

2019

**YEARBOOK
OF POLISH**

FOREIGN POLICY

2019



PISM

POLSKI INSTYTUT SPRAW MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH
THE POLISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

YEARBOOK OF POLISH FOREIGN POLICY 2019



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THE POLISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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Abbreviations

MAP	– Ministerstwo Aktywów Państwowych www.gov.pl/web/aktywa-panstwowe
MEiN	– Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki www.gov.pl/web/edukacja-i-nauka
MF	– Ministerstwo Finansów www.gov.pl/web/finanse
MFiPR	– Ministerstwo Funduszy i Polityki Regionalnej www.gov.pl/web/fundusze-regiony
MI	– Ministerstwo Infrastruktury www.gov.pl/web/infrastruktura
MKiŚ	– Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska www.gov.pl/web/klimat
MKDNiS	– Ministerstwo Kultury, Dziedzictwa Narodowego i Sportu www.gov.pl/web/kulturaismport
MON	– Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa
MRiPS	– Ministerstwo Rodziny i Polityki Społecznej www.gov.pl/web/rodzina
MRiRW	– Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo
MRPiT	– Ministerstwo Rozwoju, Pracy i Technologii www.gov.pl/web/rozwój-praca-technologie
MS	– Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości www.gov.pl/web/sprawiedliwosc
MSW	– Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji www.gov.pl/web/mswia
MSZ	– Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja
MZ	– Ministerstwo Zdrowia www.gov.pl/web/zdrowie

From the Editor

We are presenting our readers with another volume of the ‘Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy’, a unique publication on the Polish publishing market, in which analysts of the Polish Institute of International Affairs, who specialize in the discussed issues and follow the process of how Polish political activity is being shaped in the international environment on an ongoing basis, describe the implementation of Polish foreign policy. In their papers, each year they apply a uniform method, which makes the description of Polish foreign policy more systematic and ensures that it is objective.

Each chapter begins with an analysis of policy objectives set by the government. Next, the authors discuss what means were applied to achieve these objectives, and finally they go on to assess to what degree these objectives have been achieved, taking into account the circumstances in which the decision-makers operated. The approach in which PISM analysts answer the same research questions year after year has two main assets. It makes it possible to gauge shifts in foreign policy and compare specific periods in this policy, and—even more importantly—it helps to highlight those elements which are constant in Polish foreign policy because they are deeply rooted in Poland’s *raison d’état*. I find this asset particularly worth emphasising at the present time, when in the public debate on Polish foreign policy contains increasingly frequent voices which express their contempt not only for expert knowledge, but also for the foundations of Poland’s external actions, such as commitment to an international rules-based order or membership of Western integration structures and alliances.

2019 saw two developments which were capable of significantly impacting the process of how Polish foreign policy was being shaped and pursued, as they triggered a shift in its internal determinants. The first such development was the 2019 European Parliament election held on 26 May. It was won by the Law and Justice Electoral Committee which garnered 45% of the vote, which translated into slightly more than 50% of the seats allocated to Poland. This equated to the ruling party increasing its representation in the European Parliament (it took 8 more seats than back in 2014) and enabled it to pursue its specific objectives in this forum more effectively. In addition, this fact was significant from the point of view of the EU’s new institutional cycle involving the selection of new representatives to hold the EU’s most prominent offices. Another major development were the parliamentary elections held on 13 October. The election to the Sejm was won by the Law and Justice Electoral Committee with 44% of the vote, which translated into 51% of the seats. In the election to the Senate, the opposition came first.

This equated to a continuation of the cabinet led by Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and of the mission of Jacek Czaputowicz as Minister of Foreign Affairs. However, it enabled the opposition to have greater impact on the pursuit of foreign policy and its supervision, for example due to the fact that from now on it had a majority in the Senate's Foreign and European Union Affairs Committee. A Civic Coalition senator Bogdan Klich was appointed as the head of this Committee. The parliamentary elections were indirectly linked with an organisational reform of the state administration structures. As regards foreign policy, the most important move involved separating the 'European department' from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and transferring it to the Chancellery of the Prime Minister. Konrad Szymański, who had been in charge of European affairs at the MFA, was appointed Minister for European Union Affairs. Since this change was introduced at the end of the year, its effects should be expected in the following year.

In 2019, the Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy, which the foreign minister presents at the Sejm each year, was particularly important. This policy statement serves as the point of departure for the authors of the papers included in each annual volume of this 'Yearbook'. The speech delivered on 14 March by minister Jacek Czaputowicz was the thirtieth such speech following the breakthrough which happened in Poland in 1989. The minister emphasised this fact in his speech, mentioned the spirit of 'Solidarity' and stressed the 'civic' aspect of foreign policy, which is evident in the fact that citizens make an active contribution to it by choosing their representatives who pursue it on behalf of the nation. Furthermore, the minister referred to another two anniversaries celebrated in 2019, which are of major importance to Polish foreign policy. These are the 15th anniversary of Poland's accession to the European Union and the 20th anniversary of its membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He devoted a major portion of his speech to these two anniversaries.

As regards the European Union, Minister Czaputowicz reflected on the socio-economic progress which Poland has seen as a result of its participation in this integration project, and declared the state's readiness to take part in debates on the EU's future. In this context, he mentioned Poland's support for a Union which enjoys legitimacy granted to it by European societies and is based on four freedoms (free movement of goods, capital, persons and services), a Union which seeks understanding by way of reaching a consensus rather than by majority voting, a Union which operates within the framework of its treaties. As regards NATO, the foreign minister mentioned the priority involving NATO's stronger military presence on its eastern flank and emphasised Poland's aspiration to be 'the core of the NATO and U.S. military presence in the region'. Alongside this, he said that NATO should maintain its 'open door policy' and continue to cooperate

with its partner countries, and mentioned Poland's involvement in the defence of its allies. The message contained in this part of the speech, which was devoted to these two organizations, was clear: they are expected to continue to be the pillars of Polish foreign policy, not only exclusively due to the fact that membership of them was the fulfilment of aspirations held by Polish society and politicians post-1989, that is to say, mainly for sentimental reasons, but also because they continue to be of key importance for the pursuit of the state's vital interests. At the same time, the minister's speech contained another clear message: Poland considered itself a legitimate member of these two organizations and was ready to shoulder the burden of co-responsibility for their future.

There is no doubt that these aspirations were also triggered by certain changes in international relations, which were unfavourable to Poland. Challenges which in recent years consistently caught the attention of foreign ministers (these mainly included the shifts in the international order which was under pressure from powers such as Russia, which intended to undermine its basic rules, including the importance of international law for the regulation of relation between states, refraining from threatening to use force and from using force in a manner which was not coordinated with the goals of the United Nations) were joined by new challenges. From the point of view of the foundations of Polish foreign policy, the most dangerous challenge involved the increasingly evident transatlantic tensions triggered by U.S. President Donald Trump's uncompromising stance in pursuing his 'America First' policy and the reception of these actions by Poland's Western European allies. Some decisions by the U.S. administration were highly favourable to Poland, for example the pressure put on Germany to halt the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline and the attempts to persuade NATO allies to increase their defence spending. However, other moves, in particular those linked with the dissonance among the allies regarding their approach towards Iran, caused serious problems.

In 2019, Polish foreign policy attempted to counteract these unfavourable trends at various levels. In the UN, Poland's priority was to maintain its involvement in this forum following the end of its status as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council at the end of the year. This is why, for the most part of the year, Polish diplomats were making attempts, which proved successful in October 2019, for Poland to become a member of the Human Rights Council in 2020–22. Another Polish foreign policy instrument involved a ministerial level meeting devoted to peace-building and security in the Middle East (the so-called Warsaw Conference), which was organised in Warsaw in February in collaboration with the United States. This instrument had multiple goals: a) it was intended to demonstrate to the United States that Poland was a reliable ally and was ready to increase its commitment to international peace and security; b) in the context

of transatlantic tensions it was intended to facilitate the efforts to work out a compromise between the United States and Western European states regarding Iran; c) it was expected to demonstrate to the Middle Eastern states that Poland was ready to increase its political involvement in the region, which in turn was intended to increase opportunities for Poland's diplomatic, and in the future also economic, activity in the Middle East. Due to this highly ambitious set of goals, it became evident from the very beginning of this initiative that not all of them could be reached. However, the organisers expected the Warsaw Conference to go down in history as an event during which international public would learn about the process of normalising the relations between Israel and major Arab states. Previously, politicians had revealed very little information on this process. Due to all this, the conference was expected to contribute to a boost in Poland's position at least in its relations with the U.S. and the Arab states.

In 2019, the Polish diplomacy carried out several other tasks, perhaps not as spectacular as those discussed above, but certainly equally important to the state's interests. Clearly, the key task involved making sure that Polish interests were taken into account during the process of allocating posts and offices in European institutions to specific states. Efforts to increase the number of areas of common interests between Poland and its greatest ally, that is the United States, were no less important (this was hoped to be achieved for example by attempting to expand those interests to include energy and economic affairs). Another major task involved attempts to make European defence integration projects convergent with the Polish vision of the relations between the EU and NATO in this extremely important aspect. Sustained allied commitment regarding the need to defend the states of the so-called Eastern Flank against an increasingly aggressive Russia was equally important. This commitment was to be reiterated for example as part of a revision and update of NATO defence plans during the December summit in London. Due to the magnitude of challenges, issues Poland needed to tackle, as well as interests it intended to pursue via its diplomacy, an insightful observer of Polish foreign policy could have the impression that the passage of time somewhat accelerated. In these difficult circumstances, publications such as the 'Yearbook' are all the more important. This is because they not only enable us to document the activities carried out under Polish foreign policy, but also to present them in their actual context which may soon be forgotten for reasons including the natural cognitive limitations of the human mind which is unable to remember too many events happening at a rapid pace, and disinformation which is increasingly frequently used in particular by authoritarian powers.

Sławomir Dębski

I.

THE BASIS OF POLISH FOREIGN POLICY

Government Information on Polish foreign policy in 2019

(presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)

Mr Speaker, Mr President, Prime Minister, Colleagues Ministers, Members of the House, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Your Excellencies Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is the second time I have the honour of standing before you as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and informing the House, its guests and the Polish citizens about foreign policy. A foreign policy address of the minister of foreign affairs must meet two conditions: it should report on the government's achievements to date, and it should set out plans for the future—the challenges we have defined and the ways of addressing them we propose.

I am presenting to the House and to the Polish citizens a report on what the United Right's government has been able to achieve on the international stage following the 2015 election, and how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been operating both under my leadership and during the tenure of my predecessor, Sejm Deputy Mr Witold Waszczykowski. I would like to underscore the role of President Andrzej Duda, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, and all the ministers as co-authors of our foreign policy. My thanks are also due to the Polish Sejm and Senate for their very important and effective activities in the field of parliamentary democracy.

Thanks to cooperation between all institutions responsible for foreign policy, and thanks to the combination of visions, aims, and efforts of senior state officials, today Poland is an active country whose voice is being heard, and a country that commands growing respect among its foreign partners.

Members of the House! It is the 30th foreign policy address delivered by a foreign minister since the transformation of 1989, when the Polish people defeated the communist regime. The Solidarity movement and the outcomes of the 4 June 1989 election set in motion a chain of events that led to the collapse of walls dividing East and West. We remember and take pride in the fact that it was us the Poles who began our march, as a matter of fact the march of all Central and Eastern Europe as a whole towards long awaited freedom. If it had not been for Solidarity's victory, the Berlin Wall would not have come down, and the continent's division would not have been overcome.

June 1989 started the process of restoring Poland's rightful place in the world. Polish diplomacy could set about realizing European and Atlantic aspirations,

which were so deeply rooted in our society. We have come a long way from a country dependent on the Soviet Union to a pillar of NATO and a co-host of the European project.

We would like this year's celebrations of the 30th anniversary of June 1989 to highlight Poland's place in the democratization of Europe. A special role should be played by the Parliament, especially the Senate, which was elected in a fully democratic way on 4 June 1989, when the sweeping victory of Solidarity candidates showed the true nature of public aspirations.

Drawing on the values that guided Solidarity, we believe that diplomacy is a service to the citizens, who in turn make their active contribution to it. They do so indirectly by choosing from amongst themselves the President and the political representation in the Parliament, which elects the Prime Minister and gives its vote of confidence to the Council of Ministers. And they do so indirectly by participating in a public debate on foreign policy, or in public consultations on the future of Europe, as was the case last year.

Mr Speaker, Members of the House! Poland's accession to the European Union crowned the efforts of all governments that were formed after Solidarity's victory in 1989. 1 May will mark 15 years since that event. EU membership has become a foundation for the modernization of our state, economy, and foreign policy. Our citizens and companies benefit from the open borders and common market. Funds we receive from the EU budget are invested in making our country more competitive and prosperous.

In 2004, our GDP per capita was 47% of the EU average; today, it is as much as 70%. The aim of the government is to catch up with the most developed EU countries in the near future in terms of living standards, something that the economic growth of 5% will help to achieve.

2019 is a very significant year for the EU. In May, the European Parliament election will open a new institutional cycle. This invites reflection on the priorities we should pursue. Next week's European Council meeting will start a discussion about key policy aims with respect to the internal market. On 9 May, the heads of state and government will travel to Sibiu for an informal summit on the future of the European Union, while the European Council meeting in June will be devoted to the adoption of a new Strategic Agenda for the EU.

Polish diplomacy will play an active part in the discussion on the future shape of the European Union. Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has invited the leaders of the member states that have joined the EU since 2004 to Warsaw for a meeting that will be held on 1 May, i.e. 15 years after Poland and other countries of the region acceded to the EU. We want to come together and celebrate an anniversary that is so important to the citizens of Central Europe; we also want to

voice the region's opinion on which way the European Union should be headed. We want to have an active part in the Sibiu discussion.

We advocate a strong Union, one that enjoys the support of its constituent states and nations; a Union that fosters economic growth and the prosperity of its societies; a Union that helps to ensure equal living standards for the citizens of all member states; a Union that taps into the potential of the common market and respects all the four freedoms: the free movement of goods, capital, persons, and services.

Poland will work to rebuild citizens' trust in the EU institutions. Our overriding aim must be to restore the EU's full and unquestionable legitimacy, to win back voters' trust in the European institutions, and to restore their ability to solve people's real problems.

Reform of the EU system should be accompanied by a genuine democratic mandate granted in a national electoral process. The key role should be played by national parliaments, which reflect the will of the citizens of the countries that make up our community.

Today, the European project is also under threat from populist movements on the left and on the right. We consider these threats as a symptom of the crisis Europe is going through, not as its cause. The EU institutions should operate on the basis of powers set out in the treaties, and pursue objectives that advance [the interests of] all the members.

In our view, increasing the number of issues that can be decided by majority voting in the EU is a controversial proposal.

First, it illustrates the fact that compromise is no longer sought, even though unity should undergird the EU. Many EU member states believe that their voices do not count the same when key issues are on the agenda. I guess that it was precisely this sense of lack of say over the decisions taken in Brussels that prompted a large group of Britons to vote for leaving the EU.

Second, the EU system of weighting votes gives privileges to the largest member states, with the weight of the biggest countries set to increase even further after Brexit. When this system was being introduced, no one anticipated that a big member state like the United Kingdom would exit the Union, something that is bound to have a major impact on the coalition-building capacity within the Council. As a result, Brexit will weaken the Community method of taking decisions, and make it difficult for the European Commission to balance the interests of big and small countries.

Members of the House! The European Union is not only a platform of cooperation among the member states. It is also a forum where their interests

clash. A country's maturity can be measured by its ability to advance its interests. While planning for Europe's future, we also make the case for Poland.

We are actively seeking to enhance the global competitiveness of the European economy. Along with sixteen other member states, we are championing the strengthening of the Single Market and European digital policy through a deeper integration of the services sector and the elimination of barriers on the common market. We are also arguing for an environment that would foster digital transformation, including a strong EU position in artificial intelligence and a data-driven economy. We will aim to implement these proposals. The European Union is threatened by protectionism, which strikes at entrepreneurs and workers on the EU labour market.

Our vision of the European Union also includes an effective fight against tax fraud, which poses a major challenge to many member states. Our partners appreciate measures that have been adopted by the Polish government to close the VAT gap. Realizing the scale of this phenomenon and the challenges it involves, we are willing to share our experiences and solutions with the member states and the EU institutions, e.g. in the form of expert seminars (most recently such seminars were held in Paris and Brussels).

Brexit represents a serious challenge to the European Union and its member states. The UK's negotiated withdrawal deal from the EU guarantees citizens' rights and British payments to the EU budget, and gives assurance to businesspeople in the form of a transition period. Thanks to Poland's active involvement, the EU adopted measures that give Polish road hauliers and air carriers access to the UK market. In case a no-deal Brexit materialises, the UK government set out its plans for protecting EU citizens, including Poles, while the Polish government adopted a legislative package safeguarding the rights of the British citizens who live in our country. Having said that, we believe a no-deal Brexit would be the worst scenario, which is why we shall keep looking for solutions to enlist support for the negotiated agreement.

The new EU budget will take shape in a new political environment at the European Parliament, and with a new European Commission in place. We oppose cuts to the EU budget, and favour keeping a high level of financing for the cohesion policy and the Common Agricultural Policy. Let us recall that the transfer of EU funds is meant to compensate weaker economies for opening their markets to the competition from stronger economies, to a considerable benefit of the latter. To make up for the post-Brexit financial shortfall, we should give up budget rebates and increase contributions of the remaining member states. Poland stands ready to increase ours accordingly.

It is unacceptable to propose, as the Commission did, that payments from the Community budget should be contingent on an arbitrary assessment of the rule of law in the countries benefitting from such payments. The payment of these funds is a treaty obligation. What is striking about the Commission's proposal is the lack of strict criteria for how to assess the rule of law, a much lower threshold for blocking decisions, and, most importantly, the lack of legal grounds for such measures. Neither the European Commission nor such purely political body as the Council were given the right to pass judgments; what the member states did confer on them was merely the power to refer matters to the Court of Justice of the European Union.

It should also be emphasized that our reservations were largely shared by lawyers of the Council, who supervise the legislative process in Brussels. This position was reflected in the legal opinion of 25 October last year issued by the Council Legal Service.

Mr Speaker, Members of the House! Confronted with unprecedented challenges, today's world is much less stable, less predictable than in the past decades. We are witnessing a steady erosion of a world order based on the conviction that democracy is the best form of governance, that human rights are universal and inherent, and that international law should underpin international relations. The use of military force has again become a tool for changing state borders.

In this situation, strong Polish Armed Forces that are consistently modernized are the main instrument for defending our borders and building our allied credibility, while it is up to our diplomacy to create an international architecture that will foster our security.

This month marks 20 years since Poland joined NATO. The hoisting of a Polish flag at NATO headquarters symbolized Poland's return to its rightful place in Europe. It also opened a new era in our security.

We continue to prioritize a stronger military presence of NATO on the eastern flank of the Alliance, especially a closer military cooperation between Poland and the United States. We have been working on this with nine countries of our region as part of the Bucharest Format. The fourth meeting of the Bucharest Format heads state held in Kosice on 28 February is the most recent example of the common coordinated voice with which countries of the region speak about their assessment of threats and ways to improve security of the eastern flank.

We are especially interested in enhancing the Alliance's deterrence and defence potential. Our aspiration to be the core of the NATO and US military presence in the region is real. There are NATO troops stationed in our country: US soldiers, but also personnel from the UK, Romania, and Croatia. Elblag is home

to a multinational command that is tasked with coordinating allied activities along the eastern flank. A US armoured brigade is stationed on a rotational and permanent basis in western Poland.

For another year, the Ministry of National Defence has been coordinating work on the establishment of a missile defence base at Redzikowo as a permanent strategic base of US troops. The ongoing bilateral negotiations are fleshing out Poland's proposal of increasing the US military presence in our territory.

Improving military mobility remains an important task. Mass Russian manoeuvres at NATO's eastern flank call for a quick formation of allied military units that would be capable of ensuring a balance of power in the region. This is also needed if deterrence is to be credible. Poland has already significantly shortened the procedures for issuing military transit permits, and we expect our allies to follow suit. Figuratively speaking, we advocate establishing 'a military Schengen' within NATO. We support NATO-EU collaboration on this.

Like other members of the North Atlantic Alliance, we believe that the US decision to suspend its obligations arising from the treaty on the complete elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles (the so-called INF treaty) was a legitimate response to Russia's prolonged violation of the treaty.

Poland believes that the North Atlantic Alliance should maintain its open door policy. NATO's credibility in this respect was confirmed by the recent signing of the Republic of North Macedonia's accession protocol. We want to deepen cooperation with NATO partner countries, especially those in our immediate neighbourhood: Finland, Sweden, Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, countries with which we share a very similar outlook on the nature of threats to international security.

We are seeking the Alliance's support for our eastern neighbours. A Polish-Lithuanian-Ukrainian brigade is stationed in Lublin; last February, the presidents of the three countries paid a visit there. Together with our allies, we are setting up the NATO-Ukraine Platform on Countering Hybrid Warfare. Its aims include increasing resilience in such areas as the protection of critical infrastructure, cyber defence, and combating terrorism.

Speaking from this place during the NATO Parliamentary Assembly meeting last year, I emphasized the need to fulfil obligations and meet the level of defence spending according to NATO criteria. Poland is already spending 2% of its GDP on defence, and we intend to gradually increase that figure to 2.5% by 2030, or maybe even earlier. Our efforts are being noticed by NATO and allies, which I experienced myself during the recent visits to Poland by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo. Poland is held up by these leaders and by other people as an example for others to follow.

At the same time, we are pragmatic about developing defence cooperation within the European Union. We lay store by supporting the interoperability and compatibility of European countries' armed forces, and we want to enhance the mobility of armies and military equipment. We believe that the European Defence Fund is an opportunity for the Polish arms industry to spur innovation, and for our defence sector to solidify its presence in the European chain of R&D cooperation. However, we believe that the European Union must not build its strategic autonomy at the expense of NATO or by weakening transatlantic ties.

Poland stands ready to share responsibility for peace and security in Europe and beyond, in the spirit of the 360 degree approach. To defend allied territory, Polish troops are present in Latvia and Romania as part of NATO forces, while Polish aircraft police the skies over Lithuania.

Poland is also helping to combat terrorism, to address the causes of migration beyond NATO, through activities in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Mediterranean, and Africa. Due to geographic proximity, we attach particular importance to the EU training missions in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Since the 1990s, Poland has been involved in the NATO and EU missions in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Furthermore, we are part of military operations of the Global Coalition against Daesh, and of NATO's training missions in Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, and Qatar. In Afghanistan, the Polish Armed Forces are helping to build local security structures.

We are also returning to UN peacekeeping missions, with a Polish contingent expected to be deployed under the UNIFIL operation in Lebanon this coming November.

We are taking part in the EU Sophia operation in the Mediterranean, with individual Polish civilian experts, observers, and staff officers working with the EU missions in Libya, Mali, the Central African Republic, Somalia, and off the Horn of Africa.

Poland favours strengthening the Sahel countries' ability to fight organized crime and terrorism, and to protect borders, notably through the so-called G5 Sahel Joint Force. To that end, we supported the Chadian Armed Forces with EUR 600,000 worth of ammunition. Moreover, we have offered the G5 Sahel countries training in how to defuse improvised explosive devices.

Roughly 1,500 Polish soldiers are currently stationed abroad. May I thank them for their difficult service, which stands as an example of solidarity with our allies. Their commitment is helping to maintain peace in the world, and it is making our country safer.

One of the major Poland's foreign policy aims is also to ensure energy security, which we can only achieve by becoming independent of Russian gas supplies.

We have been consistently opposed to the Nord Stream 2 project, and we concur with the European Commission's criticism of it. Revision of the so-called Gas Directive aims to extend the application of EU law to third countries' gas pipelines. In 2018, we built a coalition of a dozen or so states, and agreed on the wording of the revision, which should make it difficult for Gazprom to exploit its privileged position on the European market. This has not changed our negative opinion about Nord Stream 2.

A key project in terms of security of gas supplies is the construction of the Baltic Pipe, a gas pipeline that will link Poland, through Denmark and Norway, with gas fields in the North Sea. In December 2018 a bilateral agreement was signed that regulates the legal framework of the gas pipeline. When it is complete in October 2022, the Baltic Pipe—together with the President Lech Kaczyński LNG Terminal in Swinoujście—will offer Poland genuine energy independence as well as allowing us to support other countries in the region in this regard.

Members of the House! Poland has consistently strengthened its strategic partnership with the United States, a key ally in NATO. Recently, we have successfully developed a high-level political dialogue, as evidenced by the Warsaw visit of US President Donald Trump in July 2017, the Washington visit of Polish President Andrzej Duda in September 2018, and a number of other meetings, including the visit of Vice President Michael Pence and Secretary of State Michael Pompeo to Poland this February.

Prospects for the development of Polish-US cooperation are set out in the declaration signed in September last year by the presidents of the Republic of Poland and the United States of America, "Safeguarding freedom, building prosperity through Poland-US Strategic Partnership." It creates more ways in which the US administration can help us meet our security priorities, including strengthening the US military presence in Poland and cooperation in the energy sector, and boosting trade and bilateral investment. To this end, economic visits to the US will be carried out later this year, by both the Polish president and the prime minister.

Our priorities in relations with the US include the extension of US military presence in Poland as part of the strengthening of NATO's eastern flank, joint security and defence projects such as the installation of the American missile defence system in Redzikowo and cooperation between the air forces of the two countries, and the steady enhancement of cooperation in energy security, the economy, investment, and people-to-people contacts.

Last year, we launched a strategic energy dialogue with the US aimed at improving the potential for diversifying raw material supplies.

New prospects for Poland's research and innovation sector emerged last year with an agreement between Poland and the US on scientific and technological cooperation, signed thanks to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. This agreement facilitates closer cooperation between scientists from both countries and their government agencies that finance research.

Poland's strategic partnership with the United States represents a significant component of the transatlantic community. We are convinced that it is in everyone's interest to maintain a strong transatlantic link on both sides of the Atlantic. Poland is a strong advocate of dialogue in the situation of different positions among the transatlantic community partners that reflect different conditions, assessments, and experiences.

In this context, Poland and Canada have recently been steadily reinforcing their cooperation, both in terms of political and economic relations. Security issues traditionally remain at the core of our dialogue. Polish and Canadian troops are partnering successfully within the NATO Battalion Combat Group in Latvia.

Members of the House, Mr Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen! The Federal Republic of Germany is our most important neighbour and partner in the European Union. Germany is the major trading partner for Poland, buying 28% of its exports. A strong and stable German economy is therefore indispensable for the economic success of our country and, more broadly, our region. The total balance of the Visegrad Group's trade volume with Germany exceeds that of the United States, Russia or China. That makes us a major outlet for Germany, one that helps keep a significant number of jobs in the German economy, and at the same time a valuable source of labour migrants who considerably contribute to GDP growth beyond the Oder River.

The past year has been marked by a lively dialogue with Germany. Meetings took place between the presidents of both countries and the intergovernmental consultations featuring heads of government. I have met five times with my German colleague. In the joint statement of 2 November 2018 we set out a framework for cooperation between our countries.

Germany is an important country of the European Union, and its decisions are crucial for the bloc's reform. We have similar positions in many areas; among other things we are in favour of full respect for the four freedoms of the single market, including the deepening of its digital dimension. In the debate on the future of the Union, we look forward to continuing the intensive dialogue.

We note with satisfaction that Germany's actions to transform the euro area show that they take care not to increase divisions within the European Union. We also welcome Germany's position to uphold sanctions imposed against Russia over its aggression in Crimea and Donbas. However, the Nord Stream 2 project is where we differ in our approach; we believe it will not help ensure energy security of the European Union.

Issues related to the rights of the Polish community and Poles living in Germany remain another challenge in Polish-German relations. It is a positive signal that a Polish-German Round Table meeting will be held this year on, among others, the situation of the Polish community in Germany.

We also recognise the need to discuss historical issues, which will be encouraged by the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. WWII reparations is another important subject for discussion between our countries.

France is an important reference for us in European, political and military, and economic matters. The historical picture of a friendly France is part of Poland's collective memory from the times of being under foreign rule and fighting to regain independence. The image of France as a champion of the freedom of peoples against absolute monarchies is deeply rooted in Polish culture.

We have a lot in common in our mutual relationship and we can achieve new goals together. For example, this year we will be celebrating the Polish-French Year of Science, which we hope will facilitate closer cooperation between the societies of both countries.

But our visions of the European Union's future currently diverge on a number of points. We are concerned about the idea of a multi-speed Europe, protectionist measures and those that amount to using double standards towards EU Member States. But we applaud France's participation in measures to bolster NATO's eastern borders, e.g. in Estonia, and last year in Lithuania. Given France's importance in Europe and the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament, developments in the country will have a significant impact on the future of the European Union, which, of course, is of great interest to Poland.

In addition to developing bilateral relations with France and Germany, we also want to reinvigorate cooperation with these two countries within the Weimar Triangle.

Our relations with the United Kingdom have been very intensive and across many areas. They reflect the close partnership in security, the strong pro-Atlantic views our two countries share, and a realistic assessment of Russia's policy.

The United Kingdom has been one of Poland's three key trading partners for years and it is our goal to maintain this status. We have established different formats of cooperation to be continued after the United Kingdom leaves the European Union, such as the annual intergovernmental consultations (the latest in London in December 2018) and the Quadriga dialogue of the foreign and defence ministers. The Polish-British Belvedere Forum, whose third edition was held last week, facilitates a better mutual understanding of the Polish and British political, non-governmental and expert communities.

With Italy, we share a vision of the place that sovereign Member States will have in a future reformed European Union and the strong resolve to defend the EU's external borders from illegal immigration. In 2018, Italy was Poland's fifth largest trading partner, with trade in goods characterised by a negative trade balance. In January, Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini paid a visit to Poland, while the Italian foreign minister took part in the Middle East conference in Warsaw.

With Spain, we share a high degree of convergence of positions on a two-speed EU, the ambitious budget and the shape of the Common Agricultural Policy and Cohesion Policy. Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell will be visiting Warsaw next week. We are also looking forward to the resumption of the Polish-Spanish intergovernmental consultations.

As regards the Netherlands, we continue to work constructively within the Utrecht Conference, an important forum for discussion on bilateral and EU matters. We are also engaged in an intensive dialogue with Belgium, as of this January also within the UN Security Council. Both countries will be visited by President Andrzej Duda in connection with the events to celebrate the 75th anniversary of their liberation by Polish troops.

Relations between Poland and the Holy See: are unique. This week's visit of the Holy See: Secretary of State to mark the century of restoring diplomatic relations between the Holy See: and Poland and the sixth anniversary of His Holiness Pope Francis's pontificate represent an opportunity to take stock of joint achievements and to set new avenues for future cooperation.

Mr Speaker, Members of the House! The development of regional cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe is an important constituent of the process of European integration. Shared historical experiences, cultural proximity, similar record of economic and social development, and similar priorities in the EU are all factors which bring the countries of our region closer together. Acting together, speaking with one voice, we are just stronger.

The most important fora for regional cooperation are the Visegrad Group, the Three Seas Initiative, and the Bucharest Nine.

For Poland, the Visegrad Group (V4) provides an essential framework for pursuing regional policy and advancing the interests of the Central Europe region in the international arena. The broad EU agenda lies at the core of the V4's political cooperation. In January and June last year we worked out a common position on the EU's future laid out in declarations adopted by the prime ministers. Our position on migration has been reflected in the decisions of the EU as a whole. At the same time, we remain open to pragmatic cooperation in the V4+ format, in particular with our European neighbours.

We have reactivated the Friends of Cohesion Policy Group, within which we work towards the best shape of the Multiannual Financial Framework. The Cohesion Policy Group Summit in Bratislava in November issued a joint declaration of the 14 states on the maintenance of the existing priorities, namely the Cohesion Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy.

Launched in 2015 by the presidents of Poland and Croatia, the Three Seas Initiative has been growing successfully as a political cooperation mechanism of twelve Central European EU countries in the transport, energy, and the broadly understood digital agenda sectors. We hope that the expansion of north-south transport links will contribute to the deepening of regional cooperation in this part of Europe and to the strengthening of the EU as a whole. The Warsaw Three Seas summit of 2017 brought US support for this initiative, while the Bucharest summit last year secured support from European institutions and Germany and marked the project's transition from the political and conceptual phase to intergovernmental budget decisions. This Summit also initiated the establishment of a Three Seas Fund, networks of chambers of commerce and industry, and a Business Forum. We hope that with the fourth summit scheduled for June this year in Slovenia, the initiative will gain even greater momentum.

Our bilateral relations with the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary have been experiencing rapid growth. Close political cooperation at the level of presidents, prime ministers, and foreign ministers is complemented by extensive business and civil society contacts. The rising trade volumes are a source of optimism. We will make efforts to keep this trend, which is a positive development for us all.

Our cooperation with Romania has been excellent; last year we launched bilateral intergovernmental consultations, which will be continued this year. The friendly and very good relations with Bulgaria were demonstrated by a Warsaw visit of the country's foreign minister in February.

We are also deepening dialogue with the Baltic States. In 2018, President Andrzej Duda visited Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, while Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki met twice with his counterparts from these countries. With

the Baltic States, we share an assessment of the dangers from the East and strive to strengthen the transatlantic links and synchronise the energy infrastructure. At the same time, the conditions for Orlen's operations in Lithuania have also improved. Celebrations marking the centenary of independence of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were accompanied by numerous expressions of reciprocal sympathy. In June last year, their presidents attended anniversary celebrations in Warsaw.

We also cooperate intensively with Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland. With Denmark, we have signed the agreement on the demarcation of the maritime border and the construction of the Baltic Pipe, which will enable transferring gas from Norwegian fields. With Sweden, we will work together to develop the Eastern Partnership in the year of its tenth anniversary. In two weeks, I will be hosting the Swedish foreign minister in Warsaw, with whom I will take part in a consultation between the region's heads of EU delegations to reflect on the initiative's future, on the future of the Eastern Partnership. This June in Gdansk, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki will be hosting the 10th Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, at the level of prime ministers of these states.

Poland actively supports the European integration of the Western Balkan countries. Last year, I visited North Macedonia, Albania, and Serbia, and took part in the opening of the Skopje, Tirana, and Belgrade conferences, whose purpose involves sharing Polish experiences of the accession process. This May, President Andrzej Duda is to meet with Western Balkan presidents at a conference in Tirana.

This year we hold the presidency of the Berlin Process — an initiative to support the Balkan countries in their aspirations to European Union membership. A meeting of the Berlin Process foreign ministers will be held in Warsaw this April, the Forum of Cities and Regions with the participation of ministers for development in Rzeszow in June, while the Western Balkans Summit with over a dozen heads of government, ministers of foreign affairs, ministers of home affairs, and economy, and representatives of business and civil society will be held in Poznan in early July. This will be yet another occasion to reaffirm our commitment to stability in Europe and a networking opportunity for Polish companies.

Ladies and Gentlemen! The situation in the East is a major challenge for Poland. Russia continues to pursue its aggressive policy against Ukraine, as recently evidenced by the conflict in the Kerch Strait. This has been accompanied by an intensive disinformation and propaganda war, attempted destabilisation of the Balkans, the maintaining of frozen conflicts in the Caucasus and Transnistria, and the acts of terror perpetrated on the territories of NATO and EU Member States. Poland favours a strong response to these actions. Any possible dialogue with the Russian Federation as part of the Euro-Atlantic and European structures

should be conditional upon the fulfilment of demands from the international community. In particular, we call on Russia to release the arrested Ukrainian sailors, return the captured Ukrainian vessels, and restore free navigation between the Azov Sea and the Black Sea proper.

We also urge the implementation of the resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, adopted also with the involvement of Polish parliamentarians, which calls on Russia to transfer the wreckage of the Tu-154 government plane to Poland.

At the same time, in Polish-Russian relations we are looking for areas where joint involvement can help rebuild conditions for cooperation. Last year, Polish and Russian experts together prepared teaching aids for history teachers; an agreement was made on the number of transport permits; we started important talks on diplomatic property and organised a study visit for representatives of the Russian media.

The regions of north-eastern Poland and Kaliningrad Oblast can count on financing under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme in a total amount of almost EUR 60 million.

Poland invariably supports Ukraine's territorial integrity and the sovereignty of its government throughout the country's territory within its internationally recognised borders. I received Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin during an official visit to Warsaw last October. I was the first foreign minister to visit Kyiv after the incident in the Kerch Strait. The humanitarian situation in Crimea and Donbass is the subject we also raise at the UN by organising open meetings of the Security Council.

Relations between Poland and Ukraine as regards practical cooperation are good, and even very good in the fields of military cooperation and security and energy policy. Trade between our two states increased by 9% in 2018 compared with 2017. Many Ukrainian citizens are working in Poland and our consuls issued nearly 850,000 visas last year. There are also around 40,000 Ukrainian students in Poland.

We still need to work on the dialogue about history with Ukraine. Poland's condition is that the ban on the exhumation of the remains of Poles should be lifted, incomprehensible as it is to us in the light of civilised standards. We look forward to the right decisions of the Ukrainian side in this respect.

We consider the existence of an independent Belarus to be a key foundation of the international order in Central and Eastern Europe or more widely, across Europe. In the current environment, our bilateral relationship is focused on practical neighbourly cooperation in response to the willingness presented by

the Belarusian partners. An inter-ministerial agreement was signed last year for the maintenance of road bridges at the Polish-Belarusian border and a visa-free travel regime was introduced in the region of the Augustow Canal, Brest, Grodno, and at the Minsk airport. We hope that the Belarusian authorities will revisit a local border traffic agreement as it would, in a positive way, open the border regions to even stronger contacts between local communities.

In the regional dimension, Poland is a leader in implementing European Neighbourhood Instrument programmes. According to the budgetary criterion, the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 programme is the largest cross-border programme in the European Union.

Poland consistently supports the territorial integrity and European and Atlantic ambitions of Georgia. Last year and early this year, Tbilisi was visited by President Andrzej Duda and the Speakers of the Sejm and Senate, Marek Kuchciński and Stanisław Karczewski. A Parliamentary Assembly of Poland and Georgia has also been established. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised a joint visit of the foreign ministers of Poland, Lithuania and Latvia and the deputy prime minister of Ukraine to Georgia on the 10th anniversary of President Lech Kaczyński's historic visit to this country together with the leaders of other countries in the region.

It is also worth noting that since 1 January this year, the Polish Embassy in Tbilisi has been the NATO Contact Point Embassy. For Poland, the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Georgia and of other countries of the region, which have such ambitions, is a guarantee of long-lasting stability and economic, political and social growth of our partners. We are expecting a visit of Georgia's President to Warsaw in the first half of this year.

We support the pro-European orientation of Moldova. We have declared our support for a stronger engagement of the European Union in political dialogue with Chisinau, leading to the resolution of the frozen conflict in Transnistria. We also seek to bring forward our dialogue with Azerbaijan and Armenia, looking closely at political transformations that are taking place in these countries.

Furthermore, Poland has been consistently developing its contacts with the countries of South Caucasus and Central Asia, guided by the principle of respect for territorial integrity and sovereign equality of states and their freedom to choose priorities of political and social development. We want to build good political relations and develop economic cooperation with our partners in this region by taking part in such initiatives as the construction of transport corridors linking the West and the East and by expanding the possibilities for our business presence in these countries. This will be the goal of President Andrzej Duda's planned visit to Azerbaijan.

Our strategic objective is an effective eastern policy implemented by the European Union. Under this policy, Poland focuses on sustaining a strong and uniform position towards Russia and on pursuing an agenda in relations with the Eastern Partnership countries that is as ambitious as possible. In 2019, we will join the celebrations to mark the tenth anniversary of the Eastern Partnership. We hope that partner countries will make strong efforts this year to implement the obligations arising from association agreements and that we will have a platform for reflection on the future of the Partnership. We will show to the European Union citizens that forging closer ties with the East is an investment in a stable future of the whole united Europe.

Members of the House! Asia and the Pacific is an area that offers not only many opportunities, but also challenges for our diplomacy. Poland's policy towards the region and our growing presence in it are aimed at our economic development by accessing new markets and investment opportunities.

We highly value Poland's strategic partnerships with Japan, the Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China. This year marks round anniversaries of establishing our diplomatic relations with these states.

Celebrations to mark the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan were inaugurated already last year, during the visit of the Japanese foreign minister to Warsaw. His visit was also an opportunity to forge closer economic relations in trade and investment. Japan remains key Asian investor in Poland; we appreciate the presence of Japanese businesses on the Polish market for close to thirty years. The entry into force of the EU-Japan economic partnership on 1 February 2019 opened the door for new investment and trade opportunities for Polish entrepreneurs.

Traditionally, we attach great importance to our relations with the Republic of Korea, the largest Asian investor in Poland. Its direct investments in Poland have exceeded USD one billion. The Warsaw Middle East Ministerial was an opportunity to hold bilateral talks with the Korean foreign minister.

As a member of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, we are following the talks aimed at bringing stability to the Korean Peninsula, hoping that they prove successful.

One of Poland's major partners in Asia is the People's Republic of China. Trade is the key to Poland-China cooperation. We hope that the activities of the Polish economic diplomacy and of the Polish Investment and Trade Agency, which in November 2018 opened its second Chinese office after Shanghai in Chengdu, will help to improve our bilateral trade balance.

Development of economic cooperation is our priority also in our relations with India. Poland is the largest recipient of Indian investments in Central and Eastern Europe and one of the largest in the European Union.

We also cooperate with countries from South-East Asia which belong to ASEAN. In November last year, I paid a visit to Indonesia which has been a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council since January this year. The ASEAN states are interested in Polish technologies, for example used in agriculture.

The agenda of the first in history official visit of the Polish President to Australia and New Zealand in August 2018 included the Polish Australian Economic Forum in Sydney and business talks in Auckland.

It is important to note that in 2018, LOT Polish Airlines established direct flight connections between Warsaw and Singapore. In 2019, LOT is planning to launch flights to South Asia, including Delhi. This creates a good environment for trade and tourism.

Mr Speaker, Members of the House! The region of the Middle East and North Africa has long been a hot spot on the global map, a source of threats of international terrorism and uncontrolled migrations. We should not, however, view this region only in the context of security challenges, but we should look at it also through the prism of its potential, in particular for economic cooperation.

Since parliamentary elections in 2015, Poland has brought a new momentum to its relations with the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. For the first time in many years, high-level visits of officials from Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Libya, Sudan, and the Maghreb states took place.

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, we are strongly engaged in measures to ensure global peace. The Ministerial to Promote a Future of Peace and Security in the Middle East, organized together with the United States in February this year in Warsaw, was a sign of our involvement in this region. For the first time in many years, the meeting was attended by foreign ministers of key Arab states and the prime minister of Israel.

The Conference launched the so-called Warsaw Process. We hope that it will start an international dialogue at expert level. Working groups which were set up under this process will discuss countering terrorism, ballistic missile proliferation, maritime, aviation and energy security, cybersecurity, humanitarian issues, refugee-related topics and human rights.

We also support the efforts of the United States and of the international community to resume the Middle East peace process. We are in favour of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of a two-state model, which provides

for the creation of an independent and democratic Palestine, while guaranteeing Israel's security interests.

As far as our relations with Israel are concerned, we believe that the joint declaration of prime ministers signed in June 2018 ends last year's dispute on the amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). In this context, we note with sadness and dismay the fact that some Israeli politicians are still voicing unjust accusations against Poland and the Poles. Unfortunately, it is also a consequence of longtime negligence in historical policy and of the lack of adequate reactions to the fact that Poland's image has been slandered in the world, which reinforced false stereotypes.

