in the region was "Project Brazil", implemented in 2016 by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute. It included, among other things, the following shows: Krzysztof Warlikowski's play (*A)pollonia* during the International Theatre Presentations in São Paulo (MITsp) and *Project Yanka Rudzka: Zaczyn* at the VIVADANÇA dance festival in Salvador de Bahia. The CineSesc cinema in São Paulo screened Andrzej Wajda's films as part of the "Wajda Turns 90" series, and screenings of Krzysztof Kieślowski's films also took place. In the same city, the works of Iza Tarasewicz were presented at the Art Biennale, and in the cultural centre of Casa do Povo the project *Refúgio Polonês* by the architect Jakub Szczęsny took place. Moreover, joint concerts were performed by the Polish group Mitch&Mitch and the Brazilian Orquestra Imperial.<sup>35</sup>

One of the tools for the promotion of Poland (as part of development aid) has been the Small Grants Fund run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2004 through the Embassies of the Republic of Poland. In 2007, the budget for projects in Latin America was less than PLN 50,000, in 2009 it was PLN 500,000, and in

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<sup>34</sup> *Polska inauguruje Festiwal Cervantino*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 5 October 2012, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>35</sup> *Projekt Brazylia*, [www.iam.pl](http://www.iam.pl).

2010 it stood at PLN 200,000. Among the recent examples of using the programme is sports diplomacy project implemented in cooperation with Colombia and co-financed by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The aim was to activate groups of young Colombians from areas exposed to threat of local armed groups. In September 2015, the first group of Colombian youths visited Poland, to take part in sports activities conducted at the Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw.<sup>36</sup>

In Poland and Latin America, the activity of various social organisations complements official activities. There are many Polish diaspora associations in the region, such as BRASPOL, the Union of Poles in Argentina, the Union of Poles in Chile and (until 2016) the controversial Union of Polish Associations and Organisations in Latin America (USOPAL), located in Uruguay.<sup>37</sup> These organisations are important primarily in promoting culture and tradition, and integrating the Polish community. However, none of them has developed a position strong enough to increase interest in Poland among Latin American decision-makers.

In Poland, various social organisations work to cooperate with selected Latin American countries. The Polish-Brazilian Society, established in 1929, has the longest tradition. Its most important initiatives are the organisation of anniversary events and exhibitions promoting knowledge about the relations between the two countries and maintaining contact with the Polish community in Brazil. Since the middle of the last decade, the Macunaima Foundation has organised 15 editions of the Brazilian Culture Festival, *Bom Dia Brasil*. In 2010, the School of Leaders Foundation coordinated the School of Polish Leaders from Argentina and Brazil. As part of the programme, representatives of Polish communities from both countries came to Warsaw. The aim of the initiative was to show them contemporary Poland as the country of their ancestors, and to inspire them to undertake activities promoting bilateral cooperation in their countries of origin (in 2012, the participants of the school in 2010 reunited in Porto Alegre, Brazil). The Lech Wałęsa Institute also participated in bringing Latin America closer to Poland. Since 2006, it has run the “Solidarity with Cuba” programme, which has included events to promote knowledge about the situation in Cuba, including meetings with its residents. In May 2013, Yoani Sánchez, one of the most famous Cuban oppositionists, visited Poland at the invitation of the Institute and *Gazeta Wyborcza*. In 2011, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the president of Brazil from 2003

<sup>36</sup> *Dyplomacja sportowa*, [www.bogota.msz.gov.pl](http://www.bogota.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>37</sup> In the years 1989 to 2000, the president of the USOPAL, Jan Kobylański, was honorary consul in Argentina. The controversy surrounding him in connection with accusations that he was anti-semitic, was the reason for Sikorski's decision to ban contacts of Polish diplomats with Kobylański. See: *Zapis stenograficzny (1108) z 46. posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Emigracji i Łączności z Polakami za Granicą*, Senat RP, 22 September 2009, [www.senat.gov.pl](http://www.senat.gov.pl).

to 2010, won the Lech Wałęsa Award for his contribution to reducing social inequality.

The academic circles have a major role to play in developing people-to-people contacts and spreading knowledge about Latin America. Polish Latin American studies have a long tradition. Since 1972, the magazine *Estudios Latinoamericanos* has been published, as the first Polish periodical dealing with the history and culture of the region. Archaeologists from Poland and Peru have long worked together. In 2009, the University of Warsaw (UW) and the National University of San Antonio Abad (UNSAAC) signed an agreement to establish the Centre for Andean Studies of the UW in the Peruvian city of Cuzco. In June 2013, a major discovery was made by a team of archaeologists from the Centre for Pre-Columbian Studies of the UW, who uncovered a Wari culture tomb. Since the second half of the 1970s, Poland and Chile have cooperated in the Antarctic. The Henryk Arctowski research station, which conducts geological and environmental research there, celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017.<sup>38</sup>

In 2004, according to GUS (the Central Statistical Office), 71 students from Latin American countries studied at Polish universities. Most of them were from Brazil (23), Ecuador (13) and Colombia (8). According to the latest data, by 2016 there were already 250 Latin American students, mainly from Mexico and Brazil (57 each) and Colombia (39).<sup>39</sup> For a long time, Mexico was the only Latin American partner with official scholarships. In 2013, Poland established cooperation with Brazil as part of its government scholarship programme *Ciência sem fronteiras* (Science without borders). The growing interest in academic cooperation with the region was evidenced by the appointment of a plenipotentiary for contacts with Latin America in 2015, who represents the President of the Conference of Rectors of Polish Higher Education Institutions (KRASP).

The programmes implemented by the National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA) are to help increase contacts between universities. The Agency manages the Ignacy Łukasiewicz Scholarship under the development aid programme. Students from developing countries can apply for the scholarship (in the case of Latin America, they include four members of the Pacific Alliance). Moreover, the Agency runs a programme for the Polish community, to which the descendants of Poles in Latin American countries are eligible.<sup>40</sup>

An example of an initiative combining the areas of science and business is the Polish-Brazilian Science and Technology Conference, a joint initiative of

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<sup>38</sup> Zob. *Wyzwania...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>39</sup> "Szkoly wyższe i ich finanse," *Rocznik GUS*, [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl).

<sup>40</sup> National Agency of Academic Exchange Programmes (NAWA), [www.nawa.gov.pl](http://www.nawa.gov.pl),

the University of Brasilia and the Institute of Aviation in Warsaw. It is to foster cooperation between scientists from the aviation, space and energy sectors, industry representatives, and government agencies. Since 2015, three editions have been held.<sup>41</sup>

In the area of tourism, there is growing interest among Poles in trips to Latin America. According to Eurostat data, there were 7,000 such visits in 2004 and nearly 87,000 in 2016. According to GUS, in 2016 the total number of tourists from three largest countries of the region—Argentina, Brazil and Mexico—visiting Poland exceeded 13,000, mostly from Brazil (7,300). In 2005, more than twice as many people came from these three countries (including 11,400 from Mexico and Brazil each).<sup>42</sup> The visits of Latin American tourists to Poland are usually part of longer trips to various European countries.

In promoting contacts with the region, local government cooperation is also important. A significant part of agreements between local governments in Poland and Latin America (mainly town partnerships) were concluded in the 1990s, but most of them quickly became idle. Currently, the most active are the local governments of the Wielkopolskie Voivodship (Marshal's Office and district of Poznań) and Dolnośląskie Voivodship (Marshal's Office).<sup>43</sup> The organisation of World Youth Day in 2016 in Poland was an opportunity to exchange experiences between representatives of Panama and the authorities of Kraków. It is also worth mentioning the importance of meetings with state governors, who in countries such as Argentina, Brazil or Mexico have a strong political position and are therefore important partners in dialogue on economic cooperation. The discussions were part of visits by official representatives of the Polish government. For example, a delegation headed by Alcides Rodriguez, Governor of the Brazilian State of Goiás, visited Poland in February 2010. In 2012, Sikorski met the Governor of Rio de Janeiro and the Deputy Governor of São Paulo in Brazil.

The Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) is one of the Polish think tanks dealing with current Latin American issues. Apart from publications on topics related to the region and potentially significant to the Polish authorities, the Institute has organised events aimed at public debate on Poland's cooperation with Latin America. In October 2017, an expert seminar on prospects regarding local government cooperation was held, and in November PISM co-organised the first Latin America Day in the Polish parliament.

<sup>41</sup> 3. *Polsko-Brazylijska Konferencja Nauki i Technologii*, November 2017, [www.ilot.edu.pl](http://www.ilot.edu.pl).

<sup>42</sup> "Turystyka," *Rocznik GUS*, [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl).

<sup>43</sup> A. Skorupska, B. Znojek, "Wymiar samorządowy współpracy Polski z państwami Ameryki Łacińskiej," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 91 (1031), 2 October 2017, [www.pism.pl](http://www.pism.pl).

## Assessment

Polish policy towards Latin America is a function of the general aspiration to strengthen the international position of the country. However, in their implementation, the relations with the countries of this region are not as important as relations with the main partners in the EU, NATO or the Eastern Neighbourhood. This is evidenced by rather modest objectives formulated by successive governments regarding their Latin American policy. They are limited to developing economic cooperation (above all) and political dialogue. However, as the concept of Polish involvement in the world changes, the vision of relations with Latin American countries also gains significance. Since 2004, successive governments have gradually developed a set of specific objectives in their policy towards the region, pointed out new issues to be included in bilateral dialogue, and expanded the group of partners in which Poland should be interested. However, the implementation of the individual objectives was done with varying degrees of success.

In the years 2004 to 2017, the value of Polish trade with Latin American countries quadrupled, but this was accompanied by an increasing trade deficit on the Polish side. The number of domestic companies active in Latin America increased, although the scale of this involvement remains insignificant. At the same time, the presence of investors from the region on the Polish market is still incidental. This state of affairs was partly due to the shortcomings of the economic promotion system (one solution to the problem was the decision to create ZBH instead of WPHI) and the limited effects of government initiatives supporting Polish companies. The organisation of economic missions on the occasion of government representatives' visits to Latin America or programmes financing activities in the region's markets certainly helped to draw business attention to that direction, although it did not necessarily encouraged Polish enterprises to engage in Latin American countries. Decisions of companies to enter a particular market are primarily the result of their development strategy and economic calculations. For Polish entrepreneurs, creating favourable conditions for business by the government is much more important than support programmes. Above all, it is about good political contacts and beneficial regulations (such as double taxation agreements). Successive governments were aware of these needs, but one of the difficulties they faced was the low interest in Poland among the representatives of Latin American countries.