We can already see the first tangible effects of taking decisive steps, taking strong measures by Polish state institutions and diplomacy to promote knowledge on Polish history. We are happy that in the face of these accusations influential Jewish circles and high-ranking representatives of US diplomacy have voiced their support for our position, and that US and Israeli media depicted the problem of Polish-Jewish relations during World War II in a more balanced way, much more balanced way, than they did last year.

Speaking about the future of Polish-Israeli relations, I would also like to strongly emphasize that we are ready to continue our cooperation with Israel, and to engage in a discussion on difficult issues that relate to our common history. We cannot accept, however, statements that perpetuate false stereotypes, using a simplistic vision of the tragic fate of both nations. Our dialogue should be based on openness, mutual understanding, and respect for the other side's arguments.

Members of the House! The Warsaw conference helped to strengthen our relations with the countries in the Arab Peninsula. We shall continue this cooperation and capitalize on it in bilateral political and economic dimensions, and in the context of actions to preserve regional and global security.

In the face of the conflict in Syria, Poland supports measures aimed at real political changes in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 2254 under the so-called Geneva Process, including the activities of the UN Special Envoy for Syria, which are aimed at establishing a Constitutional Commission and holding free and democratic elections in Syria.

We also support international efforts to return to peace talks in Yemen. The ceasefire agreement, reached in December 2018 in the Swedish city of Rimbo sends a good message. We also declare humanitarian support - practical and financial humanitarian support - for the Yemeni civilian population.

It is in the interest of the international community to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Given the discrepancies between the

United States and the European Union on the way to address the threats in the Middle East, we invariably believe that trans-Atlantic unity should be maintained. At the same time, Poland's relations with Iran should be built on the basis of the existing relations based on friendship and mutual respect.

Poland plays an active role in stabilization activities in the so-called South neighbourhood of the European Union. The Polish Government has earmarked EUR 10 million for financing the second phase of the project of Integrated Management of Libya's Borders, together with our partners from the Visegrad Group. We also reiterate our support for the recovery, reconstruction and democratization of Iraq.

We plan to intensify our political dialogue and economic relations with the states of Maghreb and with Egypt. Together, we will explore migration policy and exchange experiences in combating terrorism and radicalism.

The region of sub-Saharan Africa has a huge potential, and this is why we are increasing our diplomatic presence there. Last year, I officially opened two of our missions: in Tanzania's Dar es Saalam, and in Senegal's Dakar. In Khartoum in Sudan, we appointed a visiting ambassador. The Polish Investment and Trade Agency (PAIH) is opening new trade offices in this region (for example in Kenya, Nigeria and Senegal). We will also bring forward our cooperation in mining, agriculture and services.

Visits of MFA senior officials to countries such as Cameroon, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda and Senegal, which are scheduled to take place this year, will have a major economic focus. Poland's flagship development project in Africa is the assistance in establishing the Maritime Academy in Angola's Namibe.

Members of the House! Our challenge in relations with Latin America over the recent three years has been to create conditions that are favourable for a comprehensive development of cooperation, in particular in the economy. A stable economic and social situation in the key countries of this continent, progressing trade liberalization with the European Union and a strong and well-established presence of the Polish community give us ground for optimism.

We have reversed the previous trend to close Polish missions in the region. In January 2018, we opened a Polish mission in Panama, which met with a positive response of Polish pilgrims who took part in the World Youth Day in that country.

We seek to develop our relations with Mexico on the basis of the declaration which was signed by the presidents in April 2017. Mexico's capital hosts the first foreign trade office in the region established by the PAIH. Poland was present at the Pacific Alliance Forum (Mexico, Columbia, Peru, and Chile), which is the

fastest growing bloc in the region, with a view to enhancing our cooperation in trade and investment.

We have resumed political and economic dialogue between the Polish and Brazilian foreign ministries. On 1 January this year, I participated in the swearing-in ceremony of President Jair Bolsonaro, which also offered an opportunity for bilateral talks. In turn, Brazil's foreign minister took part in the Warsaw Middle East Conference. There is fertile ground for boosting cooperation between our states.

We have been actively engaged in shaping the EU's policy towards Latin America and the Caribbean, by addressing such difficult issues as the political, economic and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela which is growing more and more acute.

Members of the House! In 2018, Poland was effectively engaged in multilateral cooperation, especially on the UN Security Council and in its bid to join the Human Rights Council. To implement its Security Council priority to promote international law, Poland held a high-level open debate chaired by President Andrzej Duda, and Arria-formula Meetings dedicated to relations between the International Criminal Court and the Security Council and to the ways of boosting the effectiveness of international crime prevention.

In 2018 and in early 2019, we organized or co-organized a number of meetings to discuss the situation of civilian population during armed conflicts, impact of climate change on international peace and security, and developments in different countries, including Ukraine and Syria.

In 2018, we chaired the Preparatory Committee for the upcoming Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference (the so-called NPT treaty). We also led the work of the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. We believe that the effectiveness of both regimes should be enhanced by increasing transparency and strengthening dialogue between states that have nuclear weapons and their allies.

In December 2018, Poland hosted the Climate Conference COP24 for the third time. Thanks to the so-called Katowice Climate Package, which was adopted at the conference and which contains a set of guidelines to implement the Paris Agreement, the capital of Upper Silesia made a lasting contribution to global climate policy. Katowice hosted 30,000 delegates from all over the world. The event offered an opportunity to promote Silesia and all Poland as an open and modern country that cherishes its historical and natural heritage, and to promote Polish solutions in energy efficiency and pollutant emission.

I would like to thank President Andrzej Duda, Minister Henryk Kowalczyk, President of COP24 Michał Kurtyka and all people who were involved in the organization of this event. Thanks to you, the conference was a success, both in terms of its content and its organization, which was widely reported and appreciated in the world.

Poland supports human rights defenders and facilitates contacts between people who are involved in democratic transformations across the world. During the seventh Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy, we hosted several dozen representatives of civic society from all parts of the world. The foreign minister's "Pro Dignitate Humana" award in 2018 was given to Ukrainian film director Oleg Sentsov to honour his outstanding contribution to human rights protection.

In March this year, this month, Poland was invited to join the International Contact Group on the Freedom of Religion or Belief, which aims at forging close cooperation and coordination to promote freedom of religion. We treat this as a recognition of our active commitment to protecting the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities, including Christians.

Poland was also invited to join the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee for 2018-2022, and for the third consecutive time, we were selected to the Council of the International Telecommunications Union for 2019-2022. In addition, Poland's representative became a member of the UN International Civil Service Commission for 2019-2022.

In turn, Minister of Sports and Tourism Witold Bańka is the candidate of the whole Europe for the President of the World Anti-Doping Agency WADA. The Ministry has been pursuing its diplomatic efforts to muster support of non-European voters in the WADA elections, which are scheduled to take place in May this year.

Mr Speaker, Members of the House! Since November 2015, when the United Right took power, Poland signed 215 bilateral agreements with more than 60 states and 14 multilateral agreements. In the same period, 223 bilateral agreements concluded with 70 states entered into force. Moreover, Poland became a party to 50 multilateral agreements.

I would like to draw your attention to the Polish-Danish agreement signed on 19 November last year, which delimitates the so-called grey zone, located South of Bornholm. Its aim is to end a more than forty-year-long dispute and to ensure legal certainty in the Baltic Sea region. The Polish MFA managed to negotiate a much better outcome than other countries of the region with respect to similar solutions.

In consultation with the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology, we are terminating the agreements on investment protection (the so-called BITs), which the EU Court of Justice deemed to be incompatible with EU law.

There is a clear downward trend in the number of applications against Poland, filed with the European Court of Human Rights. In 2018, 1,941 new applications were filed, which is 120 fewer than in 2017, and a lot fewer than in 2010, when 5,768 new applications were lodged with the Strasbourg Court. As a result of these trends, last year the number of new applications against Poland in relation to the number of inhabitants stayed below the European average.

We are also making efforts to execute judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. By the end of last year, we reached a record low level of 100 judgements which were pending execution, compared with 2015, when there were 313 judgments pending execution, and with 2011, when 924 judgements were unexecuted.

We will play an active role in the ceremony to mark the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe; on this occasion, next week Thorbjørn Jagland, the Council of Europe's Secretary General, is paying a visit to Warsaw.

The public opinion sometimes has concerns about the US JUST Act and about the issue of post-war property restitution. It needs to be noted explicitly that the act is a part of US domestic legislation, it does not entail any duties on the part of other states, and provides no legal basis for making any legal claims relating to property located in Poland, which had been taken away by Nazi Germany or by Soviet Russia during World War II and by the communist authorities after the war. Potential claims of eligible persons, irrespective of their nationality, are examined under judicial or administrative proceedings in line with the rules and procedures provided for in the Polish legal system, on general terms.

Members of the House! Another important goal of diplomacy is to foster Poland's economic development. We have a reason to be satisfied: according to the World Bank, Poland now ranks as 23rd largest economy in the world, and our above-average economic growth may rank us even two positions higher on the next list.

We use our wide network of missions to provide Polish companies with information on the specific nature of individual markets and their legal and financial conditions. In 2018, our embassies and consulates informed or intervened on behalf of 4,000 Polish companies, most of them in Europe, where 80 percent of Polish exports is destined. At the same time, we are more active in other regions. In Asia, more than 500 companies received our help, 490 in the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States, more than 480 in the region of Africa and the Middle East, and over 340 in both Americas. The MFA also offers permanent

support for the Polish defence industry. We encourage companies in the defence sector to become involved in multinational research projects, development programmes and initiatives to acquire military capabilities using the European Defence Fund.

The Polish Investment and Trade Agency is opening new Foreign Trade Offices. There will be 70 such offices before the end of 2019, including 22 in Asia, 13 in the Americas, nine in Africa and the rest in Europe. A great majority of these offices have already reached full operational capacity.

We are also trying to increase the participation of Polish businesses in tenders and projects of international organizations. In June 2019, we are holding an International Fair for Humanitarian and Development Assistance - Warsaw Humanitarian Expo, which will be the first such event in Central and Eastern Europe. We would like the Expo to provide an opportunity to present Polish products and services, which are used in providing humanitarian assistance and running development projects. Among them are food, medical equipment, IT services and renewable energy sources.

The Warsaw Humanitarian Expo will also be a platform for a discussion on the relations between Polish non-governmental organizations and business aimed at achieving a better synergy of actions.

The initiative to establish the Polish Technology Hub is addressed mainly to Asian and Middle Eastern markets in response to the challenges faced by high-tech companies, especially in the IT sector.

We will continue our involvement in the work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and support its enlargement by further European countries and its activities in Asian and African countries, with which Poland enhances its economic cooperation. We plan to take advantage of this year's 120th anniversary of the birth of Michał Kalecki, an outstanding Polish economist, to remind at the forum of this organization about Polish economic thought concerning the theory of economic cycles, economic growth models and economic issues of developing countries.

Members of the House! Development cooperation is an expression of our solidarity with developing countries. Remembering the solidarity we experienced in difficult times, today we want to share this solidarity with others. It is also an investment in world's stability and security and thus in the stability and security of Poland.

Development cooperation is also connected with fulfilling Poland's obligations as a member of international organizations. We are involved in the actions of the international community to implement Sustainable Development Goals, which

are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, eradicate poverty, promote social growth and provide assistance to communities affected by armed conflicts.

According to preliminary estimates, which are not yet final but allow us to say that in 2018 Poland spent PLN 2.8 billion on Official Development Assistance.

Our eastern partners, in particular Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, remain a key area of our activity. In our opinion, fundamental reform and building modern states are the only way to stabilize the territory of the former Soviet Union in the long-term perspective. In these countries, we are supporting the development of a professional civil service by running the Eastern Partnership Academy of Public Administration. We are also supporting the development of a system of secure border management.

Other priority regions of Polish development cooperation are five African countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda) and three Asian and Middle Eastern countries (Myanmar, Lebanon, and Palestine). Development assistance in these areas covers projects developing human capital, entrepreneurship and environmental standards as well as scholarships to study in Poland.

A good example of development cooperation activities is a project which has been run in Kenya for the past four years by Polish firefighters and the Polish Center for International Aid. The project offers specialist training courses for Kenyan fire services, which improve their professionalism and efficiency. Thanks to Polish Aid, the very first fire service training service in Kenya and in the whole Horn of Africa is under construction outside Nairobi. Forty percent of Kenya's firefighters (about 450 people) have already been trained. They also received modern rescue equipment.

Humanitarian aid provided to war and conflict victims is also an integral part of Polish foreign policy. We are active in Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Ukraine. Last year, we provided medical care and rehabilitation to 30 thousand people, mainly women and children; over 35 thousand refugees received emergency aid and shelter.

We support a systemic vision of actions, which includes providing assistance and effective response to challenges as close to the sources of humanitarian and migration crises as possible and cannot agree to an unconditional and automatic admission of all migrants.

We are the biggest donor of European Investment Bank's Economic Resilience Initiative, with EUR 50 million allocated to supporting economic growth of Lebanon and Jordan which are affected by the refugee crisis. Together with

the Visegrad Group countries, we are also financing activities aimed at a better management of Libya's borders.

We are consistently increasing humanitarian aid funds. In 2015, we spent PLN 24 million, while last year our spending increased to PLN 135 million. Our contributions are meant to advance the priorities of the Polish development assistance programme, while the UN contributions are meant to advance the priorities of Polish presidency of the Security Council.

At the same time, we are strengthening our ties with major partners within the global humanitarian aid system. In 2018, on behalf of Poland, I signed a cooperation agreement with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Members of the House! The position of a country depends to a large extent on the opinions made by the global public opinion. Positive associations with Poland, the knowledge about its culture and history and respect for them are key to success of our undertakings on the international arena.

Polish Institutes, which operate in twenty-five countries, play a special role in promoting Poland and its culture abroad. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed an agreement with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, which aims to ensure better coordination of projects implemented by Polish Institutes and other diplomatic and consular missions and tap into the joint potential of all national cultural institutions to promote Polish culture abroad.

In 2018, our diplomats, in cooperation with the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the representatives of Polish community abroad, commemorated the centenary of Polish independence, organizing over 1,200 exhibitions, publications, conferences, films and other forms of promotion. The most memorable moment of international celebrations was white and red illumination of several dozen prestigious buildings across five continents, which allowed us to reach millions of people around the world informing them about this extraordinary anniversary.

We promote knowledge about Polish history and heroic actions of Poles. In Brussels, we held an exhibition titled "Armoured Wings" to recall the deeds of General Maczek and the Polish liberators of Flanders. In January this year, I had the honour of launching the exhibition together with my Belgian counterpart.

Thanks to the great work and efforts by the Polish Embassy in Bern the whole world learned about the members of the so-called Bernese Group—Polish diplomats in Switzerland led by envoy Aleksander Ładoś, who saved Jews during Holocaust by issuing them great numbers of fake Latin American passports.

As a result of joint efforts of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Krakow's tradition of making nativity scenes was recognized as valuable enough to be inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List

of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The list features practices and phenomena from around the world, which represent the diversity of intangible heritage and raise the awareness of its importance.

The 550th anniversary of Polish parliamentarism served to promote our country's contribution to the development of representative democracy. It was celebrated both in Poland and abroad, including Strasburg and Vilnius.

I would like to thank the Honourable Members of the House for conducting active parliamentary diplomacy at the level of chairpersons of chambers, committees, several dozen bilateral groups and permanent parliamentary delegations. I thank you for your presence. Your activity in the field of foreign affairs constitutes an invaluable contribution to the efforts of the president of Poland and the government.

I look forward to our fruitful cooperation in this regard. This year will provide several opportunities to do so, as 2019 marks many important anniversaries: the 20th anniversary of Poland joining NATO, the 15th anniversary of Poland's membership in the European Union, the 30th anniversary of Solidarity's victory in the elections on 4 June 1989. We will also celebrate the 450th anniversary of the Polish-Lithuanian Union, the 75th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising and the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II.

These anniversaries offer an excellent opportunity to highlight Poland's role and its contribution to the groundbreaking events in world's history. We hope that Poland's voice telling the story of these extraordinary events will be heard loud and clear in 2019.

It is also important for us to raise the awareness about international affairs in our society. The Regional Centres for International Debate serve as a tool to educate and hold debates on this topic. Since July 2016, over 100 thousand people have participated in conferences, workshops, training sessions and debates organised by the Regional Centres.

Members of the House! Today, 20 million Poles or people of Polish descent live abroad. Some of them stayed behind in the East after Poland's borders were redrawn, some others are emigrants who form today's Polish diaspora. Both these groups, completely dissimilar, face different problems and need a different approach.

In 2017, this House passed the amended Act on Repatriation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues its efforts based on this act to use its tools as widely as possible to increase the number of Poles and people of Polish origin who willingly repatriate from the Asian part of the former Soviet Union, especially

from Kazakhstan. In 2017, 298 visas were issued for the purpose of repatriation, while in 2018 this number increased to 717.

Many people remain interested in the Polish Card. Last year, over 22 thousand cards were issued, while over 13 thousand were renewed.

We have been consistently improving the operation of consular offices. The Consular Information Centre and the Integrated Call Centre allow our compatriots to receive assistance outside office hours. Since the launch of both services on 30 January 2017, the centre answered 170 thousand phone calls.

Recently, the activity of our mission in Norway to protect parental rights of Polish citizens and the rights of the children has received a lot of attention. Polish consuls contact Norwegian social services, verify their actions and react whenever needed to protect family life of our citizens. The protection of the rights of Poles is one of the cornerstones of our diplomacy.

We also strive to improve our bilateral cooperation with Norway in terms of the protection of minors. In early March, a few days ago, employees of Norwegian offices for the protection of children came on a study visit to discuss the main challenges to cross-border cooperation.

Clearly, it is not in Poland's interest to have more Poles leaving Poland and it is not our intention, nor government's intention to inspire it. Poland's economic growth, improved quality of life of its citizens and lower unemployment can convince many Poles to return to the country. We are counting on it and we are encouraging it.

At the same time, the presence of a numerous Polish community abroad is an opportunity to actively promote Polish interests. It is especially important to support Polish diaspora to further strengthen Poland's security, raise the profile of reforms implemented by the government and promote the truth about Polish history. We would like our compatriots to become an important ally of the government in promoting Poland's national interest, Polish culture, national remembrance and Polish historical narrative.

One example of success in this area was the successful defense of the Katyn memorial in New Jersey with key participation of local Polish community. Furthermore, the choice of a Polish aviator, Colonel Franciszek Kornicki in a voting in the United Kingdom, to become RAF's World War II symbol would not be possible without mass voting by fellow Poles living in the UK. I would like to express my gratitude to all people involved in these two matters.

Members of the House! Policy regarding Polish diaspora, in order to be effective, should be implemented not only for Polish community abroad, but also with its participation. We will continue to develop the Polish Diaspora

Consultative Councils at Polish foreign posts and to support Polish diaspora organizations, Polish media and education who act as guardians of culture and national tradition. This latter task is of special importance for our compatriots in the East. We support the activities of the Ministry of National Education to increase the number of teachers seconded to Polish communities in this region, as well as the civic activity in terms of providing aid to fellow Poles living in the East.

We will advocate the rights of Poles wherever they are not adequately protected, using, if need be, the multilateral fora. It is our immutable goal that Poles living abroad enjoy all rights under bilateral agreements and European standards. Our special focus will be to make the teaching of the Polish language more available, particularly for school-age children.

We discuss education with the Belarusian side during all our bilateral talks. We expect that the treaty obligation to create the conditions for the education of Polish minority to be fulfilled. There are also positive sides of our cooperation. During a visit to Belarus, I opened the military cemetery in Dunilavicy which is a burial site of soldiers fallen during the Polish-Soviet war, which was renovated with the consent of local authorities.

The Ministry of National Education is holding talks with Lithuania on improving the conditions for functioning of the Polish education system in this country. As of May 2018, there are five Polish Television (TVP) channels available in the Vilnius Region, which contributes to the strengthening of Polish identity and immunizes our compatriots against Russian disinformation. The planned launch of TVP Wilno channel will be an important event. Thanks to the cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Polish Television and the involvement of the local community of Polish journalists, it will be possible to reach our compatriots in Lithuania with our message about contemporary Poland, its culture and history.

The Polish-German treaty gave our relations a special character granting the Polish community in Germany a special status, and guaranteeing equal rights of the German minority in Poland and the Polish diaspora in Germany. During talks with the federal government, we have been consistently raising the issues of improving the conditions for developing and strengthening cultural and linguistic identity of people of Polish descent living in Germany. We hope that Polish-German Round Table talks, planned to take place in June with the participation of government officials, Polish community in Germany and German community in Poland, will allow us to achieve tangible effects, in particular with regards to teaching of Polish language as a native language, the renovation and running of

the Union of Poles' House in Bochum, Germany, the commemoration of Polish World War II victims in Germany, including the pre-war Polish minority.

Members of the House! Today's world requires of us to clearly explain our reasons, our position and our decisions and build a positive image of our country. We need to appropriately identify and respond adequately to challenges as they arise. The diplomatic service is beautiful and honourable, but also difficult. We have been consistently modernizing Polish foreign service, in terms of human resources, legal capacity and infrastructure. We are fully aware that the human resources of Polish diplomacy play a key role in achieving the priorities of Poland's foreign policy.

We are adapting the policy of developing the competencies of foreign services to new challenges. The traditional diplomatic skills remain necessary in a situation, when international relations are becoming increasingly complex. We consistently employ young well-educated people. It is with great satisfaction that we note a considerable interest in employment at the ministry—each time, over 400 candidates apply to the Diplomatic Academy. Last year was the first time we decided to repeat the recruitment to the diplomatic and consular training programme.

On the initiative of the Parliament and with the support of the overwhelming majority of Members of Parliament, the Act on Foreign Service was amended, which resulted in the removal from the service of persons with ties to special services of communist Poland.

We also need to have sufficient diplomatic representation. Over the last three years, we reopened our missions in Panama, Tanzania, Senegal and the Philippines. We opened consulates in Houston and Belfast and we launched a Polish Institute in Tbilisi.

Analyses show that our foreign posts in the Americas, Asia and Africa are understaffed, while our European missions, both in Western and Eastern Europe, are overstaffed. We will gradually change these proportions and strengthen the non-European foreign posts, as this is where the centre of gravity of global economy is shifting and this is where our growing interests lie.

The staff working at the MFA headquarters is scattered across Warsaw, with employees often working at distant locations. This hampers the coordination of our actions and generates costs. Therefore, we made a decision to start the works to build new premises on a lot we already own, which is adjacent to the MFA's main building. This investment will allow to move the staff to one location, which will facilitate management and reduce the running costs of the ministry by limiting rental fees.

We are also running real estate projects abroad. Last year, we opened the combined embassy and Polish institute in the renovated Pac Palace in Vilnius. We are also preparing to launch construction works of a new seat of our embassy in Berlin and Minsk.

Mr Speaker, Mr President, Prime Minister, Members of the House! State foreign policy is a national, not a partisan matter. The role of a foreign minister is to gain cross-party support. I trust that the main directions of our foreign policy—the concern for the security and development of our country, the support for building an efficient, effective and cohesive European Union enjoying a strong democratic mandate, regional cooperation in Central Europe, the support for the independence and territorial integrity of our neighbours are matters which unite us above party lines.

It does not mean that foreign policy should not be subject to critical evaluation. I hope that the information I presented on Polish foreign policy tasks in 2019 will prompt an in-depth debate.

Thanking once again for your attention and the attendance of the President, Prime Minister and Members of the House, I would therefore ask the Sejm to accept the Minister of Foreign Affairs' information on Polish foreign policy tasks in 2019.

Thank you.

Poland's Policy in the European Union

MELCHIOR SZCZEPANIK, JOLANTA SZYMAŃSKA

Background

2019 was an important year from the point of view of European politics because it saw the setting of priorities for the EU for the coming years including the completion of debates on the future of this bloc at the summit in Sibiu and of work on the new EU Strategic Agenda for 2019–24. 2019 also saw the beginning of a new term of EU institutions.

The new institutional cycle started with the elections to the European Parliament (EP), which were held in May. The subsequent months saw the process of staffing the most important posts in EU institutions such as the President of the EP, the President of the European Commission (EC), the President of the European Council (EurC), the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the President of the European Central Bank (ECB). The process concluded with the appointment of the members of the new European Commission.

The lack of a shared vision of all EU member states regarding the bloc's further development, which became evident during the debate on the future of the EU, which lasted many months, hampered the member states' efforts to reach a compromise on the staffing of the posts in the new institutional term.¹ The uncertainty was additionally fuelled by disputes between the EurC and the EP regarding the procedure of appointing the new EC President: while the European Council wished to retain the right to freely choose the candidate, the European Parliament supported the mechanism of *Spitzenkandidaten* and threatened to reject those candidates who would not be submitted by European political parties as 'leading candidates'. Furthermore, this uncertainty was boosted by prolonged talks on the United Kingdom's exit from the EU, which provoked questions as to this state's participation in the elections to the EP and in the subsequent process of nominating the candidates and appointing the successful ones to posts in EU institutions.

¹ For more, see: M. Makowska, M. Szczepanik, J. Szymańska, "Future of Europe: No Common Vision on the Horizon," *PISM Policy Paper*, no. 2 (172), May 2019, www.pism.pl.

The elections to the EP were preceded by an intensive campaign during which in many member states new priorities such as climate policy came to the fore. This shift was accompanied by changes in public sentiment. Although the EU-wide Eurobarometer survey conducted in spring 2019 showed that the main challenges faced by the EU still included immigration (1st place, 34% of answers, down 6 percentage points compared with autumn 2018), the biggest difference was recorded for climate change (it was ranked second, while in 2018 it was ranked fifth) which was a cause for concern for 22% of Europeans (up 6 percentage points compared with the previous edition of the survey). The economic situation and the state of public finances in specific countries were less serious causes for concern (both were indicated by 18% of the respondents).²

Public sentiment reflected the EU's changing reality. 2019 saw a major decline in the scale of uncontrolled migration to the EU, as in that year Frontex recorded 139,000 instances of illegal crossing of the EU's external borders, which was 92% fewer than in 2015. Meanwhile, climate change increasingly manifested itself as severe heat, forest fires and droughts affecting Southern and Central Europe, as well as floods in Northern Europe. Despite the ongoing trade dispute between the U.S. and China³ and the uncertainty caused by the results of Brexit, the economic situation remained stable.

In Poland, the elections to the European Parliament were an element of a bigger electoral agenda: autumn 2019 saw nation-wide parliamentary elections and a presidential election was planned for spring 2020. As a consequence, the campaign ahead of the EP elections was strongly linked with the domestic campaign. It was dominated by internal issues, including in particular the social welfare policy and ethical issues, while the EU affairs receded into the background. The very few exceptions included topics linked with the negotiations regarding the 2021–27 multiannual financial framework, Poland's prospects for joining the eurozone, and the rule of law.

In the Polish parliamentary elections, the United Right coalition with the Law and Justice party as its principal member, which had ruled the country thus far, came first once again (with the exception of the Senate, where the opposition won more seats). As regards the new government, a major modification was introduced from the point of view of European politics, as the sphere of European affairs, led by Minister Konrad Szymański, was transferred from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Chancellery of the Prime Minister.

² "Standard Eurobarometer 91," European Commission, www.ec.europa.eu.

³ D. Wnukowski, "China's Economy Amid the Trade Dispute with the U.S.," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 119 (1365), 21 August 2019, www.pism.pl.

In 2019, which saw the 15th anniversary of Poland's accession to the European Union, the public's approval for EU membership was record high (91%), while a mere 5% of Polish citizens were critical of it. The overall assessment of Poland's EU membership was highly positive. According to Polish respondents, the greatest advantages included the opportunity to obtain and spend EU funds, freedom of movement and access to the job markets of other EU member states.⁴

As the level of support for Poland's EU membership increased, the proportion of individuals who supported further development of European integration also rose. Half of the respondents (50%) were in favour of Europe's continued integration, while slightly more than a fifth of them (21%) believed that this integration was excessive.⁵ Despite their support for the concept of continued integration, Poles remained sceptical about their country's possible accession to the eurozone: in a survey conducted in April 2019 by the Instytut Badań Pollster polling company 65% of the respondents were against the introduction of the euro in Poland.

Goals and Assumptions

The Polish government intended to take an active part in the debate on the future shape of the European Union by seeking a joint position of Central Europe as a whole, to be presented at the summit in Sibiu planned for May. The preferred model involved an EU composed of strong member states and supported by institutions operating in line with the principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and equality.⁶ A priority defined by the foreign minister in his 2019 platform speech included actions to "restore the EU's full and unquestionable legitimacy, to win back voters' trust in the European institutions, and to restore their ability to solve people's real problems".⁷ Effectively, this involved opposing the deeper integration plans which in recent years were mainly promoted by the president of France, refusing to consent to EU institutions becoming engaged in domestic affairs of the member states and to applying different standards vis-à-vis different states.

The key proposal as regards the institutional reform involved boosting the role of national parliaments in the EU structure and rejecting the proposals which

⁴ "15 lat członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej," *Komunikat z badań CBOS*, 2019, no. 59, www.cbos.pl.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ "Deklaracja warszawska dotycząca ponownego zjednoczenia Europy," *Teologia Polityczna*, 2 May 2019, www.teologiapolityczna.pl.

⁷ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

envisaged expanding the scope of majority voting in the Council of the EU to include other areas (such as the EU's foreign policy). According to the government, qualified majority voting (in the double majority system)⁸ favours the biggest member states and the difference between their potential (this mainly concerns Germany and France) and the potential of the remaining member states has become even more evident in the context of Brexit. The disruption of the balance of power in the Council, which resulted from the United Kingdom's exit from the EU, was viewed as a threat to the integration process as a whole.⁹ To avoid discriminating against smaller states in the decision-making process, the Polish government emphasised that the "culture of consensus is at the heart of the Union",¹⁰ and proposed to build an as broad a consensus as possible regarding the legislative drafts.

As usual,¹¹ other important goals included boosting the single market and digital transformation. The government proposed to enhance the integration of the service sector and to eliminate the barriers occurring on the single market. It also supported the concept of the EU's increased involvement in the sphere of artificial intelligence and data-based economy. It rejected protectionism which was harmful to the entrepreneurs and the employees on the EU job market, and supported the fight against fiscal abuse in the EU by promoting its own solutions in this respect. Alongside this, it remained sceptical about setting ambitious climate goals and emphasised that an EU climate strategy should take into account certain compensation mechanisms to be offered to states, regions and sectors which are particularly affected by the results of energy transition.

As regards external relations, the Polish government saw the continuation of the process of EU enlargement and the development of the Eastern Partnership, which it viewed as a necessary tool to promote political stability and security in Europe, as its priorities. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Eastern Partnership, it proposed to devise new ambitious plans at the EU level, which could serve as a basis for this programme's continuation. To accelerate the process of European integration of the Western Balkans, the government declared its readiness to share Poland's experience from the EU accession process with the candidate countries.

⁸ As a rule, in this system a legislative proposal put forward by the EC requires the support of at least 55% of EU member states representing 65% of the bloc's population. To block the adoption of such a proposal, a blocking coalition composed of at least four member states representing 35% of EU population is necessary.

⁹ For more, see: J. Szymańska, S. Zaręba, "The Impact of Brexit on EU Council Voting," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 39 (1285), 8 April 2019, www.pism.pl.

¹⁰ "Deklaracja warszawska...", *op. cit.*

¹¹ J. Szymańska, "Poland's Policy in the European Union," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2018, PISM, 2025.

As regards the negotiations on the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2021–27, the Polish government was opposed to the proposal to reduce the budget and emphasised the need to maintain the current level of expenditure on the cohesion policy and the common agricultural policy. According to the government, the shortage of funds following Brexit should be offset by the cancellation of budget rebates and by an increase in the contributions paid by the remaining member states. In this context, Poland declared its readiness to increase its contribution. In addition, the government expressed its reservations regarding the EC's proposal to make EU budgetary payments conditional upon respect for the rule of law. It argued that in the absence of precise criteria the rule of law was impossible to assess and the payment of funds was a treaty obligation.¹²

In the process of staffing EU posts in the new institutional term Poland's ambitions were moderate. Firstly, Poland was subject to a procedure under Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union regarding the violation of the rule of law, which hampered the staffing negotiations. Secondly, the fact that the ruling party was absent from the group of the strongest political forces represented in the European Parliament¹³ effectively ruled out the prospect of politicians linked with the conservative parties being appointed to the key posts (in connection with the requirement for the candidate for the president of the EC to be approved by the parliamentary majority an entire set of posts had to reflect the power of all specific groupings represented in the EP). Thirdly, over the last decade Polish nationals (Jerzy Buzek and Donald Tusk) were among the holders of the four most important posts in the EU, which additionally reduced the chances for another Polish politician getting appointed. Despite the unfavourable circumstances, the government was hoping that a Polish national would be appointed to an important post (most preferably one linked with economic affairs) in the new European Commission. As regards the most important posts, it attempted, alongside its partners from V4, to promote candidates hailing from Central and Eastern Europe.

Political Relations

The government took an active part in the debate on the future of Europe. On 21 May, Poland sent its proposals to the member states and the EU institutions (these proposals included an EU composed of strong member states and supported by institutions operating in line with the principles of subsidiarity, proportionality

¹² "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019...", *op. cit.*

¹³ The Law and Justice party belonged to the group of European Conservatives and Reformists, which in the 9th term of the European Parliament was the sixth strongest political grouping. The biggest political groupings which had a genuine impact on the staffing process were the European People's Party, the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, Renew Europe and the Greens.

and equality) in the context of the 2019–24 Strategic Agenda, which is a document charting the EU's development directions.¹⁴ Efforts to promote the Polish stance were facilitated by the statements offered by government representatives during international conferences and in the media. In April, 'Politico', which is one of the most popular websites discussing EU affairs, published an article by Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, in which he presented Poland's stance on several key issues regarding the future of the EU.¹⁵ Just like in previous years, Poland wanted the Central European states to devise a common stance. During a meeting in Warsaw on 1 May, representatives of the states which had joined the EU in the 21st century adopted a joint declaration regarding the future development of this organisation. Elements of this declaration were included in the Strategic Agenda which the European Council adopted in June. Further development of the single market was announced and the importance of effective protection of EU borders was emphasised. The document reiterated the EU's readiness to continue the enlargement process and to implement its security and defence policy in concert with NATO. It also contained an announcement that the climate strategy would be implemented taking into account the unique situation of specific member states.

Following the elections to the EP, during the negotiations on the staffing of the most important posts in the EU, the Polish government did not offer its official support to any candidate for the president of the EC. The candidates represented the parties which competed with the European Conservatives whose candidate Jan Zahradil, a Czech national, had no chance of being appointed due to his party's weak position in the European Parliament and the European Council. Alongside the Visegrad Group (V4) countries and some leaders representing the Christian Democratic grouping (from Croatia and Latvia), Poland opposed the candidacy of Frans Timmermans, who represented the Social Democratic grouping. Prime Minister Morawiecki supported the candidacy of Ursula von der Leyen, former German defence minister, which was proposed subsequently. Although this choice did not match Poland's criticism of excessive influence of France and Germany within the EU, Polish government representatives praised von der Leyen for supporting strong transatlantic ties and seeking a balance between the supporters of the EU's federalisation and those promoting its stronger intergovernmental nature. Moreover, the election of von der Leyen equated to a failure of the *Spitzenkandidaten* procedure which was promoted by the majority

¹⁴ "Polska aktywna w dyskusji o przyszłej agendzie strategicznej," MSZ, 21 May 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹⁵ M. Morawiecki, "Poland's Vision for Europe," *Politico*, 30 April 2019, www.politico.eu. Minister Jacek Czaputowicz presented the Polish vision of the EU's future for example during an Ideas Lab conference which was organised by one the biggest Brussels-based think-tanks (CEPS), and at the European Forum in Berlin held in May.

at the EP but was not supported by the Polish government which viewed it as an initiative which excessively limits the competence of the member states in the process of electing the president of the EC. Ultimately, four out of the five most important posts were filled by representatives of the largest states of Western Europe (Germany, France, Spain and Italy). A Belgian national considered a close aide of the president of France was appointed as the president of the European Council. No post was taken up by a representative of the Visegrad Group states which were Poland's closest allies in the debate on the future of the EU, or an individual hailing from any other state of Central and Eastern Europe. Timmermans, who came under criticism from V4, continued his role as First Vice President and at the same time was appointed as Executive Vice President of the EC, although the new division of tasks suggested that he would not be dealing with issues linked with the rule of law.

Following the EP's approval of von der Leyen's candidacy, on 25 July a meeting was held between Prime Minister Morawiecki and the new president of the EC, which was an opportunity to present both Polish expectations regarding the operation of this institution in its new term and Poland's candidate for the post of European Commissioner. Krzysztof Szczerski, who had previously served as the Secretary of the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland and deputy foreign minister (2007), was presented as this candidate and the prime minister emphasised that Poland would like to have a Commissioner responsible for 'economic affairs'.¹⁶ However, Szczerski withdrew his candidacy, when von der Leyen proposed that he should be appointed as the European Commissioner for Agriculture. He was replaced with Janusz Wojciechowski. Although Wojciechowski had served as a MEP for more than two terms (2004–16) and as vice-chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, he had difficulties with winning the committee members' support for his candidacy. The MEPs criticised him for offering too general answers to the questions asked during the hearing. To convince the MEPs to approve his candidacy, he had to attend another hearing and submit written answers to additional questions.

The platform presented by von der Leyen responded to Polish demands only to some degree.¹⁷ The Polish government expressed its concern about the new president of the EC giving priority to climate policy and announcing the intention to increase the 2030 emission reduction goals and to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. However, von der Leyen also announced the establishment of a just transition fund targeted at countries such as Poland, for which an ambitious climate policy

¹⁶ "Premier: Polsce należy się ważna teka, np. gospodarcza," *Bankier*, 3 July 2019, www.bankier.pl.

¹⁷ U. von der Leyen, "A Union that strives for more. Political guidelines for the next European Commission (2019–2024)," European Commission, 16 July 2019, www.ec.europa.eu.

was linked with the need to carry out particularly costly modifications of the energy sector and the economy as a whole. Emphasis on NATO's importance as regards European security and a rather moderate stance on the reform of the migration policy were in line with Poland's expectations. It seemed that the new EC president's approach to the single market was more focused on pushing through the concept of harmonisation of the conditions for doing business rather than on promoting competitiveness, which Poland viewed as important. Ursula von der Leyen announced the intention to attempt to harmonise the rules of setting the minimum wage and to continue the work on the common corporate tax base. She supported the proposal to replace the rule of unanimity with voting on matters linked with taxes and with selected aspects of the common foreign policy. However, she did not comment on Poland's proposal to increase the scope of competence of the member state's national parliaments.

In the debate on the state of the rule of law in Poland, the government emphasised that in response to the remarks formulated by the EC it modified the programme of judiciary reforms. In the document sent in January to the EC, the Council and the member states, the government presented a list of actions it had taken.¹⁸ In an interview with the 'Financial Times', Prime Minister Morawiecki expressed his hope that the concessions made by the government would convince the EC to withdraw the complaints it had filed with the European Court of Justice.¹⁹ Contrary to Poland's expectations, the EU institutions did not view this matter as closed. The EC presented information on the state of the rule of law in Poland five times during meetings of the General Affairs Council (in February, April, July, September and December). However, the Council decided not to move on to the next stage of the procedure under Article 7 TEU, which involves determining that there is a "clear risk of a serious breach" of the EU values. The EC continued to criticise the changes to the Polish judiciary. In April, it launched an infringement procedure regarding the faults in the new disciplinary regime for Polish judges.²⁰ Since the Polish government failed to implement the EC's recommendations, in October the EC filed a complaint with the European Court of Justice.

As part of the consultations organised by the EC on methods for improving the instruments of protection of the rule of law in the EU, Poland argued that the

¹⁸ A. Wójcik, "Rząd do Rady Europejskiej, Komisji i państw UE. Arogancka samoobrona," *OKO.Press*, 5 February 2019, www.oko.press.

¹⁹ "Polish PM forecasts big changes for Brussels after EU elections," *Financial Times*, 1 January 2019, www.ft.com.

²⁰ "Rule of Law: European Commission takes new step to protect judges in Poland against political control," European Commission, 3 April 2019, www.ec.europa.eu.

set of instrument which was in place at that time was sufficient.²¹ The government claimed that there was no legal basis for creating additional tools which would go beyond Article 7 TEU. It also expressed its opposition to a mechanism to block the payment of EU funds in the event of violation of the rule of law, which the EC was planning to introduce. In addition, it challenged the sense of another proposal put forward by the EC, which involved establishing a mechanism to monitor the rule of law (the Rule of Law Review Cycle). Annual reports on the assessment of the situation in specific member states were to be the main element of this mechanism. In November 2019, the lack of approval from Poland and Hungary prevented the Council from adopting its conclusions on boosting the formal aspect of its dialogue on the rule of law, for example by taking into account the reports compiled by the EC.²²

The Polish government had an only indirect influence on the negotiations regarding the conditions of Brexit, which were carried out on behalf of the member states by a team led by Michel Barnier. However, it took actions to foster an agreement. One of the contentious issues involved the status of the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. In an interview with *'Rzeczpospolita'* Minister Jacek Czaputowicz suggested that the solution proposed by the EU regarding this matter, which the British government rejected, should only be valid for several years.²³ This was intended to facilitate the process of the British side approving it. However, the Irish government rejected this proposal and media reports suggested that diplomats generally viewed it as departure from the EU's common stance.²⁴ Nevertheless, the final version of the mechanism did include a specific time-frame which resembled the one proposed by the Polish foreign minister.²⁵

Alongside other V4 states, Poland consistently promoted the concept of EU enlargement to include the Western Balkans as an important element of the EU's future development. Therefore, Poland welcomed the opinion, which the EC

²¹ "Further strengthening of the Rule of Law within the Union. Poland's contribution," European Commission, 17 July 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu>.

²² "Rada UE. Polska i Węgry zablokowały projekt konkluzji w sprawie mechanizmu praworządności," *Polskie Radio 24*, 19 November 2019, www.polskieradio24.pl.

²³ "Czaputowicz: Polska wie, jak ratować brexit," *Rzeczpospolita*, 20 January 2019, www.rp.pl. According to the so-called backstop mechanism the United Kingdom could remain in a customs union with the EU until solutions are agreed to enable UK's freedom of pursuing its trade policy and to avoid the emergence of a 'hard border' on the island of Ireland.

²⁴ L. Bayer *et al.*, "Brussels scrambles to deal with Poland's Brexit curveball," *Politico*, 21 January 2019, www.politico.eu.

²⁵ According to the compromise, the parliament of Northern Ireland will decide on further application of EU legislation regarding customs and trade issues in the northern part of the island four years after Brexit.

published in May, recommending the launch of accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia. In June, Poland was among the initiators of a declaration in which 13 member states called on the remaining member states to act in line with the EC's recommendation.²⁶ The Western Balkans summit, which was held in Poznań as the main event of Poland's presidency in the Berlin Process, was an opportunity to promote the benefits of continuing the enlargement policy.²⁷ However, in June the European Council decided to put off the discussion regarding this subject, and at the October summit the launch of the negotiations was blocked by France which in its stance regarding Albania was backed by Denmark and the Netherlands.

Economic Relations

The EU member state were Poland's main trade partners. In 2019, they accounted for 79.8% of Polish exports and 57.7% of Polish imports.²⁸ The trade balance was positive and stood at €53 billion. As regards Poland's trade with specific EU member states, Germany was the biggest partner which accounted for 27.6% of Polish exports and 21.8% of imports. Poland's trade balance with Germany was positive and stood at €14.2 billion. No other EU member state has exceeded the threshold of a 6.1% share in Polish exports and 5% in imports.

In negotiations regarding the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2021–27, Poland was in favour of maintaining the 2014–20 level of funding for the cohesion policy and the common agricultural policy. It emphasised that these policies were of key importance to the process of reducing the disparities in the level of development between Europe's east and west. Poland also promoted this view together with other states of Central-Eastern and Southern Europe under the coalition referred to as Friends of Cohesion.²⁹ During the European Council summit held in December, opposition voiced by these countries blocked the proposal put forward by Finland, which at that time held the presidency of the Council, involving a plan to reduce the joint budget from 1.11% of the EU's GNI, which was the figure proposed by the European Commission in May 2018, to 1.07% of its GNI.

²⁶ "Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers on the EU commitment to the Western Balkans' European integration," MSZ, 11 June 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja. Aside from the Visegrad Group states and the Baltic states, the declaration was signed by Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Malta, Slovenia and Italy.

²⁷ The Berlin Process is an initiative launched by Germany in 2014 to enhance cooperation between a group of EU member states with the Western Balkan states.

²⁸ "Obroty towarowe handlu zagranicznego ogółem i według krajów w okresie styczeń–grudzień 2019 r.," GUS, 11 February 2020, <https://stat.gov.pl>.

²⁹ "Friends of Cohesion: Joint Declaration on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027," Vláda ČR, 5 November 2019, www.vlada.cz.

As regards climate policy, which was an increasingly important topic in the debates on the future of Europe, Poland's representatives argued that the requirements formulated for the member states, such as those regarding the obligation to curb greenhouse gas emissions, should to a greater degree take into account their limitations resulting from their economic situation and historical determinants. They also emphasised that any acceleration of energy transition would require increased funding from the EU. In June, alongside the Czech Republic, Estonia and Hungary, Poland protested against the plan for an obligation for the European economy to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 to be included in the conclusions from the European Council summit. However, the proponents of this concept continued to promote it and Ursula von der Leyen made it a key point of her climate strategy. At the European Council's December summit, carbon neutrality got included in the conclusions, although with the proviso that one member state (meaning Poland) "cannot commit to implement this objective".³⁰ Polish government representatives stressed that their stance did not involve objection to seeking to achieve carbon neutrality, but it resulted from their reluctance to set a specific deadline for attaining this goal in the situation of insufficient knowledge of the scale of EU financial assistance.

Just like in previous debates on the future of the EU's economy, Poland emphasised the need to make full use of the potential of the single market. In this context, the government highlighted the harmful aspects of protectionist actions carried out by the Western European states, which limited the Central European workers' access to their markets.³¹ In February, Poland was among the 17 signatories of a letter to the president of the European Council, which called on him to fully implement the EU Services Directive and to eliminate barriers to free movement of services.³² The group of signatories did not include Germany and France, that is those states which the Polish government representatives most frequently mentioned in the context of harmful protectionist initiatives on the single market.

However, during negotiations on the road transport directive, which formed an element of the so-called mobility package, Poland failed to build a sufficiently big coalition in support of freedom to provide services. In April, the EP approved its stance by a slight majority of the votes (317 to 302), while all Polish MEP voted against. In December, the negotiators acting on behalf of the Parliament and the

³⁰ "European Council conclusions, 12 December 2019," point 1, European Council, www.consilium.europa.eu.

³¹ J. Lepiarz, "Czaputowicz w Berlinie: protekcjonizm zagrożeniem dla UE," *Deutsche Welle*, 19 June 2019, www.dw.com.

³² "The future development of the Single Market and European digital policy, The Netherlands at International Organisations," *The Netherlands and you*, 27 February 2019, www.permanentrepresentations.nl.

Council reached an agreement which required a subsequent approval from both institutions. The compromise, which was divergent from the Polish government's expectations, envisaged that employees of transportation companies which provide their services in another EU member state will be subject to the provisions of the Posted Workers Directive. For companies from Central and Eastern Europe (this refers in particular to Polish and Bulgarian companies which have a strong position on the market) this will equate to the need to raise their drivers' salaries, which in turn will undermine their competitive advantage.

Poland, France and Germany adopted a joint stance in the debate on the future of the EU's competition policy. In February, following the EC's decision to block the merger of two railway companies, the French Alstom company and the German Siemens company, the two states came up with an initiative to modify this policy. They called on the EC to allow for greater concentration on the European market, mainly due to the need to establish companies which could be able to compete with huge global players. They proposed, for example, to reduce the EC's competence to block mergers and to delegate the final decision making processes to the member states. In July, the economy ministers of Poland, France and Germany signed a joint declaration which contained the majority of the French-German proposals.³³ Poland's participation in a French-German battery production programme and the three states' joint declaration on the reform of the common agricultural policy were manifestations of a rapprochement between Poland, France and Germany.³⁴

Poland continued to seek to accelerate work on amending the so-called gas directive, which the EC launched in 2017. Due to the involvement of the Romanian presidency which came up with several compromise solutions, and to Germany modifying its stance, an agreement was reached within the EU Council and, subsequently, between this institution and the EP. In line with the amendment, EU law can now be applied to gas pipelines running from third countries to the EU, both onshore ones and offshore ones running via the territorial waters of EU member states. Its application to the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, which is being built by Gazprom, will result in the pipeline operator being forced to grant third parties access to it.³⁵

³³ "Modernising EU competition policy." Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, 4 July 2019, www.bwmi.de.

³⁴ "Wspólna deklaracja ministrów rolnictwa," MRiRW, 7 October 2019, www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo.

³⁵ For more, see: B. Bieliszczuk, S. Zaręba, "The Gas Directive Amendment and Nord Stream 2: Legal and Political Consequences," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 88 (1334), 2 July 2019, www.pism.pl.

Assessment

In 2019, Poland was an active participant in the debate on the future of the EU and coordinated its stance with its partners from the Visegrad Group. In many issues regarding EU policy it also expanded its alliances and tried to convince other member states, not only its partners from Central and Eastern Europe, to back its views. This cooperation resulted for example in the initiative which involved 17 EU leaders sending a letter to the president of the European Council regarding the future of the single market and in 13 states of the 'new EU' signing a joint declaration on further development of the EU. It should be noted that despite its reservations regarding the growing role of Germany and France in the EU, the Polish government did not refrain from cooperating with the largest member states. This was evident in its support for the German-French concept of European champions and for the project involving the production of batteries.

The intention to expand the alliances was justified in the situation of reduced cooperation within the V4, which was evident in ineffective coordination of positions on staffing issues, which resulted in the absence of appointments of representatives of Central and Eastern Europe to key posts in the EU. The nomination of Poland's representative to the post of the EU Commissioner for Agriculture was another disappointment, all the more so because in the new EC structure the competence of the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development was reduced and the decision-making power in matters linked with state assistance for agriculture in emergency situations was transferred to the Directorate-General for Competition.

The personnel reshuffle carried out in 2019 on key EU posts and the Polish government's renewed mandate have created opportunities for a 'new opening' in the relations between Poland and the EU. An improvement in Poland's cooperation with the EU institutions and the largest member states, which was facilitated by the stifling of disputes over the rule of law, was important in the context of ongoing negotiations on the future shape of the multiannual budget and on the EU climate policy. Due to the fact that in the new institutional term high priority was given to the New Green Deal, the issue of energy transition will be the key challenge Poland will face in the coming years.

Security Policy of the Republic of Poland

ARTUR KACPRZYK, WOJCIECH LORENZ, MARCIN TERLIKOWSKI

Background

In 2019, Poland's immediate international environment continued to be unstable. The main threat to Polish security was posed by the policy pursued by Russia which invariably considered NATO its potential adversary and strengthened its military units in Kaliningrad Oblast and in its Western Military District. In addition, it continued to offer comprehensive support to armed separatists controlling portions of Donetsk and Luhansk regions in eastern Ukraine, and sought to federalise Ukraine and to gain the ability to influence this country. It also intensified its disinformation activities, for example by trying to use the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War to present itself as a victim and to put blame on other states, including Poland, for the war's outbreak. In Europe's southern neighbourhood, instability persisted primarily due to the conflicts in Syria and Libya and to the weakness of the state structures in Iraq.

At the same time, NATO was implementing its decisions taken in previous years to adapt to changing security environment and was preparing for the planned December meeting of heads of state and government in London, which was convened to mark the 70th anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. One constant challenge involved reconciling the positions of those Allies who called for boosting NATO's military capabilities related to deterrence and defence against Russia, with other Allies emphasising the need for increased engagement in the southern strategic direction. Despite the fact that defence spending of the European and Canadian Allies continued to rise for the fifth consecutive year, as a result of which the disparity between their budgets and the U.S. defence budget was no longer a major source of transatlantic tension, it continued to pose a certain challenge to NATO's cohesion.

NATO's attention was also focused on the now defunct American-Russian INF Treaty which bans the production, ownership and testing of land-based cruise missiles and ballistic missiles with the range of 500–5500 kilometres. Russia rejected the U.S. accusations suggesting that its 9M729/SSC-8 missiles violated this treaty and refused to destroy them. As a consequence, in February

the U.S. suspended the INF Treaty's enforcement and withdrew from it in August. Although NATO members supported the U.S. decision and worked to strengthen defence and deterrence against Russian missiles, many of them (including Germany and France) feared that an excessively tough military response could lead to an escalation of tension with Russia. This is why NATO, unlike Russia, stressed that it did not intend to deploy new missiles with nuclear warheads in Europe (although the U.S. was working on conventional variants of such missiles).

U.S. pressure put on the Allies to adapt (not only within NATO, but also within the EU) to the challenges posed by the rising power of China, which the U.S. views as its major and long-term strategic rival, was a new source of tension within NATO. For example, the U.S. strove to pressurise the Allies to prevent Chinese companies from investing in 5G infrastructure due to ICT security risks linked with such investment activity.¹ This triggered dilemmas in numerous European states which feared that their economic relations with China could suffer, should they chose to meet the U.S. demands.²

Shortly before the London meeting, French President Emmanuel Macron's statement that NATO was 'brain dead' (although it demonstrated effectiveness in the military aspect, the use of its potential to consult and coordinate actions at the strategic level was highly insufficient) triggered huge tension within NATO. By making this comment, Macron mainly referred to the fact that the Allies had not been consulted regarding Donald Trump's decision to withdraw U.S. troops from northern Syria and as regards Turkey's offensive in Syria which was facilitated by this move. This offensive targeted the People's Defence Units (YPG) associated with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) which Turkey considers a terrorist organisation. At the same time, the YPG were the U.S.'s main ally in the fight against the so-called Islamic State in Syria. In this context, Macron once again stressed that Europe should start building its strategic autonomy in order to make itself independent of potential volatility in U.S. security policy and of the possible paralysis of NATO. Macron also suggested that dialogue with Russia should be deepened, and downplayed the threat posed by Russia.

The development of the European Union's defence initiatives, as part of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), sparked fewer tensions compared with the problems within NATO. Under the Permanent Structured Cooperation mechanism (PESCO), the EU member states focused on implementing 34 joint projects agreed in 2018. They did not continue their previous debate on strategic

¹ "Remarks by Vice President Pence at NATO Engages: The Alliance at 70," The White House, 3 April 2019, www.whitehouse.gov.

² L. Gibadło, "Berlin's 5G Dilemma: Prospects for Chinese Firms' Participation in Building the German Network," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 16 (1446), 4 February 2020, www.pism.pl.

issues such as PESCO's ultimate shape and level of ambition. The exception, however, was the issue of the rules of participation of non-EU countries in PESCO (which was to be regulated in a special decision issued by the EU Council) and in European Defence Fund (EDF) projects. In April, the European Parliament adopted a draft regulation establishing the EDF for 2021–27, leaving this and other issues to the Council for final determination. The U.S. heavily criticised the absence of preferential terms for non-EU NATO member states, causing consternation.³

At the same time, two visions regarding the implementation of the concept of strategic autonomy were clashing in the EU. The first one, presented mainly by Poland, the Baltic states and Romania, involved close coordination with NATO so as to avoid additional tensions in transatlantic relations and not to weaken NATO. The other, promoted mainly by France, was based on the concept of strengthening the EU's defence capabilities as an alternative to the U.S. and NATO (this was the message advocated mainly by President Macron). Elections to the European Parliament resulted in a reshuffle in EU institutions' top positions. In her keynote speech, Ursula von der Leyen, who was elected the new President of the European Commission, declared that one of the goals of her cabinet would be to build a European Security Union understood as a complementary instrument rather than an alternative to NATO.⁴ Alongside this, France continued to develop the European Intervention Initiative which was joined by new countries (Sweden, Finland and Italy), increasing its membership to 13. The development of consultations within this cooperation mechanism once again raised questions about its impact on and relationship with NATO and the EU.

Goals and Assumptions

Security issues were at the top of the list of Polish foreign policy priorities in 2019.⁵ Most importantly, Poland intended to maintain strong transatlantic ties and to boost NATO's potential for deterrence and defence against Russia. Efforts to achieve this were pursued on two tracks: within NATO and in strategic partnership with the U.S. Poland sought to strengthen the allied military presence,

³ Undersecretaries of state Ellen Lord from the Department of Defence and Andrea J. Thompson from the Department of State wrote a special letter regarding this matter; see S. Erlanger, "Europe vows to spend more on defense, but U.S. still isn't happy," *The New York Times*, 6 June 2019, www.nytimes.com.

⁴ D. Keating, "Von der Leyen Sets Out Vision for a Sovereign EU," *Berlin Policy Journal*, 10 September 2019, www.berlinpolicyjournal.com.

⁵ "A stenographic report from Mateusz Morawiecki's 2019 policy statement," MC, www.gov.pl/web/cyfryzacja; "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

especially the U.S. military presence on its territory and on NATO's Eastern Flank as a whole. Within NATO, it sought to improve its ability to quickly mobilise and redeploy additional troops to this region in the event of a crisis and to maintain an 'open door' policy.

Within the EU, Poland's paramount goal was to ensure that the progress of new initiatives, as well as debates on European strategic autonomy, does not jeopardise either NATO or the transatlantic relations and that its purpose is to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defence capabilities. This is why Poland sought to focus member states' attention on developing EU-NATO cooperation, particularly in the field of military mobility. At the same time, it sought opportunities to increase its practical involvement in PESCO projects and advocated in favour of maintaining those EDF provisions which were favourable to it in 2021– 27.

Poland's Policy within NATO

The Polish authorities were hoping that the London meeting would be a signal of NATO's unity and its continued adaptation to threats incoming from various directions, and that it would help to defuse tension between Europe and the U.S. over the distribution of responsibilities and costs of maintaining security.⁶ This is why the representatives of Poland strongly criticised President Macron's statements and argued that these weakened NATO's unity and even raised doubts as to France's readiness to fulfil its allied commitments. They argued that Macron's criticism of the U.S. was unfounded, stressed the increase in U.S. military involvement in Europe in recent years and viewed Trump's pressure regarding the required threshold of defence spending in NATO member states as justified. Although Poland did not challenge the need for maintaining dialogue with Russia, it stressed that the situation at that time did not foster any attempts to deepen it due to Russia's aggressive policy.⁷ In order to alleviate this tension, President Duda met with President Macron in London.

One unexpected challenge that Poland encountered was posed by Turkey's stance in which Ankara announced that it would block the decision on updating the defence plans of Poland and the Baltic states, which was being prepared for adoption at the summit. In this way, Turkey sought to win stronger support from the Allies for its version of threat perception, including the recognition of the

⁶ K. Szczerski, "Prezydent oczekuje, że w Londynie NATO potwierdzi swą jedność," *Prezydent.pl*, 2 December 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

⁷ J. Shotter, "Poland's prime minister brands Macron *irresponsible* on Nato," *Financial Times*, 10 November 2019, www.ft.com; "Czaputowicz: UE zaniepokojona polityką Francji wobec NATO," *Defence24*, 12 November 2019, www.defence24.pl.

Kurdish YPG as a terrorist organisation. In order to resolve this issue, President Duda first held a telephone conversation with the Turkish president, and then met with him in person during the summit (together with the leaders of the Baltic states). In London, Turkey ultimately agreed to grant its political approval to decisions on updating the plans.⁸

Poland assessed the NATO summit in London as a success.⁹ In spite of the tensions, the Allies issued a declaration confirming that NATO would continue to adapt to the full spectrum of challenges and threats, including those posed by Russia. Another event which Poland viewed as significant was the announcement of progress in the implementation of the 2018 NATO Readiness Initiative (NRI), also known as 4x30. The Allies announced the availability of specific combat units: 30 land battalions, 30 air squadrons and 30 warships, which will be ready for deployment within 30 days.

However, the London meeting failed to resolve numerous problems within NATO which could potentially hamper the pursuit of Poland's interests linked with boosting NATO's defence and deterrence capabilities. Shortly after the summit, Turkey declared that it would block further work on updating the plans for Poland and the Baltics, if the Allies fail to agree to the solutions Ankara had proposed regarding its own security.¹⁰ President Macron softened his rhetoric regarding NATO but maintained his views on the need to build Europe's strategic autonomy and to boost its dialogue with Russia. Despite his unusually calm speeches, President Trump announced further pressure on NATO Allies regarding defence spending and referred in particular to Germany which was one of the few NATO countries to declare no plans to increase defence spending to at least 2% of GDP by 2024. In response to U.S. demands, NATO leaders agreed in London that the China's rising power required a NATO-wide response. However, they only generally suggested that this rise triggered both opportunities and challenges for the Allies. Meanwhile, in response to Macron's criticism, NATO countries committed the Secretary General to launch a strategic reflection process in order to identify methods to strengthen political consultations within NATO and to boost the political aspect of the Alliance.

In addition, in 2019 NATO failed to finish its work on its response to the collapse of the INF Treaty. While Poland sought a tough military response, its rhetoric

⁸ "Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Heads of State and/or Government," NATO, 4 November 2019, www.nato.int.

⁹ "Prezydent: Szczyt w Londynie to sukces NATO i zwycięstwo Polski," *Prezydent.pl*, 4 December 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

¹⁰ A. Brzozowski, "Turkey continues to block NATO's Eastern defence plans," *Euractiv*, 10 December 2019, www.euractiv.com.

remained cautious. Although journalists and experts from NATO countries referred to Poland as a country which was ready to host possible U.S. medium-range missiles (and sought to do so), Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz assured the public that this could only happen under joint NATO-wide arrangements.¹¹

Just like in previous years, Poland used regional cooperation formats (the so-called Bucharest Nine, the Visegrad Group) to devise a joint assessment of threats and to coordinate the policies of the Eastern Flank states within NATO and the EU. It also sought to present itself as a reliable Ally which meets its obligations within NATO. In 2019, it was one of the nine NATO member states allocating at least 2% of their GDP to defence. During the meeting in London, it announced that it would act as the framework nation for one of the six land forces brigades formed as part of the NRI. For the needs of this brigade, it pledged to form a tank battalion, a mechanised infantry battalion and a brigade command structure. In addition, it offered two squadrons of F-16 fighter jets and two mine countermeasures ships for the needs of the NRI.

Poland continued its involvement in NATO missions. In the first half of the year, the Polish Air Force took part in the Baltic Air Policing (BAP) mission for the eighth time. In addition, Poland maintained its contingent as part of a battalion-sized battle group in Latvia and sent a company-sized unit to Romania. Polish troops were involved in the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan (330 soldiers), the KFOR in Kosovo (240) and in a training mission in Iraq (268, including soldiers involved in the activities of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS). In Afghanistan and Kosovo, the Polish contingents were the sixth largest contingents among those offered by NATO member states.

Bilateral Cooperation with the U.S.

In 2019, the most important event for Polish-American security cooperation involved Presidents Andrzej Duda and Donald Trump signing a declaration on increasing the U.S. military presence in Poland, which happened at the White House on 12 June.¹² The U.S. pledged to increase the number of its troops rotating to Poland from 4500 to 5500. This included the creation of the division's forward command, deployment of more logistics officers and special forces soldiers and of a reconnaissance drone squadron (the presence of these machines has thus far been much smaller and irregular). Poland, for its part, pledged to bear the total

¹¹ S. Taheran, "Select Reactions to the INF Treaty Crisis," Arms Control Association, www.armscontrol.org.

¹² "Joint Declaration of the Presidents on Defense Cooperation in the Presence of U.S. Armed Forces on Polish Territory," *Prezydent.pl*, 12 June 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

cost of building or modernising and maintaining the necessary infrastructure. Apart from the facilities for the new units, this included a joint combat training centre, a loading and unloading base for the U.S. Air Force, as well as new or improved installations for the troops already rotating to Poland (an armoured brigade, a support battalion and an airborne combat brigade which has a more limited presence). On 23 September, in New York (during a UN meeting) the Presidents signed another declaration specifying the location of most of the new troops and installations.¹³ On 4 October, the Mission Command Element in Poznań was renamed the First Infantry Division (Forward).

Although Poland failed to achieve the initially announced goal regarding a permanent presence of division-sized U.S. troops (10,000-15,000 soldiers), the Polish authorities viewed the new arrangements as a qualitative shift. They argued that the declaration defined the continued rotating presence of U.S. troops as 'permanent', which was intended to confirm the U.S.'s political readiness to ensure its long-term military involvement in Poland. As announced in the declaration, the purpose of regular consultations on this issue was to allow joint planning in a multiannual perspective. The Polish representatives also stressed that this process could lead to a further increase in U.S. military presence in Poland in excess of the units specified in the June declaration.¹⁴ This was to be facilitated by improved infrastructure and training facilities. They also argued that the 'core' of the U.S. division, i.e. its command (which was to be expanded) and important support units, would be permanently present in Poland. This was intended to allow, in the event of a crisis, to quickly assemble a full division in Poland, which would consist of both the forces present in Poland on a rotating basis and units stationed in the U.S. and in Western Europe, whose redeployment and reception would be facilitated by new infrastructural investments and the already planned equipment depots for the U.S. armoured brigade in Powidz. In their statements offered to the Polish media, representatives of the Polish leadership stressed, both after and before signing the declaration, that the intention never was to build a single large U.S. base in Poland, and that President Duda's use of the phrase 'Fort Trump' in 2018 was an element of Poland's negotiating strategy towards the U.S. administration.¹⁵

¹³ "Joint Declaration on Advancing Defense Cooperation," *Prezydent.pl*, 23 September 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

¹⁴ J. Palowski, "Szatkowski dla Defence24.pl: W Polsce będzie obecny na stałe 'rdzeń' amerykańskiej dywizji," *Defence24*, 15 July 2019, www.defence24.pl; I. Borańska-Chmielewska, "Rozpoczynamy nową erę," *Polska Zbrojna*, 4 July 2019, www.polska-zbrojna.pl.

¹⁵ "Prezydent: Fort Trump był w jakimś sensie strategią negocjacyjną," *TVP Parlament*, 12 June 2019, www.tvpparlament.pl; "Szef BBN w Onet.pl o 'Fort Trump'," *BBN*, 13 March 2019, www.bbn.gov.pl.

The June declaration stressed that its implementation would boost NATO's deterrence and defence capabilities, something Poland had long tried to convince the Allies to do. A week before his visit to Washington, at the NATO headquarters in Brussels President Duda met with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, who thanked Poland for keeping the Allies informed about the progress of the talks with the U.S.,¹⁶ and then positively assessed the signing of the declaration and its significance for transatlantic relations. The German ambassador to Poland, who back in January expressed his concern about Russia's reaction to increased U.S. presence on NATO's Eastern Flank, now softened his stance.¹⁷ He said that the agreed increase in rotating presence did not contradict the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act.¹⁸

In August, a social media post by U.S. Ambassador to Poland Georgette Mosbacher, suggesting that some U.S. troops could be moved from Germany to Poland, sparked controversy in NATO. Mosbacher stressed that, unlike Germany, Poland was spending at least 2% of its GDP on defence. Similar statements were offered by President Trump during the signing of the June declaration with Poland. He expressed doubts regarding the purpose of maintaining a large U.S. contingent in Germany and stressed that additional U.S. troops would be redeployed to Poland from their bases in Germany or another European country.¹⁹ However, Polish government representatives sought to avoid becoming involved in U.S.-German disputes. They stressed that Poland was not seeking the transfer of U.S. troops from Germany, and that it was up to the U.S. to decide which units would be deployed in Poland. They also pointed out that U.S. troops in Germany serve as potential military reserves for allied countries and units on NATO's Eastern Flank.²⁰

Poland was of the opinion that the suspension of some U.S. investments in military infrastructure in Poland, which resulted from the fact that in September the funds earmarked for their implementation (\$130.4 million) were shifted to finance the construction of a wall on the border with Mexico, had little impact on

¹⁶ "Joint press point with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda, NATO," NATO, 4 June 2019, www.nato.int.

¹⁷ "Wiceszef MSZ: obecność wojsk USA poprawi bezpieczeństwo w regionie. Ambasador Niemiec przedstawia jednak pewne obawy," *Polskie Radio 24*, 24 January 2019, www.polskieradio24.pl.

¹⁸ J. Bielecki, "Ambasador Rolf Nikel: Niemcom dobrze się współpracuje i z PO, i z PiS," *Rzeczpospolita*, 7 July 2019, www.rp.pl.

¹⁹ "Remarks by President Trump and President Duda of the Republic of Poland Before Bilateral Meeting," The White House, 12 June 2019, www.whitehouse.gov.

²⁰ "US troops in Poland an important deterrent, foreign minister says," *DPA International*, 15 August 2019, www.dpa-international.com; J. Posaner, "Polish PM on defense: 'I wouldn't say Germany is a freeloader, but ...,'" *Politico*, 22 August 2019, www.politico.eu.

its military cooperation with the U.S. The Ministry of Defence stressed that the suspended projects (including an aviation fuel depot and an ammunition depot) would be implemented later, and that they represented a small portion of the total U.S. funds affected by budget shifts (a total of \$3.6 billion, including \$771 million earmarked for investments in Europe). The ministry was also hoping that these projects' funding would be included in the next U.S. defence budget. However, due to the fault on the part of a U.S. contractor, the delay in the construction of the Aegis Ashore missile defence base in Redzikowo, which initially was planned to be completed in 2018, increased to at least two years.²¹

Poland continued its cooperation with the U.S. as part of its armed forces modernisation process. It ordered four S-70i Black Hawk helicopters for the needs of its special forces and signed an agreement for the delivery of 18 HIMARS rocket launchers, while the U.S. Congress approved the sale of 32 F-35A fighter jets to Poland (intergovernmental negotiations continued until the end of the year).²²

Poland and the CSDP

Poland's activity under the CSDP was less intensive than its involvement in NATO and in cooperation with the U.S. Poland's participation in the debate on European strategic autonomy was the most important area of this activity. Representatives of the Polish leadership, including President Andrzej Duda and Minister of National Defence Mariusz Błaszczak, repeatedly emphasised the need to develop new EU defence initiatives which could be complementary to NATO and could contribute to increased Allied deterrence and defence potential.²³ As a promoter of this stance, Poland belong to a small group of EU member states (which included Sweden, Romania, Lithuania and Latvia) which advocated the vision of the CSDP as an instrument to strengthen the European NATO members. This contrasted with the aspirations of the militarily strongest EU member states, in particular France but also Germany, Spain and Italy, which mainly viewed the development of European military capabilities as a method for making themselves

²¹ T. Capaccio, "US hits setback in bid to shield Europe against Iran missiles," *Stars and Stripes*, 9 December 2019, www.stripes.com.

²² For more, see: the chapter written by Mateusz Piotrowski, "Poland's Policy towards the United States" in this volume.

²³ See: "Prezydent Duda podczas spotkania Grupy Arraiolos w Atenach: Inicjatywy obronne UE nie powinny konkurować z NATO," *W polityce*, 11 October 2019, www.wpolityce.pl; "Błaszczak: projekty UE powinny stanowić uzupełnienie projektów NATO," *Defence24*, 16 May 2019, www.defence24.pl.

independent of the U.S., not only as regards the defence industry and military operations, but also in terms of security policy in its broadest sense.

In this context, Poland's stance regarding the principles of access of non-EU states to PESCO and to the EDF was not surprising. In the debate on the conditions for non-EU states' participation in PESCO projects, Poland argued that this mechanism should in particular enable non-EU NATO member states to easily participate in these projects.²⁴ Some of the EU member states shared this approach (once again these included Sweden, Romania, Lithuania and Latvia) which reflected the views of not only the U.S. but also, for example, Canada and Norway. However, another group of states, led by France, feared that if PESCO is fully opened to non-EU states, this could distort the significance of this instrument (and also of the EDF) as a tool for supporting exclusively European defence, in particular the EU defence industry.²⁵ This was accompanied by a dispute over the role of Turkey, in which Greece and Cyprus were opposed to Ankara's potential cooperation with the EU under PESCO and the EDF. This prevented the EU Council from adopting its final decision by the end of the year because no consensus was reached in the Council regarding the Finnish presidency's compromise proposal presented in November.²⁶

In 2019, Poland launched its first independent project under PESCO. On 18 November, the Council approved a third batch of PESCO projects made up of 13 initiatives including the Special Operations Forces Medical Training Centre (SMTTC) which is to be established at the Military Medical Training Centre in Łódź.²⁷ Poland continued to call on France and Germany to include their bilateral MGCS project, aimed at developing a new generation European tank, in PESCO (and to open up to new partners). However, there was no response to these calls.²⁸ During the Council meeting in November, Poland announced its intention to

²⁴ "Mariusz Błaszczak: Polska za otwarciem PESCO na kraje NATO spoza UE," *Polskie Radio 24*, 14 May 2019, www.polskieradio24.pl.

²⁵ A draft EDF resolution for 2021–27 adopted by the PE included provisions stating that although non-EU companies are allowed to take part in consortia which use funding from EDF, they are not eligible for EU funds and are not allowed to freely dispose of intellectual property created during research and research & development activities. At the same time, the Council's power to amend these provisions was maintained and the definition of an 'associated country' (which was initially defined as a country belonging to the European Economic Area), which could take part in the EDF on preferential terms, was expanded. Cf. M. Madej, M. Terlikowski, "Wspólna Polityka Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony w 2019 r. Czas pierwszych ocen," in: *Rocznik Strategiczny 2019/20*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2020, pp. 74–75.

²⁶ For more, see: M. Terlikowski, "PESCO: Two Years Later," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 10 (1440), 23 January 2020, www.pism.pl.

²⁷ M. Kowalska-Sendek, E. Korsak, "PESCO z polskim projektem," *Polska Zbrojna*, 13 November 2019, www.polska-zbrojna.pl.

²⁸ A. Słojewska, "Polska chce budować europejski czołg," *Rzeczpospolita*, 14 May 2019, www.rp.pl.

join another four PESCO projects, thereby increasing their number to 11 out of 47 (see Table).

Table. PESCO projects with Poland's participation

Bold font indicates projects Poland joined in 2019

Name of project	Goal of cooperation	Coordinator / participant countries
Military Mobility	Facilitate the transport of military personnel and equipment within the borders of the EU by abolishing legal and administrative barriers.	The Netherlands / all countries participating in PESCO
Maritime (semi)Autonomous Systems for Mine Countermeasures (MAS MCM)	Development of underwater, surface and aerial technologies for maritime mine countermeasures.	Belgium / Greece, Latvia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Poland
Harbour & Maritime Surveillance and Protection (HARMSPRO)	Development of an integrated system of platform, sensors and software to monitor the situation in harbours and coastal areas.	Italy / Greece, Portugal, Poland
Integrated Unmanned Ground System (MUGS)	Development of a modular UGV capable of carrying out transport and reconnaissance tasks.	Estonia / Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands, Spain, Poland
Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe and Support to Operations	Enabling mutual initiatives involving making military logistical infrastructure available to facilitate transport of troops and equipment within the EU and to non-EU locations.	Germany / Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland
European Secure Software Defined Radio (ESSOR)	Development of technologies for digital, encrypted military communication.	France / Belgium, Germany, Spain, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Poland
Cyber Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security (CRRT)	Creation of teams of experts to detect and combat cyber threats and to enable mutual assistance between member states in emergency situations.	Lithuania / Estonia, Finland, Croatia, the Netherlands, Romania, Poland

Name of project	Goal of cooperation	Coordinator / participant countries
Special Operations Forces Medical Training Centre (SMTTC)	Provision of medical training for special forces operators in line with U.S. and NATO standards.	Poland / Hungary
Integrated European Joint Training and Simulation Centre (EUROSIM)	Development of an electronic platform enabling the organisation of joint real time simulations and tactical training by education and training centres located in different countries.	Hungary / France, Germany, Slovenia, Poland
EU Radio Navigation Solutions (EURAS)	Development of earth technologies for military radio navigation using the signals emitted by Galileo navigation satellites.	France / Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland
EU Collaborative Warfare Capabilities (ECoWAR)	Increase the ability of the project participants' armed forces to carry out collective activities in the entire operation spectrum.	France / Belgium, Spain, Romania, Sweden, Hungary, Poland

Source: *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2018, PISM, 2020, p. 46; EU website presenting the PESCO mechanism, <https://pesco.europa.eu>.

In the legislative process regarding the regulation establishing the EDF for 2021–27, Poland focused on the provisions relating to medium-sized enterprises (so-called mid-caps, employing up to 3000 individuals). It sought to maintain the rule, which was adopted for the EDF in the 2017–20 pilot period, to increase the amount of EDF funding (by 10%) offered to consortia which included companies of this size, thereby making them attractive partners for Western European defence industry giants. The draft regulation adopted by the European Parliament on 18 April (Law and Justice MEP Zdzisław Krasnodębski was the rapporteur) included these provisions, which should be viewed as Poland's success, as the initial proposal presented by the European Commission (EC) back in 2018, had set a lower level of funding.²⁹ In addition, Poland criticised the proposal to reduce the proposed EDF budget from the €13 billion initially planned by the EC to €6 billion. Such a proposal was included in the compromise EU budget plan for 2021–27 presented by the Finnish presidency in December as a starting point for further negotiations on the EU budget size and spending priorities in that period.

²⁹ For more, see: M. Terlikowski, "European Defence Fund: Between Economy and Politics," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 43 (1473), 12 March 2020, www.pism.pl.

In the second half of the year, the Visegrad Battlegroup (BG V4) was on duty in the system of EU rapid response units. Poland was its framework nation, which means that it was responsible for contributing a bigger share of its forces and resources (including the 6th Airborne Brigade from Kraków), providing operational command, as well as for the harmonisation and certification of the units making up the group, which hailed from all four Visegrad Group states and Croatia. Poland primarily viewed the BG V4 as a project facilitating enhanced defence cooperation in the Visegrad Group, and announced that the next BG V4 would be put on duty in 2023, that is a year later than previously planned, and that its standby would last 12 months instead of 6 months.³⁰ Polish soldiers took part in EU missions and military operations: EUNAVFOR MED Sophia (one M-28 Bryza reconnaissance aircraft including crew, stationed in Sicily, and a special forces unit trained to carry out activities from other states' warships)³¹, EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina (around 50 soldiers) and EUTM RCA in the Central African Republic (2 soldiers).

Assessment

2019 saw a reinforcement of military security guarantees for Poland despite political tensions within NATO and negative trends in Russia's policy. However, certain factors which in the long term could weaken NATO and, thus, Poland's security were becoming increasingly apparent. Within the EU, the voice of Poland and several other states (mainly those located on the Eastern Flank) was unable to offset the increasingly strong opinions expressed by the largest EU member states (in particular France and Germany), suggesting that the development of EU defence initiatives should be aimed at increasing the EU's ability to engage operationally on its own, without support from the U.S. or NATO. Ursula von der Leyen's declarations that the EU strategic autonomy would boost NATO stood in sharp contrast to statements offered by President Macron and Chancellor Merkel. Increasingly frequently, France and Germany reiterated their suggestions that the process of defence integration in Europe should 'go beyond the EU'. This could be achieved for example by creating a European Security Council, to which Poland was opposed. France, for its part, was involved in the development of the European Intervention Initiative.

Against this backdrop, Poland's principal success involved persuading President Trump, who was generally reluctant to U.S. foreign military involvement, to

³⁰ „Unijne dowództwo w Krakowie,” *Polska Zbrojna*, 28 June 2019, www.polska-zbrojna.pl.

³¹ R. Lesiecki, “Unijna operacja na M. Śródziemnym przedłużona, ale bez okrętów,” *Defence 24*, 29 March 2019, www.defence24.pl.

declare that additional troops would be deployed to Poland. Despite the fact that the scale of this reinforcement was smaller than what Poland had preferred, the new units and installations may significantly boost the operational capabilities of the forward-deployed U.S. forces and, most importantly, the potential for a rapid redeployment of further forces in the event of a crisis. At the same time, the outcome of the Polish-American negotiations was proof of the fact that even during a spell of favourable bilateral relations with the U.S. and with President Trump, certain limitations regarding the U.S. presence on the Eastern Flank persisted. The Pentagon's commitment to a rotational form of this presence, with larger forces being maintained as reserves, continued to be evident. This approach resulted not only from U.S. operational concepts, but also from financial issues and from the need to concurrently ensure U.S. involvement in other regions.

However, Trump's intention to increase the U.S. military presence in Poland and to possibly reduce this presence in Germany, as well as his opinion that the purpose of such redeployment was not so much to boost deterrence focused on Russia, but rather to 'reward' the former and to 'punish' the latter Ally, posed a serious political risk to Poland. In such a situation, it would be particularly unfavourable if NATO states and the political forces in the U.S. came to think that Poland had encouraged such actions. This could undermine the consensus in Congress regarding the plan to increase U.S. military presence in Poland. Although Poland was able to prevent the emergence of such an opinion and attempted to do so, it continued to be exposed to the negative consequences of Trump's more comprehensive dispute with Germany and other NATO states. In 2019, Poland was already affected by other events beyond its control: from the suspension of some U.S. military investments in Poland to the much more dangerous development involving Turkey blocking defence plan updates regarding NATO's Eastern Flank.

Poland's Foreign Economic Policy

DAMIAN WNUKOWSKI

Poland's economic situation in 2019 was favourable, as the unemployment rate decreased and salaries rose, which was conducive to a positive situation of household budgets and translated into high private consumption (however its increase was smaller than in 2018). Despite this, the pace of economic growth was slower than in previous years. This was due to factors such as a decline in the global economic situation, including in Poland's most important trade partners. This resulted in a significant decrease in the trade growth dynamic compared with 2018. Although the importance of trade with non-European countries grew insignificantly, the EU member states continued to be Poland's most important partners. Compared with 2018, an increase in the value of foreign direct investments (FDI) carried out in Poland, and in the value of Polish investments carried out abroad, was recorded (while in 2018 divestments were recorded). Actions to support Polish business abroad and to promote the Polish economy globally were carried out by Poland's prime minister and president, individual ministries (such as the ministry of foreign affairs), as well as various government agencies, in particular the Polish Investment and Trade Agency (PAIH).

The Macroeconomic Situation

According to data compiled by Statistics Poland (GUS), in 2019 Poland's real gross domestic product (GDP), which is calculated taking into account the recorded price increases, increased by 4.1% y/y. This result was 1.2 percentage points lower than in 2018.¹ Private consumption rose by 3.9% y/y, which was due, among other things, to a favourable situation on the job market. Unemployment rate was very low: according to GUS it stood at 5.2% at the end of the year, which was the lowest since 1989. An increase was recorded for both the number of working individuals (up around 1%) and the average employment in the enterprise sector (up 2.7%). The average monthly salary in this sector increased by 4.1% in real terms.² Consumption

¹ In 2018, the annual GDP growth rate was 5.3%. See: "Informacja Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego w sprawie zaktualizowanego szacunku PKB według kwartałów za lata 2018–2019," *Informacje sygnalne*, GUS, 22 April 2020, www.stat.gov.pl.

² "Sytuacja społeczno-gospodarcza kraju w 2019 r.," *Analizy statystyczne*, 2019, no. 12, GUS, www.stat.gov.pl.

was also influenced by social welfare programmes (including the 'Family 500+' programme which was expanded starting from 1 July to include all children in the family, and the decision to pay out a one-time assistance payment under the 'Pension+' programme, which was announced in May). However, the dynamic of the growth in consumption was lower than in 2018, when it stood at 4.2%. This was likely due to Polish citizens saving the money they had received under social welfare programmes and to price increases ahead of the expected economic decline.³ Factors suggesting that the economic situation began to decline included a slower dynamic of sold production of industry (up 3.9%) and sold production of construction (up 2%) than that recorded in 2018.⁴ In 2019, demand for investment increased by 7.2%, while the initial estimate was 6.9%; nevertheless this figure was smaller than in 2018, when gross fixed capital formation increased by 9.4%.⁵ The bigger than expected rise in investment may have been caused by both the favourable financial standing of companies and the implementation of projects supported from EU funds (the final stage of the spending of funds under the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2014–20 was underway). However, the smaller rate of growth compared with 2018 may have been due to companies saving their money ahead of the expected economic slowdown. The rate of investment (the relation of gross fixed capital formation to GDP at current prices) increased by 0.6 percentage points and stood at 18.8% (compared with 18.2% in 2018).⁶ However, this was much less than the government's goal which assumed that the share of investment in Poland's GDP would be 25% by 2020.⁷ For reasons which included wage pressure, 2019 saw an increase in the rate of inflation compared with 2018—the average annual price index of consumer goods and services stood at 2.3%⁸ (while in 2018 the figure was 1.6%). Still, it was below the threshold set by the NBP.⁹

³ "Wiemy, o ile urosła polska gospodarka w 2019 roku. GUS podał dane," *Polskie Radio 24*, 29 January 2020, www.polskieradio24.pl.

⁴ "Sytuacja społeczno-gospodarcza kraju w 2019 r.," *op. cit.*

⁵ "Informacja Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego w sprawie zaktualizowanego szacunku PKB według kwartałów za lata 2018–2019," *op. cit.*

⁶ S. Buchholtz, "PKB w 2019 roku. Rośnie stopa inwestycji, słabnie konsumpcja prywatna," *Bank.pl*, 29 January 2020, www.bank.pl.

⁷ "Plan na rzecz odpowiedzialnego rozwoju," MFiPR, www.gov.pl/web/fundusze-regiony.

⁸ The biggest increase was recorded in the following categories: foodstuffs and non-alcoholic beverages (4.9%), restaurants and hotels (4.4%) and education (3.6%). See: "Komunikat Prezesa Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego z dnia 15 stycznia 2020 r. w sprawie średniorocznego wskaźnika cen towarów i usług konsumpcyjnych ogółem w 2019 r.," GUS, 15 January 2020, www.stat.gov.pl.

⁹ This threshold was 2.5%, with a deviation of up to 1 percentage point upwards or downwards. See: *Polityka pieniężna*, NBP, www.nbp.pl. However, in December 2019 the rate of inflation increased to 3.4% y/y. See: "Wskaźniki cen towarów i usług konsumpcyjnych w grudniu 2019 r.," *Informacje sygnalne*, GUS, 15 January 2020, www.stat.gov.pl.

The favourable economic situation of the Polish economy translated into positive results in public finance. According to Statistics Poland, in 2019 the general government deficit stood at PLN16.828 billion. This accounted for 0.7% of Poland's GDP, while the figure for 2017 was 1.5% and for 2018 0.2%, which shows that the downward trend was not maintained. Poland's public debt was PLN 1.045 trillion or 46% of its GDP, which means that it decreased by 2.8 percentage points compared with 2018.¹⁰ The situation in Poland's neighbourhood was the main challenge to its economy. Deteriorating economic situation worldwide, including in the European Union, the escalating U.S.–China trade dispute, concern about the possible U.S. decision to impose tariffs on imports from the EU, as well as the prospect of Brexit all aggravated the situation of Polish exporters. Due to a slower pace of economic growth recorded by Poland's major trade partners, that is the EU member states, compared with previous years (1.5% compared with 2% in 2018 and 2.6% in 2017), in particular the eurozone countries (1.2% compared with 1.9% in 2018 and 2.5% in 2017), their domestic demand declined, including their demand for goods imported from Poland. This resulted in a decrease in the rate of Poland's economic growth at the end of 2019 (in December it fell to 3.2% y/y) and a rise in unemployment figures (up 0.1 percentage points in December compared with November). Another problem which hampered the operation of companies in Poland involved the shortfall of skilled workers, which was due to factors such as emigration in the last more than a decade and early retirement programmes.¹¹ This created a financial burden to the pension system. However, in 2019 there were no problems with sustaining this system due to a favourable situation on the job market and significant amounts paid to this system as pension contributions.