The development of Poland's political dialogue with Latin American partners was visible in regular contacts between government representatives (bilateral and

within the EU), the gradual expansion of the treaty base, as well as in various initiatives aimed at increasing people-to-people contacts (in the areas of culture, education and scientific cooperation). At the bilateral level, the intergovernmental consultation mechanism proved its relevance. The inclusion of global issues in the discussions was conducive to strengthening Poland's international image and could bring benefits during the efforts to obtain non-permanent membership in the UNSC. Poland's interest in cooperation with the Pacific Alliance countries is promising, but its offer has to compete with more than 50 other countries that have also obtained observer status in the organisation. The bilateral dimension could be strengthened by restoring meetings of economic experts in the think-tank format. These discussions would be useful in identifying opportunities and constraints for the development of economic cooperation, such as in the context of the EU's preferential trade agreements with individual Latin American partners. Poland's participation in meetings with the largest Latin American partners via V4 is also worth considering. This format is currently favoured mainly by Hungary, although it is limited by the fact that Czechia and Slovakia look at Latin America with less interest than do the Polish and Hungarian authorities.

The low number of bilateral visits at high level shows that Poland and Latin American countries do not treat each other as important partners. Duda's visit to Mexico was an exception in this context, but the challenge will be to ensure that the authorities of both countries continue their mutual commitments, especially the fulfilment of the declaration on pursuing a strategic partnership. EU membership made it possible to fulfil the expectations of Polish governments to increase the number of meetings at the highest level.

Regular meetings on the occasion of EU summits favoured the development of relations with Latin American countries, but did not necessarily translate into a change in their perception of Poland. It is essential for the Polish authorities to engage in EU initiatives aimed at Latin America, such as a contribution to the Trust Fund for Colombia or financial support for the EU-LAC Foundation, which is to promote cooperation between the two regions. Such decisions would require the Polish authorities to go further than their current level of aspirations to develop contacts with Latin American countries. Above all, this would be about recognising not only attractive markets, but also important partners in strengthening Poland's position in the world. So far, apart from the meaningful activity regarding Cuba or public support for EU trade agreements with the region, no Polish government has openly expressed its desire to participate in shaping EU policy towards Latin America.

Evolving relations with Latin American countries may lead to the appearance of such aspirations, although it is doubtful that in the long run these countries will be among Poland's priority partners. The main factor favouring bilateral relations will be the growing presence of Polish companies in the region. Therefore, the development of political dialogue between the Polish authorities and individual Latin American partners should serve primarily to create favourable conditions for mutual business involvement.

# Sub-Saharan Africa in Poland's Foreign Policy after 2004

JĘDRZEJ CZEREP\*

## Determinants

Sub-Saharan Africa is an area comprising 49 independent states<sup>1</sup> since South Sudan gained independence in 2011.

The African countries, especially in the context of the economic crisis in Europe, showed a high level of stable growth during this period. From the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century until today, on average six out of ten fastest growing economies have been in Africa.<sup>2</sup> Africa is undergoing an intensive process of urbanisation, the dynamics of which are second only to those of Asia. It is estimated that, by 2050, 55% of Africa's population will live in cities.<sup>3</sup> However, there has been no corresponding increase in the number of available jobs. This, combined with the population's age structure over-represented by young people, threatens to cause socio-economic turbulence and crises.<sup>4</sup> In this context, the issue of mass migration to Europe via the Mediterranean Route shortly after 2015 affected the perception of Africa in the EU, including in Poland. It also affects the definition of short and long-term of European policies on the continent, sometimes contradicting declarations of honest cooperation in political, economic, cultural and development fields.

With the apparent slowdown in the dynamics of the involvement in Africa of global powers which have long traditions of a presence on the continent (the United States, France and the UK) since 2004, political and economic activity are being strengthened by the emerging powers, especially China, India and Turkey. Although the European Union as a whole remains Africa's largest trading partner,

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<sup>1</sup> According to the classification used in the text, all African continental and island states are included, with the exception of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco (and Western Sahara). Qualifying Sudan as Sub-Saharan Africa corresponds to the division of competences within the Polish MFA structure adopted in 2018.

<sup>2</sup> "Africa rising," *The Economist*, 3 December 2011, [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com).

<sup>3</sup> A. Sy, "Foresight Africa: Top priorities for the continent in 2016," Africa Growth Initiative, Brookings Institution 2015.

<sup>4</sup> "Global Employment Trends 2014: Risk of a jobless recovery?," International Labour Organisation, 2014.

China ranks first among individual countries. This influences African countries' approach to socio-economic development models. After the negative experience of implementing the World Bank's stabilisation programmes in the 1990s, African countries began to perceive China and India as examples of economic success not requiring the adoption of standards imposed from outside. This was particularly evident in light of the financial crisis of 2007. The crisis enforced austerity policies, weakening the potential of European countries, including Poland, to strengthen their economic position and political influence in Africa.

The African Union (AU) was formed in 2002. This is a continental political and economic structure with ambitions to represent Africa on the international scene and to formulate its own responses to the continent's problems. The AU increased the importance of a multilateral approach in other countries' policy-making in Africa.

Sub-Saharan Africa, largely excluded from the military strategies of global powers (with the exception of France) since the end of the Cold War, began to be included in the security policies of the United States, the European Union, China, Japan, Turkey, Russia and the Arabian Peninsula countries. At the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the influence of African Muslim extremist groups increased to a level that threatened not only the stability of individual states but also the security of African regions (the Horn of Africa, Sahara and Sahel, and Western and Central Africa) as well as Europe and the Middle East. The problem of Somali piracy, which threatened the security of commercial shipping on one of the most important routes (through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden) led a number of countries to establish a permanent military presence in the region. The military dimension of cooperation with African countries is becoming increasingly important in view of the crises emanating from the EU's southern neighbourhood, including Sub-Saharan Africa.

The factors hindering Poland's development of a comprehensive approach to Africa include disparities in the history of contacts, the limited Polish presence in individual countries, and the cultural, political and economic diversity of the continent. With no colonial history, Poland does not have a natural strong bond with some African countries, unlike France, the UK or Portugal. This has both positive and negative repercussions. It makes it difficult to compete economically with the countries that have been present on the continent for decades (as well as with the emerging powers, which are investing more resources and energy in relations with Africa). On the other hand, the lack of colonial burden avoids distrust and accusations of a desire to renew the tradition of domination. In 2004, Poland had embassies in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia (reactivated in 2003 after a decade of non-functioning), Kenya, Nigeria, South

Africa, Senegal, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Despite 15 years passing since the beginning of the political transformation after 2004, the position and chances of Poland in Sub-Saharan Africa were influenced by the legacy of contacts from the period of the Peoples Republic of Poland (PRL). Poland's membership of the Eastern Bloc contributed to the establishment and maintenance of intense political, economic and cultural contacts with developing countries, including African ones. These contacts were based on, among other things, the experience of the Polish scientific staff working at African universities, and of engineers implementing infrastructure projects in several countries. In the years 1961 to 2000, the total number of graduates of Polish universities from Africa (including North Africa) was 2,363.<sup>5</sup> Thanks to the scholarships granted to students from developing countries, there emerged a large group of people emotionally connected with Poland, often speaking Polish, and occupying significant professional and political positions in their own countries. The memory of Poles' participation in UN missions and other humanitarian operations during the PRL (Nigeria and Ethiopia) and the first 15 years of transformation (Namibia, Rwanda, Liberia, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Cote d'Ivoire) also had a positive impact on the image of Poland. Positive associations related to Poland were promising initial capital in finding political and market niches beneficial to all stakeholders. However, while Poland's accession to the EU brought no factors to stimulate the development of an active policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa, the international context after 2013 highlighted its importance. Due to growing problems with exports to Russia and the EU's economic sanctions against that country in 2014, exporters and investors intensified their search for markets outside Europe, including Africa. This translated into increased expectations among businesses that the state would provide institutional support for expansion in this direction. The migration crisis and its political repercussions in Europe from 2015 onwards highlighted the need to strengthen the cooperation of EU countries, including Poland, with partners from Sub-Saharan Africa in the areas of stability, security and development, including the fight against climate change. On the other hand, Poland's aspiration to become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council required the intensification of political contacts with Sub-Saharan African countries, whose support was a condition for success.

In the years 2004 to 2017, foreign policy was directed by seven foreign ministers from the SLD (until 2005), non-party representatives (2005 to 2006), PiS (2006 to 2007 and 2015 to 2017) and PO (2007 to 2015). Although changes

<sup>5</sup> E. Jaroszewska, Ł. Łotocki, J. Łukaszewska-Bezulska, M. Żejmis, *Integracja obywateli państw afrykańskich w Polsce w świetle badań jakościowych. Raport końcowy z badań statutowych 2012*, Warsaw University, 2012.

in government and ministers resulted in adjustments to foreign policy, it evolved independently in relation to Sub-Saharan Africa.

### Aims and Objectives

Poland did not have a separate and comprehensive strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa. The objectives of policy towards the countries of the continent were scattered in various documents. Among the most important were the exposé of foreign ministers and the assumptions of development policy, in which Africa occupies an important position, and the economic one, supporting the expansion of Polish companies on the continent.

The first attempt to define the role of Africa in Polish foreign policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century was made at the end of 2004 by the government's "Polish Strategy for Non-European Developing Countries."<sup>6</sup> The document describes the conditions of Poland's cooperation with, among others, African countries, the short, medium, and long-term strategy objectives, tasks in the political, diplomatic, development, economic, cultural, and scientific fields, instruments of influence, and detailed aspects of Poland's cooperation with individual developing countries including the "priority counties" of Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and South Africa, and Libya, Nigeria, Kenya, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ghana ("important countries"). The basic assumptions of the document were to provide impetus for detailed analysis of economic opportunities for Poland in selected countries. In 2008, the Polish Embassy in Senegal was asked to complement and develop the Strategy, also in the context of the 2007 European Union-Africa Summit in Lisbon, which announced a desire to revitalise relations with African countries in the political, economic and scientific fields.<sup>7</sup> However, this trend was counter-inspired by Minister Radosław Sikorski's policy of austerity, which aimed to limit contacts giving little measurable benefit, thus slowing down the process of raising Africa's importance in Polish foreign policy.

The government's annual foreign policy information and multi-annual programming documents (*Polish Foreign Policy Priorities 2012 to 2016*,<sup>8</sup> *Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017 to 2021*<sup>9</sup>) show the variability of political and

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<sup>6</sup> *Strategia RP w odniesieniu do pozaeuropejskich krajów rozwijających się*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, November 2004, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>7</sup> M. Łupina, "Meandry polskiej dyplomacji w Afryce w latach 1990–2015," *Stowarzyszenie Polskich Mediów*, 2015, <http://polskiemedia.org>.

<sup>8</sup> *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, March 2012, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>9</sup> *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, September 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

economic objectives towards Africa and individual African countries. They refer to untapped potential inherited from the period of intensive contacts with Africa during the PRL era and unspecified declarations that Poland will attempt cooperation wherever there are opportunities.<sup>10</sup>

The positive approach to the potential of economic relations, presented in the Minister's speeches in 2007 and from 2013 (the year in which the Ministry of Economy launched its Go Africa programme<sup>11</sup>) consistently highlighted Nigeria and South Africa as prospective partners for Poland. In 2015 to 2016 they were joined by Angola, Ethiopia, Senegal Tanzania and Zambia.

While the ministers' speeches from 2013 onwards increased the pressure to build beneficial economic relations with individual African countries, only Witold Waszczykowski, in 2017, described the opening up to Africa as well as Asia and the Middle East as a "deep turn" to maintain the balance between the various elements of Polish foreign policy.<sup>12</sup> This was the first time that such a clear signal was given to raise the profile of policies towards Africa. It was rare for the programming documents to include socio-political processes in Africa in the broader context of global changes. The *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012–2016*, describing Africa in relation to China's growing position on the continent's markets, and the *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, referring to the socio-economic background of the development of African metropolises and the far-reaching effects of climate change, stood out in this context.

The years of the diminishing importance of relations with African countries immediately after Polish accession to the EU, and then between 2009 and 2012, resulted in a lack of references to Africa in the ministers' speeches, or references that were only perfunctory, offering no political or economic objectives. EU membership influenced the Polish perception of Africa as an area where the

<sup>10</sup> *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2004 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz at the sitting of the Sejm on 21 January 2004)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl); *Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2006 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Stefan Meller at the sitting of the Sejm on 15 February 2006)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>11</sup> The launch of the programme was connected with the far-reaching objective of diversifying the geographical diversification of Polish economic activity in the world through activities supporting Polish businesses investing in Africa, similar to other programmes promoting Polish enterprises around the world: "Go China," "Go India," "Go ASEAN," "Go Arctic," "Go Iran."

<sup>12</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017)," see p. 13 in this volume.

Community builds broader strategies and objectives.<sup>13</sup> In one case, Poland described its military involvement in Mali and the Central African Republic as serving to strengthen relations with France, the former colonial metropolis of these countries.

In recent years, there has been a growing perception of policy objectives in Africa as being closely related to European security.<sup>14</sup> The perceived threat of migration has become increasingly important.<sup>15</sup>

Occasionally, the government expressed concern for peace on the African continent on its own initiative.<sup>16</sup> In most cases, similar declarations were related to NATO and EU priorities, Poland's candidacy for the UN Security Council<sup>17</sup> or Poland's security.<sup>18</sup>

Among the objectives of policies towards African countries were postulates to support missionaries or Christian minorities,<sup>19</sup> corresponding to the expectations of the Catholic Church and public opinion in Poland.

In the speeches of ministers until 2015, references to development policy appeared only inconsistently. They have gained importance since 2016, when development cooperation with Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Senegal began to be associated with the strengthening of political and economic relations. Detailed assumptions of development policy towards Africa (especially bilateral) are

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<sup>13</sup> *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2004...*, *op. cit.*; *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2007 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Anna Fotyga at the sitting of the Sejm on 11 May 2007)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl); *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2013 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at the sitting of the Sejm on 20 March 2013)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>14</sup> *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2015 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at the sitting of the Sejm on 23 April 2015)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl); *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2016 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at the sitting of the Sejm on 29 January 2016)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl); "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2017...", *op. cit.*; *Priorities of Polish foreign policy 2017–2021*, *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2016 ...*, *op. cit.*; *Priorities of Polish foreign policy 2017–2021*, *op. cit.*

<sup>16</sup> The government information on foreign policy in 2007 paid particular attention to Nigeria's stability. The government information of 2015 highlights the importance of dialogue with regional organisations, especially the AU, in enhancing security in Africa.

<sup>17</sup> *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2016 ...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2017...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2007...*, *op. cit.*; *Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2014 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at the sitting of the Sejm on 8 May 2014)*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

expressed in annual plans of development aid/cooperation, in reports on their implementation as well as in multiannual plans (for 2012 to 2015<sup>20</sup> and 2016 to 2020<sup>21</sup>) and in the Development Cooperation Act of 2011.<sup>22</sup>

Some of Poland's actions, which were part of its policy towards Africa, were, in fact, focused on foreign policy objectives located outside Africa or issues related to the state of the Polish army. Participation in military peace missions, and training and stabilisation missions in Sub-Saharan Africa, carried out in close cooperation with France (in, for example, Chad, Mali and the Central African Republic), served to strengthen the allied ties with this country. The deployment of troops in Chad, in difficult terrain and conditions much different to those in Poland, was to increase the experience of the Polish army and to improve its capabilities. Participation in the EU training mission in Mali served to strengthen the Polish voice in shaping the security policy of the European Union. Poland's large participation in UN missions at the beginning of the discussed period was part of the objective of strengthening Poland's international position as a country taking co-responsibility for world peace.

### Poland's Relations with African Countries

**Evolution of political relations with African countries.** Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004 confirmed a shift of the emphasis regarding foreign policy in the Euro-Atlantic direction, and **stagnation with regard to Africa**. The initiatives taken since the second half of the 1990s, to create a holistic approach to Africa by, for example, setting up a separate department for Africa in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have not brought about change in this respect. The only high-level political meeting was a visit by Jacob Zuma (then Vice-president of South Africa, and later president) to Poland in 2004. He met President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, but the meeting was not relevant to the directions of Polish politics in Africa. In the absence of a coherent strategy and sense of importance, this policy was characterised by volatility and arbitrariness. At the end of this period, there were **signs of a slow recovery** in relations with Africa. The network of honorary consulates was expanded, with offices established in among others, Burkina Faso and Mali, and preparations for a similar step in the Republic of Cape Verde were

<sup>20</sup> "Wieloletni program współpracy rozwojowej na lata 2012–2015," *Polska Pomoc*, [www.polskapomoc.gov.pl](http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl).

<sup>21</sup> "Wieloletni program współpracy rozwojowej na lata 2016–2020," *Polska Pomoc*, [www.polskapomoc.gov.pl](http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl).

<sup>22</sup> "Ustawa z dnia 16 września 2011 r. o współpracy rozwojowej," *Dz.U. [Journal of Laws] 2011*, no. 234, item 1386.

underway.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, however, decisions to radically reduce activity in Africa evolved and did not allow the upward trend to continue.

The optimisation and austerity plans resulting in the liquidation of the diplomatic missions in countries with low trade volumes<sup>24</sup> by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski from 2008 caused a **withdrawal from political engagement in Africa**, especially Sub-Saharan Africa. Following the closure of the embassies in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Senegal and Zimbabwe, the number of missions in Sub-Saharan Africa decreased to five. The rapid course of these decisions was not supported by analysis of the potential for developing relations with individual countries. There were no visits by heads of state or government to the region during this period. However, during the same period, despite limited political contacts, Polish entrepreneurs began to be successful in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria, for example, Kulczyk Investments purchased shares in the Naconde oil extraction company in 2011 under the OML 42 licence partly repurchased from Shell in the Niger Delta,<sup>25</sup> and in Senegal the Azoty Police SA Group started its expansion to obtain phosphate. These examples began to inspire the government to support the position of domestic business on the African continent.

The apparent effects of large business cooperation in Africa, the optimism aroused by the initial successes of the events of the Arab Spring, and the impressive economic growth recorded by African countries, especially during the crisis in Europe, translated into a change of attitude towards Africa among experts and business. Around 2012, a consensus emerged to **create a favourable environment for the development of economic relations** in African countries.

The result was the undertaking work on the Go Africa programme, which was announced in 2013. It was to support entrepreneurs in evaluating African markets, establishing contacts, participating in fairs and conferences, and preparing investments. Its consequence was to intensify political contacts, and to organise state visits and economic missions. This was accompanied by the activation of academic, expert and business circles. The initial narrow list of priority countries of the programme (Algeria, Angola, Nigeria, Mozambique, South Africa and Kenya) gradually expanded to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and the Côte d'Ivoire. The culmination of the "return to Africa" trend was the restoration of the embassies in Senegal (2016) and Tanzania

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<sup>23</sup> M. Łupina, *op. cit.*

<sup>24</sup> A. Panuszko, "Likwidujemy ambasady dla oszczędności. Zamkniętych będzie 16 placówek dyplomatycznych," *WP Finance*, 5 November 2008, <https://finanse.wp.pl>.

<sup>25</sup> *Neconde Energy Limited*, Kulczyk Investment, <http://kulczykinvestments.com>.

(2017).<sup>26</sup> The development of political and economic contacts was fostered by the establishment of the Parliamentary Group for Africa in 2011, which gained importance as a centre supporting policy development in Sub-Saharan Africa, among others, by organising four editions of the Polish-African Day in the Sejm between 2013 and 2016.

During the period in question, three visits by Polish prime ministers took place, covering four African countries. The organisation of the trips and the selection of the destination countries were influenced by members of the Polish parliament of African origin (Killion Munzele Munyama, from Zambia, and John Abraham Godson, from Nigeria). The visits were accompanied by entrepreneurs establishing contacts, confirming the conclusion of agreements and participating in business seminars.