Goals of Poland's Foreign Economic Policy

Supporting Poland's economic development and protecting the interests of Polish entrepreneurs were among the foreign policy priorities for 2019 listed by Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz.¹² Just like in previous years, the Polish

¹⁰ "Komunikat dotyczący deficytu i długu sektora instytucji rządowych i samorządowych w 2019 r.," *Informacje sygnalne*, GUS, 22 April 2020, www.stat.gov.pl.

¹¹ As a result of a retirement age reform carried out in 2017, the retirement age for women was lowered to 60 years (from 65 years), and for men to 65 years (from 67 years).

¹² See: "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume; "Minister Jacek Czaputowicz na spotkaniu z przedstawicielami polskiego biznesu," MSZ, 10 December 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

government's main specific goals as regards foreign economic policy included the intention to boost the level of internationalisation of the Polish economy¹³ by: a) increasing Poland's exports, b) diversifying the directions of foreign sale and boosting the share of developing markets in it, c) boosting investments, both foreign investments in Poland, with special emphasis on state-of-the-art projects with a high added value, and Polish investments carried out abroad, d) building a positive image for Poland as a stable trade and investment partner.¹⁴ These goals were convergent for example with the Strategy for Responsible Development,¹⁵ which charted the Polish government's actions in economic affairs, and the Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021.¹⁶ In his policy statement presented at the Sejm in March 2019, the minister of foreign affairs also said that Polish diplomacy intended to increase the participation of Polish businesses in tenders and projects of international organizations.¹⁷

Foreign Trade

In 2019, the value of Poland's foreign trade amounted to €475.1 billion, which was €23.3 billion more compared with 2018 (up 5%). The value of Poland's exports stood at €238.1 billion and was €14.5 billion (or 6%) higher than in 2018, while its imports reached €237 billion, which means that they increased by almost €9 billion (4%) y/y. However, the export and import dynamic was significantly smaller than in 2018, when an increase of 8.2% and 10.7% was recorded respectively.¹⁸ The faster pace of growth of Poland's exports than of its imports, which was recorded in 2019, may have been due to factors such as devaluation of the zloty, which was favourable to exports, and Poland's reduced consumption compared with the previous years. As a consequence, a trade deficit, which in 2018 stood at €4.5 billion, transformed into a trade surplus of €1.1 billion (one of the few such instances in the Polish economy after 1989).¹⁹

¹³ "Premier: polska polityka gospodarcza ma służyć polskim firmom," KPRM, 17 December 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

¹⁴ See: D. Wnukowski, "Poland's Foreign Economic Policy," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2018, PISM, 2025.

¹⁵ "Informacje o Strategii na rzecz odpowiedzialnego rozwoju," MFiPR, 10 April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/fundusze-regiony.

¹⁶ "Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021," MSZ, September 2017, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹⁷ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019...", *op. cit.*

¹⁸ "Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski styczeń–grudzień 2019 rok w mln euro (dane wstępne)," MRPiT, February 2020, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologie.

¹⁹ "Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski styczeń–grudzień 2019...", *op. cit.*

Just like in the previous years, trade with European countries accounted for the biggest share of the value of Poland's commodity trade (Table 1). Poland exported goods worth €211.4 billion to these markets (88.8% of its total exports), up 6.1% y/y. This included exports to the EU member states worth €190.5 billion (80% of total exports), which increased by 5.7% compared with 2018. In 2019, Poland's imports from European states stood at €160.5 billion (67.5% of total imports) and increased by 0.3% y/y. Imports from the EU member states amounted to €137.6 billion (58% of total imports), up 2.6% y/y. The dynamic of exports to and imports from the EU was smaller than in 2018, when an increase of 9% and 7.8% was recorded respectively. This was due not only to decreased consumption and investment, but also to the reduction in Poland's exports to other EU member states (in particular Germany) as part of global value chains (GVC), which resulted from a less favourable global economic situation (especially at the end of the year).

Non-European countries continued to have an insignificant, albeit increasing, share in Poland's exports. In 2019, this group of trade partners accounted for more than 11.2% of the value of Poland's exports (in 2018 the figure was 10.9%). The situation regarding imports was slightly different, because these countries accounted for more than 32% of the value of goods Poland imported (in 2018 it was slightly more than 30%), of which around 25% were goods imported from Asian partners (23.7% in 2018), mainly China, South Korea and Japan.²⁰ Poland's total exports to Asian states increased by 7.3%, while its imports by 10%. This indicates that in its trade with Asia Poland recorded its biggest deficit which amounted to more than €47 billion. Poland's trade relations with North American states (the U.S., Canada) were favourable. Poland's exports increased by 11.6% (to €8.2 billion), and its imports by 16.2% (to €8 billion). A very dynamic increase of as much as almost 25% was recorded as regards Poland's exports to Africa (to €2.9 billion). However, in absolute numbers this was just around €600 million due to the relatively small comparative base in 2018 (€2.3 billion). An even bigger increase was recorded for Poland's imports from Africa, up more than 40% to around €3 billion (this indicates that in its trade with Africa Poland recorded a deficit of more than €95 million). A similar dynamic rise in trade was recorded for Australia and Oceania, as Poland's exports to this region increased by more than 28% (to €960 million) and its imports by more than 60% (to €920 million). Also in this case the increase was calculated in relation to a low base recorded in 2018. A decline in trade relations was recorded for Central and South American states. Poland's exports to these destinations fell by 3.6% (to €2.2 billion) and its imports by 3.9% (to €4.2 billion).

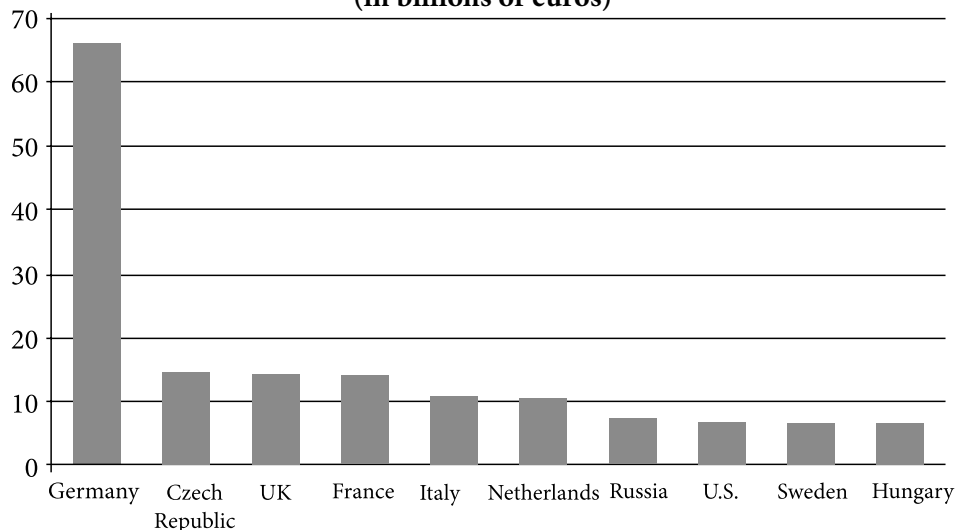
²⁰ *Ibidem*.

Table. Destinations of Poland's exports and imports in 2019
(according to continents)

Continent	2019			Change (2018=100)		Share in 2019 (%)	
	Exports (in millions of euros)	Imports (in millions of euros)	Balance (in millions of euros)	Exports	Imports	Eksport	Import
Europe	211,364	160,045	51,319	106.1	100.3	88.75	67.54
Asia	12,480.8	59,492.1	-47,011.3	107.3	110.0	5.24	25.10
Africa	2865.8	2961.7	-95.9	124.7	140.6	1.20	1.25
North America	8180.1	8036.8	143.3	111.6	116.2	3.43	3.39
South and Central America	2152.5	4180.4	-2027.9	96.4	96.1	0.90	1.76
Australia and Oceania	962.6	925.4	37.2	128.6	162	0.40	0.39

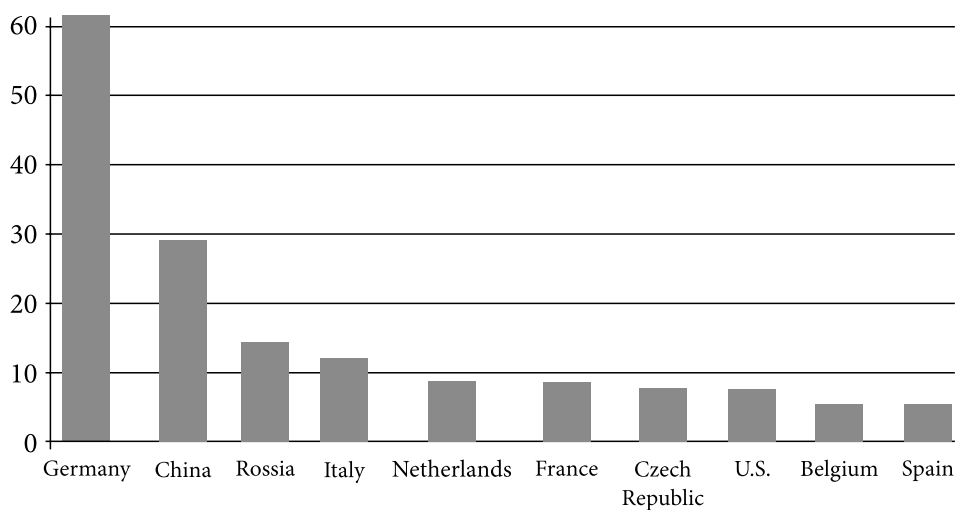
Source: the author's own analysis based on: "Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski styczeń-grudzień 2019 rok w mln EUR (dane ostateczne)," MFiPR, August 2020.

Chart 1. Poland's biggest partners in commodity exports in 2019
(in billions of euros)



Source: the author's own analysis based on "Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski styczeń–grudzień 2019 rok w mln EUR (dane ostateczne)," MRiT, August 2020.

Chart 2. Poland's biggest partners in commodity imports in 2019
(in billions of euros)



Source: the author's own analysis based on "Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski styczeń–grudzień 2019 rok w mln EUR (dane ostateczne)," MRiT, August 2020.

In 2019, Poland's most important partners as regards commodity trade included Germany (€117.9 billion), China (€31.9 billion), Italy (€22.7 billion), France (€22.6 billion), the Czech Republic (€22.5 billion) and Russia (€21.9 billion). The biggest recipients of Poland's exports included Germany (€66 billion), the Czech Republic (€14.6 billion), the United Kingdom (€14.2 billion), France (€14 billion) and Italy (€10.8 billion; see Chart 1). As regards the value of Poland's imports, the most important partners included Germany (€51.8 billion), China (€29.3 billion), Russia (€14.5 billion), Italy (€11.9 billion) and the Netherlands (€9 billion; Chart 2). The biggest trade surplus was recorded in Poland's relations with Germany (€14.2 billion), the United Kingdom (€8.8 billion), the Czech Republic (€6.7 billion), France (€5.3 billion) and Romania (€3 billion), while the biggest trade deficit with China (€26.6 billion), Russia (€7 billion), South Korea (€4.4 billion), Japan (€3.8 billion) and Vietnam (€2.5 billion).²¹

In terms of commodity structure, the most important groups of goods Poland exported in 2019 included products of the electro-mechanical industry (€96.8 billion—more than 40% of total exports) and the chemical industry (€32.9 billion—almost 14%), agri-food products (€31.8 billion—more than 13%) and metallurgical products (€23 billion—almost 10%). As regards imports, the most important groups of goods in terms of value included products of the electro-mechanical industry (€93.6 billion—more than 39%), the chemical industry (close to €39.4 billion—almost 17%), metallurgical products (€23.8 billion—10%) and agri-food products (€21.3 billion—9% of total imports).

Services played an important part in Poland's foreign trade. According to statistics compiled by the NBP, in 2019 revenues earned by Polish companies from the export of services stood at PLN276.3 billion (€64.9 billion²²) up PLN25.7 billion (€6 billion), or more than 10%, compared with 2018. The most important categories in Poland's exports included transport and business services. The value of the import of services amounted to PLN168.1 billion (€39.5 billion) and was PLN9.8 billion (€2.3 billion) higher than that recorded on 2018. This indicates that in 2019 Poland's positive balance in its trade in services stood at PLN108.2 billion (€25.4 billion). The most important directions for Polish exports of services included Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. In 2019, the share of services in Poland's total exports increased to 21.8%, and in its imports to 14.6%.²³

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² According to the following exchange rate: EUR1 = PLN4.2585 (as at 31 December 2019).

²³ "Balance of payments of the Republic of Poland for the fourth quarter of 2019," NBP, Warsaw 2020, www.nbp.pl.

Foreign Direct Investments

According to NBP figures, in 2019 Poland received foreign direct investments (FDI) worth PLN50.8 billion (€11.9 billion²⁴), up PLN0.5 billion (€117.4 million) compared with 2018. This was mainly due to the high level of profit reinvestment (up 41% y/y) combined with lower dividend payments than in 2018 (down 13%). The largest FDIs were provided by Germany, the Netherlands and Spain, while the biggest drop in investments was recorded for the United Kingdom, Lithuania and Romania. 2019 also saw an increase in the value of Polish FDIs abroad, of PLN8.2 billion (€1.9 billion), while in 2018 a negative balance to the tune of PLN1.5 billion (around €350 million) was recorded. This mainly resulted from an increase in the value of debt instruments (it reached an almost unprecedented value of PLN14.2 billion or €3.3 billion). The biggest Polish FDIs were carried out in Sweden, Cyprus and Germany. As regards divestments, these were recorded in Luxembourg, South Korea and the U.S. (they were mainly linked with the re-organisation of capital group structures).²⁵

In 2019, the Polish Investment and Trade Agency (PAIH), which provides services to foreign investors operating in Poland, handled 56 investment projects worth as much as €2.9 billion, which were expected to create around 11,800 jobs. In terms of value, three sectors were dominant: electromobility (more than €2.1 billion), automotive (€331 million) and household appliances (€180 million). Automotive companies which invested in Poland included Toyota (production of gearboxes for electric motors) and PSA. The biggest number of projects, a third of their total number, involved modern services for the business sector including R&D centres. The biggest number of investments came from the U.S. (12), Germany (6), South Korea (5) and Japan (5). Investments of the biggest value were announced by companies hailing from South Korea (€1.8 billion), Germany (around €202 million), Japan (€121 million) and the United States (more than €90 million).²⁶ In the 'Doing Business 2020' ranking of ease of doing business, compiled by the World Bank, Poland was only ranked 40th (while in the previous edition it was ranked 33rd and in 2017 27th). Compared with 2018, the World Bank issued a significantly lower assessment of the procedure for registering property, which was due to the increased duration of this procedure (a drop from the 41st to the 92nd place). Poland scored positive results in categories such as export procedures (1st place), insolvency proceedings (39th) and access to loans (37th),

²⁴ According to the following exchange rate: EUR1 = PLN4.2585 (as at 31 December 2019).

²⁵ "Balance of payments of the Republic of Poland for the fourth quarter of 2019," *op. cit.*

²⁶ M. Jarcko, "PAIH zrealizowała w 2019 r. 56 projektów o rekordowej wartości 2,9 mld euro," *Forsal.pl*, 20 January 2020, www.forsal.pl. However, it should be noted that this involved investment decisions rather than fully implemented projects.

while the following categories performed worse: starting business activity (128th), registering property (92nd) and the tax system (77th).²⁷ In the 12th edition of the 'Investment Climate' survey carried out by PAIH, Grant Thornton and HSBC, Poland's investment climate was assessed as favourable for the third time in a row and scored 3.7 points out of the maximum of 5 point. 65% of the surveyed foreign investors assessed the conditions for doing business in Poland as at least good, and 94% of them were satisfied with their investments in Poland and said that they would repeat them. The main assets listed by these companies included the size of the domestic market and economic stability, while the issues which needed improvement included the volatility and vagueness of legislation, low effectiveness of business courts and fiscal bureaucracy.²⁸ The biggest credit rating agencies maintained Poland's rating on the investment grade. In October 2019, the Standard & Poor's rating agency maintained Poland's ranking at the A-/A-2 level (for foreign denominated debt) and A/A-1 (for zloty denominated debt). The rating outlook remained stable. The Moody's rating agency maintained Poland's ranking at the A2/P-1 level (for both foreign and zloty denominated debt), and the outlook was also stable.²⁹

Review of Selected Instruments of Poland's Foreign Economic Policy

Foreign visits. Just like in previous years, in 2019 promotion of economic cooperation during meetings held by the president, the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs with representatives of other states, international organisations and companies, was a frequently used instrument in economic diplomacy.

In January, President Andrzej Duda took part in the World Economic Forum in Davos, where he inaugurated the Polish Pavilion for the first time in the forum's history. He also held talks with Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, after which he discussed the prospect of signing an agreement on avoidance of double taxation, which was among the most important barriers hindering the development of Polish-Brazilian economic relations.³⁰ Economic issues were also on the agenda of other foreign visits paid by President Duda: for example in May, during his visit to Azerbaijan, he signed several agreements, including the agreement on cooperation between the ministries of agriculture and institutions responsible for

²⁷ "Doing Business 2020," World Bank, 14 October 2020, www.doingbusiness.org.

²⁸ "Climate for Business remains good," PAIH, 11 June 2019, www.paih.gov.pl.

²⁹ "PAP: S&P nie zmienił ratingu Polski. Moody's nie opublikował raportu," *Business Insider*, 12 October 2019, www.businessinsider.com.pl.

³⁰ "Jair Bolsonaro przyjął zaproszenie do Polski. Spotkanie prezydentów Polski i Brazylii," *TVN24 BiS*, 24 January 2019, www.tvn24.pl.

phytosanitary supervision. He also discussed cooperation prospects in spheres such as energy, transport and location of Polish investments in the duty free zone of the Port of Baku-Alat.³¹ In June, during the president's visit to Slovenia to attend the Three Seas Initiative summit, the Three Seas Initiative Investment Fund was established to fund infrastructural investments in Central and Eastern Europe.³² In October, during President Duda's visit to the Netherlands, several documents were signed including a cooperation agreement between the ports of Szczecin–Świnoujście and Rotterdam, including in the field of joint investments.³³ The World Economic Forum held in January in Davos was also attended by Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, who met not only with state leaders (including the Prime Minister of Ireland Leo Varadkar and Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko), but also with Tim Cook, the CEO of Apple, with whom he discussed the company's investment plans in Europe following Brexit.³⁴ In April, PM Morawiecki³⁵ paid a visit to the U.S., during which (in Chicago) he attended a festive première of a film from the 'The Royal Tour'³⁶ series, which promoted the Polish economy, among other things. In May, he inaugurated Business & Science Poland, a Polish lobbying centre located in Brussels, and attended the celebrations of the 15th anniversary of Poland's accession to the European Union.³⁷ In September, PM Morawiecki paid a visit to Romania, where he announced Poland's intention to develop bilateral cooperation, including in energy and transport.³⁸ In December, on the sidelines of a European Council meeting in Brussels, he took part in the inauguration of the 2nd edition of the POLSKA Food Festival event which promoted Polish foodstuffs.

³¹ The Polish president's visit was also accompanied by a Polish-Azerbaijani Business Forum. See: "President to pay visit to Azerbaijan on Thursday," *Prezydent.pl*, 29 May 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

³² A Three Seas Initiative Business Forum was also held. See: "Wizyta Prezydenta w Słowenii," *Prezydent.pl*, 5 June 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

³³ "Wizyta w Holandii. Spotkania polityczne i gospodarcze," *Prezydent.pl*, 30 October 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

³⁴ "Premier Mateusz Morawiecki na Światowym Forum Ekonomicznym w Davos," KPRM, 24 January 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

³⁵ "Premier Mateusz Morawiecki podczas VIII szczytu państw Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej i Chin," KPRM, 12 April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

³⁶ These are popular programmes aired by the PBS channel, which present an account of a trip to a specific country with its political leader. The previous editions featured for example the king of Jordan, the prime minister of New Zealand, the presidents of Mexico and Peru, and the prime minister of Israel. As part of his visit to the U.S., the Polish prime minister held a meeting with U.S. businesspeople. See: "USA: Mateusz Morawiecki na premierze filmu 'Poland: The Royal Tour,'" KPRM, 17 April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

³⁷ "Wizyta premiera Mateusza Morawieckiego w Brukseli," KPRM, 16 May 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

³⁸ Relevant Polish and Romanian ministries signed memorandums on this matter. See: "Premier Morawiecki w Bukareszcie. 'Z Rumunią łączy nas stanowisko ws. Energetyki,'" *Polsat News*, 18 September 2019, www.polsatnews.pl.

Economic cooperation was also discussed during the prime minister's meetings with representatives of other states held in Warsaw. In February, he talked with the French Economy and Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire, who invited Poland to take part in a project focused on development of electric car batteries.³⁹ In August, a meeting was held between the Polish PM and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky. The topics discussed included cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian companies in the fields of energy and armaments production.⁴⁰ In September, PM Morawiecki met with U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, with whom he signed a U.S.–Poland Joint Declaration on 5G.⁴¹

Economic cooperation was also discussed during foreign visits paid by FM Jacek Czaputowicz including to Romania (January), Hungary (February), Iceland, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Singapore (April), Norway (May), Kuwait (August) and South Korea (October), and during the visits paid by foreign guests to Poland. These included the visits of foreign ministers of Bulgaria (February), Spain (March), Azerbaijan, Latvia, Slovenia (April), Brazil, Kazakhstan, Belgium (May), China (July), Denmark, Ukraine, Hungary, Lithuania, Indonesia and Slovakia (September).

Trade and investment issues were also discussed during visits paid by deputy foreign ministers: Marcin Przydacz, for example to Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (July), Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and India (September) and Japan (December), and Maciej Lang, for example to Bahrain (June), Mongolia and Angola (July), Chile, Peru and Colombia (October) and Sri Lanka and Oman (November).

Export support programmes. 2019 saw the end of the second year of the implementation of the 'Go to Brand' programme intended to support the promotion of brands and the export activity of micro-, small- and medium-sized companies. It involved twelve sectors: biotechnology and pharmacy, construction and finishing of buildings, automotive and aircraft parts, sailing and leisure boats, cosmetics, machines and devices, furniture, Polish fashion, medical equipment, IT/ICT, food, medical services. These activities included the organisation of promotional and informational stands during foreign fairs, economic missions and PR campaigns.⁴² In 2019, the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) received around 1400 applications for co-funding, including more than

³⁹ "Wizyta Bruno Le Maire'a, francuskiego ministra gospodarki i finansów w Polsce," Embassy of France in Poland, www.pl.ambafrance.org.

⁴⁰ "Półtorej godziny rozmowy Morawieckiego z Zelenskim," *TVN24*, 1 September 2019, www.tvn24.pl.

⁴¹ "Wspólna deklaracja USA i Polski na temat 5G," *KPRM*, 2 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

⁴² "PAIH podsumowuje projekt Brand i tworzy zespół ekspertów branżowych," *PAIH*, 10 December 2019, www.paih.gov.pl.

300 under the IT/ICT sector promotion programme. PARP decided to co-fund 770 projects worth a total of around PLN212 million.⁴³

PAIH carried out the Polish Technological Bridges project planned for 2018–23. As part of this project, companies could obtain grants worth up to PLN200,000 (in the *de minimis* aid formula⁴⁴) for the preparation and implementation of a business development strategy focused on regions other than the European Union. The support was funded from the Smart Growth Operational Programme for 2014–20, and its total value stood at more than PLN176.5 million.⁴⁵ In 2019, 285 companies, mainly small ones, used the support provided under this programme. In 2019, PAIH announced a call for applications for co-funding of business expansion in Australia, India, Israel, Norway, Russia, Algeria, Egypt, South Africa, Indonesia, Singapore, South Korea, China, the U.S., the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Japan, Canada and Ukraine. The markets of the U.S. and the UAE were most popular with the applicants.

The Warsaw Humanitarian Expo and preparations for EXPO 2020. In June 2019, in Nadarzyn near Warsaw, International Exhibition of Humanitarian Aid and Development Assistance was organised. It was the first such event in Central and Eastern Europe. The event was also an opportunity to present Polish products and services used in humanitarian initiatives and development projects, for example food, medical equipment and logistics. It was also attended by non-governmental organisations operating in the humanitarian aid sector. The participants had an opportunity to find out more about the procedures for taking part in public tenders announced by various UN agendas, including the World Food Programme, WHO and UNICEF.⁴⁶

2019 also saw preparations for Poland's participation in EXPO 2020 in Dubai,⁴⁷ including the construction of the Polish pavilion.⁴⁸ A procedure was underway to collect co-funding applications as part of the programme for promoting the companies which took part in the exhibition.⁴⁹ In February 2019, deputy minister

⁴³ "Program Go to Brand," MRPiT, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologia.

⁴⁴ This involves support of a relatively small value, which does not violate the rules of competition and does not impact trade between EU member states. See: "Czym jest pomoc *de minimis*?", PARP, www.parp.gov.pl.

⁴⁵ "Polskie Mosty Technologiczne: blisko 300 grantobiorców i nowe rynki," PAIH, 6 December 2019, www.paih.gov.pl.

⁴⁶ "Minister Jacek Czaputowicz uroczystie zainaugurował Warszawskie Targi Humanitarne," MSZ, 11 June 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

⁴⁷ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the organisation of this event was put off until 2021.

⁴⁸ "Wiemy kto wybuduje Pawilon Polski na Wystawie Światowej EXPO 2020 w Dubaju," PAIH, 26 August 2019, www.paih.gov.pl.

⁴⁹ "Program Go to Brand," *op. cit.*

of Entrepreneurship and Technology Tadeusz Kościński was appointed the General Commissioner of the Polish Section of EXPO 2020.⁵⁰

Assessment

In 2019, Poland managed to achieve most of its goals in the foreign economic policy, albeit to a varying degree. The value of Poland's commodity exports increased by 6%, and that of the export of services by as much as 10% compared with 2018. However, the export growth dynamic fell y/y (from 8.2% in 2018). This was due to an increasingly difficult global economic situation, which also affected Poland's major trade partners, that is the EU member states. It was believed that a decline in economic activity would continue or even aggravate in 2020, which had a negative effect on Poland's growth prospects. As regards the diversification of export markets and the plan to increase the share of developing markets in the group of Poland's export partners, minor positive results were achieved. In 2019, the share of non-European states in the value of Poland's exports was 0.5 percentage point bigger than in 2018. The value of FDIs launched in Poland in 2019 was slightly higher than in 2018 and the scale of Polish FDIs carried out abroad also increased (up €1.9 billion). The goal involving attracting investments from the high technology sector with a high added value to Poland, such as electromobility projects and R&D centres, was achieved to some degree. However, the scale of these investments was not big compared with the total number of FDIs carried out in Poland.

The results of actions intended to build a positive image for Poland as a stable trade and investment partner should be viewed as varied. Although Poland scored a significantly lower result in the prestigious 'Doing Business 2020' ranking, many companies operating on the Polish market wanted to continue their business activity (as evidenced by reinvestments carried out for example by Toyota). Moreover, the biggest credit rating agencies (S&P, Moody's) maintained Poland's investment grade rating. However, the goal involving the plan to increase the share of Polish companies in the market of public tenders announced by international organisations has not been achieved. For example, as regards tenders for the implementation of UN projects this share stood at around 0.01% (166th place out of the 193 member states).⁵¹

⁵⁰ In March 2020 he was succeeded by Adrian Malinowski. See: "Adrian Malinowski pokieruje przygotowaniem do Wystawy Światowej EXPO 2020 w Dubaju," PAIH, 2 March 2020, www.paih.gov.pl.

⁵¹ "President addresses Warsaw Humanitarian Expo," *Prezydent.pl*, 11 June 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

II.

POLAND'S POLICY

TOWARDS SELECTED STATES AND REGIONS

Poland's Policy Towards the United States

MATEUSZ M. PIOTROWSKI

Background

The basic external factors determining Poland's policy towards the United States were the tensions between the U.S. and the EU and several NATO allies,¹ as well as the deterioration in U.S.-Chinese relations. Other important factors included the state of relations between the U.S. and the Russian Federation and the relationship between Presidents Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin. An escalation in the relations between the U.S. and Iran and the U.S.'s withdrawal from the so-called nuclear deal, which followed it, were also important.² These factors have shaped the U.S. foreign policy and resulted in the emergence of new topics in talks with the allies, including involvement in diplomatic and military initiatives against Iran and attempts to curb technological cooperation with China.

As regards internal determinants, developments which Poland viewed as important included the U.S. Congress decision to provide the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) with a record high funding worth \$6.5 billion in 2019 and its pledge to ensure a similar level of support in 2020. Development of cooperation in the field of energy was facilitated by U.S. continued expansion in exporting liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Unlike in 2018, in 2019 Poland's two-year term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council was of no major importance to the progress of bilateral relations. This was due to the fact that the rank of the U.S. ambassador to the UN was lowered and this official was excluded from the so-called Cabinet of the United States,³ which happened at the end of 2018 following Nikki Haley's resignation. The issue of tourist visas required from the citizens of Poland, which

¹ For more on the state of transatlantic relations, see: Ł. Kulesa, "Enlightened Opportunism? Poland's Policy Towards the Return of Transatlantic Tensions in 2017–2018," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2018, PISM, 2021.

² M.A. Piotrowski, "The U.S. Decision to Quit the Nuclear Deal with Iran," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 69 (1140), 12 May 2018, www.pism.pl.

³ The Cabinet is an informal advisory body composed of more than ten individuals including department secretaries and heads of agencies or special advisors delegated by the president. See: the present line-up on the White House website, www.whitehouse.gov.

had for years cast a shadow on bilateral relations, lost its negative impact in 2019 due to the political determination of U.S. ambassador to Poland Georgette Mosbacher to lift the visa regime.⁴ In 2019, measures taken by both states resulted in Poland's inclusion in the visa-free travel programme. Moreover, the asymmetry of potentials of Poland and the United States continued to impact the bilateral relations.

Goals and Assumptions

In 2019, the main assumption of Poland's foreign policy towards the U.S. involved maintaining the strategic alliance based on bilateral cooperation and within NATO. Development of military cooperation with the U.S. was viewed as a priority as regards actions intended to increase NATO's military presence on the Eastern Flank of the Alliance.⁵ The priorities of Poland's policy towards the U.S. were discussed in the Joint Declaration on Polish-American Strategic Partnership adopted in September 2018.⁶ These included boosting cooperation in the sphere of security and energy, and increasing the scale of U.S. investment in Poland and in the states of the Three Seas Initiative.

The basic goal of Polish-U.S. cooperation was to boost and consolidate the presence of U.S. armed forces on Polish soil. The former intention to make this presence permanent was dropped.⁷ The second goal involved maintaining U.S. involvement in the process of modernisation of the Polish armed forces. The third goal was to develop cooperation in the sphere of energy by increasing the volume of LNG supplies from the U.S. and launching cooperation in nuclear energy. The fourth goal involved making the U.S. Poland's fifth largest economic partner (in 2019 the U.S. was ranked eighth in this category).⁸

⁴ W. Rogacin, "Ambasador USA Georgette Mosbacher: Wizy dla Polaków zniesiemy najpóźniej w 2020 r.," *Polska Times*, 19 April 2019, <https://polskatimes.pl>.

⁵ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

⁶ "Polsko-Amerykańskie Partnerstwo Strategiczne dla Obrony Wolności i Dobrobytu," *Prezydent. pl*, 18 September 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

⁷ Poland's initial goal was a permanent presence of U.S. troops the size of a division (10.000–15.000 soldiers), which however was not possible due to limited infrastructural base, huge cost and the shift from the permanent stationing concept to a rotating presence. For more, see: the chapter written by A. Kacprzyk, W. Lorenz and M. Terlikowski in this volume.

⁸ "Emilewicz: dwukrotny wzrosty wymiany handlowej między Polską a USA jest możliwy w perspektywie pięciu lat," PAP, 26 April 2019, www.pap.pl.

Political Relations

Poland's relations with the U.S. were among the most important elements of its foreign policy in 2019. Dialogue intended to increase U.S. military presence in Poland was the most important initiative carried out as part of this policy. Talks regarding this issue and the purchase of U.S.-made armaments for the needs of the Polish armed forces were carried out by Defence Minister Mariusz Błaszczak. In 2019, he met with acting U.S. Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan and the United States National Security Advisor John Bolton and his successor Robert O'Brien. In this context, the most important event during this cooperation was the visit paid by President Andrzej Duda to the White House in June 2019, during which the two presidents signed the Joint Declaration on Defense Cooperation Regarding United States Force Posture in the Republic of Poland.⁹ The main decision was to increase U.S. military presence from 4500 to 5500 troops.¹⁰

Plans were made to sign another agreement specifying the provisions of the June declaration in September during President Donald Trump's visit to Poland, which was linked with his participation in the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. However, a few days before the planned travel it was announced that the president would remain in the U.S. due to the threat posed by hurricane Dorian to the southern states,¹¹ and Vice President Mike Pence would travel to Poland. In the end, Duda and Trump signed the document at the end of September, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly meeting.¹² It specified the locations of the planned increased presence of U.S. troops.¹³

In order to develop energy cooperation, during his visit to the U.S. in June President Andrzej Duda travelled to Houston, Texas, where he met with the United States Secretary of Energy Rick Perry, the CEOs of energy and technology companies and representatives of Polish businesses operating on the U.S. market. More detailed talks were held by the government's plenipotentiary for energy

⁹ "Wspólna deklaracja Prezydentów o współpracy obronnej w zakresie obecności sił zbrojnych USA na terytorium RP," *Prezydent.pl*, 12 June 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

¹⁰ For more on the details of this declaration, see a section of this text focused on cooperation in the sphere of security.

¹¹ Another likely reason for cancelling this visit involved Donald Trump's reluctance to meet Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky. Such a meeting was to be held on the sidelines of the meeting in Warsaw. This was the beginning of a scandal involving Trump withholding military aid for Ukraine, which resulted in the president's impeachment and later his acquittal by the U.S. Senate.

¹² "Wspólna deklaracja Prezydentów PL i USA na temat pogłębiania współpracy obronnej," *Prezydent.pl*, 23 September 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

¹³ For more on the details of this declaration, see a section of this text focused on cooperation in the sphere of security.

infrastructure Piotr Naimski. In March, the United States saw the inauguration session of the Strategic Dialogue on Energy established in 2018, which was attended by Naimski and Perry (another session was held in August). The main topics of the talks included the export of LNG, cyber security of critical infrastructure and cooperation in the field of nuclear energy. In June, Naimski and Perry signed an agreement on cooperation in the sphere of civilian nuclear energy.¹⁴ The memorandum envisaged cooperation in advancing the Polish nuclear programme which included the construction of six nuclear-fired units (with a capacity of 1.5 GW each). In August, in Warsaw a trilateral agreement on cooperation between the Republic of Poland, the United States and Ukraine was signed to boost regional security regarding natural gas supplies.¹⁵ It was mainly intended to ensure the supplies of American LNG to Ukraine via Poland.

Other cooperation documents signed in 2019 included an agreement concluded by the Polish Space Agency (POLSA) regarding the exchange of information on space events with the United States Strategic Command.¹⁶ POLSA has also signed a declaration of intent regarding cooperation in space exploration with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).¹⁷

Talks on political issues were also attended by Minister Jacek Czaputowicz. He held several meetings with his American counterpart, United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. The topics of the talks included the intention to increase U.S. presence in Poland and the allied commitments within NATO, as well as threats posed by cooperation with Huawei in developing the 5G technology. Pompeo visited Warsaw in February to attend a ministerial conference on peace and security building in the Middle East (known as the Middle Eastern conference), where he publicly spoke about the need to enact in the Polish legal order transparent laws regarding the restitution of the so-called heirless property which had belonged to the victims of the Holocaust.¹⁸ In July 2019, Czaputowicz also met with the United States Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook, most

¹⁴ "Porozumienie o współpracy w dziedzinie cywilnej energii jądrowej pomiędzy Polską a USA," KPRM, 13 June 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

¹⁵ "Porozumienie o współpracy na rzecz wzmocnienia regionalnego bezpieczeństwa dostaw gazu ziemnego," KPRM, 4 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

¹⁶ Since August 2019 this issue has been under the jurisdiction of independent Space Command; "Polska Agencja Kosmiczna podpisała porozumienie z Dowództwem Strategicznym USA o wymianie danych dotyczących zdarzeń w kosmosie," Polish Space Agency, 12 April 2019, <https://polsa.gov.pl>.

¹⁷ "Porozumienie NASA i Polskiej Agencji Kosmicznej. Celem eksploracja pozaziemska," *Space24*, 25 October 2019, www.space24.pl.

¹⁸ For more, see: the chapter written by M. Wojnarowicz in this volume.

likely to talk about Poland's possible involvement in military initiatives targeting Iran.

Talks on political issues were also conducted on behalf of the U.S. by Vice President Mike Pence, who visited Poland twice. He dealt with issues such as an increase in U.S. military presence, enhancement of economic cooperation with special emphasis placed on energy, and the lifting of the visa requirement for Polish citizens. During the February visit, which was linked with the Middle Eastern conference, a contract was signed for the purchase of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems known as HIMARS.¹⁹ In September, during Mike Pence's second visit to Warsaw the U.S. and Poland signed a joint declaration on 5G, in which they pledged to boost cooperation in telecommunications technology.²⁰

The Warsaw Process. The Warsaw Process was one of the instruments of Poland's policy towards the United States. This mechanism was intended to demonstrate to the U.S. administration that Poland was ready to become involved in actions to enhance global security and to deal with issues which were important from the U.S. point of view. This readiness was expected to facilitate the talks on increasing U.S. military presence in Poland and to bring Poland closer to the United States. Alongside this, another goal of the Polish leadership was to work out a compromise between the stance of the U.S. and that of the EU regarding Iran.²¹ Moreover, the Polish government hoped that the Warsaw Process would remain an active Polish-American international mechanism just like the so-called Krakow Initiative/PSI (Proliferation Security Initiative),²² and thus will become a permanent point of reference in the dialogue between the two sides. For the United States, the main purpose was to put pressure on Iran and convince its leadership to re-negotiate the nuclear deal.

The decision to hold a ministerial conference on peace and security building in the Middle East, which inaugurated the Warsaw Process, was announced in January 2019 by Secretary Pompeo and Minister Czaputowicz in a joint statement. The conference was held in Warsaw in February and was attended by representatives of 65 delegations. During the event, seven working groups

¹⁹ For more on the details of this contract see a section of this text focused on cooperation in the sphere of security.

²⁰ "Wspólna deklaracja USA i Polski na temat 5G," KPRM, 2 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

²¹ For more on the Middle East conference and its consequences, see: K. Wasilewski, M. Wojnarowicz, "Po konferencji w Warszawie – bliskowschodni gambit Polski," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, 2019, no. 3, pp. 99–110.

²² The establishment of the PSI was announced in May 2003 during Bush's visit to Poland. At present, 105 states are the initiative's members. The PSI complements other activities and agreements on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

were established to deal with energy security, maritime and aviation security, cybersecurity, humanitarian issues and refugees, human rights, missile non-proliferation, as well as counterterrorism and illicit finance.²³ Five of these groups held their meetings in 2019, including one in Poland. The conclusions formulated by the working groups are to be presented during another conference of the Warsaw Process.²⁴

Poland's inclusion in the Visa Waiver Program. The lifting of the visa requirement valid for Polish citizens was an important element of Polish-American political relations. Due to the launch in 2018 of campaigns to promote best practices in applying for U.S. tourist visas, Poland expected a continuation of the decline in the number of rejected visa applications, with the target being below the acceptable threshold, which could enable it to be included in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). In 2019, Poland and the United States signed two agreements which brought Poland closer to meeting additional VWP inclusion criteria. One of these agreements focused on enhancing cooperation in preventing and combating serious crime²⁵ and the other on cooperation on border security and immigration.²⁶ In October, President Trump signed the decision to include Poland in the VWP, and on 11 November 2019, following a verification procedure carried out by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the requirement for Polish citizens to hold a tourist visa was lifted.

Defence Cooperation

Presence of U.S. troops. In 2019 the number of U.S. soldiers stationed on the Polish territory was 4500. The Armored Brigade Combat Team and the Combat Aviation Brigade continued to form the basis for the rotating presence of U.S. troops. American troops were also an element of the NATO Battle Group stationed in Poland. As part of troops rotation, units of the 3rd Squadron (Pacesetter) of the 278th Armoured Cavalry Regiment of the National Guard of Pennsylvania and Tennessee, which replaced the units of the 2nd Squadron (Phantom Raiders) of

²³ "Grupy robocze," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

²⁴ P. Sasnal, B. Wiśniewski, "After the Middle East Conference in Warsaw," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 11/2019, 18 February 2019, www.pism.pl.

²⁵ Agreement between the government of the Republic of Poland and the government of the United States of America on enhancing cooperation on preventing and combating serious crime, Dz.U. [Journal of Law] 2019, item 2038.

²⁶ Agreement between the government of the Republic of Poland and the government of the United States of America on enhancing cooperation on border security and immigration, Dz.U. [Journal of Laws] 2019, item 2402.

this regiment, were sent to Poland.²⁷ 2019 saw further delays in the construction work of the Aegis Ashore military base in Redzikowo, which formed an element of the NATO EPAA (European Phased Adaptive Approach) missile defence system. These delays were due to problems²⁸ affecting the principal contractor which had been hired by the Missile Defense Agency. In connection with this delay, which at present is estimated at two years, the expected date of completion is now the end of 2022 (initially the base was to be ready at the end of 2018²⁹).

The declaration signed in June by presidents Duda and Trump included three decisions: to increase U.S. military presence in Poland by 1000 troops, to ensure that Poland builds additional military infrastructure and to seek further agreements and arrangements regarding stepped-up defence cooperation. The declaration signed in September specified the location of the deployed additional units. In line with the content of both declarations, Poznań was selected to host the U.S. Land Forces' Forward Division Command³⁰ and the Area Support Group of the U.S. Land Forces, while Drawsko Pomorskie will host the Combat Training Centre (CTC) to be jointly used by Polish and American armed forces. Wrocław-Strachowice was selected as the location of a logistical base of the U.S. air force, while a squadron of MQ-9 Reaper drones will be stationed in Łask. In Powidz, infrastructure will be built for the needs of the Combat Aviation Brigade and the Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. Facilities serving the special forces will be located in Drawsko Pomorskie (as part of the CTC), Powidz and Lubliniec. The declaration signed in June also contained a provision regarding the development in Poland of infrastructure for the needs of the Armored Brigade Combat Group, however, the September declaration stated that the two sides were still in the process of selecting the most favourable location. Despite the Defense Department's obligation (imposed on it by U.S. Congress as part of the defence budget adopted for the fiscal year 2019) to compile a report on the possibility of

²⁷ "Uroczystość przekazania dowodzenia Batalionową Grupą Bojową w ramach NATO-wskiej Wzmocnionej Wysuniętej Obecności," Embassy and Consulate of the United States in Poland, 13 May 2019, <https://pl.usembassy.gov>.