Prime Minister Donald Tusk visited to Nigeria from 10 to 13 April 2013. The visit was associated with the increased importance of relations with this country as a result of the growing value of trade and investments in this country. Tusk met Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, and with governors of states that were particularly attractive in terms of investments. Poland and Nigeria declared they would hold annual ministerial consultations on companies' plans and investment projects. In South Africa, from 16 to 18 October 2013, the Tusk spoke to President Zuma and his deputy Kgalema Motlanthe about economic relations, regional issues and relations between the European Union and Africa. At ministerial level, issues of developing cooperation in the fields of transport, agriculture and science were discussed (for example, the Warsaw School of Economics concluded an agreement with Wits Business School). The visits to Nigeria and South Africa were accompanied by the conclusion of agreements between the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency and local counterparts. In Zambia, from 19 to 21 October, Tusk met President Michael Sata and Minister of Trade Emmanuel Chenda. He also had a meeting with Zambian graduates of Polish universities. On the occasion of the African Union-European Union Summit in Abidjan in November 2017, Prime Minister Beata Szydło and MFA Vice-presidents Konrad Szymański and Joanna Wronecka held political talks aimed at building relations between Poland, as a future member of the UN Security Council, and African countries. The summit also had a bilateral dimension, aimed at strengthening the position of Polish enterprises and political relations with Algeria, Angola, Nigeria and Ethiopia, among others.

The only visit of a president of the Republic of Poland to Africa during the discussed period was the trip by Andrzej Duda to Ethiopia between 6 and 10 May

<sup>26</sup> In Poland, the existing embassies of North Africa, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and South Africa were joined by the Senegalese mission, opened in 2015.

2017. The programme included discussions with the authorities of this country, President Mulatu Teshome Virtue and Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tawahedo Church Mathias, and the rector and academic staff of the University of Addis Ababa. The most important element of the visit was the economic promotion of Poland, for example the investments of Ursus and Asseco. As part of building support for Poland's candidacy for the UN Security Council, Duda addressed the African Union on 9 May 2017, stressing Poland's willingness to share the experience of transformation and to invest on the continent. He also visited the facilities supported by Polish development funds.

In recent years there have been several important visits to Poland by African leaders. On 21 November 2013, Tusk received the Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, who was in Poland for the climate summit in Warsaw. The Ethiopian leader encouraged Poland to invest in renewable energy in Ethiopia. The potential for investment in agricultural development was also discussed. On 14 March 2014, Tusk received the Vice-president of South Africa, Kgalema Motlanthe in Warsaw during discussions on trade cooperation, science and transport. Apart from bilateral discussions, Poland also established direct contact with the highest bodies of the African Union. On 17 April 2015, the President of the African Union Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, visited Poland and was received by President Bronisław Komorowski. On 27 October 2016, the President of Senegal, Macky Sall, was received by Duda in Warsaw. The visit, as well as the decision to open the Senegalese embassy, indicated the revitalisation of contacts and served to build support for Poland's candidacy for the UN Security Council.

**Africa in Poland's development policy.** Although the strategic applicable documents in the first years of the period in question did not include specific African countries as priorities in Polish development policy, they were included in annual reports and aid plans. Until 2011, Angola was a country of particular interest,<sup>27</sup> and between 2007 and 2008 Tanzania was too.<sup>28</sup>

It was only with the *Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme 2012 to 2015*<sup>29</sup> that development policy towards Africa became specific. Eight East African countries (Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South

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<sup>27</sup> J. Stryjek, "Poland's Cooperation for Development," in *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2007*, Polish Institute of International Affairs, 2008, pp. 273–297.

<sup>28</sup> *Polski program pomocy zagranicznej udzielanej za pośrednictwem MSZ RP w roku 2007*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2007, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl); *Program polskiej pomocy zagranicznej udzielanej za pośrednictwem MSZ RP w roku 2008*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2008, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>29</sup> "Wieloletni program współpracy rozwojowej na lata 2012–2015," *Polska Pomoc*, [www.polskapomoc.gov.pl](http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl).

Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda) were included in the list of priority countries in designing development activities, due to their very high poverty levels according to the classification of Development Assistance Committee (DAC) OECD.<sup>30</sup> Development activities conducted by Poland in relation to East Africa were to correspond to specific priorities: education and professional and social activation (including development of entrepreneurship, including fisheries and agriculture), environmental protection (including management of water resources and waste) and healthcare (access to healthcare, improvement of sanitary conditions and improvement of access to food and water).

The next *Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme 2016 to 2020*<sup>31</sup> brought significant changes. Compared to the *Multiannual Programme 2012 to 2015*, actions were focused on a smaller number of geographical and thematic priorities.<sup>32</sup> From the territory of Africa, where Poland had or planned to restore its embassies, the following countries were indicated: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Senegal. Of the countries included in the previous programme as a priority and not included in the new programme, only Tunisia was included in the transition mechanism for phasing out its activities in a way that would not undermine earlier commitments. In the other cases, engagement ended suddenly. A new catalogue of thematic priorities was also defined, including good governance, democracy and human rights, human capital, entrepreneurship and the private sector, sustainable agriculture and rural development, and environmental protection. A separate list of priority countries was defined for scholarship programmes for studies in Poland implemented through the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These included Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Senegal and Tanzania.<sup>33</sup>

Bilateral development aid is implemented primarily through grants awarded to non-governmental organisations under the Polish Aid competition. For organisations implementing development programmes in Africa in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the change of geographical priorities negatively affects the possibility of using the experience gained and the trust of local partners. For example, it forced giving up valuable initiatives in South Sudan in favour of designing new activities in a previously unknown area in Senegal.

<sup>30</sup> Poland became a full member of the Committee in 2013.

<sup>31</sup> "Wieloletni program współpracy rozwojowej na lata 2016–2020," *Polska Pomoc*, [www.polskapomoc.gov.pl](http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl).

<sup>32</sup> P. Kugiel, "Poland's Development Cooperation," in *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2016*, Polish Institute of International Affairs, 2018, p. 230.

<sup>33</sup> *Program Stypendialny im. Ignacego Łukasiewicza*, Narodowa Agencja Wymiany Akademickiej, <https://nawa.gov.pl>.

## Economic Relations

Between 2004 and 2017, trade in goods with African countries almost quadrupled, moving from a negative to a positive balance. The volume of trade exchange increased consistently from 2004 to 2015 (when it reached a record level of PLN 17.46 billion), with the exception of a decline in 2010. The years 2016 to 2017, when Africa experienced an economic slowdown, translated into lower trade volumes. The most apparent effects of the intensification of economic contacts between Poland and Africa from 2013 were an increase in the number of companies operating in Africa from approx. 3,000 to approx. 4,000 and a clear increase in the value of exports. Imports grew at a slower rate during this period. Since 2013, the positive balance has remained at an average of more than PLN 3.2 billion, compared to an average close to PLN 400 million in the previous years. There was also a clear increase in trade with specific countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Tanzania, Senegal and Kenya.

Table 1

### Foreign Trade turnover with Sub-Saharan African Countries (PLN million)

Year	Export	Import	Balance	Exchange
2004	1048.4	1724.9	-676.5	2773.4
2005	1236.8	1690.1	-453.3	2927.0
2006	1479.2	2480.4	-1001.2	3959.7
2007	1890.4	2689.5	-799.1	4580.0
2008	1523.7	2622.9	-1099.2	4146.6
2009	2652.3	3424.1	771.8	6076.5
2010	3317.1	2972.1	435.0	6289.3
2011	2925.0	3301.9	-376.9	6226.9
2012	3559.8	3421.4	138.4	6981.3
2013	4799.7	4096.0	703.7	8895.7
2014	4559.2	3527.3	463.7	8086.5
2015	6154.6	4248.5	1906.1	10403.1
2016	5359.2	4250.1	1109.1	9609.4
2017	5679.5	3717.1	1962.4	9396.6

Source: Author's compilation based on data from Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS).

Polish exports to Sub-Saharan Africa increased more than five-fold during the period in question, from PLN 1.04 billion in 2014 to PLN 5.67 billion in 2017. The years of the most dynamic export growth (over 30% compared to the

previous year) were 2009, 2013 and 2015. Declining dynamics were recorded in 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2016.

Imports almost tripled in the period in question, from an initial level of PLN 1.72 billion to PLN 4.25 billion in 2016, when the peak was recorded. The fastest increases in the level of imports (over 15% compared to the previous year) were in 2006, 2009, 2013 and 2015. The years 2005, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2014 and 2017 saw declines.

Table 2

**Foreign Trade Turnover with Major Partners in Sub-Saharan Africa  
(in PLN million) as a Percentage of Total Turnover in the Region**

Year	South Africa	Liberia	CDI	Mozambique	Nigeria
2004	821 (29.6 %)	759 (27.3%)	382 (13.7%)	9 (0.3%)	140 (5.5%)
2007	1658 (36.2%)	1155 (25.2%)	379 (8.2%)	124 (2.7%)	233 (5.0%)
2010	2100 (33.3%)	1536 (24.4%)	559 (8.8%)	98 (1.5%)	258 (4.1%)
2013	2829 (31.8%)	2333 (26.2%)	647 (7.2%)	244 (2.7%)	362 (4.0%)
2015	3075 (29.5%)	2111 (20.2%)	783 (7.5%)	273 (2.6%)	512 (4.9%)
2017	3826 (40.7%)	2737 (29.1%)	869 (9.2%)	589 (6.2%)	554 (5.8%)

Source: Author's compilation based on data from GUS.

In terms of turnover, South Africa was Poland's leading trading partner in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2017 (PLN 3.82 billion, increase by 182% compared to 2010.), followed by Liberia (PLN 2.73 billion, 178% increase), Côte d'Ivoire (PLN 869 million, 155% increase), Nigeria (PLN 554 million, 214% increase), Kenya (PLN 345 million, 246% increase), the Republic of Congo (PLN 98 million, 315% increase), Mozambique (PLN 589 million, 597% increase), Senegal (PLN 368 million, 844% increase), Tanzania (PLN 405 million, 557% increase) and Ethiopia (PLN 102 million, 411% increase). In the case of the last four countries, the clear increase in the value of trade was influenced by single, large contracts.

The increase in the volume of trade in goods corresponded approximately to the general increase in Poland's foreign trade turnover. During the discussed period, there was a relatively high dynamic of imports from Sub-Saharan Africa as well as an impetus given to exports in 2013. The share of trade with Sub-Saharan Africa amounted to 0.46% of total Polish trade at the beginning of the discussed period, rising to 0.69% by 2015 and falling to 0.55% in 2017. This places Africa on the margins of Polish foreign trade.