²⁸ In a hearing in Congress, director of the Missile Defence Agency Jon Hill said that delays in the construction of the base in Redzikowo were caused by problems encountered by the principal contractor (the British John Wood Group PLC company), which were linked with the assembly of elements of the heating, cooling, power installations as well as auxiliary steering elements which need to be fixed before the launch of the assembly of the Aegis Ashore system.

²⁹ T. Capaccio, "US hits setback in bid to shield Europe against Iran missiles," *Stars and Stripes*, 9 December 2019, www.stripes.com.

³⁰ In October, First Infantry Division (Forward) replaced the Mission Command Element which had previously operated as part of Operation and was transferred to Poznań on the basis of a 2018 decision. For more, see: M. Piotrowski, "Poland's Policy Towards the United States," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2018*, PISM, 2025.

deploying an armoured brigade to Poland to station there permanently in the first quarter of 2019, no such report was prepared by the end of 2019.³¹

Modernisation of the armed forces. In 2019, the Polish ministry of defence completed the process of purchasing the M142 HIMARS High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems as part of the technical modernisation programme known as 'Homar'.³² In February, the authorities of Poland and the United States signed a contract worth around PLN1.6 billion net³³ for the delivery of an artillery squadron by 2023. In May, the defence ministry sent an inquiry regarding the possible purchase of 32 F-35A multi-role fighter jets as part of the 'Harpia' technical modernisation programme.³⁴ In September, the U.S. Department of State consented to selling these jets to Poland. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency roughly estimated the cost of purchasing these jets at around PLN25.6 billion. Also in September, the U.S. Congress approved this deal, which enabled the U.S. administration to launch work on preparing a draft of the relevant intergovernmental agreement.³⁵ However, this draft was not presented to Poland by the end of 2019. In 2019, no talks were launched on procuring six IBCS / Patriot batteries as part of the so-called second stage of the 'Wisła' technical modernisation programme.³⁶

In addition, in January the Polish defence ministry ordered four S-70i Black Hawk helicopters for the special forces. These helicopters are manufactured at the PZL Mielec plant which is owned by the U.S. Sikorsky/Lockheed Martin company. The total contract value was PLN683.4 million.³⁷ All four helicopters were delivered in December 2019. In February, the Polish Police signed a contract for the purchase of three Bell 407GX helicopters with their manufacturer, that is the Bell Textron Helicopter Inc. company with headquarters in Texas.³⁸ The first helicopter was delivered in December 2019 and the remaining two are to be

³¹ "H.R.5515 – John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019," www.congress.gov.

³² R. Lesiecki, "Nowoczesna broń dla polskich żołnierzy, czyli kontrakt na HIMARS-y podpisany," *Defence24*, 13 February 2019, www.defence24.pl.

³³ This sum is PLN700 million smaller than the maximum contract value which the Defence Security Cooperation Agency has set in 2018.

³⁴ "Błaszczak: Wysłaliśmy zapytanie ofertowe ws. zakupu 32 samolotów F-35A," *Wprost*, 28 May 2019, www.wprost.pl.

³⁵ M. Szopa, "Kongres USA zgodził się na F-35 dla Polski," *Defence 24*, 27 September 2019, www.defence24.pl.

³⁶ On the acquisition of two missile batteries as part of the first phase of 'Wisła' see: zob. M. Piotrowski, *Polityka Polski wobec Stanów Zjednoczonych*, op. cit.

³⁷ R. Lesiecki, "Cztery Black Hawki do końca 2019 r. Kontrakt za 683 mln zł podpisany," *Defence 24*, 25 January 2019, www.defence24.pl.

³⁸ "Trzy śmigłowce Bell dla Policji. Kolejny zakup z wolnej ręki," *Info Security*, 1 February 2019, www.infosecurity24.pl.

delivered in 2020. The contract value was PLN61.8 million.³⁹ Also in February, the Police announced its intention to purchase another two Black Hawk helicopters on the basis of a contract signed in November 2018, which envisaged such a possibility.⁴⁰ However, no relevant agreement was signed with the manufacturing plant in Mielec by the end of the year.

Economic Relations

2019 saw another increase in trade between Poland and the U.S. The total value of commercial exchange stood at \$16.2 billion, out of which Polish exports accounted for \$7.6 billion. Although the value of exports increased just like in previous years, the increase in Poland's imports from the U.S. was more significant, which caused a further decline in the balance of trade down to \$983 million.⁴¹ Polish companies mainly exported the following types of goods to the U.S.: turbojets, propjets and spare parts, aerial vehicles and spare parts, furniture, orthopaedic devices, and automotive parts and equipment. Poland mainly imported U.S.-made aircraft, turbojets, propjets, as well as products of the chemical industry.

In 2019, the United States ranked second (after Germany) in terms of the value of investment projects carried out in Poland. Its share was 11% and the value of its investment amounted to 4% of Poland's GDP. Around 1500 U.S. companies operated in Poland, which accounted for around 3% of all foreign companies. Their division as regards the number of employees was even: companies with 1–9 employees accounted for 30% of all U.S. companies operating in Poland, those with 10–49 employees 25%, 50–249 employees 24%, and those which employed more than 250 individuals—21%.⁴² One of the U.S.'s biggest investment projects carried out in 2019 was linked with the operation in Poland of the Amazon company and involved the creation of two new logistical centres.

In 2019, Poland bought 0.61 million tonnes of LNG from the United States, which accounted for 24.2% of Poland's total LNG imports in that year.⁴³ In June, during President Duda's visit to the U.S. the Polish Oil and Gas Company (PGNiG)

³⁹ "Ile Policja zapłaciła za nowe śmigłowce Bell-407GXi?," *Info Security*, 8 February 2019, www.infosecurity24.pl [accessed on: 11 May 2020].

⁴⁰ "Dwa kolejne Black Hawki dla Policji. Jest zgoda premiera," *Info Security*, 28 February 2019, www.infosecurity24.pl [accessed on: 11 May 2020].

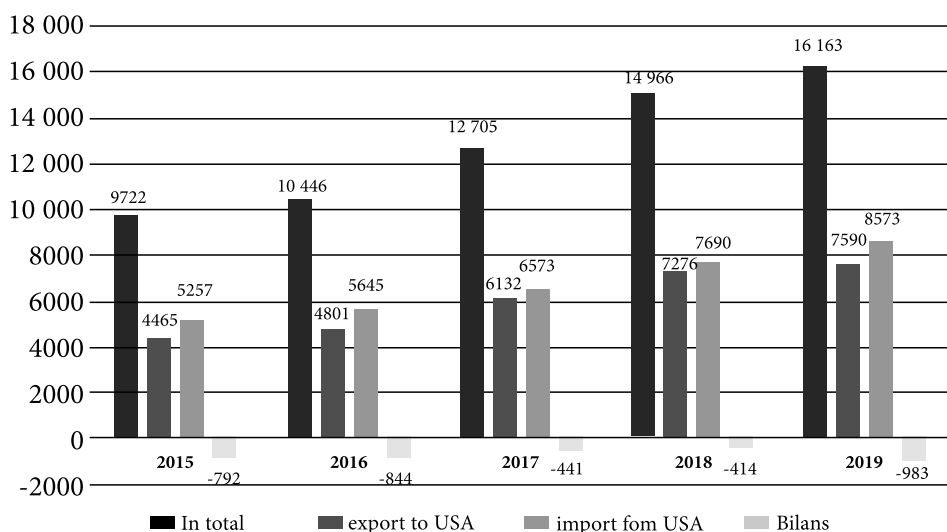
⁴¹ Data compiled on the basis of statistics provided by GUS, <http://swaid.stat.gov.pl>.

⁴² *30 lat inwestycji amerykańskich w Polsce, Raport Amerykańskiej Izby Handlowej w Polsce i KPMG*, 23 April 2020, <https://home.kpmg/pl>.

⁴³ A. Sikora, M. Sikora, "Polskie LNG—podsumowanie 2019 roku," *CIRE*, 27 December 2019, www.cire.pl.

signed an agreement with the U.S. Venture Global company regarding an increase in the volume of LNG purchased by PGNiG of 1.5 million tonnes annually.⁴⁴ As a consequence, the total volume of LNG purchased from U.S. companies starting from 2023 will amount to 7 million tonnes annually.⁴⁵ This indicates that taking into account Poland's annual gas consumption, which is 18 bcm, LNG procured from the U.S. will account for around 54% of the Polish gas market.⁴⁶

Figure. Balance of trade between Poland and the United States (in millions \$)



Source: the author's own calculation on the basis of statistics compiled by GUS.

Social and Cultural Relations

According to a survey conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) in Q1 2019, 51% of the respondents had a positive attitude towards the American nation and a mere 14% described their attitude as not very positive. 30% were indifferent and 5% chose the 'difficult to say' answer.⁴⁷ These results

⁴⁴ "PGNiG zakupi o 1,5 mln ton rocznie więcej LNG od Venture Global LNG," PGNiG, 12 June 2019, <http://pgnig.pl>.

⁴⁵ For more on contracts for the supply of LNG signed by PGNiG in 2018 see: M. Piotrowski, "Polityka Polski wobec Stanów Zjednoczonych," *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ It is estimated that 1 million tonnes of LNG is an equivalent of 1.38 bcm of natural gas.

⁴⁷ "Stosunek do innych narodów," *Komunikat z badań CBOS*, 2019, no. 17, www.cbos.pl.

indicated an 8 percentage point increase in friendly attitudes compared with the results of a poll carried out in 2018, and a stable level of negative attitudes.

The most important development as regards cultural relations involved three 2019 Academy Award nominations for the film entitled 'Cold War' directed by Paweł Pawlikowski.⁴⁸ Amazon was responsible for the film's distribution in the U.S. and for its promotional campaign.⁴⁹ Other significant events in 2019 included another edition of the Polish Heritage Night, organised by the Polish embassy in Washington in cooperation with NBA player Marcin Gortat, and a screening of the 'Warsaw 44' film in a cinema in Washington on the occasion of the anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising. The embassy was also involved in the promotion of 'The Witcher', a TV series produced by Netflix on the basis of stories and books by Andrzej Sapkowski.

Assessment

For Polish-American relations, 2019 was a year of continuation of processes which had been launched in previous years. These mainly included the development of military cooperation, which accelerated during Donald Trump's presidency, and continuation of energy cooperation. Despite the asymmetry of potentials in bilateral relations, Poland succeeded in enhancing its cooperation with the United States due to joint business undertakings (which mainly included the purchase of arms and LNG) and Poland's readiness to support U.S. politically in the international arena (the Warsaw Process). This resulted in the strengthening of mutual relations, which was evident in joint declarations regarding defence cooperation and in the sphere of civilian nuclear energy.

In 2019, Poland and the U.S. signed two agreements regarding defence cooperation. Although their provisions had not been implemented by the end of 2019, the very fact of their signing should be viewed as a success in the context of attempts to increase U.S. presence in Poland, which was achieved despite certain tensions within NATO and President Trump's rhetoric suggesting that the U.S. should reduce both its involvement in NATO and the presence of American troops worldwide. It should be noted that once again cooperation in the sphere of security was a dominant element of Poland's relations with the U.S..

The signing of a contract for the purchase of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), the negotiations regarding the purchase of F-35A fighter jets, which were followed by the issuing of an approval for this purchase, were

⁴⁸ Best Director, Best Cinematography, Best Foreign Language Film.

⁴⁹ B. Hollender, "Zimna wojna: Sukces zależy też od pieniędzy," *Rzeczpospolita*, 28 January 2019, www.rp.pl.

important elements of the efforts to deepen cooperation in this sphere. In 2019, just like in 2018, no talks were launched on the procurement of another six Patriot batteries as part of stage two of the 'Wisła' programme. Due to the start of the procedure to purchase the F-35 fighter jets, the likely reason for this was that the plans concerning the six Patriot batteries were reviewed and postponed for several years mainly because of the cost of the programme. The decision to purchase the HIMARS systems without launching a public procurement procedure (which enabled the manufacturer to impose a specific fixed price for these systems) and without engaging the Polish defence industry in the implementation of this contract should be assessed negatively.

Poland signed an agreement with the U.S. regarding cooperation in the sphere of nuclear energy and an increase in the volume of LNG supplies. Annual supplies will amount to around 9.66 bcm, which will enable Poland to almost fully meet its demand for gas in the situation of the absence of around 10 bcm of gas supplied by Russia. Moreover, other important developments included another increase in trade and a decline in the negative trade balance. Although this boosted America's importance as Poland's trade partner, it did not translate into any improvement of the state of the Polish economy. What should be expected in the coming years are further declarations regarding military cooperation, including purchases of U.S.-made arms, and a decision to launch the implementation of the project involving the construction of a nuclear power plant in Poland.

Poland's Policy Towards Germany

LIDIA GIBADŁO

Background

In 2019, important determinants of Poland's policy towards Germany included events and processes ongoing in the European Union, in particular the European Parliament elections and the appointment of members of the European Commission. The appointment of Germany's Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen as President of the European Commission consolidated Germany's position in the EU, which was reflected in the priorities set by the new Commission: climate policy and environmental protection, digitisation and the economy.¹ Although Poland welcomed the adoption of these goals, its view on how they should be attained was different from the German view. In December, EU leaders reached an agreement on the EU's carbon neutrality by 2050, which Poland did not join at this stage. In October 2019, the EC declared that the new budget for 2021–27 would be more focused on financing the fight against climate change, migration challenges, digitisation and security, and announced that the disbursement of structural funds would be conditional on respecting the rule of law. This idea was supported by the German government but opposed by the Polish authorities.²

Poland's policy towards Germany was also impacted by disputes between Germany and France. Despite the signing in January 2019 of the Aachen Treaty, in which the two states declared their readiness to tighten cooperation, Germany continued to be opposed to deepening the European integration in line with the 'multi-speed Europe' scenario proposed by President Emmanuel Macron. Important contentious issues involved France blocking Albania's and North Macedonia's EU accession talks, which was contrary to the position adopted by Germany and Poland, and attempted reset in the relations with Russia, which hindered the reactivation of cooperation within the Weimar Triangle. Another factor that indirectly impacted Poland's policy towards Germany involved the debate on the future of the EU in the context of Brexit negotiations and the final

¹ M. Makowska, M. Szczepanik, J. Szymańska, "The Von der Leyen Commission: Searching for Balance in Europe," *PISM Policy Paper*, no. 5 (175), December 2019, www.pism.pl.

² M. Makowska, "State of Negotiations of the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 161 (1407), 19 November 2019, www.pism.pl.

ratification by the United Kingdom of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement in December 2019. The debate mainly focused on the issue of EU reform and on the confrontation of the Polish and German visions of this process.

As regards the implementation of Poland's security policy in its relations with Germany, one important element involved a convergent stance of both states on the most significant issues: for both governments NATO membership and the relations with the U.S. played the most important part in ensuring Europe's security. At the same time, both states supported the development of the EU's strategic potential understood as boosting the European pillar of NATO. Relations with the United States continued to be the factor impacting Poland's policy towards Germany. In 2019, one contentious issue in U.S.-German relations directly impacting the relations between Germany and Poland involved the Middle Eastern policy. In February, Poland hosted the Warsaw Conference which, according to some observers, had anti-Iranian overtones.³ Since Germany was opposed to the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran, it expressed criticism of the fact that Poland organized this event. From the perspective of the Polish government, another problem involved continued support on the part of the German authorities for the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. Not only did this project continue to be a contentious issue in U.S.-German relations, but also posed a threat to the energy security of the EU and Ukraine.

Historical issues were an important element of Poland's policy towards Germany. 2019 saw anniversaries of several events that happened during the Second World War and the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. At that time, in both states domestic politics had a limited impact on the staffing of the most important government posts. The victory of the Law and Justice party in the parliamentary election held in October heralded a continuation of Mateusz Morawiecki's cabinet. However, European policy was transferred from the MFA to the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, and Deputy Foreign Minister Konrad Szymański was appointed Minister for European Union Affairs responsible for this area of the government's activity. Germany, for its part, changed its defence minister: Ursula von der Leyen was replaced by CDU chief Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer.

Goals and Assumptions

Poland viewed its relations with Germany as a priority due to the Polish economy's dependence on the economic situation on the German market. When presenting information on Polish foreign policy goals in 2019 in the Sejm, Foreign

³ For more, see: S. Nowacka, "Poland's Policy towards the Middle Eastern States and Northern Africa in 2018–2019" in this volume.

Minister Jacek Czaputowicz said that “a strong and stable German economy is ... indispensable for the economic success of our country and, more broadly, our region”.⁴ Alongside this, the minister indicated that the relations with Poland and other Central European states were important to Germany because the total balance of the Visegrad Group's trade with Germany exceeded that of the United States or China and played an important part in generating jobs in Germany. Similarly, Polish economic migrants working in Germany contributed to the development of the German economy. Therefore, Poland sought to maintain its high volume of trade and to intensify its technology cooperation with Germany in order to boost the level of innovation in the Polish economy.

Since Germany's “decisions are crucial for the EU's reform”,⁵ Berlin was Poland's most important partner in the European Union; the pursuit of Poland's interests largely depended on this state. This is why Mateusz Morawiecki's government was hoping that Germany would continue to be opposed to any deeper integration and to the tightening of integration in the eurozone which could contribute to the fulfilment of the ‘multi-speed Europe’ scenario. Minister Czaputowicz stressed that Poland, just like Germany, was in favour of respecting the four freedoms of the European single market and supported the plan to expand this market's digital dimension. Poland was opposed to a quick pace of implementation of the green transition and this is why it intended to convince Germany to slow down this pace and to earmark more funds for this purpose. Aside from that, the government attempted to persuade Germany to change its position on EU budget cuts, as the implementation of such a reduced budget would equate to smaller funds for the EU's cohesion and agricultural policy. During his speech at the Sejm, Minister Czaputowicz said that the Polish government wished to “reinvigorate cooperation”⁶ with France and Germany within the Weimar Triangle.

Another goal adopted by Poland involved a continuation of its cooperation with Germany in the field of security, for example during joint exercises and consultations, and in the construction of the EU's security pillar in line with the principle of complementarity with NATO. Minister of National Defence Mariusz Błaszczak declared this intention during his meeting with Germany's Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer⁷. Poland was also interested in Germany

⁴ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019),” see p. 13 in this volume.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ “Alliance and its challenges, European projects and joint exercises—meeting of the head of the MoND with German Defence Minister A. Kramp-Karrenbauer,” MON, 16 August 2019, www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa.

maintaining its stance on EU sanctions against Russia, which had been imposed as a result of Russia's annexation of Crimea and the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

During his speech at the Sejm, Minister Czaputowicz announced that the government "recognised the need to discuss historical issues",⁸ in particular in the context of the celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. Poland did not abandon its attempts to demand reparations for the losses it had suffered in 1939–45, both Minister Czaputowicz and Prime Minister Morawiecki stressed that Poland maintained its claims.

The Polish government mentioned "improving the conditions for developing and strengthening cultural and linguistic identity"⁹ of Poles living in Germany as another goal in Poland's relations with Germany. Talks during the Polish-German Round Table planned for 2019 with the participation of representatives of the two governments, the Polish community in Germany and the German community in Poland were viewed as an opportunity to raise these issues. Specific goals included a request to increase the availability of Polish language learning in Germany and to commemorate the Polish victims of the Second World War in Germany, including the pre-war Polish minority.

Political Relations

In its relations with Germany, Poland's activities focused on European policy. In 2019, during their talks with representatives of the German leadership, members of the Polish government attempted to dissuade Germany from making concessions regarding the 'multi-speed Europe' scenario promoted by France. One opportunity to carry out such talks was the German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas's visit to Warsaw in April, during which he and Minister Czaputowicz took part in a debate on this issue. Maas stressed that the 'axis' made up of three large states—Germany, France and the United Kingdom—will cease to exist due to Brexit and suggested that this could be an opportunity to redefine the role of countries such as Poland in the EU. Minister Czaputowicz, for his part, stressed the growing importance of France and Germany in the EU Council.¹⁰ In May, during the 22nd International WDR European Forum held in Berlin, the Polish side expressed its criticism of the vision of Europe presented by Germany and stressed its disapproval of the possible implementation of the 'social Europe' scenario.¹¹ Minister Czaputowicz stressed that harmonisation of

⁸ *Ibidem.*

⁹ *Ibidem.*

¹⁰ "Debata ministrów: 'Przyszłość Europy – wizje Polski i Niemiec,'" PISM, www.pism.pl.

¹¹ In his speech, Maas pointed to three elements of this concept: multinational corporations paying due taxes on the EU territory, elimination of social dumping by unifying minimum wages

standards in this field would undermine competition in some EU member states and that the implementation of the other element, i.e. the vision of a 'sovereign Europe',¹² mentioned by Minister Maas, could weaken Europe's cooperation with the U.S. In addition, the Polish foreign minister emphasised Poland's disapproval of the German-backed proposal to abandon the EU Council's unanimity principle applied thus far and to introduce majority voting in issues linked with external affairs. Minister Czaputowicz said that this form of voting could trigger 'tensions in the EU Council'. In his view, Brexit could boost the importance of the largest EU member states in the EU Council, which could result in the voting system becoming 'unfair'.¹³

Negotiations regarding the EU's new budget were an important element of Poland's policy towards Germany. In this respect, Germany and Poland supported two different views. In autumn, Germany, which is the biggest contributor to the EU budget, joined the so-called Frugal Four (Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden) which was in favour of maintaining the level of contributions at 1% of each member state's gross national income. In the context of emphasis being placed on financing new initiatives, such as carbon neutrality, this created the risk that funds earmarked for the cohesion policy and the agricultural policy could be reduced.¹⁴ In this debate, Poland joined the group known as Friends of Cohesion, which defended the proposal to maintain the level of financing in both areas applied thus far. During subsequent meetings, representatives of the Polish government attempted to convince the German side to support the Polish stance. One such opportunity was the meeting of heads of government of the Visegrad Group states and Chancellor Merkel in February in Bratislava, during which the Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary voiced their opposition to the plan to limit the funds earmarked for cohesion and agriculture.¹⁵ Another signal suggesting that Poland's stance was supported by most EU member states (17 of them) was the November meeting of Friends of Cohesion in Prague.

across the EU, introduction on social welfare solutions and citizen co-deciding mechanisms, while all this should be accompanied by economic growth, see "Nur als Europe United werden wir unsere Werte in dieser Welt bewahren!", Auswärtiges Amt, 23 May 2019, www.auswaertiges-amt.de.

¹² One element of the implementation of the vision of a 'sovereign Europe' was to involve a reform of voting in the Council of the EU on issues linked with the EU's external policy, so that to avoid a situation in which 'the slowest EU member state sets the pace for all' in this sphere. This was intended to make the EU's reaction to the policy pursued by states such as the U.S., China and Russia more efficient, see: *ibidem*.

¹³ J. Lepiarz, "Czaputowicz o niemieckiej wizji UE: Polska inaczej rozkłada akcenty," *Deutsche Welle*, 23 May 2019, www.dw.com/pl.

¹⁴ M. Makowska, "State of Negotiations..." *op. cit.*

¹⁵ "Pressekonferenz von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel, dem slowakischen Ministerpräsidenten Pellegrini, dem tschechischen Ministerpräsidenten Babiš, dem ungarischen Ministerpräsidenten Orbán und dem polnischen Ministerpräsidenten Morawiecki," Die Bundeskanzlerin, 7 February 2019, www.bundeskanzlerin.de.

Its participants called on the EU to maintain the cohesion policy funding at the level defined in its 2014–20 MFF.¹⁶ In the context of the proposal to make payments of EU funds conditional on respecting the rule of law, which Chancellor Merkel supported in October,¹⁷ Poland repeatedly attempted to convince its EU partners (including Germany) that the mechanisms applied thus far were sufficient, however, their quality should be improved and the mechanism of informal dialogue between EU institutions and the member states should be applied.¹⁸

Climate policy was another recurrent topic in Polish-German relations. Unlike Poland, Germany supported the EU's carbon neutrality goal set during the European Council meeting in December. In addition, it undertook unilateral measures to limit the use of non-renewable energy sources in the energy mix. During the meetings of representatives of Poland and Germany, as well as in the EU forum, the Polish side repeatedly stressed that the huge share of coal in its energy mix complicated Poland's energy transition prospects. One signal that Germany did take Poland's situation into account was the fact that Chancellor Merkel expressed her understanding for the Polish government's opposition to the EU member states' decision to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. Chancellor Merkel said that Poland, which generated 80% of its energy from coal, **"had the most difficult point of departure" for launching a transformation of its energy infrastructure.**¹⁹ This is why Germany, in line with Poland's expectations, supported the creation of a just transition fund. Germany and Poland were home to the biggest number of regions that could benefit from the funds offered under this mechanism.²⁰

Poland continued to criticise the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, which seems to have indirectly convinced the German government to withdraw its support for this project. In its arguments the Polish government referred to the threat that the pipeline posed to the energy security of Central Europe and Ukraine, including due to the fact that it enabled Russia to have a monopoly on gas supplies to Europe and created 'a price diktat devised by Gazprom.'²¹

¹⁶ T. Bielecki, "Batalia o (nie)odchudzenie polityki spójności," *Deutsche Welle*, 6 November 2019, www.dw.com/pl.

¹⁷ A. Widzyk, "Merkel za powiązaniem funduszy UE z praworządnością," *Deutsche Welle*, 17 October 2019, www.dw.com/pl.

¹⁸ A. Wójcik, "Komisja Europejska nie daruje Polsce. Dyscyplinowanie sędziów niezgodne z prawem UE," *OKO.Press*, 17 July 2019, www.oko.press.

¹⁹ "Merkel broni polskiego stanowiska ws. Neutralności klimatycznej," *Biznes Alert*, 13 December 2019, www.biznesalert.pl.

²⁰ A. Stojewska, "Wielu chętnych na unijny węglowy fundusz," *Rzeczpospolita*, 22 November 2019, www.rp.pl.

²¹ "Morawiecki: Nord Stream 2 zagraża bezpieczeństwu energetycznemu tej części Europy," *Dziennik*, 17 September 2019, www.dziennik.pl.

Integration of the Western Balkan states into the EU was an area of common interest for Poland and Germany. Poland continued to use the existing formats and bilateral meetings to coordinate cooperation in this area. For example, it participated in the Berlin Process, initiated by Germany in 2014 to develop relations between the EU states and the Western Balkan countries, and chaired its work in 2019. In April, during a meeting of foreign ministers of the Berlin Process countries in Warsaw, ministers Czaputowicz and Maas held consultations, including on the EU strategy towards the region.²² However, the central event of the Polish presidency was the Western Balkans Summit organised in Poznań in July. Aside from Minister Czaputowicz, at the summit Poland was represented by President Andrzej Duda and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki. Germany was represented by Chancellor Angela Merkel. It should be noted, however, that the summit did not result in the adoption of any important decisions as regards further integration of the Western Balkans with the EU.²³ The fact that France, the Netherlands and Denmark vetoed the decision to launch accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia was a red light signal for the aspirations of the region's states. It also weakened Polish-German efforts in this field.

In 2019, in its contacts with the German side, the Polish government signalled its interest in boosting cooperation within the Weimar Triangle. Prime Minister Morawiecki indicated that President Macron's visit, planned for early 2020, could serve as a 'new opening' in Polish-French relations.²⁴ The expectations were stoked by the speech delivered by the Polish FM during the Weimar Transatlantic Forum held in Genshagen in November. Minister Czaputowicz stressed that "Poland is open to cooperation in the Weimar format in such matters as the Syria issue, the work of the Council of Europe and new defence technologies".²⁵

Another important event in bilateral relations was the meeting of the Polish-German round table on the situation of Poles in Germany and of the German minority in Poland, the first such meeting in four years. However, the consultations failed to bring any discernible results, no communiqué was issued after their conclusion and no press conference was held.²⁶

²² M. Kozłowska, M. Sommer, "J. Czaputowicz: Polska wśród państw, które chciałyby szybkiej akcesji Bałkanów Zachodnich do UE," *Dzieje.pl*, 12 April 2020, www.dzieje.pl.

²³ M. Kucharczyk, "Na szczycie Bałkanów Zachodnich w Poznaniu bez przełomu," *Euractiv*, 8 July 2019, www.euractiv.pl.

²⁴ L. Marchand, D. Nawrot, "Prezydent Francji odwiedzi Polskę na początku 2020 r.?", *Euractiv*, 23 August 2019, www.euractiv.pl.

²⁵ "Weimarskie Forum Transatlantyczne: Obrazy, Wyobrażenia i Przyszłość Zachodu," Stiftung Genshagen, November 2019, www.stiftung-genshagen.de.

²⁶ J. Lepiarz, "Polsko-niemiecki Okrągły Stół. Bez konkretnych rezultatów," *Deutsche Welle*, 19 June 2019, www.dw.com/pl.

Defence Cooperation

Joint military exercises facilitated the military cooperation between Poland and Germany. In May, the Bundeswehr took part in the 'Dragon-19' exercise during which Polish F-16 fighter jets were moved to the German airport of Laage.²⁷ During his visit to Berlin in August, Minister of Defence Mariusz Błaszczak suggested to Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer that Poland and Germany should organise another joint exercise.²⁸ The 'Defender 2020' drills were viewed as one opportunity for such an exercise: they were planned to take place in spring 2020 under U.S. command, while Germany was expected to serve as a logistical hub.²⁹ Other issues discussed during the meeting included the construction of a French-German tank: the Polish defence minister said that Poland would be interested in purchasing these tanks. He also suggested that this initiative should be accelerated and submitted as a PESCO project.³⁰

As regards security policy, one important topic for Polish-German cooperation involved the relations with Russia. Poland's lasting goal was to maintain the EU sanctions imposed on Russia, which was possible due to Germany's support. No change to the joint position happened during the meeting in the Normandy Format held in Paris in December, despite President Macron's attempts to reset the relations with Russia. His proposal received no backing from Germany.³¹

In 2019, Germany began its two-year term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, which coincided with Poland's term which ended on 31 December 2019. Poland organised a conference on the relationship between the effects of climate change and the security situation in the context of the UN missions in Mali, Sudan and the Central African Republic. Germany co-organised the conference and chaired the group dealing with climate and security.³²

Economic Relations

Germany continued to be Poland's most important trade partner: Germany's share in Poland's total exports was 27.6% (€65.1 billion), down 0.6 percentage point compared with 2018. German-made goods accounted for 21.8% of Polish imports

²⁷ M. Kozubal, "F-16 będą operowały z Niemiec," *Rzeczpospolita*, 13 May 2019, www.rp.pl.

²⁸ "Wyzwania Sojuszu..." *op. cit.*

²⁹ "Defender 2020. 37 tys. żołnierzy na manewrach," *Deutsche Welle*, 7 October 2019, www.dw.com/pl.

³⁰ "Wyzwania Sojuszu..." *op. cit.*

³¹ A. Legucka, D. Szeligowski, "The Normandy e Format Summit—No Real Progress," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 67, 11 December 2019, www.pism.pl.

³² "Powiązanie skutków zmian klimatu z sytuacją bezpieczeństwa," MON, 25 February 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

(€50.9 billion), down 0.6 percentage point versus 2018. Poland's trade surplus with Germany increased by €2.6 billion to €14.2 billion.³³ At the same time, Poland's importance in Germany's trade policy increased: in 2019 Poland was Germany's eighth biggest export partner (€65.8 billion; up 2.6 billion compared with 2018) and its fifth biggest import partner (€57.7 billion; up 2.6 billion), outstripping Italy in this category.³⁴ The Polish diaspora continued to play an important part in Germany's economic growth: in 2018 706,000 Poles emigrated to Germany seeking a job, and Germany continued to be the main destination for Polish economic migrants.³⁵

Germany's importance to the Polish economy was evident in the fact that this country was Poland's second biggest foreign investor. Statistics compiled as at the end of 2018 indicate that German investments amounted to €34.8 billion (16.6% of total foreign investments, down 1.1 percentage points compared with 2017). German capital was mainly invested in automotive trade and repair (39.6%) and in the industrial production sector (34.0%). Another sector of interest to German investors was the property market service sector (10.9%). Data compiled by Statistics Poland (GUS) indicate that, just like in 2018, investments based on German capital were mainly located in Mazowieckie (25.6%), Wielkopolskie (24.9%) and Dolnośląskie (19.7%) provinces. Moreover, statistics compiled by GUS indicated that 5415 German businesses invested their capital in Poland, placing Germany at the top of the list of all countries mentioned in the report.³⁶ Meanwhile, Polish investments in Germany continued to be much smaller: in 2018 they amounted to PLN6.1 billion. However, Germany was indicated by the biggest proportion of the surveyed entrepreneurs (15.8%) as their future investment destination in 2020–21.³⁷

The Polish leadership intended not only to reinforce Poland's economic links with its western neighbour, but also to use these links to boost the level of innovation of Polish companies and to expand the Polish high technology sector. In 2019, the most prominent economic event was the Polish-German summit

³³ "Foreign trade turnover of goods in total and by countries in 2019," GUS, 11 February 2020, <http://stat.gov.pl>.

³⁴ "Rangfolge der Handelspartner im Außenhandel der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (vorläufige Ergebnisse)," Federal Statistical Office of Germany, 20 April 2020, www.destatis.de.

³⁵ "Information on the size and directions of emigration for temporary stay from Poland between 2004–2020," GUS, 15 November 2019, www.stat.gov.pl.

³⁶ "Economic activity of entities with foreign capital in 2018," GUS, 30 January 2020, www.stat.gov.pl.

³⁷ D. Ciesielska-Maciągowska, J. Gniadek, H. Kępka, "Zagraniczna ekspansja inwestycyjna polskich przedsiębiorstw – tendencje, perspektywy," Polish Economic Institute, December 2019, www.pie.net.pl.

held in Berlin in March. It was opened by Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology Jadwiga Emilewicz and Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Peter Altmaier.³⁸ The ministers called on the EU to “adopt an ambitious long-term industrial strategy to respond to the challenges posed by global competition”. This strategy could cover investments for example in the artificial intelligence sector and could facilitate the creation of an investment-friendly environment in the EU.³⁹ One symbol of this cooperation involved Poland joining the French-German initiative to build car batteries.⁴⁰

Social and Cultural Relations

Historical issues continued to be an important aspect of Poland’s policy towards Germany. In 2019, German politicians took part in the celebrations commemorating several events that happened during the Second World War. In September, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Chancellor Angela Merkel attended the celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the Second World War’s outbreak. In August, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas took part in events commemorating the 75th anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, and in December Chancellor Angela Merkel visited the former Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau several weeks ahead of its 75th liberation anniversary. During each of these visits, German politicians stressed that Germany was responsible for the outbreak of the Second World War and for the crimes perpetrated by Nazi Germany in 1939–45. In this context, the issue of reparations was repeatedly raised. Both Minister Czaputowicz⁴¹ and Prime Minister Morawiecki⁴² stressed that the compensation Poland received from Germany for the losses it had incurred was not satisfactory. At the same time, the two politicians chose not to provide the exact sum of compensation, as they waited for a report by a parliamentary committee tasked with evaluating the sum in damages that Poland should receive from Germany. In June, the committee’s head, MP Arkadiusz Mularczyk, estimated this sum at \$850 billion and announced that the report would be presented by 1 September 2019, which, however, did not happen. The

³⁸ “Polsko-Niemieckie Forum Gospodarcze – nowa jakość współpracy,” MRPiT, 18 March 2019, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologie.

³⁹ W. Szymański, “Polska–Niemcy: Gospodarka, przyjacielu,” *Deutsche Welle*, 18 March 2019, www.dw.com/pl.

⁴⁰ “Polska może wejść do mającego produkować baterie konsorcjum Francji i Niemiec,” *WNP*, 30 April 2019, www.wnp.pl.

⁴¹ “Polen sieht sich mit Reparationen diskriminiert,” *Der Spiegel*, 19 August 2019, www.spiegel.de.

⁴² R. Pietruszka, “Morawiecki w niemieckich mediach nie tylko o reparacjach, ale i wydatkach na obronność. ‘Nie powiedziałbym, że Niemcy są pasożytem, ale...’,” *Dziennik*, 22 August 2019, www.dziennik.pl.

newly elected Sejm failed to re-establish this committee.⁴³ Support offered by the German government to the construction of a memorial to the Polish victims of the Second World War in Berlin was a significant gesture. The CDU/CSU-SPD government communicated its stance on this matter in a reply to parliamentary question asked by an MP representing the Left Party: "The Second World War is a fundamental component of the German culture of memory. 80 years after its outbreak, 30 years after the peaceful revolutions in Central Europe and 15 years after Poland's entry to the EU, together with Poland the government of Germany intends to boost the intensity of efforts aimed at building our shared culture of memory and expanding the process of coming to terms with German terror perpetrated on Polish soil".⁴⁴

One important event in the context of cultural relations, intended to acquaint Germans with the cultural achievements of their eastern neighbours, was another edition of the 'filmPOLSKA' festival organised in April in Berlin. The audience had an opportunity to see both new Polish films such as 'Fugue' directed by Agnieszka Smoczyńska, and Polish film classics: on the occasion of Krzysztof Zanussi's 80th birthday films such as 'The Structure of Crystals' and 'Camouflage' were screened.⁴⁵ Books by Olga Tokarczuk, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, enjoyed popularity in Germany. The writer inaugurated the 71th edition of the prestigious Frankfurt Book Fair.⁴⁶

In 2019, the Polish government continued to demand that the German side should support and expand Polish language learning opportunities in Germany. During his visit to Berlin in November, Minister Czaputowicz said that the Polish government expected Germany "to establish a fund to enable both the federal and the state level government to support the creation of community schools that would offer classes of Polish as a mother tongue across Germany".⁴⁷

⁴³ "Sejm bez zespołu ds. reparacji wojennych. Mularczyk: Sprawa reparacji będzie kontynuowana," *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, 10 December 2019, www.dziennik.pl.

⁴⁴ J. Lepiarz, "Rząd Niemiec poparł projekt pomnika polskich ofiar wojny," *Deutsche Welle*, 5 June 2019, www.dw.com/pl.

⁴⁵ E. Stasik, "Festiwal filmPOLSKA w Berlinie. Polskie kino ma się dobrze," *Deutsche Welle*, 22 April 2019, www.dw.com/pl.

⁴⁶ E. Cieślík, "Olga Tokarczuk zainaugurowała 71. Targi Książki we Frankfurcie," *Lubimy czytać*, 16 October 2019, www.lubimyczytac.pl.

⁴⁷ "Berlin: Spotkanie ministrów spraw zagranicznych Polski i Niemiec," MSZ, 26 November 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

Assessment

In 2019, Poland achieved the goals of its policy towards Germany only in some aspects. The Polish government was moderately successful in impacting Germany's stance on the future of the EU's climate policy. Although Germany joined the 2050 carbon neutrality agreement, Chancellor Merkel expressed her understanding of Poland's objections and announced that Poland would receive considerable financial assistance to cover its energy transition costs. Although in 2019 no meeting of the leaders of France, Germany and Poland was held, the Polish government representatives signalled their intention to revive the cooperation within the framework of the Weimar Triangle. This, however, mainly depended on the possible improvement of French-Polish relations. Poland failed to persuade Germany to increase the EU's 2021–27 budget and to withdraw from the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. Similarly, the meeting of the Polish-German round table failed to bring any significant results. The German government increasingly frequently signalled its support for the planned introduction of majority voting in the EU Council in matters linked with foreign policy, which was opposed by the Polish government.

In line with Poland's expectations, Polish-German cooperation in the field of security, including joint military exercises, was continued following Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer taking the post of Germany's Defence Minister. The German government did not change its position regarding the sanctions imposed on Russia, which was convergent with the Polish stance.

In 2019, the Polish government achieved the goal which involved maintaining active relations with Poland's biggest economic partner. This was evident in the increasing importance of Poland as Germany's foreign trade partner and in the activity of German investors on the Polish market. Prospects for expanding the Polish-German cooperation in the field of innovation were favourable, as evidenced by the organisation of meetings such as the Polish-German economic summit.

From Poland's perspective, the presence of German politicians during the celebrations commemorating the Second World War anniversaries should be assessed positively. Using these opportunities, the Polish government continued its efforts to prove the legitimacy of war reparation claims, however, to no avail. Similarly, the work of the parliamentary committee to evaluate the sum in damages that Poland should receive from Germany for the losses it had suffered during the Second World War ended in a fiasco because this committee was not appointed in the new term of the Sejm. However, the German government's support for the construction of a memorial to the Polish victims of the Second

World War in Berlin likely suggests that the issue of Germany's accountability for crimes perpetrated on the territory of German-occupied Poland in 1939–45 will increasingly be stressed in debates attended by experts and politicians. As a consequence, it is hoped, it will increasingly be present in the German public debate.

Poland's Policy Towards France

ŁUKASZ MAŚŁANKA

Background

2019 was a politically stable year for France, although social protests were frequent. The presidential term of centrist Emmanuel Macron was underway, and the party he had founded, *La République en marche*, held a majority in the National Assembly. In domestic politics, 2019 saw the implementation of tough economic reforms mainly intended to reduce the deficit and the public debt and to boost economic growth. At the same time, the government was introducing the tenets of an ambitious climate policy, which was accompanied by increased tax on fossil fuels. These decisions sparked a strong emotional reaction from the public, with the 'Yellow Vests' (*Gilets jaunes*) movement, which had been developing since autumn 2018, being one of its main manifestations. In this case, street protests had an impact on France's European policy as the country began to expect its allies to become equally strongly involved in the implementation of climate-related goals.

In its foreign policy, France modified its moderately pro-Atlantic course to make it a more independent policy aimed at seeking balance in a world increasingly shaped by the U.S.-China rivalry. One element of this policy involved a dialogue with Russia, with two bilateral meetings between the presidents (in Brégançon and in Moscow)¹ being the symbols of this dialogue. However, unlike several other EU member states, France did not raise the issue of lifting the sanctions imposed on Russia post-2014. Nevertheless, the basic objectives of the French policy towards Russia, i.e. seeking a compromise on contentious issues (including Russia ceasing its aggressive actions targeting its neighbours in exchange for a halt in further EU and NATO enlargement to the East) and focusing the EU's attention on the Mediterranean Sea basin to a greater degree, diverged from the goals of Poland's foreign policy.

Ongoing discussions within the EU were another important determinant of Poland's policy towards France. In 2019, they mainly concerned climate issues, the

¹ Ł. Jurczyszyn, "Risky Strategy of Rapprochement: Russia in France's Foreign Policy," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 149 (1395), 24 October 2019, www.pism.pl.

problem of EU enlargement to include the Western Balkan countries, Europe's defence autonomy and the upcoming negotiations regarding the multiannual budget perspective. Differences between the Polish and the French positions were particularly evident in the first three issues. With regard to the future budgetary perspective, there were both some shared views (support for an ambitious budget and for maintaining the Common Agricultural Policy in its current form) and certain divergences (France was in favour of a large eurozone budget and wanted to channel the funds into investments at the expense of the cohesion policy). There were also certain divergences regarding the vision of the common market: France proposed to make free exchange of goods and services conditional on the social and fiscal harmonisation of the member states, while Poland supported market freedoms and at the same time wanted each member state's autonomy in shaping their welfare and tax policies to be maintained. The Polish authorities were highly sceptical about the plans involving the EU's institutional reform, which was presented for the first time by Emmanuel Macron in 2017 and reiterated in his 'Letter to citizens of Europe' published ahead of the EP election.²

Resumption of negotiations in the Normandy Format was an important backdrop for Poland's policy towards France. The French side argued that having the presidents of Russia and Ukraine attend a summit meeting was an important achievement of the French-Russian dialogue. Thus far, several swaps of prisoners-of-war were the most important outcome of this format's work. However, from the point of view of the security policy of the Central and Eastern European states, the only proof of success of the French approach would involve Russia deciding to withdraw its support for the Donbas separatists and agreeing to restore Crimea's status in line with international law.