The most important categories of goods (according to the standard international trade classification, SITC) in trade with African countries were machines, devices and transport equipment (dominant in Polish exports, accounting for 34.5%

in 2014), industrial goods classified mainly by raw materials, and food and live animals (dominant in imports, accounting for 23.7% in 2014). Raw materials also occupy a high position in imports (21.5 % in 2014). This shows relations between economies differing in their level of development.<sup>34</sup>

The implementation of the Go Africa programme resulted in the organisation of a number of economic missions to African countries with the participation of business and administrative representatives. Between 2013 and 2017, economic missions and visits with an economic component took place to Angola, Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya (twice), Mozambique, Nigeria, the Republic of Congo, South Africa, Senegal (three times), Tanzania, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire and Zambia. Another activity was the establishment of a network of Foreign Trade Offices by the Polish Investment and Trade Agency (PAIH). In 2016, the first African Office in Nairobi was established, which, between 2016 and 2017, handled about 100 enquiries and organised several study visits, mainly for medical and construction companies from Poland. It also initiated the creation of the Advisory Board, an institution involving Kenyan graduates of Polish universities in the processes of building an environment beneficial to Polish investors and cooperated with the Kenya Chamber of Mines in promoting mineral extraction in Kenya.

A symbol of the risks and threats of investing in Africa was KGHM's failed investment in copper mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This ended with the evacuation of employees of the subsidiary KGHM Congo in March 2009 and the filing of a request for approval of the voluntary liquidation by the Lubumbashi Court in December 2009. The experience of poorly-prepared investment in a dangerous environment resulted in the reluctance of Polish entrepreneurs to invest on the continent. It was only after 2012 that the investment climate improved clearly. An example of successful investments by Polish companies in Africa developed with the support of the Go Africa programme is Ursus, present in Africa since 2013, which treated the expansion of its position on this continent as a form of protection against the effects of a drop in sales on developed markets. It concluded contracts in Ethiopia (2013, 2015 and 2015) for the supply of tractors and the construction of assembly plant, in Tanzania (2015) for the supply of tractors and instruments and equipment for assembly hall and service centres, in Zambia (2017) for the supply of tractors and instruments, in Algeria (2017), where it established a joint venture, and in Namibia (2017) for the assembly of tractors, machines, buses and speciality vehicles. Other important investments in the agri-food sector include the contract for the construction of grain silos and warehouses in Tanzania by Feerum. In 2013, Asseco initiated

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<sup>34</sup> R. Knap, "Handel Polski z krajami Afryki – tendencje i potencjał rozwoju," *Biznes Międzynarodowy w Gospodarce Globalnej*, no. 35/1, 2016, pp. 236–251.

the establishment of an IT software sales centre in Ethiopia. Pamapol, present in Africa since 2010, developed its activities in Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Benin, Ghana and Angola. Mokate coffees and teas became popular in many African countries. These companies already have a stable position in Africa. The most important investments of African companies in Poland include those carried out by companies from South Africa, a country belonging to the G-20. Examples include SAB Miller in the Lech and Tyskie Breweries, Fra-Mondi in the Pulp and Paper Mill in Świecie, and Celuloza SA.

### Military Engagement

Military engagement in Africa takes place in coordination with partners France, the European Union and the United Nations.

In 2006, Poles took part in the European Union's mission of securing elections and UN support in the Democratic Republic of Congo (EUFOR RD Congo). The 130-person contingent was dominated by the military police, which secured, among other places, the airport in Kinshasa.<sup>35</sup>

From 2008 to 2009, Poland participated in a military mission to prevent the spread of the conflict in Sudanese Darfur, by supporting the training of the Chadian police and ensuring the security of refugee aid operations in Chad and the Central African Republic.<sup>36</sup> The Polish military contingent in Chad was part of the European Union military operation in the Republic of Chad and the Central African Republic (EUFOR Chad/RCA, established by UN Security Council Resolution 1778) from September 2008, and from 15 March 2009 the United Nations Organisation's Mission in the Republic of Chad and the Central African Republic (MINURCAT), which took over responsibility for the mission's objectives from EU forces. The Polish contingent of 400 people was one of the most numerous among those delegated by 26 EU countries.<sup>37</sup> Its mission was terminated in December 2009.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> B. Górka-Winter, "Poland in Peacekeeping and Stabilisation Operations," in *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2007*, Polish Institute of International Affairs, 2008, pp. 257–272.

<sup>36</sup> M. Madej, M. Terlikowski, "The Political and Military Aspects of Poland's Security Policy in 2008," in *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2009*, Polish Institute of International Affairs, 2010, p. 58.

<sup>37</sup> The mission included the 1<sup>st</sup> Siedlce Reconnaissance Battalion, Special Unit of Military Gendarmerie in Gliwice, 10<sup>th</sup> Opole Logistics Brigade and 5<sup>th</sup> Engineering Regiment. The equipment of Poles included KTO Rosomak armoured vehicles, Jelcz CP-10 fuel tankers, Jelcz CW-10 water tankers, Jelcz HIAB and Multilift, SL-34 loaders, LUNA hoists, Stary 944 with armoured cabin, and Stary 944 equipped with Hibneryt guns.

<sup>38</sup> J. Rybak, *Szef BBN pyta MON o misję w Czadzie*, Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego, 17 April 2018, [www.bbn.gov.pl](http://www.bbn.gov.pl).

From 2013 to 2014, the Polish military contingent participated in the European Union Training Mission in the Republic of Mali (EUTM Mali). Polish soldiers numbering 20 people participated in the logistical, administrative and counter-intelligence security of the EUTM Mali headquarters, conducted training in logistics for the Mali forces and de-mined the surroundings of the EUTM base.<sup>39</sup>

From 1 February 2014 to 25 April 2014, Poland participated in the French-led operation "Sangaris," an intervention during the civil war in the Central African Republic. Poland deployed two four-person transport aircraft crews and ground personnel (34 people in total). Following the conversion of the French intervention mission into a European Union military operation in the Central African Republic (EUFOR RCA) in July 2014, a 50-person contingent was selected for the European Gendarmerie Force (EUGENDEFOR). Poles ensured security in Banga, the capital of the CAR, cooperating with French, Spanish and local military police and providing support in the field of forensic science, among others. Following the takeover of the military mission by UN forces (MINUSCA) in February 2015, Poland continued its symbolic participation in EU advisory missions in this country, including EUMAM CAR (2015 to 2016) and EUTM CAR (2016 to 2017).<sup>40</sup>

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Poles participated in UN missions in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), Sudan (UNMIS), Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI), the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) and Western Sahara (MINUSRO). After Poland reduced its participation in UN missions in 2009,<sup>41</sup> in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, individual military experts took part in UN missions in South Sudan (UNMISS), the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and Liberia (UNMIL).<sup>42</sup>

### Cultural and Scientific Relations

The promotion of Polish culture and Poland's cultural presence in Africa is very limited. There were no Polish Institute posts on the continent. The cultural activities of embassies were varied. For example, before its liquidation in 2008, the Dakar post contributed to the creation of a Polish language course at the Faculty of Slavic Studies at the University of Dakar, and to the establishment of

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<sup>39</sup> PKW Mali, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, <http://pkwmali.wp.mil.pl/pl/index.html>.

<sup>40</sup> PKW Republika Środkowoafrykańska, Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej, <http://pkwrsa.wp.mil.pl/pl/10.html>.

<sup>41</sup> M. Madej, "The Political and Military Dimension of Polish Security Policy," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2010*, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2011, p. 69.

<sup>42</sup> *Polacy w misjach pokojowych ONZ*, Ośrodek Informacji ONZ w Warszawie, [www.unic.un.org.pl](http://www.unic.un.org.pl).

a Polish department at the university library in Prai (Republic of Cape Verde). The Polish library also functioned at the Polish embassy in Luanda (Angola).<sup>43</sup> Among the few cultural events addressed to a young mass audience were the stay and concert in Ethiopia of the reggae band Vavamuffin (2008), supported by the Polish embassy in Addis Ababa, which received good reviews in the Ethiopian press.<sup>44</sup>

Poland carried out significant scientific cooperation activities in Africa. In 2005, thanks to South Africa's cooperation with Poland and other countries, the Southern African Large Telescope (SALT), the largest single optical telescope in the southern hemisphere,<sup>45</sup> was put into service. Since 2006, thanks to the linked credit, the Polish company Navimor, together with the Maritime Academy in Gdynia, have worked on the construction of the Academy of Fisheries and Water Management in Namibe (Angola).<sup>46</sup> The project enabled 300 companies from Poland to conclude contracts in this country and strengthened Poland's image as a desirable partner in science and education.

Continuous expansion of the range of Polish universities' offers in Africa became possible in 2005 after the establishment of Study in Poland, an integrated international campaign to promote education at Polish universities.<sup>47</sup> In 2013, 585 people from Sub-Saharan Africa<sup>48</sup> studied in Poland; in the academic year 2016 to 2017, this increased to 1,080 (most from Cameroon, Nigeria and Angola).<sup>49</sup> Among the graduates of Polish universities, both those graduating in 2004 to 2017 and earlier, there are people of holding significant positions who promote Poland in their countries of origin. They include João Teta, former Rector of Agostinho Neto University and Secretary of State for Science and Technology in Angola, and Alpha Oumar Konaré, President of Mali from 1992 to 2002 and chairman of the African Union Commission from 2003 to 2008.<sup>50</sup> Attempts were made to activate this environment, with, for example, Konaré being elected honorary chairman of the Association of Polish-Senegalese Friendship established on the occasion of the first Congress of African Graduates of Polish Universities in Dakar

<sup>43</sup> M. Łupina, *op. cit.*

<sup>44</sup> Ł. Kamiński, "... a Vavamuffin w Etiopii," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2 December 2018, [www.archiwum.wyborcza.pl](http://www.archiwum.wyborcza.pl).

<sup>45</sup> *The Southern African Large Telescope*, [www.salt.ac.za](http://www.salt.ac.za).

<sup>46</sup> *Republika Angoli. Informacja o stosunkach gospodarczych z Polską*, Departament Promocji i Współpracy Dwustronnej Ministerstwa Gospodarki, March 2015.