The future of transatlantic relations was another area in which the views held by Poland and those supported by France were divergent. The French authorities argued that the crisis in these relations was a manifestation of a broader trend in which European affairs became increasingly less important for the U.S. leadership. This triggered the need for EU member states to devise a shared position in foreign and defence policy, one that would be separate from the U.S. position. The Polish authorities, for their part, viewed the United States as their most reliable partner in security and defence issues, and were strongly in favour of continuing to deepen the bilateral cooperation.

The political differences were reflected in specific areas of Polish-French cooperation. The French authorities were reluctant to include Poland in

² M. Szczepanik, "Macron's Back: The French President's Manifesto Ahead of European Elections," *PISM Spotlight*, 7 March 2019, www.pism.pl.

German-French military ventures.³ This reluctance resulted from their awareness of divergent defence policy priorities, from Poland's preference for partnership with the United States in these matters, and from negative experiences resulting from the unpredictability of Poland's procurement policy (for example in the tender for the purchase of helicopters). However, the French expert community pressurised the government to treat Poland in a more inclusive manner and to encourage it to participate as a partner in the armed forces modernisation projects implemented by France and Germany.⁴

Goals and Assumptions

While presenting the Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Polish Foreign Policy Tasks in 2019, Jacek Czaputowicz said that "France is an important reference for us in European, political and military, and economic matters". Therefore, Poland's policy towards France should be aimed at alleviating the current divergences which included "the idea of a multi-speed Europe, protectionist measures and those that amount to using double standards towards EU Member States" advocated by France. "France's participation in measures to bolster NATO's eastern borders, e.g. in Estonia, and last year in Lithuania"⁵ was proof of the fact that rapprochement between the positions of Poland and France was possible. Implementation of economic policy goals should be facilitated by increased trade exchange and bilateral investments and by ongoing dialogue with the French side, intended to curb the protectionist tendencies in shaping the EU's internal market.

The Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021 included the following passage: "Poland also sees vast potential in re-invigorating and enhancing security cooperation with Germany and France in the framework of the Weimar Triangle".⁶ Therefore, Poland's foreign policy should be oriented at intensifying the Polish-French dialogue which has always been the weakest element of this Triangle. The Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs also contained the declaration that "in addition to developing bilateral relations with France and Germany, we also

³ "Die Welt: Niemcy i Francja wykluczają Polskę z projektów zbrojeniowych," *Dziennik*, 2 January 2020, www.dziennik.pl.

⁴ "Trois fois deux pour l'Europe. Comment un renforcement des relations bilatérales France-Allemagne, Allemagne-Pologne et France-Pologne peut faire avancer l'UE," *Editoriaux de l'Ifri*, 11 March 2020, www.ifri.org.

⁵ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

⁶ "Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021," MSZ, September 2017, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

want to reinvigorate cooperation with these two countries within the Weimar Triangle”.⁷ It seemed that the best method for achieving this goal could involve holding a high-level meeting (president, prime minister, minister of foreign affairs) in this format.

Another goal pursued by Poland was to encourage France to become increasingly involved in the security of NATO's Eastern Flank and to convince it that reaching a durable agreement between the EU and Russia's current leadership was impossible due to the lack of willingness on the part of Russia. In addition, the Polish side wished to make the French partners aware of the fact that NATO's insufficient military presence on the Eastern Flank, combined with the EU's inactivity as regards emphasising the importance of territorial integrity of the Eastern Partnership states, could embolden Russia to launch further aggressive actions.

Political Relations

In 2019, the intensity of Polish-French relations was low. The Polish side sought to organise a visit by the French president to Warsaw in the first half of the year, to no avail.⁸ In an attempt to organise such a visit, on 20 February Paweł Soloch, the head of the National Security Bureau, and Krzysztof Szczerski, secretary of state at the Chancellery of the President, travelled to Paris. Minister Szczerski referred to the French side's interest in the Warsaw process which had been initiated during a ministerial conference on peace and security building in the Middle East, which was held in Warsaw on 14 February.⁹ However, at this conference the French side was only represented by a director of the European policy department of the French MFA.

Presidents Andrzej Duda and Emmanuel Macron only met on the sidelines of the NATO summit in London (4 December). During a brief conversation, President Duda emphasised the role of NATO in the European security architecture. Bilateral economic and military cooperation was also mentioned.¹⁰ French President Édouard Philippe visited Poland twice, each time representing France at a multilateral event. The first visit took place as part of the Western

⁷ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 ...,” *op. cit.*

⁸ “Przed wizytą Prezydenta Francji w Polsce,” *Prezydent.pl*, 28 January 2019, www.prezydent.pl; “President's aide: E. Macron likely to visit Poland in June or later,” *Prezydent.pl*, 25 March 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

⁹ “Szczerski: Wizyta Macrona powinna dać dobry impuls we wzajemnych relacjach,” *TVP Info*, 20 February 2019, www.tvp.info.

¹⁰ “Prezydent: Szczyt w Londynie to sukces NATO i zwycięstwo Polski,” *Prezydent.pl*, 4 December 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

Balkans summit (4–5 July), while the other was paid on the occasion of the celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War (1 September).

In a joint declaration signed on 9 April 2019 in Vienna to mark the centenary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the Speaker of the Polish Senate Stanisław Karczewski and his French counterpart Gérard Larcher called for a new dynamic in Polish-French relations. A meeting of the speakers of the upper houses of parliaments of the Weimar Triangle states was also held.¹¹ A month later, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture Piotr Gliński and Deputy Foreign Minister Konrad Szymański paid a visit to Paris to take part in a conference of EU countries' culture ministers focused on conservation of historical monuments. No Polish-French bilateral meetings were held on this occasion.

In 2019, the process of implementation of Poland's policy towards France was not facilitated by the fact that representatives of the two countries communicated via the mass media. Climate issues triggered particularly strong emotions. A lot of publicity was given to Poland, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Hungary blocking the new EU climate targets in June 2019 due to imprecisely defined compensation mechanisms. In September, on his way to the UN General Assembly, President Macron argued that it was Poland that was blocking the EU's climate efforts and advised those protesting against the French authorities' inertia regarding these issues to organise their protest in Poland.¹² This assessment came under tough criticism from the Polish authorities: President Duda referred to it as 'insolence' and emphasised Poland's contribution to the process of devising the guidelines for the implementation of the Paris Agreement during the COP24 summit held in Katowice.¹³ In December 2019, Poland was the only EU country to refrain from declaring its intention to meet the carbon neutrality goal by 2050. The French president reacted again: he reiterated France's support for a solidarity package for countries which encountered exceptional difficulties in achieving the climate goals. He also added that if a country failed to confirm its intention to join the EU climate policy, it would be excluded from "European mechanisms, including financial solidarity in particular".¹⁴ Media reports mainly highlighted the final

¹¹ "G. Larcher i S. Karczewski wezwali do nadania nowej dynamiki stosunkom polsko-francuskim," Kancelaria Senatu, 9 April 2019, www.senat.gov.pl.

¹² "Climat: Macron pense que la Pologne «bloque tout» engagement européen," *Le Monde*, 23 September 2019, www.lemonde.fr.

¹³ "Prezydent Duda komentuje słowa Macrona. „Przykro tego słuchać,” *TVP Info*, 24 September 2019, www.tvp.info.

¹⁴ "Komunikat Ambasadora ws. wypowiedzi Prezydenta Francji po Radzie Europejskiej 13 grudnia 2019," Embassy of France in Poland, 15 January 2020, <https://pl.ambafrance.org>.

fragment of this statement. Prior to Poland's decision on carbon neutrality, on 26 November a meeting was held between Poland's Climate Minister Michał Kurtyka and a French delegation headed by Secretary General for European Affairs Sandrine Gaudin. The ministers discussed further efforts to mitigate climate change and to devise methods for distributing the economic burden associated with achieving carbon neutrality among all EU member states.¹⁵ It seems that the issue the French side considered most alarming was the absence of a final government-approved version of the most important documents in the context of the development of the Polish energy sector and the country's path to achieving carbon neutrality, that is 'Poland's energy policy until 2040', 'The national energy and climate plan', 'The hydrogen strategy' and 'The just transition plan'.¹⁶

As part of the Polish presidency of the Berlin Process, a Western Balkans Summit was organised in Poznań (4–5 July 2019). It was mainly intended to boost cooperation between the region's non-EU countries and the EU. At this summit France was represented by Prime Minister Édouard Philippe. Poland was in favour of setting a clear EU accession path for the Western Balkan states, while France was much more restrained regarding this issue and emphasised the need to resolve inter-state and inter-ethnic conflicts in the region in the first place, and the need for an institutional and budgetary reform of the EU. This divergence resulted in France opposing the plan to open accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia at the EC summit in October 2019.¹⁷ This opposition, which was motivated by the desire to find a new neighbourhood policy formula, one which would not necessarily lead to enlargement, stood in contrast to Polish foreign policy goals pursued not only through the Berlin Process but most importantly through the Eastern Partnership programme whose current model of functioning France also criticised.¹⁸

Defence Cooperation

In 2019, Polish-French military relations were marked by debates on European strategic autonomy, involvement in transatlantic relations and CSDP tools. Prior

¹⁵ "Kurtyka: Neutralność klimatyczna jednym z tematów polsko-francuskich rozmów," *Energetyka24*, 27 November 2019, www.energetyka24.com.

¹⁶ "Jakóbik: Polski plan sprawiedliwej transformacji powstaje w cieniu rekonstrukcji rządu," *Biznes alert*, 25 August 2020, www.biznesalert.pl.

¹⁷ Ł. Jurczyszyn, "The Significance of France's Opposition to EU Enlargement to North Macedonia and Albania," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 169 (1415), 2 December 2019, www.pism.pl.

¹⁸ "Table ronde sur les relations avec la Russie," Assemblée Nationale, 3 December 2019, www.assemblee-nationale.fr.

to his visit to Paris, Paweł Soloch, the head of Poland's National Security Bureau, published an article in 'L'Opinion', in which he argued that Poland's pro-Atlantic strategic sensitivity and the concept advocated by the French side, which was more oriented towards Europe's increasing autonomy, could be combined. He also expressed his support for the European Intervention Initiative (EI2), which was operating under the patronage of France, although at the same time he expressed his belief that it should work in synergy with NATO and the EU.¹⁹

In addition, Minister Soloch paid a visit to the Eurocorps command headquarters in Strasbourg (18–19 March). During this visit, he reiterated Poland's readiness to change the decision to withdraw from this initiative, which had been announced two years earlier.²⁰ Poland had the associated member status and negotiations focused on its full membership were suspended in 2016. Soloch explained Poland's return to the initiative citing the Eurocorps's increased significance in NATO's chain of command.²¹

The NSB head visited France for the third time on 24–25 October to take part in a conference on defence issues organised by the Polish embassy with the participation of the Visegrad Group states. The purpose of the meeting was to familiarize the French side with the Central European states' defence interests. Paweł Soloch referred to a report on European security published by the French Senate. He emphasised numerous views that Poland and France shared and stressed that the defence interests of NATO's Eastern Flank states were presented in an objective manner.²²

In this context, the words by President Emmanuel Macron regarding the alleged 'brain death of NATO', contained in his interview for 'The Economist' published on 7 November 2019,²³ did not receive a warm welcome. The French President emphasised the contradictions emerging within NATO as a result of a unilateral policy pursued by the U.S. and by Turkey's disloyalty. However, the Polish side interpreted these words as an attempt to undermine the need for allied solidarity which was of key importance to the security of Central and Eastern Europe.²⁴

¹⁹ "Szef BBN dla l'Opinion: Polskę i Francję łączy polityka bezpieczeństwa i obrony," BBN, 21 February 2019, www.bbn.gov.pl.

²⁰ At that time, Poland motivated its lack of interest in the Eurocorps arguing that the corps was focusing on security challenges in the EU's southern neighbourhood only.

²¹ "Wizyta Szefa BBN w EUKORPUSIE," BBN, 22 March 2019, www.bbn.gov.pl.

²² "Wizyta Szefa BBN we Francji," BBN, 27 October 2019, www.bbn.gov.pl.

²³ "Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead," *The Economist*, 7 November 2019, www.economist.com.

²⁴ Ł. Jurchyszyn, "Znaczenie i reakcje na wywiad prezydenta Emmanuela Macrona dla The Economist," *Podcast PISM*, ep. 72, 12 November 2019, www.pism.pl.

At the end of 2018, Poland announced its involvement in several PESCO projects. Until 31 December 2018, it had participated in seven such projects, whereas France, one of the leaders of structured cooperation, took part in 21 projects. The two states were jointly involved in the following projects: Integrated Unmanned Ground System, European Secure Software Defined Radio, Cyber Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security, Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe and Support to Operations, and Military Mobility.²⁵ There were certain discrepancies regarding the scope of funding of specific projects in the upcoming EU multiannual budget perspective. Poland was particularly interested in the implementation of the Military Mobility project. In the draft budget presented by the President of the European Council the funds earmarked for its implementation (€1.5 billion) were considerably reduced compared with the European Commission's draft (€6.5 billion). This issue could lead to a future dispute between Poland and France which did not consider Military Mobility as a priority.

The so-called Weimar tank was a prospective, ambitious project, albeit at that time it was at a very early conceptual stage. The Polish armed forces were interested in purchasing a new tank type in the near future. However, the project, which was to be implemented jointly with German and French partners, had a major weak point, namely the planned time-frame for its creation stretching into the 2030s. In 2019, the Polish side slowed down the 'Orka' programme involving the modernisation of Poland's navy, aimed at purchasing three new generation submarines. The bid submitted by the French Naval Group company (other bids were submitted by a German and a Swedish company) concerned Scorpène class submarines integrated with long range cruise missiles (NCM).

Economic Relations

In 2019, France continued to be Poland's fourth biggest export partner,²⁶ and was ranked sixth on the list of Poland's import partners.²⁷ The value of trade exchange increased from €20.86 billion in 2018 to €22.276 billion.²⁸ In 2019, the value of Poland's exports to France stood at €13 788 million, which indicates that it increased by €1.303 billion compared with 2018. In 2019, Poland imported

²⁵ "Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) updated list of PESCO projects," European Council, 3 March 2020, www.consilium.europa.eu.

²⁶ "Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski, styczeń–grudzień 2019 rok," MRPiT, February 2020, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologie.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ "Francja – informacja o sytuacji gospodarczej i stosunkach gospodarczych z Polską," MRPiT, April 2020, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologie.

from France goods worth more than €8.488 billion (up €113 million), which once again resulted in a trade surplus in Poland's favour amounting to €5.299 billion (up €1.189 billion).²⁹ Poland's exports to France mainly included products manufactured by the electromechanical industry such as automotive parts and accessories, automatic data processing machines, passenger cars, batteries and engines (49%), chemical products (13.8%), agri-food products (12.2%) and metallurgical products (7.1%). The structure of Poland's imports from France was similar: products of the electromechanical industry mainly including passenger cars and trucks, spare parts to these (39.5%), products of the chemical industry: mainly perfumes, cosmetics (31.7%), as well as products of the metallurgical (9.2%) and agri-food industries (9%).³⁰

The economic relations were the subject of talks between Polish and French politicians. France's Minister of the Economy and Finance Bruno Le Maire visited Poland twice. On 22 February, he met with Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, Minister of Finance Teresa Czerwińska and Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology Jadwiga Emilewicz. The topics of talks between the French minister and the Polish prime minister included bilateral economic relations and the EU's industrial development including the production of electrical car batteries. Poland and France were among the seven EU countries which in December 2019 received the European Commission's consent for offering public assistance to the development of European car battery manufacturing potential. The sum earmarked for these activities stood at €3.2 billion and Poland was allowed to earmark €240 million for the recycling of dead batteries and recovering certain materials they contain.³¹ Other topics of talks included the negotiations on the multiannual financial framework and the current challenges linked with international trade policies.³² During the meeting with minister Czerwińska, a Polish-French tax declaration was signed.³³ Bruno Le Maire presented Jadwiga Emilewicz with details of the French-German industrial strategy which Poland had joined in July 2019. The goal of this strategy was to have the EU's antitrust laws eased in order to facilitate the creation of European economic 'champions'.³⁴

²⁹ "Syntetyczna informacja...", *op. cit.*

³⁰ "Francja – informacja o sytuacji gospodarczej...", *op. cit.*

³¹ "Miliardy na baterie do samochodów elektrycznych. Polska dostała zgodę," *Dziennik*, 9 December 2019, www.dziennik.pl.

³² "Premier Mateusz Morawiecki spotkał się z ministrem gospodarki i finansów Francji Bruno Le Maire'em," KPRM, 22 February 2019, www.premier.gov.pl.

³³ "Wizyta Bruno Le Maire'a, francuskiego ministra gospodarki i finansów w Polsce," Embassy of France in Warsaw, 22 February 2019, www.pl.ambafrance.org.

³⁴ "Minister Jadwiga Emilewicz dołącza się do planów Berlina i Paryża. Nowe 'chłopaki, weźcie z sobą'," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9 July 2019, www.wyborcza.pl.

On 4 July, in Poznań, during Le Maire's another visit to Poland, this time on the sidelines of the Western Balkans summit, a joint declaration of the ministers of economic affairs of the Weimar Triangle countries was signed. It was entitled Modernising EU Competition Policy.³⁵

Just like in previous years, Poland and France expressed their support for the common agricultural policy. Within the framework of the Weimar Triangle, a meeting of agriculture ministers of France, Germany and Poland was held in Warsaw on 7 October 2019. The ministers signed a declaration on European agriculture. In this document, they expressed support for the common agricultural policy and emphasised the importance of the agricultural sector for the EU economy. The French Minister of Agriculture Didier Guillaume stressed that the agriculture of the three countries taken together accounted for 40% of European agriculture. Due to the fact that Poland and France were important producers of meat, the Polish side welcomed the opinion expressed by the French minister that livestock farming did not pose any threat to the climate.³⁶

2019 saw the continuation of the dispute over posted workers. Although an amendment to the relevant directive of the EP and the Council, which limited the period of posting of workers to 12 months, had been enacted back in 2018, Poland and Hungary quickly challenged its provisions at the CJEU. In March 2019, the then Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology Jadwiga Emilewicz said that "today the debate on the shape of European laws regarding the broadly understood work mobility cannot be considered as finished. We will continue to jointly examine whether the new directive does solve the problems related to posting and whether it guarantees the implementation of the principles of *fair play*".³⁷

Social and Cultural Relations

Important events connected with the promotion of Polish culture in France included the exhibition of Polish 19th century painting entitled 'Pologne 1840–1918. Peindre l'âme d'une nation', held on 28 September 2019 – 19 January 2020, under the patronage of both presidents, in connection with the centenary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and France. The exhibition was prepared in cooperation with the National Museum in Warsaw and displayed

³⁵ "EU: France, Germany, and Poland Present Proposals for EU Antitrust Law Reform," *Competition Policy International*, 7 July 2019, www.competitionpolicyinternational.com.

³⁶ "Wspólna deklaracja Ministrów Rolnictwa," MRiRW, 7 October 2019, www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo.

³⁷ "Obawy o skutki dyrektywy o delegowaniu pracowników," *Euractiv*, 14 March 2019, ww.euractiv.pl.

in a branch of the Louvre Museum in Lens, a city located in the Hauts-de-France region which was a popular destination for Polish emigrants in the first half of the 20th century.³⁸

Between 29 November and 2 December the Polish Institute in Paris organised the 12th edition of the Kinopolska festival which enabled the French cinema goers to see the latest films directed by Filip Bajon, Jan Komasa, Jagoda Szalc, Adrian Panek and Jacek Borcuch.³⁹ Under the auspices of the French Institute in Poland the 10th edition of the New French Cinema Review was organised in several Polish cities (22 May – 20 June 2019).

There was a rapprochement in the field of historical policy. Referring to Russian President Vladimir Putin's statements regarding Poland's alleged co-responsibility for the outbreak of the Second World War, the French ambassador to Poland Frédéric Billet, alongside his German colleague, stressed the importance of the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact in the genesis of this conflict.⁴⁰ The fact that European TV channel Arte produced important documentaries on the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact⁴¹ and the Katyn massacre⁴² should be viewed in this context, even though this was not a direct result of government activities.

In addition, the French side emphasised that distorting historical truth is possible in those countries where freedom of scientific research is being undermined. However, in this statement it referred not only to the situation in Russia but also to disputes in Polish-Jewish relations. In this regard, controversy became evident in late February and early March, when the French Minister of Higher Education Frédérique Vidal wrote a letter to Deputy Prime Minister Jarosław Gowin calling on the Polish government to distance itself from attempts by a group of activists linked with the 'Gazeta Polska' daily newspaper to disrupt a scientific conference focused on the new line of Polish research on the Holocaust (Paris, EHESS, 21–22 February). At this conference, Poland was represented by both representatives of the Polish Centre for Holocaust Research and the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). Minister Vidal accused the representatives of IPN of failing to react to improper behaviour on the part of the protesters. Deputy Prime Minister Jarosław Gowin consulted the issue with the Polish ambassador to France Tomasz Młynarski and denied the facts discussed in minister Vidal's

³⁸ "Pologne 1840–1918. Peindre l'âme d'une nation," Louvre-Lens, www.louvre-lens.fr.

³⁹ "Kinopolska: le cinéma polonais en vitrine au coeur de Paris," *Cineuropa*, 28 November 2019, www.cineuropa.org.

⁴⁰ "Ambasador Francji o skutkach paktu Ribbentrop–Mołotow dla Polski," PAP, 31 December 2019, www.pap.pl.

⁴¹ "Le pacte Hitler–Staline," ARTE, www.boutique.arte.tv.

⁴² "Les bourreaux de Staline – Katyn 1940," ARTE, www.boutique.arte.tv.

letter. He also added that concerns regarding the freedom of scientific research in Poland were unfounded.⁴³

Assessment

In line with the goals of Poland's policy towards France, an increase in trade between the two countries was recorded. In 2019, its value increased by PLN1.416 billion compared with 2018 (up 6.8%, while the corresponding increase in 2018 versus 2017 had been 9%). As regards economic relations, the most significant even involved Poland joining the French-German initiative to liberate the rules of enterprise concentration. From the point of view of Polish companies' interests, this decision sparked controversy because it could additionally undermine their competitiveness on the European market.⁴⁴

Contrary to the adopted assumptions, in 2019, just like in previous years, efforts to rejuvenate cooperation in the framework of the Weimar Triangle failed. A courtesy meeting of speakers of upper houses of parliament was the highest level meeting held in this format in 2019. Apart from that, an agreement was reached between ministers of the economy and ministers of agriculture of the three states.

No progress in developing defence cooperation was recorded. Poland postponed the implementation of contracts in which the French side could potentially become involved. Other problematic issues included France's attitude towards NATO and Poland's attitude towards the concept of Europe's strategic autonomy advocated by President Macron. Implementation of PESCO projects was ongoing, including several projects carried out in collaboration with France.

In 2019, the low intensity of Polish-French contacts was more evident in Polish politics than in French politics. France was skilful at making good use of its influence in the EU, which resulted in top EU positions being filled with individuals favourable to France, including in particular in the European External Action Service and the EC (European Commissioner for Internal Market). Therefore, further attempts to achieve social harmonisation of the EU and to focus the EU's attention on its southern neighbourhood could be expected, which was to the detriment of the Eastern Partnership promoted by Poland. Due to differences in potential and geographical location, Poland's position vis-à-vis France was further weakened by Poland's problems within the EU, which were

⁴³ "Gowin w liście do francuskiej minister: niepotrzebne są obawy, że polski rząd mógłby ograniczać wolność badań naukowych," PAP, 4 March 2019, www.pap.pl.

⁴⁴ S. Zaręba, "Perspectives on EU M&A Control after the EC's Siemens-Alstom Decision," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 33 (1279), 11 March 2019, www.pism.pl.

linked with the disputes over the rule of law, as well as by its smaller political influence. This, in turn, resulted from the fact that it was a non-eurozone state and from its position on climate policy, which was different from the position adopted by large EU member states. Moreover, Poland failed to persuade France that the form of dialogue with Russia it had adopted was pointless. Although this dialogue did not pose a direct threat to European solidarity, it could potentially be used to consolidate the status quo in the Eastern Partnership countries, to postpone the prospect of their EU accession and to boost Russia's influence there.

Poland's Policy Towards Great Britain

PRZEMYSŁAW BISKUP

Background

In 2019, membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), huge trade exchange and the presence in the UK of one of the largest Polish communities living abroad continued to be the most important long-term determinants of Poland's policy towards Great Britain. In addition, the United Kingdom¹ was Poland's principal ally due to its military, technological and financial potential, as well as its political will to become involved in NATO's Eastern Flank.²

In 2019, the basic mid-term determinant of Polish-British relations involved 'path dependence' resulting from the Polish government's concept regarding the UK's Brexit negotiations, adopted back in 2016. It envisaged a communitarisation of these negotiations under strategic supervision of the European Council. The schedule of this process was set in a treaty which provided for concluding the Brexit deal in 2019. As regards the economic, social and political consequences of Brexit, the most important issues involved the size of trade exchange (PLN 120 billion), the positive trade balance and the legal security of Polish nationals residing in Great Britain. Due to these factors, Poland was among those states which were most vulnerable to the consequences of a no-deal Brexit.³

The most important short-term determinant of Poland's policy in 2019 was the dynamic political crisis in Great Britain, which resulted in the British Brexit strategy becoming increasingly unstable. Between January and April, Prime Minister Theresa May made three attempts to ratify the original withdrawal agreement approved on 25 November 2018, to no avail. This failure resulted in spring 2019 in the Brexit date being postponed twice. The victory of the Eurosceptic Brexit Party in the European Parliament elections held on 23 May resulted in a change in the office of the Prime Minister, which was announced in July. Boris Johnson revised the United Kingdom's

¹ The full name of this state is: the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In this text, the author uses the names Great Britain and the United Kingdom interchangeably.

² "Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013–2019)," *NATO Communiqué*, PR/CP (2019) 123, 29 November 2019, www.nato.int.

³ P. Biskup, "Poland's Policy Towards the United Kingdom," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2017, PISM, 2020, p. 85.

negotiating position, for example he declared increased readiness to carry out a no-deal Brexit and to modify the assumptions of the Northern Ireland Protocol.⁴ The Brexit Party's victory over Tories and Labour demonstrated to the EU countries the risk posed by a no-deal Brexit and the prospect of losing their reliable British partners. In addition, 2019 saw a series of reshuffles in the UK government including the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary (twice). The turn of 2020 saw further personnel reshuffles and policy changes, which resulted from a snap general election (held on 12 December).⁵ In the context of ongoing Polish-British cooperation within the EU, the most important aspect involved the United Kingdom's declining activity in the EU forum during Theresa May's term in office, which subsequently Boris Johnson continued making it his government's official policy.⁶

Although Poland's policy towards Great Britain was affected by limitations resulting from the two states' different economic and political potential, and by a negative assessment of Polish domestic policy expressed by the British media,⁷ to some degree this was counterbalanced by the ongoing political crisis in the UK.⁸ In 2019, the ongoing intergovernmental relations were boosted by cooperation between the Polish United Right MEPs with Tory MEPs in the European Conservatives and Reformists Group in the European Parliament. One aspect that weakened these relations involved the fact that in both countries the ruling parties focused on numerous electoral campaigns held throughout 2019 (parliamentary and European elections in both Poland and the UK, local elections in England).⁹

⁴ P. Biskup, "The Future of Brexit in the Light of the 2019 UK General Elections Campaign," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 170 (1416), 3 December 2019, www.pism.pl.

⁵ P. Biskup, "Relacje unijno-brytyjskie w czasach zarazy," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny* 2020, no. 2 (81), p. 56–72.

⁶ L. Buchan, "UK to withdraw officials from EU meetings from September 1, Boris Johnson government announces," *The Independent*, 20 August 2019, www.independent.co.uk.

⁷ Ch. Davies, "Top Polish official resigns over alleged harassment of judges," *The Guardian*, 21 August 2019, www.theguardian.com; "Poland risks pariah status with crackdown on judges," *The Times*, 4 July 2018, www.thetimes.co.uk; P. Foster, "Polish ruling party whips up LGBTQ hatred ahead of elections amid 'gay-free' zones and Pride march attacks," *The Telegraph*, 9 August 2019, www.telegraph.co.uk; "Ambassador Knott signs open letter on Equality Parade," The British Embassy in Warsaw, 31 May 2019, www.gov.uk.

⁸ P. Biskup, "Brexit jako rewolucja?," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, 2019, no. 4 (79), pp. 94–112.

⁹ P. Biskup, "The UK Political Crisis as a Barrier to the Ratification of the Brexit Agreement," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 78 (1324), 7 June 2019, www.pism.pl; *idem*, "Brexit as a Tool in Boris Johnson's Political Strategy," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 142 (1388), 11 October 2019, www.pism.pl.

Goals and Assumptions

In 2019, when devising its policy towards Great Britain Poland adopted the same goals as in previous years. These goals were based on the assumption that despite Brexit Great Britain should continue to be among Poland's most important partners in both bilateral and multilateral formats, in particular in the field of economic and transatlantic cooperation and collaboration within NATO.¹⁰ In his policy statement delivered on 14 March, Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz argued that Poland's relations with Great Britain were "very intensive and across many areas. They reflect the close partnership in security, the strong pro-Atlantic views our two countries share, and a realistic assessment of Russia's policy".¹¹ In addition, he emphasised that the United Kingdom "has been one of Poland's three key trading partners for years and it is our goal to maintain this status".¹²

Czaputowicz also said that "a no-deal Brexit would be the worst scenario, which is why we shall keep looking for solutions to enlist support for the negotiated agreement".¹³ Among the tasks to be carried out in 2019 he indicated the continuation of bilateral cooperation formats "such as the annual intergovernmental consultations ... and the Quadriga dialogue of the foreign and defence ministers". Just as in 2017–18, the emphasis was placed on the Polish-British Belvedere Forum as a format which "facilitates a better mutual understanding of the Polish and British political, non-governmental and expert communities".

Therefore, in the EU aspect, in 2019 the most important goal of Poland's policy towards Great Britain involved advocating the ratification of the original withdrawal agreement.¹⁴ In the situation of a mounting political crisis in the UK, this goal was updated and another assumption was added to it, involving the need to strive for a limited renegotiation of the agreement. Alongside this, the Polish authorities adopted the assumption that in connection with the UK's increasing withdrawal from EU membership commitments, recorded since November 2018, Poland would not develop any new intra-EU initiatives in collaboration with Great Britain.¹⁵

¹⁰ P. Biskup, "Poland's Policy Towards the United Kingdom," *op. cit.*

¹¹ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume. See: also "Britain has been shaping the world for centuries. That won't change with Brexit: article by Jeremy Hunt," Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 29 March 2019, www.gov.uk.

¹² "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019...", *op. cit.*

¹³ *Ibidem.*

¹⁴ *Ibidem.*

¹⁵ J. Bielecki, "Czaputowicz: Polska wie, jak ratować Brexit," *Rzeczpospolita*, 21 January 2019, www.rp.pl.

In bilateral relations, the Polish government planned to boost political cooperation using the formats established from 2015 onwards, and in the field of economic and scientific cooperation it planned to develop dedicated formats (such as BTI and YESI) which were expected to bolster trade exchange and technology transfer after Brexit. From the point of view of defence cooperation, the most important goal was to maintain the British military presence on NATO's Eastern Flank. As regards social relations, the Polish government's goal involved facilitating the implementation of the provisions of the withdrawal agreement relating to the rights of Polish citizens residing in the UK (in particular regarding the possibilities of obtaining a permanent residence permit in the UK) and at the same time carrying out an information campaign to encourage Polish citizens to return to Poland.

In addition, Poland intended to cooperate with Great Britain in the field of multilateral diplomacy, in particular in the framework of the OSCE and in dedicated formats focusing on the EU's neighbouring countries (e.g. the Berlin Process). Aside from that, the Polish government planned to cooperate with the United Kingdom in the framework of the UN to pursue the agenda of Poland's UN Security Council membership in 2019.

Political Relations

In the opinion of the Polish authorities, the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement secured Polish interests (the rights of Polish citizens, financial settlements, the continuation of trade),¹⁶ and thus its ratification and implementation were issues of key importance. In an attempt to defuse tension in EU-British relations, Poland backed all UK's requests for an extension of the Brexit deadline, which however was to be made conditional upon implementing certain measures to minimize the legal risk affecting the EU decision making processes until the actual Brexit date. This risk mainly involved attempts to undermine the validity of decisions made by the European Parliament and the European Commission (EC) before the final Brexit date without ensuring the necessary representation of British and non-British EU citizens residing in the UK. This is why Poland supported the requirement to hold a European Parliament election in the UK and to nominate a British candidate for the EC.¹⁷

Alongside this, due to the high risk of a no-deal Brexit, in 2019 Poland continued its domestic preparations should such a scenario materialise, which

¹⁶ "Premier Mateusz Morawiecki: Umowa w sprawie brexitu odpowiada naszym oczekiwaniom," KPRM, 25 November 2018, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

¹⁷ "Deputy Minister Konrad Szymański met with Michel Barnier," MSZ, 29 March 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

were coordinated at the EU level by the EC.¹⁸ The Polish authorities held talks with their British partners focusing on the development of direct maritime connections to reduce the potential losses should the Calais–Dover route become inoperable. Minister of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation Marek Gróbarczyk met in London with his British counterpart Grant Shapps to discuss these issues (on 12 September).¹⁹

From the time of the UK's ratification crisis in January onwards, representatives of the Polish government held parallel diplomatic talks, in both bilateral and EU formats, to facilitate limited renegotiations of the Withdrawal Agreement. The EU and the UK particularly strongly reacted²⁰ to the opinion voiced in January by Minister Czaputowicz²¹ regarding the need to establish a legal mechanism to limit the period of applicability of the backstop solution.²² Although this proposal was initially rejected by Ireland and other EU member states, it paved the way for solutions adopted in October, including in particular the introduction of a limit on the applicability of the new Northern Ireland Protocol to four years, with an extension possible at the request of the Northern Ireland Assembly.²³ The situation resulting from the House of Commons' rejection of the Withdrawal Agreement was discussed in Warsaw during the meeting the British Foreign Secretary

¹⁸ "Consultations with the European Commission on preparations for the UK's exit from the EU," MSZ, 31 January 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja; "MPiT aktywnie działa, by pomóc przedsiębiorcom w przygotowaniu się do brexitu," MPiT, 24 January 2019, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologie.

¹⁹ "Minister Gróbarczyk spotkał się w Londynie z szefem IMO oraz brytyjskim ministrem transportu," MGMIŻŚ, 12 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/gospodarkamorska.

²⁰ J. Rothwel, P. Foster, "Poland breaks ranks with EU to suggest time limit on Irish backstop instead of 'no deal' Brexit," *The Telegraph*, 21 January 2019, www.telegraph.co.uk; "Poland pushes for five-year limit on Brexit backstop," *The Times*, 22 January 2019, www.thetimes.co.uk; D. Boffey, "Barnier urges May to shift focus away from backstop," *The Guardian*, 21 January 2019, www.theguardian.com; J. Randerson, J. Cienski, "5-year backstop would resolve Brexit crisis, says Polish foreign minister," *Politico.eu*, 21 January 2019, www.politico.eu.

²¹ J. Bielecki, "Czaputowicz: Polska wie, jak ratować Brexit," *Rzeczpospolita*, 21 January 2019, www.rp.pl.

²² The backstop was a 'permanent emergency mechanism' envisaged in the initial version of the Northern Ireland Protocol to the Agreement on the UK's exit from the EU regarding the land border on the island of Ireland. It proposed that should no agreement be reached on the final shape of the relations by the end of 2020, the United Kingdom as a whole would remain in the EU customs area, while the environmental regulations, employees' rights and public assistance would be subject to harmonisation. Should the final form of the relations involve a looser model of UK-EU cooperation (e.g. a free trade zone), Northern Ireland would remain in the customs and regulatory union with the EU. P. Biskup, "Brexit Model under the Proposed EU-UK Deal," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 166 (1239), 8 December 2018, www.pism.pl.

²³ P. Biskup, "The Long-Term Implications of Brexit for Northern Ireland," in: F. Zuleeg, A. Aktou-dianakis, J. Wachowiak (eds), *Towards an Ambitious, Broad, Deep and Flexible EU-UK partnership?*, European Policy Centre, 2020.

Jeremy Hunt with Czaputowicz and Szymański (on 13 February).²⁴ In addition, Poland attempted to convince the EU to use the opportunity resulting from the appointment of Boris Johnson as Prime Minister to resume the negotiations. In this context, talks held in Warsaw (on 12–13 September) between Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union Stephen Barclay and Czaputowicz and Szymański were particularly important. They focused on the new British negotiating position and the prospects for breaking the impasse in the talks over the backstop.²⁵

As a result of the political crisis in Great Britain, the key bilateral cooperation formats, that is intergovernmental consultations and the quadriga (which comprises foreign and defence ministers), were not used in 2019. However, Morawiecki and Johnson inaugurated their cooperation as Prime Ministers in a telephone conversation on 9 August. It focused on boosting bilateral relations, the Johnson government's new position regarding Brexit, the security situation in the Persian Gulf region in the context of Iran seizing a British tanker, Russia's destabilising activities and cooperation within NATO. In addition, the British side declared its readiness to guarantee protection of Polish citizens' right regardless of the prospective ratification of the Withdrawal Agreement.²⁶

2019 saw a series of ministerial level visits including a working visit to Poland paid by Foreign Office Minister Mark Field (on 24–25 January). The purpose of the visit was to implement the decisions agreed during intergovernmental consultations held back in December 2018 in the field of cooperation between the two states in the Asia-Pacific region and in climate policy. In the context of the preparations for COP26 in Glasgow, the British side was interested in Polish experience regarding the COP24 conference held in Katowice. Aside from that, Field met with Deputy Foreign Minister Maciej Lang, Deputy Environment Minister Sławomir Mazurek and the government's plenipotentiary for strategic energy infrastructure Piotr Naimski.²⁷ During Foreign Secretary Hunt's visit in February, the situation in the Middle East was discussed in the context of the political summit focusing on this region organised in Warsaw.²⁸ On 15–16 February, Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Science Piotr Dardziński paid a visit to the United Kingdom to talk

²⁴ "Wizyta brytyjskiego ministra spraw zagranicznych Jeremy'ego Hunta w Polsce," MSZ, 13 February 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

²⁵ "Min. K. Szymański: 'Oferta, jaką przedstawił premier Johnson, po raz pierwszy od wielu miesięcy stwarza szanse na wyjście z państwa, w jakim znalazły się rokowania,'" in: J. Bielecki, "Polska szuka umowy," *Rzeczpospolita*, 7 October 2019, www.rp.pl.

²⁶ "PM call with Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki of Poland," PM Office, 9 August 2019, www.gov.uk.

²⁷ "Minister Field visits Poland to follow up third annual UK-Poland inter-governmental consultations," Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 25 January 2019, www.gov.uk.

²⁸ "Wizyta brytyjskiego ministra spraw zagranicznych Jeremy'ego Hunta w Polsce," *op. cit.*

with Deputy Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation Chris Skidmore. The topics discussed during the meeting included efforts to boost bilateral relations in higher education and science, in particular in the context of supporting short-term mobility of students and researchers and organising the second edition of the Polish-British Science and Innovation Forum.²⁹

In 2019, anniversary celebrations of key events from the period of the Second World War were an important element of Polish-British relations. On 6 June, at the invitation of Queen Elizabeth II, Prime Minister Morawiecki took part in the main celebrations commemorating the 75th anniversary of D-Day,³⁰ and on September Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab took part in the Polish celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War.³¹ The embassies of the two states cooperated under a programme commemorating the centenary of the establishment of diplomatic relations back in 1919. The programme included exhibitions, historical debates and integration events for Poles residing in the United Kingdom and for Britons residing in Poland.³²

The agenda of the Polish presidency of the Berlin Process in 2019 was the continuation of the 2018 British presidency agenda. The Western Balkans Summit in Poznań (3–5 July) was attended by Prime Minister May and Minister of State for Europe Alan Duncan.³³ The summit was accompanied by a Think Tank Forum attended by the British Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace³⁴, and other events. In addition, under the Polish presidency, a summit of Foreign Ministers of the Berlin Process was held in Warsaw (11–12 April) with the participation of Minister Duncan.³⁵ On 6 March, the Polish MFA, the British Embassy in Warsaw and the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime organised an anti-corruption seminar attended by representatives of non-governmental organisations from the Western Balkans.³⁶

²⁹ "Wizyta delegacji MNiSW w Anglii: Wzmocnienie polsko-brytyjskiej współpracy naukowej," MEiN, 14 February 2019, www.gov.pl/web/edukacja-i-nauka.

³⁰ M. Strzałkowski, "Wielka Brytania: Uroczystości z okazji 75. rocznicy lądowania w Normandii," *Euractiv*, 6 June 2019, www.euractiv.pl.

³¹ "Wieluń. 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II," *Prezydent.pl*, 1 September 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

³² "The UK and Poland celebrate 100 years of renewed diplomatic relations," Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 26 February 2019, www.gov.uk.

³³ "Polskie przewodnictwo w Procesie Berlińskim," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

³⁴ "Think Tank Forum—July 3," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

³⁵ "Foreign ministers of the Berlin Process met in Warsaw to discuss bilateral issues and the situation of young people," MSZ, 12 April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

³⁶ "Representatives of civil society from Western Balkans speak in Warsaw on tackling corruption," MSZ, 6 March 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

In the context of the fact that in 2019 Poland was an elected member of the UN SC, both states cooperated in preventing persecution on grounds of religion. The United Kingdom backed the draft resolution proposed by Poland to the UN General Assembly (adopted on 28 May), which called for declaring 22 August as the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief.³⁷ In addition, the UK supported Poland's stance on defending democracy and peace in Ukraine during the OSCE's 2019 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.³⁸

Defence Cooperation

NATO's enhanced forward presence in Poland and the Baltic states was another field of cooperation. As part of this presence, Poland maintained its contingent in Latvia, while the United Kingdom was the framework nation for the NATO battalion combat group in Estonia. In 2019, 1000 British soldiers were stationed in Poland and the Baltic states, including around 150 in the battalion combat group stationed in Orzysz.³⁹ Moreover, in 2019 the two states cooperated under the Baltic Air Policing programme and protected NATO air space operating from airfields located in Lithuania and Estonia.⁴⁰ In addition, Great Britain supported the decisions regarding NATO's investments in infrastructure on Polish soil, including the planned expansion of the logistics centre in Powidz near Poznań worth \$ 260 million.⁴¹

The UK-Poland Treaty on Defence and Security Cooperation (ratified in 2018⁴²) gave an impetus for the organisation of the British national stand under the slogan 'Partnership and technology transfer' during the International Defence Industry Exhibition in Kielce (3–6 September). It was inaugurated by Ambassador

³⁷ "Międzynarodowy Dzień upamiętniający ofiary aktów przemocy ze względu na religię lub wyznanie," MSZ, 23 August 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja; "UK co-sponsors a UN resolution to commemorate victims of acts of violence based on religion or belief," Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 3 June 2019, www.gov.uk.

³⁸ "Minister Jacek Czaputowicz attends OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw," MSZ, 16 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja; "UK statement on democratic institutions at HDI Meeting 2019," Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 17 September 2019, www.gov.uk.

³⁹ "Batalionowa Grupa Bojowa," MON, www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa; "Prime Minister visits British troops in Estonia," PM Office, 21 December 2019, www.gov.uk.