<sup>47</sup> *Study in Poland*, [www.studyinpoland.pl](http://www.studyinpoland.pl).

<sup>48</sup> "Studenci zagraniczni w Polsce 2013," *Study in Poland*, 2013, [www.studyinpoland.pl](http://www.studyinpoland.pl).

<sup>49</sup> "Studenci zagraniczni w Polsce 2017," *Study in Poland*, 2017, [www.studyinpoland.pl](http://www.studyinpoland.pl).

<sup>50</sup> *Curriculum Vitae of H. E. Alpha Oumar Konare, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union*, [www.ft.dk](http://www.ft.dk).

in 2007. In the following year, the congress was held under the patronage of three organisations: the Association of Former African Students and Interns in Poland, the Association of Former Senegalese Students in Poland, and the Association of Polish-Senegalese Friendship. In Poland, contacts with graduates were maintained by, among others, the Foundation Polish Education for Foreigners “Copernicus” and the quarterly “Kontakt.”<sup>51</sup>

Polish archaeologists made an important contribution to saving and documenting Sudan’s historical heritage, and to cultural relations between Poland and Sudan. The cooperation of Polish archaeological centres with the National Corporation for Ancient History and Museums in Khartoum contributed to an increase in the number of archaeological sites in this country, up to 11, which is comparable to that of Egypt.<sup>52</sup> Polish missionaries play a special role in building cultural relations at the grassroots level. There were about 800 of them in Africa, most of them in Zambia (approx. 100), and also in Cameroon, Tanzania, Madagascar and Rwanda.<sup>53</sup>

In Poland, studies in the area of knowledge regarding African cultures were available at the Faculty of African Studies at the University of Warsaw (where Swahili, Hausa and Amharic languages were taught), and the African research community was brought together within the Polish African Society, operating since 1990. The most important cultural event in Poland, presenting the latest cultural trends in Africa, was the annual review of African films “AfryKamera” organised since 2006.<sup>54</sup> Among NGOs dealing with African issues, including cultural ones, the most active was the Foundation Afryka Inaczej, which runs the news service Afryka.org. It published the history of the African Diaspora in Poland, describing, among other things, the contribution of Africans to Polish cultural life and ways of presenting Africans in literature and film.<sup>55</sup>

## Assessment

Poland’s foreign policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa and individual African countries in the period 2004 to 2017 lacked a clear vision of development.

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<sup>51</sup> M. Chilczuk, “50 lat kształcenia cudzoziemców w Polsce,” *Kontakt*, no. 1–2, 2001, p. 15.

<sup>52</sup> S. Zdziebłowski, “Sudan/ W Chartumie powstanie Polski Ośrodek Archeologiczny,” 20 February 2018, *Nauka w Polsce*, <http://naukawpolsce.pap.pl>.

<sup>53</sup> *Wizyta w Zambii. Premier spotkał się z Polonią i misjonarzami*, 20 October 2013, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>54</sup> *Organizacje afrykanistyczne w Polsce*, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Pretorii, [www.pretoria.msz.gov.pl](http://www.pretoria.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>55</sup> M. Diouf, P. Średziński, *Afryka w Warszawie. Dzieje afrykańskiej diaspory nad Wisłą*, Fundacja Afryka Inaczej, 2010.

This led, for example, to the liquidation and re-establishment of embassies and to a change of priority countries in development policy in 2016. The general declarations of intent made in the government's foreign policy information to explore the opportunities for cooperation proved, in fact, the lack of a broader political approach to Africa.

The potential of the presence of people educated in Poland from this African region and the memory of good relations between the PRL and numerous countries of Sub-Saharan Africa were used insufficiently.

To a large extent, political involvement in Africa was a side-effect of other actions, such as signing the *Millennium Declaration*, the *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development* and its *Action Plan*, membership of the OECD Development Assistance Committee, membership of the European Union, promotion of Polish exports, and Poland seeking a seat as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Military engagement in Africa met expectations as an instrument for building trust with allied countries and strengthening Poland's role within international organisations. However, it had little effect on increasing the potential for a non-military presence in individual countries.

The costs of deciding to liquidate diplomatic missions in important African countries proved to be higher than the expected benefits. The reduction in the number of embassies delayed Poland's opportunity to take advantage of Africa's increasingly apparent economic potential by several years. It was only economic interests that inspired the greater emphasis on Sub-Saharan Africa observed since 2012. The new interest in the continent, which began with effective entrepreneurial activities, was supported by the government's Go Africa programme. Efforts were made to restore political and diplomatic contacts on the continent. The restoration of the embassies in Senegal and Tanzania, and the opening of the first PAIH Foreign Trade Office in Nairobi, were important steps in this direction. The need to diversify markets and the growing experience of entrepreneurs in Africa help strengthen the Polish presence on the continent and formulate far-reaching policies in this respect.

Poland's policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa was not an expression of a deeper understanding of the processes shaping the situation on the continent and its position in the globalised world. The lack of a separate Department for Sub-Saharan Africa in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made it difficult to develop a coherent vision of the region's position in Polish foreign policy. It was only in the most recent documents and programme positions defining the assumptions of policy towards African countries, such as the *Government's Information on Foreign Policy in 2017* and the *Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017 to 2021*, that the importance of the continent in the context of civilisational, demographic, climate

and economic changes was appreciated. This means a change in political thinking about Africa and offers the chance for Poland to become genuinely, deeply anchored on the continent. However, it is difficult to assess how sustainable this treatment of African issues will prove. The growing importance of migration crises and instability in Europe's southern neighbourhood between 2015 and 2017 encourages solutions designed to have an immediate effect. The confrontation of these two perspectives will influence the shaping of Poland's policy towards the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa in the coming years.

# Poland in the United Nations

SZYMON ZARĘBA\*

## Determinants

In 2017, the United Nations remained the most universal (especially in terms of membership and scope of activities) multilateral cooperation forum in which Poland was active. Conventionally, the UN focused on maintaining international peace and security. Its members initiated debates on threats in various regions of the world and on general problems, especially the fight against terrorism, disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Cooperation between the UN and regional organisations, sustainable economic and social development, climate change and respect for international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, also played an important role.

The ability of the UN to respond effectively in crisis situations was assessed as very limited by representatives of members and experts.<sup>1</sup> The main reasons for this were the deep political divisions between the permanent members of the Security Council on issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine. These differences of opinion had a negative impact on other matters involving the Council, reducing chances of members reaching a consensus.<sup>2</sup> However, unlike in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the UN forum in 2017 was more likely to avoid making ambitious postulates for overcoming this weakness and thoroughly reforming the organisation. This was partly due to lack of success of such initiatives in previous years, and partly to expectations of a reform package being presented by the new Secretary-General António Guterres, who was sworn in in December 2016. The proposals he presented in subsequent months, starting in February 2017, proved to be almost entirely limited to administrative issues. They reflected Guterres' relatively realistic opinion that UN reforms should be more modest than those planned so far, as this would

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<sup>1</sup> Cf.: statements in the conventional debate on Security Council reform in the General Assembly, *Lack of Political Will among 'Elite Few' Threatens Security Council Reform Efforts, Delegates Tell General Assembly*, 7 November 2017, United Nations, GA/11969, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org).

<sup>2</sup> Cf.: a summary of these reservations in I. Martin, "In Hindsight: What's wrong with the Security Council?" *Security Council Report*, 29 March 2018, April 2018, [www.securitycouncilreport.org](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org).

increase the possibility of their implementation.<sup>3</sup> These included, in particular, projects to improve cost-effectiveness and transparency, and to plan and evaluate the implementation of activities. Emphasis was also placed on ensuring gender balance and combating sexual exploitation both within the United Nations system and in external activities. What's more, the Secretary-General proposed actions to support the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development from 2015 and the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the UN in 2006.

The year 2017 saw the culmination of efforts by successive Polish governments to have Poland elected as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for 2018 to 2019. The intention to stand as a candidate was expressed by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski in 2014, and upheld by his successors, Grzegorz Schetyna and Witold Waszczykowski. Poland's competitor in the competition for one non-permanent seat in the Council for Eastern European countries was Bulgaria. The Polish government managed to convince the Bulgarian authorities to give up this ambition in exchange for support for the Bulgarian candidate for the position of UN Secretary-General.<sup>4</sup> In the absence of competitors, the Polish campaign for Council membership, officially inaugurated by President Andrzej Duda and Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski on 16 September 2016, was actually successful before 2017. Nevertheless, the first half of 2017, until elections to the Council at the beginning of June, was marked by the government's efforts to gain the broadest possible support for the Polish candidacy.

This required Poland to be more cautious about issues of particular importance to informal groups of countries playing an important role in the UN, such as Muslim countries. At the same time, the activity of the Polish government at the UN, from Poland's security point of view, was conventionally influenced by Polish-American relations and membership of NATO and the European Union. It required taking into account Allied obligations and EU interests.

Analysis of the statements of the president and members of the government allows us to state that, in 2017, the trend of increasing the importance of the UN in Polish foreign policy continued, at least in the declarative sphere. Until 2014, the opposite trend was apparent, which may be confirmed by the fact that, in the foreign minister's *Information on the Tasks of Polish Foreign Policy* in 2014, only

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<sup>3</sup> A. Novosseloff, A. Boutellis, "UN Peace Operations and Guterres's Reform Agenda," *IPI Global Observatory*, 14 November 2017, <https://theglobalobservatory.org>.

<sup>4</sup> *Minister Witold Waszczykowski: niestale członkostwo w RB ONZ to instrument oddziaływania na świat*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 1 June 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl). The Bulgarian government announced that it would not continue to apply for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council in December 2016.

one, three-sentence paragraph was devoted to the role of the UN. In subsequent years, the significance of the UN for successive Polish governments gradually increased. For example, in the foreign minister's *Information on the Tasks of Polish Foreign Policy* in 2017, several extended paragraphs were devoted to UN-related issues.

This change had two main premises. The key role was played by the concerns of the Polish authorities regarding the future of the current international order benefiting from the source of the fundamental values and principles of international law included in the Charter of the United Nations (in particular, sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders and respect for human rights).<sup>5</sup> They were caused by the deterioration of Poland's security environment in connection with Russia's aggression against Ukraine. These events forced the Polish authorities to focus much more strongly on the problems of regional security and compliance with the fundamental principles of the Charter than in previous years. The statements of government representatives left no doubt that Poland considered the situation in Ukraine to be a significant threat not only to Central and Eastern Europe, but also to international peace and security, and therefore required a global response. The UN indicated as an appropriate forum where a solution to this problem should be sought.<sup>6</sup> The increased importance attributed to the UN by the Polish government was also influenced by the complicated situation of Poland in the European Union related to the proceedings initiated at the beginning of 2016 by the European Commission in connection with the risk of a serious violation of the rule of law. Poland's ability to promote EU interests in the Security Council was perceived as one of the bargaining arguments in the dispute with the Commission.<sup>7</sup>

### Aims and Objectives

As in previous years, in 2017 Poland clearly advocated multilateralism, appreciating the key role of the UN on a global scale despite its weaknesses.<sup>8</sup> The directions and objectives of Poland's activity at the UN were indicated primarily

<sup>5</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2017 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Witold Waszczykowski at a sitting of the Sejm on 9 February 2017)," see p. 13 in this volume.

<sup>6</sup> *Polska została niestałym członkiem Rady Bezpieczeństwa ONZ na kadencję 2018–2019*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2 June 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>7</sup> Cf.: statement by Minister Waszczykowski of December 2017: *Minister Witold Waszczykowski: barierą dla dialogu z Brukselą brak woli politycznej po stronie KE*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 28 December 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>8</sup> *Odpowiedź na interpelację nr 18551 w sprawie priorytetów polityki Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych w 2018 r.*, Sejm RP, 7 February 2018, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

by the *Information on the Tasks of Polish Foreign Policy* presented to the Polish Parliament by Waszczykowski on 9 February, as well as in the *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy* for 2017 to 2021, approved by the Council of Ministers in July.

The implementation of the operational objectives in the individual areas of the UN's activity was to serve the attainment of one of the government's three main objectives: shaping a positive image of the country and strengthening its credibility on a global and European scale.<sup>9</sup> The strengthening of Poland's position at the international level was to contribute to increasing its coalition capabilities and more effective implementation of other foreign policy objectives,<sup>10</sup> such as in relations with EU Member States and institutions.<sup>11</sup> To make this possible, the Polish authorities made efforts to create Poland's reputation as a credible, responsible and actively involved state in solving global problems.

The Polish government paid particular attention to attempts by some countries, especially Russia, to undermine the current global order, stressing the need for an appropriate response from the international community. Poland, therefore, attempted to strengthen the UN as a pillar of this order and as the main institution for maintaining peace and stability on a global scale, including the territorial status quo. At the same time, it sought to increase its influence on the organisation's current activities in the area of peace and security by gaining non-permanent membership of the Security Council.

The Polish authorities also indicated their intention to return to active participation in the UN's peacekeeping operations.<sup>12</sup> This was intended to increase Poland's role in security issues on international forum and to confirm its solidarity with societies in need and respect for human rights and democratic values. What's more, Poland clearly stated that it would support the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty NPT, as the only instrument that allows real prevention of proliferation of such weapons.

The Polish government also considered important the implementation of Polish obligations resulting from the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 adopted by the General Assembly in 2015, postulating the implementation of many economic, social and environmental objectives. To make this possible, the

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<sup>9</sup> As with the other two, the *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021* indicated ensuring Poland's security and creating conditions for its economic and social development, cf.: *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, September 2017, p. 5, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 23–24.

<sup>11</sup> Cf.: *Minister Witold Waszczykowski: bariera dla dialogu z Brukselą ...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> See, for example: *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, *op. cit.*, pp. 23–24; "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2017..." *op. cit.*

government announced action at the national level. The fight against climate change was also included in the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in the context of Agenda 2030. Above all, Poland stressed the need to implement the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015 by all parties.<sup>13</sup>

Poland also declared its support for the UN's actions to ensure respect for human rights and prevent extremism, intolerance and terrorism. This was intended to strengthen the state security and its development in the opinion of the Polish authorities.<sup>14</sup> Particular emphasis was placed on the need to ensure freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The Polish authorities announced that they would strive to make the protection of the rights of religious minorities, including Christians, an object of interest and common actions of the European Union and United Nations.

### Specific Issues

In the first half of 2017, Poland took steps to promote its candidacy for non-permanent membership of the Security Council under the slogan "Solidarity–Responsibility–Commitment." At the beginning of January, Waszczykowski met Guterres during his two-day visit to New York. He discussed, above all, the main current threats to international peace and the challenges faced by the Security Council in relation to the need to resolve the most important crises, including the conflict in Ukraine. Moreover, he held discussions with representatives of individual states that are members of the Security Council, appealing for support for Poland's efforts to gain a non-permanent seat on the Council and to share their work experiences. He also participated in an open debate on conflict prevention and peacekeeping organised by the Swedish Presidency. In April 2017, the Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Joanna Wronecka, held consultations with permanent representatives of members from several regional and sub-regional organisations at the UN, including the League of Arab States, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). She also participated in a conference on conflict prevention, co-organised with another candidate for non-permanent membership of the Security Council, Kuwait. Ministers and deputies from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended numerous bilateral meetings,

<sup>13</sup> *Wystąpienie Prezydenta RP podczas 72. Sesji Zgromadzenia Ogólnego ONZ*, 19 September 2017, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>14</sup> *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021*, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–23; "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2017..." *op. cit.*

seeking support for Polish efforts and probing the possibilities of cooperation on the Council after election.

In a secret ballot at the UN General Assembly on 2 June 2017, Poland was elected as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the 2018 to 2019 term. Votes in favour came from 190 countries, with only two abstentions,<sup>15</sup> which was a very good result. Apart from Poland, Kuwait, Peru, Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea were also elected, gaining slightly less support. What's more, Italy was replaced by the Netherlands on the basis of the agreement on the division of the two-year term.

After the June election, Poland's activity at the UN was mainly consultative in various formats, as the country sought to identify members' positions on issues raised in the Security Council. Poland's preparation for the Council was also supported by personnel changes. On 17 November 2017, ambassador Zbigniew Czech became the Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations Office in Geneva (he had previously been director of the United Nations and Human Rights Department).<sup>16</sup> On 1 December, Wronecka was appointed Permanent Representative of Poland to the UN.<sup>17</sup>

The Polish delegation to the 72nd Session of the General Assembly (the first after the election), which began in September 2017, was chaired by Duda. His speech focused on three issues: striving for sustainable development, strengthening international peace and security, and ensuring protection of fundamental human rights on a global scale. In support of the implementation of Agenda 2030, Duda pointed out the need to intensify humanitarian and development aid and eliminate the causes of humanitarian crises, and the importance of combating climate change. He also stressed that the only guarantee of international peace and security is respect for and primacy of international law in relations between states. He drew attention to the serious violations of the fundamental standards of this law, such as the inviolability of borders, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and the prohibition of the use of force, caused by external interference in Georgia and Ukraine. He pointed out that security must be seen on many levels, and that it is closely linked to such global problems as mass migration, refugees and terrorism. Duda's speech also referred to efforts to obtain a non-permanent seat on the Council, including references to the three main values

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<sup>15</sup> The secrecy of voting in the General Assembly makes it impossible to identify countries that did not support the Polish candidacy.

<sup>16</sup> *MSZ: nominacje dla nowych ambasadorów RP (komunikat)*, Polska Agencja Prasowa, 17 November 2017, <http://centrumprasowe.pap.pl>.

<sup>17</sup> *Nominacje dla nowych ambasadorów RP*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 1 December 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

promoting Polish candidacy (solidarity, responsibility and involvement) as well as acknowledging the 190 countries that voted for Poland.

Until the Security Council election, Poland had been cautious about issues considered sensitive to the main informal political blocs at the UN, such as the group of Muslim countries. Therefore, during votes in the General Assembly on controversial issues, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Polish representatives consistently shared the position of delegates from other EU countries. Such a strategy made it possible to justify the actions taken by the policy pursued by EU. After the election, this approach changed partially, and Poland sometimes did not vote along with the majority of EU countries. For example, in voting on the resolution of the General Assembly adopted in response to the transfer of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, Poland abstained.<sup>18</sup> This gesture was received positively by the U.S. and Israel, which opposed the resolution, while it was received with scepticism by Muslim states, which essentially support the Palestinian position.

The Polish government expressly supported the Secretary-General's actions aimed at reforming the UN, especially the postulates to cut costs and bureaucracy. On 18 September 2017, Waszczykowski participated in a high-level meeting organised by the U.S. and chaired by President Donald Trump.<sup>19</sup> At that time, Poland signed the joint declaration of over 120 countries proposed by the United States, postulating, among other things, increased transparency of the UN's actions and responsibility for the funds spent.<sup>20</sup> In his public statements, however, Waszczykowski stressed the need to exercise caution when making budget savings, pointing to the risk of making the UN's current activities dependent on countries, especially undemocratic ones, ready to provide the UN with material and personal support in exchange for the possibility of gaining more influence over it.<sup>21</sup>

In the area of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Poland expressed its attachment to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of Mass Destruction as the only real instrument that could lead to implementation of the idea of disarmament and a world without such weapons.<sup>22</sup> At the beginning of June 2017, the Preparatory Committee for the Review

<sup>18</sup> Along with three other EU countries, Croatia, Czechia, and Romania, cf.: *Resolution ES-10/19. Status of Jerusalem*, United Nations General Assembly, 22 December 2017, UN Doc. A/RES/ES-10/19.

<sup>19</sup> *Szef polskiej dyplomacji zakończył wizytę w USA*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 22 September 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>20</sup> Full text: *Declaration of Support for United Nations Reform*, United States Mission to the United Nations, 18 September 2017, <https://usun.state.gov>.

<sup>21</sup> *Minister Witold Waszczykowski o potrzebie reformy ONZ i związanym z tym ryzyku*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 19 September 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>22</sup> *Wystąpienie Prezydenta RP podczas 72. Sesji Zgromadzenia Ogólnego ONZ*, *op. cit.*

Conference of the Parties to this Treaty elected a Pole, ambassador Jan Bugajski, to chair the next meeting starting in 2018.<sup>23</sup> This meant that Poland took over the annual chairmanship of the preparations for the NPT review in 2020.<sup>24</sup> Polish representatives, along with those from the vast majority of EU countries, did not participate in the UN conference to adopt the text of the NPT, which was held in New York from March to July 2017.<sup>25</sup> This was due to scepticism about attempts to create a competitive legal regime to limit proliferation of these weapons. From the date of its opening to signature on 7 July until 31 December 2017, the treaty was signed by 57 states and ratified by only three.<sup>26</sup> Its future remains highly uncertain, since at least 50 states have to express their intention to become definitively bound by treaty in order for it to enter into force.