⁴⁰ "Polska – aktywny sojusznik w ramach misji Baltic Air Policing," MON, 5 April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa; "RAF Typhoons scramble to intercept Russian fighters as part of Baltic Air Policing Mission," Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom, 17 June 2019, www.gov.uk.

⁴¹ H.L. Smith, "NATO to spend \$260m on new military site in eastern Poland," *The Times*, 2 April 2019, www.thetimes.co.uk.

⁴² "UK/Poland: Treaty on Defence and Security Cooperation [CS Poland no.1/2018]," Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 9 May 2018, www.gov.uk.

Jonathan Knott and Air Vice-Marshal Nigel Maddox, the chief advisor for military affairs at the Department for International Trade. On 4–5 December, the British delegation took part in an industrial symposium organised by the Polish Ministry of Defence under the Maritime Unmanned Systems Initiative, which focused on building maritime unmanned systems and ensuring their interoperability in selected member states (Belgium, Denmark, France, Spain, Greece, the Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Poland, the United States, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Italy).⁴³

Economic Relations

According to Statistics Poland (GUS), in 2019 the United Kingdom was Poland's third biggest trade partner after Germany and the Czech Republic. The total value of Polish-British trade turnover stood at almost PLN86.51 billion (up 4.1% compared with 2018). On the list of importers of Polish-made goods the United Kingdom ranked third after Germany and the Czech Republic, whose import figures were only slightly higher (the situation was similar to that recorded in 2017–18), whereas it was ranked ninth on the list of Poland's import partners.⁴⁴ In 2019, the value of Poland's exports to the British market stood at PLN61.23 billion (up 3.1%), and its imports from the UK—PLN 23.28 billion (down 1.8%), which resulted in a positive trade balance of PLN 37.95 billion (up 10%). In 2019, the United Kingdom accounted for 5.98% of Poland's foreign trade. The exported goods mainly included machinery and mechanical appliances, foodstuffs and agricultural produce, vehicles and automotive parts, as well as chemical products, whereas the imported goods were mainly chemical products, machinery and transport equipment.⁴⁵

In 2018, the value of Polish-British exchange of services stood at PLN 31.66 billion and was the second biggest after Polish-German service exchange (up 12.2% compared with 2017). The United Kingdom was ranked third, after Germany and Switzerland, as regards the value of services provided by Polish companies (PLN18.75 billion) and second, after Germany, in the value of services purchased by Polish companies (PLN 12.91 billion), which resulted in a positive balance of trade in services amounting to PLN 5.84 billion (up around

⁴³ "Partnership and technology: UK theme at the 2019 International Defence Industry Exhibition," Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 27 August 2019, www.gov.uk; "Symposium przemysłowe nt. bezzałogowych systemów morskich," MON, 4 December 2019, www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa.

⁴⁴ "Foreign trade turnover of goods in total and by countries in January–April 2019," GUS, www.stat.gov.pl.

⁴⁵ "Foreign trade turnover according to countries, data for 2019," GUS, www.stat.gov.pl.

4.4% compared with 2017).⁴⁶ In 2018, the value of the UK's cumulative direct investments in Poland was around PLN34 billion, which means that the UK was Poland's seventh biggest investor.⁴⁷

On 27–28 June, in Warsaw, the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology and the Polish Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with the British Embassy, organised the second Polish-British Business, Trade and Investment Forum (BTI).⁴⁸ Other important events included the sixth Congress of Polish Entrepreneurs organised on 14 November in London by the Polish Business Link (PBLink) with support from the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, which was attended by around 120 companies,⁴⁹ and the eighth Polish Economic Forum held on 9 March at the London School of Economics with the participation of Minister Konrad Szymański.⁵⁰ The ministries and the embassy have used these initiatives as opportunities to spread information on the preparations for Brexit in its both possible variants: a Brexit based on a deal and a no-deal Brexit.

In addition, 2019 saw the development of new cyclic formats to promote Polish-British cooperation with a high innovation potential, such as the second Polish-British Science Forum organised as part of the British-Polish Year of Entrepreneurship, Science and Innovation (YESI). It was held on 20 September on the initiative of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Alongside this, events focused on working cooperation on similar issues were organised. On 27 March, in Warsaw, the Ministry of Energy in cooperation with the British Embassy organised consultations on wind energy in the Baltic sea, and 18 June saw a presentation of the British offer of development projects for the needs of the Solidarity Transport Hub (CPK), organised by the British Embassy in cooperation with the CPK's management board.⁵¹ In addition, during his visit to London on 12 September Minister Gróbarczyk was the guest of honour at the London International Shipping Week, during which he discussed with the British

⁴⁶ More recent data not available; "Eksport towarów i usług według krajów, dane za 2017-18," GUS, www.stat.gov.pl; "Import towarów i usług według krajów, dane za 2018-19," GUS, www.stat.gov.pl.

⁴⁷ More recent data not available; "Foreign direct investments in Poland in 2018 (in PLN)," NBP, www.nbp.pl.

⁴⁸ "II Polsko-Brytyjskie Forum Biznesu, Handlu i Inwestycji (BTI)," KIG, 4 June 2019, www.kig.pl.

⁴⁹ "Congress of Polish Entrepreneurs in the UK 2019," *PBLink*, 14 November 2019, www.pblink.co.uk.

⁵⁰ "LSE SU Polish Economic Forum 2019 już 9 marca w Londynie," *Business Insider*, 3 March 2019, www.businessinsider.com.pl.

⁵¹ "Drugie polsko-brytyjskie forum naukowe: Kobiety w STEM," MSZ, 20 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja; "Rozbudowa morskiej energetyki wiatrowej na Bałtyku," *Trybuna Górnicza*, 27 March 2019, www.netTG.pl; "UK studios present designs for Poland's Solidarity Transport Hub," Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 27 June 2020, www.gov.uk.

operators a special law enacted by the Polish Sejm to boost the development of the seaports in Świnoujście, Gdynia and Gdańsk.⁵²

Social and Cultural Relations

In 2019, Poles continued to be the largest national group in the United Kingdom. The 900,000-strong Polish diaspora accounted for around 15% of all foreign nationals living in the United Kingdom and 25% of citizens of EU member states residing there.⁵³ In connection with the signing in November 2018 of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement, the MFA (the head office and the consular services) carried out an information campaign and offered legal and procedural assistance to encourage Polish citizens to register in the system run by the British Home Office in order to obtain the 'settled status' envisaged by the British law. This campaign resulted in a significant improvement in registration statistics, although at the end of 2019 it turned out that around 40% of Polish nationals failed to avail themselves of this right: on 30 April 75,000 Polish applications were registered in the system and on 30 June—154,000, by 30 September their number doubled (347,000) and reached 512,000 by 31 December.⁵⁴ Alongside this, the Polish embassy and consulates carried out an information campaign to encourage Polish nationals to return to Poland, which however has failed to bring any significant results.⁵⁵

The most important event co-organised by the Polish MFA to boost the development of cooperation between societies was the third Polish-British Belvedere Forum (held on 6–7 March in Warsaw) with the participation of Deputy Foreign Minister Szymon Szynkowski vel Sęk. The Forum was attended by several hundred representatives of the world of science, business, politics, the media and civil society. During the Forum, a Belvedere Award was presented to Professor Norman Davies for his contribution to Polish-British dialogue.⁵⁶ In

⁵² "Minister Gróbarczyk...", *op. cit.*

⁵³ "Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality: January to December 2019," Office for National Statistics, www.ons.gov.uk.

⁵⁴ "Prawa obywateli państw członkowskich UE w Wielkiej Brytanii po brexicie," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja; "EU Settlement Scheme statistics," Home Office, 17 September 2020, www.gov.uk.

⁵⁵ According to UK statistics, the balance of immigration from Poland and Polish immigrants returning to Poland was around 5000 individuals: "Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality: January 2018 to December 2019," Office for National Statistics, www.ons.gov.uk, more precise data is not available because once the migrants return home, they are treated as Polish citizens. J. Rothwell, "Polish ambassador to UK urges fellow countrymen to 'seriously consider' returning to Poland after Brexit," *The Telegraph*, 17 September 2019, www.telegraph.co.uk.

⁵⁶ "III polsko-brytyjskie Forum Belwederskie," MSZ, 7 March 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja; "Polish-British Belvedere Forum held in Warsaw," Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 8 March 2019, www.gov.uk.

addition, the Polish embassy made efforts to publicize the fact that on 10 October Olga Tokarczuk received the Nobel Prize in Literature. In the British context, it was emphasised that in 2018 she had been awarded the prestigious Man Booker International Prize.⁵⁷

Assessment

In 2019, in its relations with the United Kingdom Poland attained its goals, in particular as regards ‘path dependence’, which resulted from the decisions made back in 2016–17, and in the context of the British political dynamic which was difficult to predict. The most important challenge involved securing the ratification of the withdrawal agreement in spite of the crisis in the United Kingdom. However, as one of the 27 EU member states, Poland had limited possibilities of impacting this situation. Initially, the Polish authorities attempted to pursue diplomatic activities to mobilise support on the British political scene for the ratification of the original version of the agreement. However, due to the negative results of the votes in the House of Commons, this goal was modified and the need for the agreement’s selective renegotiation by the EU was emphasised. Poland helped to work out an EU-UK compromise by persuading the EU partners to recognise the legitimacy of limited modifications, and the British partners—to accept the EU’s stance. The controversial proposal put forward by Minister Czaputowicz in January consolidated Poland’s image in the UK as a ‘well-meaning intermediary’ in the dialogue between the UK government and the authorities of EU member states and the European Commission. By promoting their vision of the EU-UK deal, the Polish authorities managed to maintain the EU’s unified stance on Brexit and helped to break the British political deadlock. In addition, the decisions to adopt a realistic assumption regarding Poland being no longer able to carry out new EU projects in cooperation with the United Kingdom, and to expand the Polish preparations for Brexit to include consultations on direct maritime connections, deserve a positive assessment.

In 2019, the presence of the British military contingent in Poland was maintained and cooperation within NATO in the Baltic states was continued. Although political cooperation, which requires the participation of top-level politicians (intergovernmental consultations and the quadriga format), was limited, cooperation in implementing economic, academic and social projects (such as the BTI, YESI and the Belvedere Forum) and working-level collaboration (including consultations on energy issues and on the CPK) were efficient.

⁵⁷ “Olga Tokarczuk receives the Nobel Prize in Literature,” MSZ, 10 October 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

The MFA's role in supporting the implementation of the withdrawal agreement provisions in the context of Polish citizens receiving the settled status in the UK should be viewed as moderately successful. A correlation between increasingly intensive activity of the Polish consular services in summer and autumn 2019 and the surge in the number of Polish nationals registering in a dedicated IT system run by the UK government was evident. However, at the end of the year still around 40% of Poles living in the UK failed to register their stay in this system. The campaign to encourage Polish citizens to return to Poland, which was being carried out concurrently, proved to be rather ineffective.

The cooperation between the two states enabled Poland to efficiently take over the presidency of the Berlin Process and boosted the UK's interest in cooperation to stabilise the situation in the states located in the EU's neighbourhood. In the UN forum, persuading the UK to support the proposal to establish the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief should be viewed as a moderate success for Poland.

Poland's Policy Towards Russia

JAKUB BENEDYCZAK

Background

In 2019, the background which determined the policy of the Republic of Poland (RP) towards the Russian Federation (RF) did not change considerably compared with the previous years. The fundamental premise of this policy continued to be the threat to Poland's security posed by Russia's aggressive actions. Since March 2014, Russia has exposed the annexed Crimea to constant militarisation¹ and destabilised Ukraine by supporting the separatist republics—the Luhansk People's Republic and the Donetsk People's Republic. The scale of the RF's military exercises held in 2019 (e.g. the 'Ocean Shield' in the Baltic Sea) was proof of the fact that the Russian army was reviewing its readiness to take part in a full-scale conventional armed conflict.² Russia continued to fail to abide by international disarmament treaties and increased the military aspect of its western strategic direction.

2019 saw the continuation of Poland's dependence on Russian natural gas and oil, although the first effects of its energy diversification efforts became evident. In 2019, Poland imported from the RF 7% less gas than in 2018 (8.95 bcm or 60.2% of the total imported volume), while at the same time it imported 3% more liquefied gas from the U.S., Qatar and Norway (3.43 bcm or 23.1% of the total volume) and 28% more from its western and southern suppliers (2.47 bcm or 16.7% of the total volume). Until the end of 2022, when importing gas from Russia Poland will be bound by the unfavourable *take-or-pay* clause resulting from the Yamal gas contract, which obligates Poland to either collect at least 8.7 bcm of gas annually or to pay for this volume of gas.³ Despite the fact that Russia's share in Poland's oil imports declined by 14%, PKN Orlen continued to be the world's sixth biggest importer of Russian gas.⁴

¹ M. Zaniewicz, "The Significance of Russia's Militarisation of Crimea," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 36 (1466), 3 March 2020, www.pism.pl.

² A.M. Dyer, "Russia's 2019 Military Drills," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 136 (1382), 1 October 2019, www.pism.pl.

³ "Sprawozdanie z zarządu działalności PGNiG SA i Grupy Kapitałowej PGNiG w 2019," PGNiG, www.pgnig.pl.

⁴ "Forbes: Orlen szóstym zagranicznym importerem ropy z Rosji," *Rzeczpospolita*, 23 April 2020, www.rp.pl.

The fact that the Russian authorities continued to keep the wreckage of the Tu-154M Polish presidential plane was an unsolvable problem in the relations between Poland and Russia. The Investigative Committee of the RF once again stated that it could not return the wreckage because ‘intense work was ongoing’⁵ as part of the investigation into the crash. At the end of the year, Minister Czaputowicz stated that Poland did not rule out the possibility of filing a complaint against Russia with the International Court of Justice in The Hague in order to recover the plane’s wreckage.⁶

Poland feared that the new president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, would attempt to improve his country’s relations with Russia by reaching an unfavourable compromise with Moscow, which in turn could result in the weakening of the sanctions regime imposed on Russia by the Euro-Atlantic community. On 9 December 2019, talks between the leaders of Russia, France, Germany and Ukraine (the first such talks since 2016) were held in Paris on the regulation of the conflict in the Donbas (the Normandy Format). In addition, the Russian-Ukrainian dialogue coincided with a Russian-French détente⁷ and with the fact that the RF regained its full voting rights in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.⁸ Despite Polish concerns, the European Union (EU) extended its economic sanctions against Russia twice (on 27 June and 19 December), whereas the United States not only maintained the sanction regime already in place, but also introduced another package of sanctions in response to Russia’s chemical attack targeting the Skripal family in Salisbury (the United Kingdom, March 2018).

The end of December saw the emergence of another event which determined Poland’s policy towards Russia and aggravated the already unfavourable bilateral relations: Poland became the target of a series of aggressive statements by Vladimir Putin.⁹ The speeches delivered by the Russian president formed an attempt to modify the international community’s historical memory regarding Poland’s role in the Second World War by presenting Poland as one of the perpetrators rather than a victim. This required a decisive response from the Polish authorities. On

⁵ A. Wróbel, “Rosja: pod koniec maja badanie wraku Tu-154M z udziałem przedstawicieli Polski,” PAP, 8 May 2019, www.pap.pl; “Rossijskoje sledstwiye odobriło postąpiwszyj ot Polszy zapros na oczeriednoj osmotr obłomkow priezidentskogo samoleta,” Komitet Śledczy FR, 8 May 2019, www.sledcom.ru.

⁶ “Szef MSZ o wraku Tu-154M: Obserwujemy niepokojące działania wokół miejsca katastrofy,” *Tok FM*, 19 September 2019, www.tokfm.pl.

⁷ “Macron: Europa musi zacząć dialog z Rosją, mimo obaw Polski,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 7 November 2019, www.rp.pl.

⁸ S. Zaręba, “Russia’s Return to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe,” *PISM Bulletin*, no. 108 (1354), 31 July 2019, www.pism.pl.

⁹ A.M. Dyner, “World War II in Russia’s Foreign Policy,” *PISM Bulletin*, no. 12 (1442), 28 January 2020, www.pism.pl.

19 December 2019, during an annual press conference, President Putin said that it was the 1938 Munich Agreement, which Poland took advantage of in order to annex Zaolzie which at that time belonged to Czechoslovakia, rather than the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact that caused the outbreak of the Second World War. He added that in September 1939 the Red Army did not fight against Polish troops in Brest-Litovsk because when it entered the city, it had already been occupied by Nazi German troops. On the next day, during a meeting with the leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Vladimir Putin accused Józef Lipski, ambassador of the Second Polish Republic to Nazi Germany, of reacting enthusiastically to Hitler's proposal involving sending European Jews to Africa.¹⁰ On 24 December 2019, at a meeting at the Ministry of Defence, President Putin once again referred to Lipski, calling him a "bastard and anti-Semitic pig".¹¹

Goals and Assumptions

The goals and assumptions of Poland's policy towards the RF were presented by Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz in his *Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Polish Foreign Policy Tasks in 2019*.¹²

According to the 2017 Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland, the Polish authorities viewed Russia as a state that posed a threat to the security of Poland and Europe as a whole ("We assume that by 2032 Russia will maintain its aggressive stance in its foreign ... policy and will remain the main source of instability in NATO's eastern neighbourhood").¹³ This is why Poland's goals involved responding—in the framework of Euro-Atlantic structures—to Russia's aggressive actions (mainly in the vicinity of the Kerch Strait), to its information and propaganda activities, its attempts to destabilise the situation in the Balkans and to maintain frozen conflicts in the Caucasus and in Transnistria, and to its acts of terror carried out in NATO and EU member states. Minister Czaputowicz emphasised that a multilateral political dialogue with Russia could only be conducted if Russia met the demands voiced by the international community, in particular those related to the release of captured Ukrainian seamen, the return

¹⁰ A. Mierzyńska, "Rozgrywka Putina. Chce nastawić Zachód przeciw Polsce. W Rosji temat nie istnieje [Analiza Mierzyńskiej]," *OKO.press*, 1 January 2020, www.oko.press.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

¹³ "Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland," MON, www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa.

of Ukrainian vessels and the restoration of the freedom of navigation in the Sea of Azov and in the Black Sea.¹⁴

Another Poland's task involved signalling to the international community that Russia was violating international law (including in particular its occupation of Crimea, violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity, triggering a humanitarian disaster in the Donbas), as well as advocating maintaining the U.S. and EU sanctions should Russia continue to occupy and destabilise Ukraine.

The third goal involved identifying areas of common engagement to serve as a point of departure for future cooperation. In this context, Minister Czaputowicz emphasised the need to make contacts in the field of culture, education, road transport, and to develop the Poland-Russia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014–20 which is aimed at boosting cooperation between the regions of north-eastern Poland and Kaliningrad Oblast in the field of ecology, the economy and social contacts.¹⁵

The fourth goal involved efforts to have the wreckage of the Tu-154M government plane returned, that is to make Russia abide by Resolution 2246 adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 12 October 2018. It obliged Russia to return the plane's wreckage and other material evidence within a year.¹⁶

In November 2019, Poland expanded the content of the draft document entitled 'Poland's energy policy until 2040—strategy for development of the fuel and energy sector'.¹⁷ The document emphasised that Poland would strive to undermine Russia's dominant position as a supplier of gas and oil, by diversifying its sources of supplies of these two commodities, which will have a positive impact on their price and on the negotiating position of Polish companies.

Political Relations

Just as in previous years, Poland attempted to pursue its policy towards the RF in the framework of international structures and organisations. It should be noted that in 2019 more bilateral meetings were held than in 2018 (9 vs. 4).¹⁸ The

¹⁴ D. Szeligowski, "Tensions in the Azov Sea," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 114 (1185), 23 August 2018, www.pism.pl.

¹⁵ "Poland and Russia Cross Border Program 2014–2020," *Poland–Russia*, 21 May 2020, www.plru.eu.

¹⁶ "Rada Europy wzywa Rosję do zwrotu Polsce wraku samolotu Tu-154M. Rezolucja przyjęta," *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, 12 October 2018, www.gazetaprawna.pl.

¹⁷ "Zaktualizowany projekt Polityki energetycznej Polski do 2040 r.," MAP, 8 November 2019, www.gov.pl/web/aktywa-panstwowe.

¹⁸ A. Legucka, "Poland's Policy Towards Russia," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2018*, PISM, 2024, p.139.

most important such meeting was the conversation between Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz and his counterpart Sergey Lavrov, held on 17 May on the sidelines of the session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Helsinki. This was the first such high-level meeting of representatives of the two states in five years. Minister Czaputowicz raised the issue of the return of the Tu-154M plane and proposed that “the wreckage should be returned to Poland and at the same time it should remain under special supervision by the Council of Europe”.¹⁹ Alongside this, he emphasised the need to fully abide by the Minsk agreements and to respect Ukraine’s territorial integrity, and assured Sergey Lavrov that Poland respected the bilateral agreement on taking care of Soviet soldiers’ burial places. The two ministers agreed that it was necessary to resume regular political meetings,²⁰ which however never happened.

As part of lower level meetings, on 29 March Deputy Foreign Minister Marcin Przydacz met with Russia’s ambassador to Poland. Director of the Polish MFA’s Eastern Department Jan Hofmokl met with the Russian ambassador five times (on 11 February, 5 and 7 March, 27 and 31 December) and held two meetings with the director of the Third European Department of the Russian MFA (on 21 May and 20 September).²¹ Poland’s ambassador to Moscow Włodzimierz Marciniak held three meetings with the director of the Third European Department of the Russian MFA (on 4 February, 11 April, 27 June).²² The visits paid by the Russian ambassador to the Polish MFA at the end of December were particularly important. He was summoned to the MFA in connection with the statement by the Russian president accusing Poland of being co-responsible for the outbreak of the Second World War. During these visits, the director of the Eastern Department handed in an official protest to the Russian ambassador.²³ The remaining meetings focused on current political and economic issues, problems in bilateral relations and their possible solutions.

Several days earlier (on 21 December), the Polish MFA responded to Vladimir Putin’s words and protested against the false historical narrative promoted by the

¹⁹ M. Dzierżanowski, O. Wasilewska, “Przełom ws. wraku tupolewa? Szef MSZ we *Wprost*: Mamy nową propozycję dla Rosji,” *Wprost*, 23 September 2019, www.wprost.pl.

²⁰ “Foreign ministers of Poland and Russia meet in Helsinki,” MSZ, 17 May 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

²¹ A list of meetings provided by the Russian Federation Unit of the Polish MFA’s Eastern Department, *President of Russia*, 22 May 2020, www.en.kremlin.ru.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ B. Bodalska, “Rosyjski ambasador na dywaniku w MSZ,” *Euractiv*, 30 December 2019, www.euractiv.com.

Russian president.²⁴ On 29 December, in a statement Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki expressed his opposition to any attempts to propagate lies and to rehabilitate Stalin,²⁵ which was widely reported in the media worldwide.²⁶

Poland raised the issues of the annexation of Crimea and Russia's aggressive policy towards Ukraine in international forums. During the Munich Security Conference (on 17 February), PM Morawiecki referred to the widely known speech delivered by Vladimir Putin at a meeting back in 2007, in which he announced a revision of the international order.²⁷ A year later, Russia attacked Georgia.²⁸ Poland raised the issue of violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity at a meeting of the UN Security Council²⁹ and in the European Parliament³⁰ on the fifth anniversary of Crimea's annexation. During an anniversary meeting of NATO foreign ministers, the Polish minister of foreign affairs called on NATO to continue its policy of 'credible deterrence and boosting of defence capabilities'.³¹ During the November meeting of NATO foreign ministers, the Polish minister referred to Russia as a factor destabilising the security of Central and Eastern Europe, which confirmed the correctness of the decisions to strengthen NATO's Eastern Flank (21 November).³²

During its two-year term in the UN Security Council, on 20 May Poland, alongside five other states, blocked Russia's request to convene an extraordinary SC meeting over Ukraine's language law which introduced an obligation to use the Ukrainian language in state institutions.³³

2019 saw a decline in the intensity of actions aimed at making the requested return of the Tu-154M presidential plane's wreckage an issue of international

²⁴ "Stanowisko MSZ RP wobec fałszywych narracji historycznych prezentowanych przez Federację Rosyjską," MSZ, 21 December 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

²⁵ "Oświadczenie Prezesa Rady Ministrów Mateusza Morawieckiego," KPRM, 29 December 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

²⁶ "Światowe media piszą o oświadczeniu Morawieckiego w związku z wypowiedziami Putina," *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, 30 December 2019, www.gazetaprawna.pl.

²⁷ "Putin's famous Munich Speech 2007," *Youtube*, 20 November 2015, www.youtube.com.

²⁸ "Premier Mateusz Morawiecki o przyszłości Europy podczas Monachijskiej Konferencji Bezpieczeństwa," *Youtube*, 17 February 2019, www.youtube.com.

²⁹ "5 lat aneksji. Nad łamaniem praw na Krymie obradowała Rada Bezpieczeństwa ONZ," *Belsat*, 16 March 2019, www.belsat.eu.

³⁰ "Krym jest jak więzienie: dyskusja w Parlamencie Europejskim o sytuacji na okupowanym półwyspie," *Belsat*, 5 March 2019, www.belsat.eu.

³¹ "NATO foreign ministers meet to celebrate its jubilee," MSZ, 5 April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

³² "Minister Jacek Czaputowicz at the meeting of NATO foreign ministers," MSZ, 21 November 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

³³ "Ukraińska ustawa językowa. RB ONZ blokuje wniosek Rosji," *Onet*, 21 May 2019, www.onet.pl.

importance. On 12 October, a year passed since the adoption of the Council of Europe's Resolution 2246 calling on Russia to return the wreckage, which failed to be implemented. On 29 October, a seven-person delegation of the National Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Poland carried out a visual inspection of the wreckage in collaboration with the Russian Investigative Committee. However, this failed to bring about any progress in the investigation.

In February 2019, in protest against the reorganisation of the Institute of Central and Eastern Europe in Lublin (now the Institute of Central Europe) and the transfer of supervision of the Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Matters from the Foreign Ministry to the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, four members of the Group, including its head Mirosław Filipowicz, announced their resignation.³⁴ As a consequence, the Group *de facto* ceased to exist. In addition, pursuant to a law enacted in 2017, Poland continued its efforts to remove the memorials and obelisks commemorating Soviet soldiers, which triggered repeated protests from Russia. At the same time, Poland never ceased to take care of 1,200,000 Soviet soldiers' burial places scattered across the country. In retaliation for this, at the end of the year the Russian Ministry of Defence devised a draft law introducing criminal responsibility (including for politicians and officials) for destroying and desecrating the memorials of the so-called Great Patriotic War.³⁵

Economic Relations

In 2019, trade between Poland and Russia fell by 4.2% (from PLN98.1 billion in 2018 to PLN94 billion).³⁶ The reasons behind this included unfavourable political relations, a decline in Russia's GDP and energy diversification efforts which resulted in a 14.3% decrease in Russia's exports to Poland.³⁷ Despite this, Russia continued to be Poland's third biggest import partner (accounting for 6.2% of Poland's imports). Fuels accounted for almost 80% of goods purchased by Poland from Russia.³⁸ Aside from the issue of Poland's dependence on these commodities, major controversy (in particular on the part of mining industry

³⁴ A. Gmiterek-Zabłocka, "Rozpada się Polsko-Rosyjska Grupa do Spraw Trudnych. Z zespołu odchodzą naukowcy," *Tok FM*, 13 February 2019, www.tokfm.pl.

³⁵ "Zasiedaniye Rossijskogo organizatsionnogo komiteta *Pobieda*," *President of Russia*, 11 December 2019, www.kremlin.ru.

³⁶ "Foreign trade, Statistics Poland Database (SWAiD)," GUS, 29 May 2020, www.stat.gov.pl.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ "Torgowla miezdu Rossiej i Polszej w 2019 g. Podgotowlen sajtom Wnieszniaja Torgowla Rossii na osnovie dannych Fiedieralnoj tamozennoj sluzby Rossii," *Russia-trade* (based on statistics published by the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation), 29 May 2020, www.russian-trade.com.

trade unions)³⁹ was sparked by a constant increase in the import of coal from Russia. In 2019, Poland purchased 11 million tonnes of coal from Russia (while its total coal imports stood at 16.3 million tonnes).⁴⁰ Due to the fact that Russian coal was much cheaper (it cost around PLN303 per tonne compared to PLN412–460 for one tonne of Polish coal⁴¹), in the previous five years the volume of coal imported from Russia tripled.⁴²

Poland managed to considerably reduce its trade deficit (by 25.4%).⁴³ This was due to a reduction in the import of Russian goods, an increase in Poland's exports to Russia (up 9.9%)⁴⁴ and to the fact that Polish companies were increasingly more open to cooperate with Russian businesses operating in sectors other than the foodstuffs sector (in Russia the embargo on European-made foodstuffs was still in place).⁴⁵ Poland exported to Russia goods such as machines, devices and vehicles (42.54%), chemical products (24.13%), foodstuffs and agricultural produce (8.92%), metals (8.30%), wood industry products and similar products (5.47%), textiles and shoes (2.33%), mineral products (0.8%).⁴⁶ Russia was Poland's seventh biggest export partner (3.1% of Poland's exports).⁴⁷

The Polish-Russian economic relations were also affected by energy issues. On 24 April 2019, PERN S.A. stopped receiving oil supplies from the Belarusian section of the 'Druzhba' oil pipeline due to an excessive chloride concentration found in the oil. Poland found out that a million tonnes of oil got contaminated and oil transmission was resumed 46 days later. Efforts to clean the entire volume of contaminated oil were not finished by the end of the year. Shortly after the pipeline failure, PKN Orlen and Lotos decided to seek financial compensation from Transneft, however, to no avail.⁴⁸

³⁹ P. Ciszak, "Węgiel z Rosji nas zalewa. Polska wciąż ściąga rekordowe ilości," *Money.pl*, 14 January 2020, www.money.pl.

⁴⁰ K. Baca-Pogorzelska, "Poczemu Polska pokupuje mien'sze uęla iz Rossii," *Nowaja Polska*, 5 May 2020, www.nowayapolsha.pl.

⁴¹ J. Frączyk, "Węgiel z Rosji tańszy nawet od mialu z polskich kopalń. Górnictwo ma problem," *Business Insider*, 7 February 2020, www.businessinsider.com.pl.

⁴² "Węgiel z Rosji 'zalewa' Polskę. Najnowsze dane ministerstwa," *TVN24*, 14 January 2020, www.tvn24.pl.

⁴³ "Foreign trade, Statistics Poland Database (SWAiD)," *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁵ "Rosjanie już pięć lat żyją bez francuskiego sera i polskich jabłek," *Belsat*, 10 August 2019, www.bielsat.eu.

⁴⁶ "Torgowla między Rossiję i Polszej w 2019 g.," *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ "Mapa polskiego eksportu i importu. Więcej sprzedajemy za granicę niż sprowadzamy," *Business Insider*, 11 February 2020, www.businessinsider.com.pl.

⁴⁸ "Brodna ropa z Rosji wciąż w polskich magazynach," *WNP*, 11 December 2019, www.wnp.pl.

On 10 September 2019, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) issued its verdict regarding a complaint Poland had filed against a decision issued by the European Commission in 2016, which allowed the Russian gas giant Gazprom to send greater volumes of gas through the OPAL pipeline (the onshore leg of the Nord Stream pipeline). The verdict limited the utilisation of the OPAL pipeline's capacity to 50% (that is more than 12 bcm of gas less annually). The judgement was favourable to Poland, as it obligated the European Commission to analyse not only the aspect of energy security of the EU as a whole but also the security of gas markets in specific EU member states, when issuing permissions for the construction of gas pipelines in the EU in the future.⁴⁹ The verdict's wording was convergent with the principle of energy solidarity which Poland had advocated for many years.

On 15 November 2019, the Polish Oil and Gas Company (PGNiG) presented Gazprom with its declaration of will to terminate the Yamal contract effective on 31 December 2022. By the end of 2019, the company concluded contracts for the supply of LNG from non-Russian suppliers and acquired natural gas fields on the Norwegian Continental Shelf. Gas extracted from these fields is expected to be transmitted to Poland via the Baltic Pipe pipeline post-2022.⁵⁰ In addition, PGNiG's CEO argued that his company was paying PLN1 billion too much annually for the gas supplied by Gazprom,⁵¹ which was due to the fact that this gas was 20–30% more expensive than American LNG.⁵²

Positive aspects of Polish-Russian economic cooperation included the agreement reached by the Polish-Russian committee for international road carriages (on 17–18 September) regarding the number of transportation permits allocated to either party in 2020. It was agreed that Poland and Russia will receive 210,000 such permits each.⁵³ In addition, following several years of negotiations, the Office for Electronic Communications reached an agreement with its Russian counterpart involving Russia ceasing to use the 700 MHz band which is necessary for launching the 5G network in Poland. Without Russia releasing this band, in particular in Kaliningrad Oblast, it will be impossible to roll out the network due to major signal interference.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ B. Bielszczuk, S. Zaręba, "EU General Court's Ruling on the OPAL Pipeline," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 47, 11 September 2019, www.pism.pl.

⁵⁰ "Oświadczenie woli zakończenia Kontraktu Jamalskiego z dniem 31 grudnia 2022 roku," PGNiG, 15 November 2019, www.pgnig.pl.

⁵¹ "Prezes PGNiG: Rocznie przepłacaliśmy ok. 1 mld zł za rosyjski gaz," *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, 18 November 2019, www.gazetaprawna.pl.

⁵² I. Trusewicz, "Gaz z Gazpromu najdroższy na rynku," *Rzeczpospolita*, 10 June 2019, www.rp.pl.

⁵³ A. Lysionok, "Polska z Rosją uzgodniły kontyngent zezwoleń na 2020 rok," *Trans.info*, 20 September 2019, www.trans.info.pl.

⁵⁴ See: "Polska dogadała się z Rosją. Jest szansa, że sieć 5G pojawi się szybciej," 5G: sieci telekomunikacyjne nowej generacji, 8 November 2019, www.gov.pl/web/5g.

Social and Cultural Relations

Compared with 2018, 2019 saw a 13% increase in the number of Russians who came to Poland to reside there for more than 90 days (12,271 vs. 10,635 individuals). They accounted for almost 3% of the total number of foreign nationals applying for a residence permit. The majority of Russians intending to reside in Poland applied for a temporary residence permit (5201) or a permanent residence permit (4230).⁵⁵ Just like in previous years, the number of Russians who travelled to Poland (around 2.4 million visits) was bigger than the number of Poles who travelled to Russia (around 1.2 million visits). Similarly, Russians spent more money in Poland than Poles in Russia (PLN2 billion vs. PLN1.3 billion).⁵⁶ A minor decrease in passenger traffic (down 2%) indicated that travel facilitations Russia had introduced for example for Poles travelling to Kaliningrad and Leningrad Oblast, including to Saint Petersburg, failed to encourage Polish nationals to travel to Russia.⁵⁷

Just like in previous years, Russians were among those groups and nations towards which Poles had the most hostile attitude. A mere 26% of the respondents liked Russians and 42% declared a negative attitude towards them. The only ethnic groups to which Polish respondents had an even more hostile attitude were Romani people (46% negative answers) and Arabs (55%). However, these results showed some improvement because in a poll conducted in 2017 49% of the respondents declared a negative attitude towards Russians, while back in 2005 the corresponding proportion was as many as 61%.⁵⁸

Polish-Russian cultural relations can be viewed as positive. However, this has not translated into increased contacts between officials and decision makers in this field. The meeting between Mikhail Shvydkoy, a plenipotentiary of the President of the Russian Federation for foreign cultural cooperation, and Polish diplomats and representatives of government institutions, held during the opening ceremony of the exhibition entitled 'The ABC of Polish design' in Saint Petersburg (on 13 November) was the only important meeting. No similar high-level meeting with a representative of the Russian Federation in the field of culture has been held since the cancellation in 2015 of the 'Polish Year' in Russia and the 'Russian Year' in Poland due to Russia's annexation of Crimea.

⁵⁵ "Rosja. Porównanie lat 2019 i 2018," Urząd ds. cudzoziemców, 29 May 2020, www.migracje.gov.pl.

⁵⁶ "Ruch graniczny oraz wydatki cudzoziemców w Polsce i Polaków za granicą w 2018 roku oraz w I, II, III i IV kwartale 2019 r. (informacje sygnałne)," GUS, 29 May 2020, www.stat.gov.pl.

⁵⁷ "e-wiza' do Rosji," MF—Krajowa Administracja Skarbowa, 17 July 2019, www.gov.pl/web/kas; "Rosja. Wjazd i pobyt," Krajowa Administracja Skarbowa, 29 May 2020, www.granica.gov.pl.

⁵⁸ "Attitude to other nationalities," *CBOS Report*, 2020, no. 31, www.cbos.pl.

In Russia, Polish culture was being promoted by the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding (CPRDiP) as well as by the Polish Institutes in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. The Polish Institute in Saint Petersburg and the CPRDiP were particularly active.⁵⁹ One key task carried out by the Saint Petersburg-based Institute involved the promotion of Polish language learning in Russia. Polish language classes were offered to cultural and educational institutions across Russia (e.g. the Saint Petersburg State University). This initiative was accompanied by a promotional campaign on the Institute's Youtube channel⁶⁰ and by workshops targeted at Russian teachers, lecturers and translators. In connection with the fact that 2019 was declared as a year commemorating the composers Maria Szymanowska and Stanisław Moniuszko, a series of concerts, competitions and a location-based game entitled 'Follow the sound' were organised in Saint Petersburg. The game was an opportunity to promote Polish contemporary music including artists such as the singer-songwriter Dawid Podsiadło and the band Kamp.⁶¹ Similarly to previous years, Chopin concerts and competitions were held across Russia. On 16 February, a concert was organised in Saint Petersburg to commemorate Czesław Niemen. Over events included a concert by Leszek Możdżer and a workshop for pupils of a music school conducted by this piano virtuoso; both events were held in Saint Petersburg.

As part of the 'Theatre Year' in Russia, the most prominent Polish theatre troupes visited Saint Petersburg, including Teatr Nowy and Teatr Narodowy (The National Theatre) from Warsaw, Teatr Stary (The Helena Modrzejewska National Stary Theatre) from Kraków, the Grotowski Institute from Wrocław. During all of their performances the auditorium was filled to capacity.⁶² Aside from theatre performances, Polish cinema continued to be popular with the Russian audience. On 23–30 May, during the 12th edition of the 'Vistula' film festival, films by Polish directors who are recognised in Russia (Wajda, Kutz, Kolski) were screened alongside more contemporary Polish films such as 'Siedem uczuć' (Seven feelings), 'Fuga' (Fugue) and 'Cicha noc' (Silent night)⁶³. Janusz Kondratiuk's film 'Jak pies z kotem' (Like dog and cat) represented Poland at the International Visegrad Film Festival in Pskov. On 21–25 August, a Polish Film Festival was held in Saint Petersburg.⁶⁴

In Moscow, Polish diplomats took part in celebrations commemorating the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War and the 75th anniversary

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁰ "Polish Institute in Saint Petersburg," *Youtube*, 29 May 2020, www.youtube.com.

⁶¹ Information shared by the Polish Cultural Institute in Saint Petersburg, April 2020.

⁶² *Ibidem*.

⁶³ "12. Festiwal Filmowy Wisła w Moskwie," *Festiwal Wisła*, 29 May 2020, www.festiwalwisla.pl.

⁶⁴ Information shared by the Polish Cultural Institute in Saint Petersburg, April 2020.

of the Warsaw Uprising. In addition, they paid tribute to the victims of the Great Terror, for example by taking part on 5 August in celebrations of international Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Political Repression held at a cemetery in Sandarmokh (in Karelia).⁶⁵

In 2019, the CPRDiP launched an online version of the 'Novaya Polsha' magazine⁶⁶ which was initiated back in 1999 by Jerzy Giedroyc and Jerzy Pomianowski. In 2019, the Centre earmarked more funds for youth exchanges than in 2018: the total sum of PLN3.7 million⁶⁷ funded 22 projects for 1572 exchange participants from Poland and Russia. In 2018, the corresponding figures were: 1733 participants, 18 projects and PLN993,000. The CPRDiP awarded scholarships to 10 Russian researchers, worth a total of PLN142,800⁶⁸ (in 2018: 11 researchers and PLN98,000),⁶⁹ and organised a three-day youth workshop in Warsaw attended by 120 Poles and Russians aged 13–26.⁷⁰

Assessment

Due to historically-motivated conflicts, 2019 saw a further deterioration of the relations between Poland and Russia. Therefore, the meeting of foreign ministers—the first such meeting since 2014—could not have resulted in a breakthrough.

The first goal, which involved engaging the Euro-Atlantic structures to react to Russia's aggressive actions and to convince them to make their dialogue with Russia conditional upon Moscow abiding by international law, has partly been achieved. During the NATO summit in London (on 3–4 December), in line with Poland's proposal, NATO updated its plan for the defence of Poland and the Baltic states against Russia, confirmed that Russia's actions posed a threat to it, and expressed its readiness to continue its dialogue with Russia as soon as Russia's actions would "make that possible".⁷¹ In addition, the Western states have become more sensitive to disinformation and espionage threats posed by Russia. Despite this, Poland failed to convince the Euro-Atlantic community to force Russia to stop its aggressive policy which for example involved disrupting navigation in the Sea of Azov. Moreover, although Russia failed to meet the conditions for

⁶⁵ *Ibidem.*

⁶⁶ *Nowaja Polska*, 29 May 2020, www.novayapolsha.pl.

⁶⁷ "Wymiana młodzieży," CPRDiP, 29 May 2020, www.cprdip.pl.

⁶⁸ "Stypendia 2019," CPRDiP, 29 May 2020, www.cprdip.pl.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem.*

⁷⁰ "Debaty i wykłady, CPRDiP," 29 May 2020, www.cprdip.pl.

⁷¹ "London Declaration," NATO, 4 December 2019, www.nato.int.

dialogue set by the Western states, a Russian-French rapprochement occurred and German-Russian economic cooperation continues, which in the future may convince Germany to propose to lift sanctions.

The second goal set by Poland, which involved exposing Russia's aggressive actions in the international forum and advocating the continuation of sanctions, has been achieved. Alongside its regional allies, that is Ukraine and the Baltic states, in the international forum (in particular in the UN) Poland repeatedly raised the issue of the annexation of Crimea and violation of Ukrainian territorial integrity. In December, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution calling on Russia to withdraw its armed forces from Crimea and to cease to occupy Ukrainian territory.⁷² In addition, within NATO and the EU Poland was making active attempts to convince the U.S. and the EU not to lift their sanctions against Russia. These attempts were successful.

The third goal, which involved efforts to identify areas of common interest, has only partly been achieved. Although Polish institutions did manage to maintain the already well-developed contacts in the field of culture, they failed to use the opportunities such as the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Olga Tokarczuk and the international acclaim won by films directed by Paweł Pawlikowski, to promote contemporary Polish culture. Instead, they chose to focus on the legacy of the period of the partitions of Poland and the People's Republic of Poland. Funds earmarked for youth exchanges and educational projects were highly insufficient and the project involving collaboration with Kaliningrad Oblast failed to revive bilateral cooperation in the field of transport, cross-border issues and environmental issues and to elevate these relations to the ministerial level. Interestingly, economic cooperation proved to be surprisingly favourable despite the decline in trade turnover. Statistics regarding Poland's exports to Russia indicated that Polish companies operating in sectors other than the agricultural sector were increasingly willing and able to adjust to the requirements of the Russian market and expanded into other available sectors of the economy. In this context, the Polish authorities should be all the more focused on supporting domestic entrepreneurs who were able to fill the gap on the Russian market in sectors such as IT, furniture and construction.⁷³

The fourth goal, which involved the return of the presidential plane's wreckage, has not been achieved and no progress has been made regarding this issue.