Poland has also taken initiatives to promote and enforce the ban on the production and use of chemical weapons. In early October 2017, the Permanent Representative of Poland, ambassador Bogusław Winid and High Representatives of the UN and the Organisation for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) opened a solemn exhibition on the banning convention at the UN Headquarters in New York.<sup>27</sup> Also in October, Poland submitted a draft resolution on the implementation of the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention to the General Assembly.<sup>28</sup> The document provided for, among other things, condemning current cases of its use and pressing criminal charges against those responsible. After discussion and amendments, the draft was put to a vote on 4 December. It was supported by an overwhelming majority of the countries, with 159 votes in favour and just seven against (there were 14 abstentions)<sup>29</sup> and became General Assembly Resolution 72/43.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *Polska przewodniczy przygotowaniom do konferencji przeglądowej NPT w 2018 r.*, Państwowa Agencja Atomistyki, 7 June 2017, [www.paa.gov.pl/do.html](http://www.paa.gov.pl/do.html).

<sup>24</sup> *Wystąpienie Prezydenta RP podczas 72. Sesji Zgromadzenia Ogólnego ONZ*, *op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> Cf.: the list of participants in: *United Nations Conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, New York, 27-31 March, 15 June-7 July 2017. List of participants*, United Nations General Assembly, 25 July 2017, UN Doc. A/CONF.229/2017/INF/4/Rev.1.

<sup>26</sup> *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*, 7 July 2017, <https://treaties.un.org>.

<sup>27</sup> *Otwarcie wystawy poświęconej dwudziestej rocznicy Konwencji o zakazie broni chemicznej*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 26 October 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>28</sup> *General and complete disarmament: implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction Poland: draft resolution*, United Nations General Assembly, 12 October 2017, UN Doc. A/C.1/72/L.26.

<sup>29</sup> *Adopting 57 First Committee Texts, General Assembly Addresses Myriad Security Issues, from Use of Chemical Weapons in Syria to Nuclear-Arms-Ban Treaty*, United Nations General Assembly, 4 December 2017, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org).

<sup>30</sup> *Resolution 72/43. Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction*, United Nations General Assembly, 12 December 2017, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/72/43>.

The Polish authorities repeatedly declared their intention to involve Poland more actively in UN peacekeeping missions.<sup>31</sup> They maintained a willingness, declared in 2016, to make available a contingent consisting of an engineering subdivision for de-mining and building infrastructure, as well as a group of staff officers and observers.<sup>32</sup> This offer did not meet with the UN's interest, and by the end of 2017 the scope of Polish involvement in its peacekeeping operations had not increased.

As in previous years, Poland actively promoted the international criminal justice system. Its role in this respect was recognised by the first ever visit of the full International Criminal Court (ICC) to Poland. The judges met a Polish delegation headed by Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Renata Szczęch, on 22 June 2017.<sup>33</sup> The meeting allowed an exchange of experience and, at the same time, established better cooperation between the ICC and the Security Council during the next Polish term. In December 2017, Poland engaged in negotiations lasting nearly two weeks to activate ICC jurisdiction over the crime of aggression. The delegation was headed by Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jacek Czaputowicz. Although amendments to the Statute of the ICC, providing for the possibility of the court to deal with such crimes had already been adopted in 2010 in Kampala, their entry into force depended on the adoption of a resolution activating jurisdiction. On 14 December, Poland supported a consensual resolution of the Assembly of States Parties to the ICC Statute, ICC-ASP/16/L.10. According to its wording, since 17 July 2018, the court's jurisdiction would also cover crimes of aggression.<sup>34</sup>

However, the request by African States to seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legal effects of the 1965 separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius by the UK in 1965, did not receive Polish support. Poland abstained on this issue, as did the vast majority of EU Member States.<sup>35</sup> However, the resolution was adopted thanks to the strong support of developing countries, and a day later the proceedings before the ICJ were initiated.

<sup>31</sup> For example, *Minister Witold Waszczykowski wystąpił podczas debaty otwartej Rady Bezpieczeństwa ONZ w Nowym Jorku*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 11 January 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl); *Polska w Radzie Bezpieczeństwa ONZ. Witold Waszczykowski: pragniemy, by nasze członkostwo było rzeczywiste, nie iluzoryczne*, Polskie Radio, 5 June 2017, [www.polskieradio.pl](http://www.polskieradio.pl).

<sup>32</sup> R. Lesiecki, "Kiedy Polska wróci do misji pokojowych ONZ?," *Defence24*, 2 February 2018, [www.defence24.pl](http://www.defence24.pl).

<sup>33</sup> *Sędziowie haskiego Trybunału z wizytą w Polsce*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 24 June 2017, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>34</sup> *Assembly activates Court's jurisdiction over crime of aggression*, International Criminal Court, 25 December 2017, [www.icc-cpi.int](http://www.icc-cpi.int).

<sup>35</sup> *88<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting*, United Nations General Assembly, 22 June 2017, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org).

The Polish government also took steps to make Agenda 2030 more effective by adopting the *Strategy for Responsible Development* on 14 February 2017.<sup>36</sup> It identified the objectives, necessary actions, instruments of implementation and key projects to implement the *Plan for Responsible Development* adopted by the government a year earlier, also known as the Morawiecki Plan.<sup>37</sup>

At the same time, Poland continued to implement some of the objectives of Agenda 2030 not covered by the Morawiecki Plan, within the framework of the multiannual *Development Cooperation Programme for 2016 to 2020* adopted by the government in October 2015. One of the results of these activities was the visit by Wronecka to Lviv in July 2017. Then, the agreement was signed with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to implement the second edition of the project promoting entrepreneurship among internal refugees in Ukraine. Poland undertook to allocate an additional PLN 2 million for this purpose, compared to PLN 3 million spent since 2015. It should be noted that, according to OECD data, Polish development aid in absolute numbers has slightly increased, from \$663 million net in 2016 to \$674 million net in 2017. However, in relation to national income, it decreased by 0.02% (taking into account prices in 2016, by 4%).<sup>38</sup>

## Assessment

The assessment of the effectiveness of the government's efforts to improve Poland's image and credibility on the international forum in 2017 is generally positive thanks to its more active involvement in the UN's activities. This is mainly due to the success of the election of Poland as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the term 2018 to 2019, in particular when considering the high support for Poland as candidate. This confirms the serious approach of Polish diplomacy in competition for membership of the Council, although after Bulgaria's withdrawal, the election of Poland as the Eastern European member was almost certain.

The activities undertaken by the Polish government in the sphere of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially chemical and nuclear weapons, should also be assessed positively. Poland was unequivocally in favour of strengthening the existing legal regimes, being aware of the absence of any

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<sup>36</sup> *Strategy of Polish Foreign Policy 2017–2021, op. cit.*, pp. 22–23.

<sup>37</sup> Derived from the name of its author, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Development Mateusz Morawiecki.

<sup>38</sup> *Development aid stable in 2017 with more sent to poorest countries*, OECD, 9 April 2018, p. 4, [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org).

possible alternative. One can also appreciate the consistency of the Polish authorities in supporting basic principles and standards of international law contained in the UN Charter, including the support given to countries such as Georgia and Ukraine. Due to the brief term, it is difficult to assess the support for sustainable development by Poland. It is noteworthy, however, that the strategic documents on the economic policy of the country include tasks and objectives to guarantee such development.

In the future, Poland's position in the UN and its related international credibility may be negatively affected by the marginal involvement of the Polish armed forces in peacekeeping operations and fluctuations in the scope of development assistance provided. This suggests that Poland is active mainly in areas that do not require more intensive involvement of human, material and financial resources. This may hinder the authorities' declared efforts to shape Poland's image as a responsible and participatory entity in resolving global problems, negatively affecting the efficiency of other Polish foreign policy objectives, thus reducing coalition capacity.

It seems advisable to take action that would prevent such an impression. On the one hand, steps should be considered that ensure maintenance, at least, of the level of development aid in relation to national income. On the other hand, an attempt to match the Polish contingent with the needs of UN peacekeeping operations would be desirable. Unsuccessful efforts to increase the contribution of the Polish armed forces in 2017 were caused by inadequacy of operational capabilities of the units proposed by Poland.<sup>39</sup> Considering that the UN, in principle, covers members' costs related to dispatching their personnel on missions, the participation of the Polish armed forces would not entail a significant budgetary burden and, externally, would indicate Poland's attachment to the principles underlying the UN system.

It is relatively unrealistic to expect that the European Commission will try to improve relations with Poland and make compromises in proceedings concerning the rule of law, hoping that Polish representatives will support initiatives beneficial to the EU in the Security Council. First, the Council's activities focus on threats to international peace and security, an area that is not a major concern for the EU, unlike, for example, trade relations. Second, the Council also includes other EU Member States, which may be just like Poland, or more likely to promote EU interests without expecting concrete concessions from the Commission. Third, the Commission's representatives are likely to realise that it would be difficult for Poland to speak openly against most of the EU proposals, as this

<sup>39</sup> R. Lesiecki, "Kiedy Polska wróci do misji ...," *op. cit.*

would be unfavourable to Poland itself and difficult to justify to partners outside the Council in view of Poland's declared principles and values, and would be a potential source of conflicts in relations with other EU countries active on the Security Council.



On the eve of the centenary of regaining independence, the international situation, which was beneficial to Poland's interests, was clearly coming to an end, and the international order was subjected to constant tests of endurance, because of pressure from the powers aspiring to change it. Thus, Polish diplomacy had to make strong efforts to ensure that the traditional values of Polish foreign policy—that is, respect for international law or the principles of democratic equality of states and renunciation of force as a means of pursuing interests - remain in the catalogue of values appreciated and shared by most countries of the world. This was the main task of the Polish foreign policy throughout the whole year 2017..

*Sławomir Dębski*

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ISSN 1233-9903  
ISBN 978-83-66091-70-2  
e-ISBN 978-83-66091-71-9