⁷² "Zgromadzenie Ogólne ONZ wezwało Rosję do opuszczenia Krymu. Przyjęta rezolucja," *Polskie Radio 24*, 10 December 2019, www.polskieradio24.pl.

⁷³ H. Luckiewicz, "Polski eksport do Rosji się odbudowuje. Sankcje sankcjami, a obroty wzrosły o 20%," *WNP*, 20 November 2018, www.wnp.pl.

Poland's Policy Towards China

JUSTYNA SZCZUDLIK

Background

Since 2017, Poland's policy towards China has been more cautious, mainly in matters such as investments (for example in critical infrastructure), the growing trade deficit on the Polish side, as well as China's reluctance to engage in a regular political dialogue with Poland and its intention to replace it with meetings in the 16+1 formula. In 2019, Poland continued this approach. The turn of 2019 saw preparations for Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Poland planned for the end of January 2019. October marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states.

At the sub-regional level, preparations were underway for the 16+1 summit planned for April in Dubrovnik. Taking into account the absence of Poland's prime minister at the previous summit in Sofia in 2018, which was intended to signal Poland's dissatisfaction with this cooperation format, the Polish government had to arrive at a stance regarding the level of representation at the next summit. Moreover, during the previous 16+1 meeting Greece expressed its intention to join the format and its possible membership was to be discussed at the summit in Dubrovnik. This required Poland to take a stance.

In 2019, Poland's policy towards China was also influenced by the European Union's increasingly tougher stance towards the authorities in Beijing post-2016. The so-called investment screening, an investment control mechanism adopted in 2018, regarding mainly Chinese investments, in sectors such as high technology and critical infrastructure, was expected to come into effect in 2019. This was another element, after the so-called connectivity strategy adopted in 2018,¹ of the EU's response to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which involved the bloc's more principled policy towards China. In the situation of concern about China's *modus operandi* as part of the BRI (for example involving the absence of transparency of projects carried out under this initiative) and about its investment in high technology sectors, which has been growing since 2016, groups of EU business

¹ "Connecting Europe and Asia—Building blocks for an EU Strategy," European Economic and Social Committee, 19 September 2018, www.eesc.europa.eu.

owners began to put pressure on EU leaders, who announced their intention to modify Europe's approach to China. In this context, the EU–China relations may have been influenced by the planned shift in EU leadership following the European Parliament elections in mid-2019 and by the uncertainty regarding the new leaders' possible more cautious China policy. Another important factor involved the fact that on 18 December 2018 China published its third document on its policy towards the European Union. In this document, the Chinese authorities omitted all of the problematic issues identified by the EU, which did not bode well for the bilateral relations in 2019.

Another factor involved the continuation of the US's confrontational approach to China, including the so-called trade war launched in mid-2018. The United States attempted to persuade its allies, including Poland, to limit their cooperation with China, mainly to block the participation of Chinese companies in the deployment of 5G technology in Europe. The U.S. suggested that the presence of Chinese businesses in the 5G development effort could result in the curbing of intelligence exchange with the U.S. and reduce Washington's involvement in NATO.

Goals and Assumptions

Poland's most important goals in its policy towards China involved economic issues, in particular its attempts to improve its trade balance² by increasing Poland's exports to China. In 2019, Poland continued its efforts to convince China to eliminate certain market access barriers, mainly the non-tariff barriers to trade such as permits, certificates, very strict phytosanitary standards concerning foodstuffs and agricultural produce. In this context, Poland's another goal was to persuade China to lift its embargo on pork, which had been in place since 2014 due to the occurrence of African swine fever (ASF) in Poland, and to introduce the principle of regionalisation, i.e. to enable imports from those locations which are free from this disease. In addition, Poland sought to attract Chinese investments, although since 2017 it has approached this issue with caution and made every effort to prevent the situation in which Chinese companies would control the entire investment project and invest in critical infrastructure.

At the political level, the most important goal involved the participation in a regular dialogue between high-ranking officials as part of mechanisms established on the basis of strategic partnership declarations. These include the annual strategic dialogue, which involves meetings of deputy foreign ministers, and the

² "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

Intergovernmental Committee, which involves annual meetings of representatives of various ministries chaired by ministers of foreign affairs. In 2019, Poland and China intended to organise the second committee meeting, which was to be held in 2018, but was cancelled due to the Chinese side repeatedly postponing Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Poland. The Polish side was also determined to organise another meeting of the Poland–China Regional Forum, which was repeatedly postponed (last time it was held in 2016 in Warsaw).

As regards cooperation between societies, just like in previous years Poland's goal involved promoting Polish culture in China and developing tourism, mainly by encouraging increasing numbers of Chinese tourists to visit Poland.

Just like in 2018, Poland's cooperation with China was also determined by its relations with the U.S. and within the EU. Taking account of the U.S. and EU context, the Polish government's goal regarding its cooperation with China was to ensure security mainly to critical infrastructure, especially in the context of 5G rollout and other Chinese investment projects, and to increase Poland's access to the Chinese market.

Political Relations

The bilateral aspect. On 11 January, Chinese citizen Wang Weijin, an employee of Huawei's Polish subsidiary company, was arrested in Warsaw on spying charges. This development impacted the bilateral relations especially in the first half of 2019. Although the initial reaction in the Chinese media was highly critical of Poland (for example the editor-in-chief of the 'Global Times' daily newspaper, which is linked with the Chinese Communist Party, asked on his Twitter account whether anything in Poland was worthy of stealing for Huawei and stated that Polish national security department flattered itself by making this arrest and formulating these charges³), the official response offered by the Chinese leadership was restrained. On 12 January, the Chinese embassy in Poland issued a statement highlighting the lack of evidence to support the spying charges and demanded that the Polish side act in line with the law and, for example, allow the arrested Chinese national to contact the Chinese consul.⁴ China's foreign ministry offered a more moderate statement on this issue during a press conference held on 14 January. The spokesperson emphasised that the Chinese side was notified of this matter and expected Poland to enable Chinese diplomats to get in touch with the detainee. She also highlighted that China appreciated its relations

³ Hu Xijin, *Twitter*, 11 January 2019, www.twitter.com.

⁴ "Statement of the spokesperson of the Embassy of China in Poland in connection with the detention of a Chinese citizen," Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Warsaw, 12 January 2019, www.pl.china-embassy.org.

with Poland, hoped to maintain a stable bilateral cooperation and mutual trust.⁵ Following this development, the visit of China's foreign minister to Poland, which was planned for the end of January, was cancelled. The second meeting of the Polish-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee was to be held during this visit. The fact that in the end Huawei dismissed Wang Weijin can be interpreted as a manifestation of the Chinese side liberalising its attitude towards Poland.

Another political event involved China's criticism of U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's visit to Poland. Secretary Pompeo attended a conference focused on the Middle East. It is important to note that China in fact criticised the U.S. rather than Poland. This was most likely due to the fact that the Chinese leadership did not want to destabilise their relations with Poland in order to avoid a situation in which Warsaw could openly announce its decision to exclude Chinese companies involved in the 5G rollout from its market, as this could in turn result in other European countries taking similar decisions.⁶ On 13 February, the Chinese embassy in Warsaw issued a statement in which it argued that the U.S. was putting pressure on Poland in order to undermine Polish-Chinese relations. It also expressed its hope that the Polish side would pursue its own independent policy towards China, ensure fair conditions for doing business for Chinese companies operating in Poland, so as not to destabilise the bilateral relations.⁷ The statement was offered in response to Pompeo's statements given during his visit to Warsaw, in which he noted that the U.S. would not deploy its military equipment in a country which might be exposed to China's information hacking activities.⁸ This statement could be viewed as a suggestion that Poland should ban Chinese telecommunications companies from taking part in the development of the 5G network.

Despite a decline in Polish-Chinese relations, in March Deputy Foreign Minister Wang Chao paid a visit to Poland and the sixth round of the strategic dialogue was held. On the Polish side it was chaired by Deputy Minister Maciej Lang. Wang also met with minister Czaputowicz. The Polish side emphasised that China was Poland's highly important strategic partner. These assurances were intended to defuse tension in bilateral relations.⁹

⁵ "Press conference of the Chinese MFA spokesperson," Ministry of Foreign Affairs The People's Republic of China, 14 January 2019, www.fmprc.gov.cn.

⁶ The author's conversation with Polish diplomats, January 2020.

⁷ "Oświadczenie Rzecznika Ambasady ChRL w związku z wypowiedzią niektórych urzędników ze strony USA w Polsce," Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Warsaw, 13 February 2019, www.pl.china-embassy.org.

⁸ "Pompeo w Warszawie: nigdy nie umieścimy sprzętu w kraju, gdzie Chiny mogą hakować," *Defence24*, 12 February 2019, www.defence24.pl.

⁹ "MSZ: Rozmowy o relacjach polsko-chińskich w Warszawie (komunikat)," PAP, 2 March 2019, www.pap.pl.

In 2019, the first top-level meeting took place in March in Brussels (it was also the first meeting since the arrest of a Chinese national in Warsaw) on the sidelines of the Foreign Affairs Council. Minister Jacek Czaputowicz met with Minister Wang Yi. China's top diplomat visited Brussels in connection with the preparations for an EU–China summit planned for April.

Another series of bilateral top-level contacts occurred during the 8th summit of the heads of government of the 16+1 format, which was held in Dubrovnik on 11–12 April. Poland was represented by Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki. Aside from the plenary meeting of all members of this format, during a separate meeting the Polish PM held talks with Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang. The main topics of the talks included economic issues, primarily the growing trade deficit on the Polish side. Morawiecki assured his Chinese counterpart that Poland would not apply any discriminatory measures targeting foreign companies. The purpose of this statement and of the Polish prime minister's presence in Dubrovnik was to improve Poland's relations with China following the tension which emerged in January and February, as well as to pledge that Chinese telecommunications companies would not be excluded from involvement in the 5G rollout. Li Keqiang assured PM Morawiecki that a meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee would be held in 2019.¹⁰

On 25–27 April, the Second International Belt and Road Forum took place in Beijing. Unlike during the previous meeting, which was held back in 2017 with the participation of the then prime minister Beata Szydło, Poland was represented by Marian Banaś, the head of the National Fiscal Administration and deputy finance minister. The low rank of the Polish representation at this event was most likely due to Poland's cautious approach to the BRI, which was in line with the EU stance expressed in the so-called connectivity strategy adopted in October 2018.

In 2019, the most important event in the bilateral relations was Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Poland on 7–8 July. The minister met with President Andrzej Duda, PM Morawiecki and FM Czaputowicz. 8 July saw the second meeting of the Polish-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee. It resulted in the publication of Joint Conclusions in which the two sides emphasised their support for cooperation as part of EU–China relations, including their backing for the negotiations regarding an investment agreement. They also highlighted the fact that Poland appreciated China's key role in the development of cargo rail connections, and the intention to organise the 5th Regional Forum in 2020.¹¹ The Polish side organised a meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee in the Myślewicki Palace

¹⁰ The author's conversation with a Polish diplomat, Warsaw, May 2019.

¹¹ "II posiedzenie polsko-Chińskiego Komitetu Międzyrządowego. Wspólne konkluzje," MSZ, 8 July 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

(in the Royal Baths Park), where secret Chinese-American talks were held back in the 1950s and 1960s. In February, Secretary Pompeo was received in the same venue. The Chinese side took note of this coincidence and in its dispatch the Xinhua news agency reported that during his stay in Warsaw the Chinese minister referred to the historic Chinese-American talks held in the Royal Baths Park and said that Poland could act as an intermediary between China and the U.S. He also emphasised that China trusted Poland.¹² During a conversation with FM Czaputowicz and at a press conference held after the meeting, the Polish side assured the Chinese guest that it was not going to apply any discriminatory measures against foreign companies, including the Chinese ones. Reiteration of PM Morawiecki's declaration communicated in Dubrovnik was intended to convince the Chinese side that the Polish stance on this matter, mainly involving the issue of Chinese companies' participation in Poland's 5G rollout, was firm.¹³

In September, following U.S. Vice President Mike Pence's visit to Poland and the signing of a joint Polish-American declaration regarding 5G, which suggested that Chinese companies should be banned from the Polish market (although the word 'China' was not used in the document), the Chinese embassy in Warsaw and the Chinese MFA reacted once again. Just like in the case of their response to Pompeo's statement back in February, the statements offered by Chinese officials were mainly targeted at the United States rather than Poland. On the one hand, this could indicate China's reluctance to destabilise its relations with Poland, taking into account Poland's very favourable relations with the U.S. On the other hand, it could be an example of China treating Poland like a location, where a Chinese-American conflict was being waged. A statement issued by the embassy read that "some U.S. politicians and some media intend to provoke global chaos and confuse terms such as China and the Huawei company, and in doing so they use their ability to manoeuvre and to mislead". Alongside this, it assured that "China and Poland are important partners to each other ... Recently, Polish leaders clearly announced their intention to maintain an open and fair telecommunications market. They also stated that they were not going to pursue a policy that would exclude certain countries and companies. The Chinese side welcomed and appreciated these assurances. We believe that the Polish side will surely deliver on its promises and Chinese companies legally operating in Poland will be able to do business in conditions characterised by equality, fairness,

¹² "Wang Yi: Hope Poland will Cherish the Trust from the Chinese Side and Continue to Play the Role as a Bridge and Bond," Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 8 July 2019, www.fmprc.gov.cn.

¹³ "Czaputowicz: wyzwaniem w relacjach polsko-chińskich brak zrównoważonej współpracy gospodarczej," PAP, 9 July 2019 r., www.pap.pl.

openness and transparency”.¹⁴ The Chinese MFA spokesperson offered a similar statement, in which she expressed her hope that Poland would deliver on its promise to refrain from discriminating against foreign companies operating on its market. The spokesperson devoted most of her statement to the United States.¹⁵

Following VP Pence's visit and the Chinese side's reaction to it, the Polish government attempted to mitigate the anti-Chinese tone of the declaration by referring to the assurances offered by PM Morawiecki in Dubrovnik and FM Czaputowicz during Wang Yi's visit to Poland in July. Several days following the signing of the declaration, during the Economic Forum in Krynica, the President of the Office of Electronic Communications Marcin Cichy said that the Polish-American declaration was quite moderate and that he did not expect any company to be banned from participation in the development of the 5G network in Poland.¹⁶ Several weeks later, the 'Rzeczpospolita' daily newspaper published an interview with Deputy Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology Marcin Ociepa, who emphasised that Polish-Chinese relations were favourable and Poland did not experience any pressure from China. When answering a question about Chinese-American rivalry, the minister stressed that Poland did not support either side in this conflict and that it could act as an intermediary between China and the U.S., thus making a reference to the symbolic meaning of Wang Yi's visit to Warsaw.¹⁷

2019 saw another meeting at the level of deputy ministers. At the end of October, Maciej Lang attended the 14th meeting of coordinators of the 17+1 format, which was held in Beijing. During his stay in China, he also met with the Chinese Deputy FM Qin Gang and the deputy minister at the International Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Qian Hongshan. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the implementation of the decisions made by the two states during the second meeting of the Polish-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee.¹⁸

In December, during his visit to the United States to attend a conference marking the 30th anniversary of the collapse of Communism in Central Europe,

¹⁴ “Rzecznik prasowy Ambasady Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej w Polsce odpowiada na pytanie dotyczące polsko-amerykańskiej wspólnej deklaracji 5G,” Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Warsaw, 3 September 2019, www.pl.china-embassy.org.

¹⁵ “Press conference of the Chinese MFA spokesperson,” Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 3 September 2019, www.fmprc.gov.cn.

¹⁶ “Polskie 5G nie dla Huawei? Prezes UKE: Myślę, że nie dojdzie do wyłączania kogokolwiek z rozwoju tej sieci,” *Dziennik*, 3 September 2019, www.dziennik.pl.

¹⁷ J. Jędrzejkowski, “Polska może być pomostem między USA a Chinami,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 29 September 2019, www.rp.pl.

¹⁸ “Deputy Minister Maciej Lang attends a meeting of National Coordinators of the Central and Eastern Europe-China cooperation,” MSZ, 30 October 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration Mariusz Kamiński expressed a highly critical opinion on China. He referred to China as a threat and emphasised that Poland shared the U.S. stance, and referred to the arrest of a Huawei employee in Warsaw as an example of this convergence.¹⁹ China did not react to this statement, most likely because it was offered during a conference rather than an official high-level meeting.

The sub-regional level (the 16+1 format). On 11–12 April, the 8th summit of the heads of government of the 16+1 format was held in Dubrovnik alongside an economic forum. This was the first time, when the meeting in Dubrovnik was held shortly after an EU–China summit (9 April). Central and Eastern European states, including Poland, were determined to make sure that the Dubrovnik Guidelines contain as many specific decisions agreed during the EU–China summit as possible. This was intended to highlight the convergence of the format's activity with the EU's policy towards China and, at the same time, to mitigate criticism of the format expressed by some EU member states, in particular Germany.

Ultimately, the Dubrovnik Guidelines contained numerous proposals put forward by the Central and Eastern European states, including the proposals mentioned in the joint statement issued following the EU–China summit regarding the need to accelerate the talks on the investment agreement and on food labelling to indicate the country of origin (this refers to foodstuffs and agricultural produce from China and EU member states, which will be protected against counterfeiting and infringement of intellectual property rights). EU member states also sought to have several new points added regarding the need to devise a procedure for expanding the format and to consult all members on the introduction of new cooperation mechanisms.²⁰

The most important event during the summit involved the first ever expansion of the format to include Greece, which resulted in renaming it '17+1'. Due to the lack of enlargement procedures, each member state expressed its consent to Greece joining the format in the form of a diplomatic note. Poland was among the countries which issued such a note.

The EU dimension. In 2019, the European Union toughened its policy towards China. In March 2019, the EC published a document entitled 'EU–China: A Strategic Outlook'. For the first time, in an official publication, China was referred to not only as a partner, but as a systemic rival promoting an alternative model of governance, and an economic competitor, especially in the

¹⁹ "Minister Kamiński ostro o Chinach i 5G," *Bankier*, 10 December 2019, www.bankier.pl.

²⁰ "The Dubrovnik Guidelines for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries," *Xinhua*, 13 April 2019, www.xinhuanet.com.

technology sector.²¹ The document discussed the actions the EU was going to take to force China to genuinely apply the principle of reciprocity. The EU will demand that China increase Europe's access to its market (including to public tenders), improve the protection of intellectual property, abandon the technology transfer obligation and halt government subsidies offered to Chinese companies. The EU has declared its intention to accelerate the talks on bilateral agreements on investment and on geographic labelling.

On 26 March, the EC published its recommendations regarding 5G network security, including an action plan. The EU member states were obliged to present their security risk assessment regarding the development of the 5G network by the end of June. On the basis of these documents the EC intended to announce its EU-wide assessment and to come up with instruments to ensure security of the 5G infrastructure in Europe.

The most important event in EU–China relations was the EU–China summit held on 9 April. The meeting was an attempt to test a new EU approach, which was announced in the document published in March. Due to the EU's assertive stance, the two sides negotiated their joint statement until the last moment. They pledged to accelerate the talks regarding two agreements: an investment agreement (and to finish the negotiations by 2020) and the other one regarding food labelling (by the end of 2019). This was also the first time when the two sides admitted that there should be no obligatory technology transfer, and declared their intention to intensify the discussion on international rules regarding industrial subsidies as part of a reform of the WTO.

Poland endorsed the EU's tougher stance on China and followed the EC's requests, including those relating to the preparation of security recommendations for the 5G network. The Polish government took part in EU-wide debates and proposed to bolster the single market in order to effectively increase the EU's competitiveness versus China. During the summit preparations, Poland emphasised the importance of issues linked with market access, the connectivity strategy, cooperation in the sphere of cyber security (5G) and respect for human rights. Most of these proposals were included in the final document.²²

From the point of view of Poland's interests, the issue of market access to increase exports was more important than the issue of investment opportunities. Poland supported the EU's pressure put on China in order to ensure equal

²¹ "EU-China—A Strategic Outlook," European Commission, 12 March 2019 r., www.ec.europa.eu.

²² "Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu RP w udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie styczeń–czerwiec 2019 r. (przewodnictwo Rumunii w Radzie Unii Europejskiej)," Kancelaria Sejmu, 5 July 2019, pp. 46–47, www.sejm.gov.pl.

opportunities for foreign investors, and to eliminate inequalities in trade and barriers to access to the Chinese market. The U.S. also emphasised that the EU and China should seek to conclude an agreement on mutual investment protection, with the proviso that it will contain significant commitments regarding EU companies' access to the Chinese market.²³

The Polish government also supported the initiatives intended to devise EU-wide recommendations regarding the security of cutting edge telecommunications technology such as 5G.²⁴ On 17 July, in line with the actions plan, the Ministry of Digitisation submitted to the European Commission its analysis on telecommunications network security in the context of the future roll-out of the 5G network.²⁵

Economic Relations

2019 was another year which saw an increase in trade (in goods). Poland also recorded a bumper trade deficit which stood at almost €26.5 billion (in 2018 the figure was around €24 billion). The value of trade was more than €31 billion, which included exports to China worth €2.6 billion, and imports from China worth €29 billion. The increase in trade deficit also meant that China's share in Poland's imports rose. In 2019, imports from China accounted for 12.43% of Poland's total imports. In 2018, the figure was 11.6%.²⁶

2019 saw a drop in China's declared investment compared with 2018. The only investment project announced in Poland in 2019 involved the winning bid submitted by the Chinese Stecol company (which is a component of Power China, one of the biggest construction groups in China) in a tender for the construction of a section of the S14 expressway which is an element of the Łódź ring road. The Polish General Directorate for National Roads and Motorways (GDDKiA) selected the investor on 10 July (shortly after Minister Wang Yi's visit to Poland). The relevant contract was signed in August. None of the bidders appealed against the decision and the Chinese bid received a positive assessment from the Public Procurement Office. According to GDDKiA, the Chinese company met the requirements regarding experience and staff. This will be the first road

²³ "Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu RP w udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie lipiec–grudzień 2019 r. (przewodnictwo Finlandii w Radzie Unii Europejskiej)," Kancelaria Sejmu, 15 January 2020, p. 8, www.sejm.gov.pl.

²⁴ "Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu RP w udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie styczeń–czerwiec 2019 r..." *op. cit.*

²⁵ „Polska przekazała analizę ryzyka sieci 5G Komisji Europejskiej,” *CyberDefence24*, 17 July 2019, www.cyberdefence24.pl.

²⁶ "Handel Zagraniczny, Statistics Poland," GUS, www.swaid.stat.gov.pl.

construction investment carried out by a Chinese company after Covec's failure back in 2012.²⁷ Although Stecol had won several road construction tenders in Poland in 2018, the Public Procurement Office's Appeals Bureau cancelled all of these as a result of protests submitted by other bidders.

In November, a Polish-Chinese consortium (which included Chinese companies Stecol and Sinohydro) won an electronic tender for the modernisation of a 70-km long section of the Czyżew–Białystok railway, which is an element of the currently developed Rail Baltica route. It should be remembered, however, that this does not automatically translate into a final contractor selection decision. Thus, in 2019 it was unclear whether Chinese companies would take part in this investment.²⁸

In 2019, another development worthy of note involved new cargo rail links between Poland and China. November saw the launch of the first regular intermodal rail connection²⁹ between Xi'an and the Port of Gdańsk. Once the train arrives from China (via Russia and Belarus) at the Adampol Małaszewicze terminal, its cargo is transported by rail to the Port of Gdańsk. The entire journey lasts 12 days. This is how the previously applied transport solutions using multiple routes leading from China via Hamburg and Duisburg to the UK and Scandinavia can be accelerated by up to 5 days.³⁰

2019 also saw the launch of a rail link from Xi'an to the terminal in Sławków in Silesia. The first train departed for Poland on 24 December. It carried 45 containers with goods such as electronic devices, automotive parts, paper products and textiles. The assets of this link included the absence of the need to transship the cargo on the EU border (which was possible due to the utilisation of Europe's westernmost section of a broad-gauge railway), the possibility of dispatching the longest container trains in Europe (up to 950 metres) and the transshipment potential of the terminal in Sławków. In Poland, the cargo gets transshipped onto trucks and standard-gauge cargo trains, and delivered to customers. The terminal operates a regular cargo service with Gdańsk, Maddaloni in Italy, Schwarzhede in Germany and other destinations.³¹

²⁷ T. Elźbieciak, "Chińczycy wracają na budowę polskich dróg. To już przesądzone," *WNP*, 21 August 2019, www.wnp.pl.

²⁸ J. Madrjas, "Polsko-chińskie konsorcjum wygrało aukcję na modernizację odcinka Rail Baltica," *Rynek kolejowy*, 5 November 2019, www.rynek-kolejowy.pl.

²⁹ This involves using several types of transport in one transport unit such as a container.

³⁰ "Pierwszy regularny serwis kolejowy łączący Chiny z Gdańskiem," Port Gdańsk, 21 November 2019, www.portgdansk.pl.

³¹ "Pierwszy pociąg z Chin, który wjechał do Polski szerokim torem LHS bez przeładunku na granicy," *Rynek Kolejowy*, 6 January 2020, www.rynek-kolejowy.pl.

Social and Cultural Relations

As regards social contacts, Poland emphasised the promotion of Polish culture in China, cooperation in the field of education, including attempts to attract Chinese students to study at Polish universities, and cooperation in the field of tourism to increase the number of Chinese tourists visiting Poland. In 2019, almost 140,000 Chinese tourists came to Poland, which was slightly more than in 2018. This meant that the upward trend which began in 2017 continued. Although Chinese tourists were the 16th largest group of foreign tourists to visit Poland, they spent the biggest sums during their stay per one person.³²

In 2019, Poland continued to promote its culture in China. This task was mainly carried out by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute under its Project Asia initiative, in which it was assisted by the Polish Institute in Beijing. The promotional activities mainly included Polish jazz concerts (most of them were organised as part of the 'Jazz in Polish' programme), computer games (presentations during fairs and festivals in Shanghai and Beijing), theatre (the participation of Polish theatre artists in the Wuzhen Theatre Festival; they performed 'The Fairy Queen' directed by Michał Znaniecki), contemporary music, as well as other arts and design.³³

Assessment

In 2019, in its relations with China Poland failed to achieve most of its assumed economic goals. The trade deficit was not reduced and no high quality Chinese investments were attracted to Poland. China did not lift its embargo on the import of Polish pork and did not introduce the principle of regionalisation. The Chinese market remained closed to Polish exporters to a large degree due to numerous non-tariff barriers which continued to apply. The launch of new cargo rail links can be viewed as partial achievement of economic goals. However, at present it is difficult to assess whether train service carried out using these links will be regular, whether Poland will manage to boost its exports in this manner and who will benefit from transshipment fees.

In the political aspect, Poland managed to achieve some of its goals. The visit paid by China's FM Wang Yi in July and the second meeting of the Polish-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee should be viewed as the most important events in this sphere. Aside from that, China's deputy FM Wang Chao's visit to Warsaw in March and another meeting in the strategic dialogue formula were elements of

³² M. Kalwasiński, "Rekordowa liczba chińskich turystów odwiedziła Polskę," *Bankier*, 26 February 2020, www.bankier.pl.

³³ For more details on the promotion of Polish culture in China in 2019 see the website of Project Asia run by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, www.culture.pl/pl/temat/azja.

efforts to achieve a goal involving regular political dialogue as part of bilateral cooperation mechanisms.

Poland achieved some of its political goals in the 16+1 format (since April known as 17+1) and at the EU level. The Polish government used the summit in Dubrovnik as an opportunity to improve Poland's relations with China, which deteriorated following the arrest of a Huawei employee in Warsaw. This, in turn, paved the way for the organisation of Wang Yi's visit in July. Efforts to improve the relations included PM Morawiecki's presence at the summit and his pledge that Poland would not ban Chinese companies from involvement in the 5G network rollout. During the negotiations regarding the Guidelines, Poland successfully sought to include provisions resulting from EU policy in the document and to devise the format's expansion procedures.

At the EU level, Poland supported such actions in the bloc's relations with China which were intended to result in a boost to the security of investment (screening), critical infrastructure (mainly the 5G network), as well as in equal and non-discriminatory access to the Chinese market for Polish companies, which required a tougher policy towards China. Poland did not challenge any of the EU's proposals to assume a more cautious approach to Beijing. As a consequence, Poland's policy towards China was based on the EU's definition of China as both an economic and systemic rival, and a partner.

Poland did not fully follow the U.S. recommendations that EU member states should limit their cooperation with China. On the contrary, it attempted to maintain the right balance between China and the U.S. Despite the arrest of a Chinese citizen, the visits paid and statements given by Pompeo and Pence in Warsaw (which included Poland and the U.S. signing a declaration on 5G, which has an anti-Chinese tone), Poland sought to maintain favourable relations with China while at the same time it remained in the mainstream of the EU's policy. This means that Poland both cooperated with the U.S. and supported the EU in its policy towards China (and took part in charting this policy and preparing its details). This policy was different from the U.S. approach in that it was less repressive and maintained open channels of communications with China. This approach was facilitated by Polish politicians refraining from making statements which could directly hit China, in contrast to situations which happened in 2018. The only exception was the statement by minister Kamiński. However, it was not official and did not provoke any response from China.

Poland's Policy Towards Ukraine

MARIA PIECHOWSKA

Background

2019 was an election year both in Poland and in Ukraine. In Poland, the political landscape did not change and the Law and Justice party, alongside its coalition partners, continued its rule which had begun in 2015. Change happened in Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelensky won the presidential election defeating the incumbent President Petro Poroshenko in two rounds (held on 31 March and 21 April).¹ The popularity enjoyed by the new president and his political base, the Servant of the People party, was among the reasons behind the decision to call a snap parliamentary election which was held on 21 July (initially it was planned for 27 October). In line with the expectations, the Servant of the People party came first and attained a majority in the Verkhovna Rada.² A month later, on 29 August, the new government was sworn in with Oleksiy Honcharuk as the prime minister,³ succeeding Volodymyr Hroysman (in office since 14 April 2016). Vadym Prystaiko was appointed as the new minister of foreign affairs, succeeding Pavlo Klimkin (in office since 2 December 2014). These changes reshaped the political landscape and at the same time had a significant impact on Polish-Ukrainian relations. The winning party's platform emphasised the need to improve Ukraine's relations with its western neighbours (Poland and Hungary).

In recent years (2015–19) Poland's policy towards Ukraine was determined by the prolonged conflict over historical issues,⁴ whose immediate effects included a moratorium imposed by Ukraine on search for and exhumation of remains of Polish war victims. Poland amending its Act on the Institute of National Remembrance in January 2018 was another development which aggravated the bilateral relations. It contained passages which mentioned "crimes of Ukrainian

¹ D. Szeligowski, "Volodymyr Zelensky Wins the Presidential Election in Ukraine," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 19/2019, 23 April 2019, www.pism.pl.

² *Idem*, "Servant of the People Party Wins Absolute Majority in Ukrainian Parliament," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 39/2019, 23 July 2019, www.pism.pl.

³ *Idem*, "A New Government in Ukraine," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 44/2019, 2 September 2019, www.pism.pl.

⁴ For more, see: *idem*, "Poland's Policy Towards Ukraine," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2018, PISM, 2025.

nationalists and members of Ukrainian organizations collaborating with the Third German Reich”⁵ which triggered strong opposition from the Ukrainian side.⁶ Significant migration from Ukraine to Poland was another factor shaping the bilateral relations. According to estimates, around 1–2 million Ukrainian job seekers came to Poland, which had an impact on political relations, the scale of remittances and on issues such as border infrastructure.

Another factor impacting Poland's foreign policy towards Ukraine was the development of Kyiv's relations with the European Union. Although 2019 saw the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Eastern Partnership programme, for Ukraine its association agreement with the EU was the most important issue. Poland became involved in the process of its implementation, in particular in the area linked with decentralization (the EU-LEAD programme). The DCFTA free trade agreement (a component of the association agreement), which had come into effect on 1 January 2016, resulted in a boost in trade between Poland and Ukraine. As a consequence, Poland became one of Ukraine's most important trade partners.

What Poland and Ukraine had in common was their shared perception of security-related challenges, mainly those linked with Russia and its aggressive policy in the region, including military activity Russian forces continued in eastern Ukraine (in portions of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts) and the occupation of Crimea. The end of 2018 saw a deterioration of the situation in the Sea of Azov and in the region of the Kerch Strait: on 25 November Russian warships attacked and seized three Ukrainian vessels which attempted to pass the Kerch Strait.⁷ 24 Ukrainian seamen were captured as a result. It was only in December 2019 (after three years) that negotiations in the Normandy format (Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia) were resumed and resulted in a long-awaited exchange of prisoners-of-war. The meeting failed to bring a breakthrough in efforts to regulate the conflict, as the parties failed to arrive at a decision on full armistice, nor did they agree to withdraw troops from along the demarcation line.⁸ In the context of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, another important development involved

⁵ The Act of 26 January 2018 amending the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance—Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, the Act on Graves and War Cemeteries, the Act on Museums and the Act on the Liability of Collective Entities for Acts prohibited under the penalty. Dz.U. [Journal of Laws] of 2018, item 369.

⁶ For more, see: D. Szeligowski, “Poland's Policy Towards Ukraine,” *op. cit.*

⁷ A.M. Dyner, D. Szeligowski, “Political and Military Aspects of the Russia-Ukraine Kerch Strait Incident,” *PISM Spotlight*, no. 79/2018, 27 November 2018, www.pism.pl.

⁸ D. Szeligowski, “Further Lack of Progress in Settling the Situation in Donbas,” *PISM Bulletin*, no. 30 (1962), 24 February 2020, www.pism.pl.

Poland's non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council (UN SC) in 2018–19.

Goals and Assumptions

The Polish government's policy towards Ukraine did not change following the parliamentary elections. The general goals of the Polish foreign policy were presented in the Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021.⁹ Due to Russia's destabilising role in the region, the most important goal involved providing Ukraine with long-term support in building its resilience to internal and external challenges, including in particular its modernisation efforts and support for pro-European and transatlantic reforms. More specific goals set for 2019 were unveiled at the Sejm during the presentation of Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Polish Foreign Policy Tasks in 2019. Minister Jacek Czaputowicz stressed that Poland "invariably supports Ukraine's territorial integrity and the sovereignty of its government throughout the country's territory within its internationally recognised borders".¹⁰ He said that Russia's aggressive policy targeting Ukraine should meet with a decisive response from the international community, including NATO which should continue to deepen its cooperation with Ukraine. The intention to maintain the 'open door' policy and to act as an advocate of NATO's continued support for Ukraine was mentioned as the main goal of Poland's policy towards Ukraine in the sphere of security. Minister Czaputowicz also referred to the incident in the Kerch Strait and to the need to call on Russia to release the arrested Ukrainian seamen, return the captured Ukrainian vessels, and restore free navigation between the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea proper.

Poland viewed reforms in Ukraine as highly important. This was stressed both by Minister Czaputowicz in his Information... and on other occasions, for example during a conference on support for Ukrainian reforms held in July 2019 in Toronto. At this meeting, the minister emphasised the role of Poland's support in the process of combatting corruption as a key factor for improving business climate for both domestic and foreign entrepreneurs.¹¹

Just like in 2018, historical issues were listed among several important elements of bilateral relations, and the lifting of the moratorium on search for

⁹ "Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021," MSZ, September 2017, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹⁰ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

¹¹ "Minister Jacek Czaputowicz attends Ukraine conference in Canada," MSZ, 3 July 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

and exhumation of remains of Polish victims of wars and conflicts on Ukrainian territory was an important condition for future dialogue.

Political Relations

2019 can be divided into two periods. The first one lasted until 21 March (when Volodymyr Zelensky won the presidential election), and Poland's activities carried out during that time focused on supporting Ukraine in the international forum and drawing the world's attention to the events surrounding the incident in the Kerch Strait. Alongside this, unresolved historical issues were raised. The other period, which followed the election of the new president, mainly involved continued support for Ukraine in the international arena and bilateral meetings with its new leadership. President Zelensky's visit to Warsaw was the most important development.

Poland supported Ukraine in the international arena at numerous levels. At the beginning of the year, Jacek Czaputowicz travelled to Ukraine alongside the foreign ministers of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. The main purpose of this visit, which took place on 15 January, i.e. soon after the incident in the Kerch Strait and in the Black Sea involving the Russian navy, was to express support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and solidarity with the Ukrainian nation in the context of Russia's aggression, by issuing declarations and manifesting the ministers' presence in eastern Ukraine.

Although in the first quarter of the year Poland's activities were focused on making public statements in international organisations to express support for Ukraine, one event of major importance to bilateral relations also happened. On 17 January, the Polish Constitutional Court (CC) announced that the provisions of the amended Act on the Institute of National Remembrance, in the section referring to 'Ukrainian nationalists' and 'Eastern Małopolska' are incompatible with the Polish constitution.¹² This decision was welcomed by the Ukrainian side which viewed the Polish Act on the Institute of National Remembrance as one of the most important obstacles to favourable bilateral relations. President Poroshenko sent a letter of thanks to the CC and to President Andrzej Duda.

A week later (on 24 January), in Davos, the two presidents met on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum. Andrzej Duda reiterated Poland's support for Ukraine's full territorial integrity and inviolability of its borders, and stressed the importance of continued reforms in Ukraine. In Davos, meetings between representatives of the two countries' governments were also held. Minister

¹² "Nowelizacja ustawy o Instytucie Pamięci Narodowej," Trybunał Konstytucyjny, <https://trybunal.gov.pl>.

Czaputowicz talked to minister Klimkin about bilateral relations, and on the next day he met with Ivanna Klymush-Tsintsadze, Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration. During that meeting, aside from declarations of support for Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations, the issue of historical policy was raised. Minister Czaputowicz referred to the decision of the Polish Constitutional Court regarding the amended Act on the Institute of National Remembrance and expressed his hope that the Ukrainian authorities would enable the researchers to carry out activities focused on search for and exhumation of remains of Polish citizens.¹³

Another top-level meeting was held on 22 February, when Presidents Duda and Poroshenko, alongside Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaitė, visited the headquarters of the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian LITPOLUKRBRIG brigade in Lublin. The presidents of Lithuania and Poland stressed the need to continue military cooperation with Ukraine, especially in the context of its NATO membership aspirations.

The issue of Russia's aggressive policy towards Ukraine was raised by the Polish side in international organisations. On 22 February, a debate was held at the UN General Assembly on the temporarily occupied portions of Ukrainian territory, during which Poland was represented by Deputy Foreign Minister Bartosz Cichocki. He reiterated Poland's support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.¹⁴ In the first quarter of 2019, Poland spoke about Ukraine's security also in other forums, for example this issue was among the topics discussed by EU foreign ministers during the meeting of the EU Foreign Affairs Council held on 18 February in Brussels and during the meeting of presidents of the Bucharest Nine states held on 28 February in Košice. The issue of the Russian aggression was raised by Poland at a meeting of the UN Security Council. On 15 March, which marked the fifth anniversary of the Russian occupation of Ukraine's Crimea, an Arria-formula meeting was held at the UN SC on the situation in Crimea; it was convened at the request of Poland and several other countries.

Following Volodymyr Zelensky's victory in the presidential elections, President Duda sent an official congratulatory dispatch to him, in which he invited the new Ukrainian president to visit Poland. On the same day, the Polish president and the Ukrainian president-elect held a telephone conversation.

¹³ "Davos supports European aspirations of Western Balkans," MSZ, 26 January 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹⁴ "Debata ZO NZ nt. tymczasowo okupowanych terytoriów Ukrainy," MSZ, 20 February 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

On 12 April, Poland's newly appointed Deputy Foreign Minister Marcin Przydacz paid a working visit to Kyiv. He succeeded Bartosz Cichocki in this post because on 8 March Mr Cichocki was appointed Poland's ambassador to Ukraine. Minister Przydacz met with Deputy Foreign Minister Vasyl Bodnar to discuss the situation in the Donbas and international support for Ukraine. Other important topics covered during the talks included issues linked with bilateral relations including historical policy. Minister Przydacz stressed that Poland expected Ukraine to lift the ban on exhumation activities as soon as possible and said that "Poland and Ukraine are close partners, neighbours, with centuries of shared history [...]. Ukraine's political history in recent years, or even weeks, indicates that building the country's political position on the basis of a nationalist narrative fails to bring success".¹⁵ Other topics discussed included the role of Ukrainian migrants in Poland and trade exchange.

In the second half of May, Poland was among the states which blocked Russia's request to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Security Council on the Ukrainian language law¹⁶ which envisaged a requirement to use the Ukrainian language in state institutions. The purpose of this law was to eliminate the Russian language from everyday life and to foster the development of the Ukrainian language.¹⁷ When this topic was raised once again two months later, in July, most representatives of the participating states expressed their concern about Russia's stance and emphasised the aggressive nature of Russia's policy towards Ukraine.¹⁸

Zelensky was sworn in as Ukraine's president on 20 May. The celebration was attended by presidents of the Baltic states, Hungary and Georgia. Poland decided not to send a top-level delegation. As a consequence, minister Czaputowicz and the Chief of the Chancellery of the President Halina Szymańska travelled to Kyiv. Using this opportunity, the Polish FM met with the new president to discuss the future of bilateral cooperation in areas such as economic and social affairs, and historical dialogue. Other topics discussed included the advantages linked with the participation in the Eastern Partnership programme and the Three Seas Initiative.

The Eastern Partnership was the leading theme of another visit paid by minister Czaputowicz to Ukraine on 30–31 May. Together with Margot Wallström,

¹⁵ "Wiceszef MSZ Marcin Przydacz na rozmowach w Kijowie," MSZ, 12 April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹⁶ "Possible Ukraine Briefing," *What's in blue?*, 20 May 2019, www.whatsinblue.org.

¹⁷ T.A. Olszański, "Ukrainians and their language. The Act on the State Language of Ukraine," *OSW Commentary*, 11 June 2019, www.osw.waw.pl.

¹⁸ "Briefing Security Council on Ukraine, Under-Secretary-General Expresses Concern over Language Law, Ceasefire Violations," UN, 16 July 2019, www.un.org.

Sweden's Foreign Minister, he visited Kyiv to mark the tenth anniversary of the inauguration of the Eastern Partnership by Poland and Sweden. The ministers met with President Zelensky, Vadym Prystaiko (Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration for Foreign Policy Issues) and Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin. The main topics of their talks included the future of the Eastern Partnership, the Ukrainian-Russian conflict, and cooperation between Poland, Sweden and Ukraine in the sphere of security.¹⁹

President Duda met with Ukraine's new president on 4 June in Brussels. This was when the Ukrainian president pledged to soften his country's historical rhetoric: "I am open to fostering the process of reconciliation and preventing the situation in which topics related to difficult historical periods will dominate in Polish-Ukrainian relations".²⁰ President Duda reiterated Poland's support for Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations and invited President Zelensky to Warsaw.

The new Ukrainian President paid his first visit to Poland in late August and early September, to attend the celebrations of the anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. The Ukrainian president announced that the moratorium on search for and exhumation of remains of Polish war victims in Ukraine would be lifted. President Duda stressed the need to increase trade and to boost cooperation between business owners from the two states.²¹ The importance of this meeting to the Ukrainian side was corroborated by the line-up of the Ukrainian delegation which, aside from president Zelensky, included Dmytro Kuleba (Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration), Vadym Prystaiko (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Oleksiy Orzhel (Minister of Energy) and Oleksandr Danyluk (Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council). The topics covered during the talks included cross-border cooperation and the construction of new border crossings, issues related to trade and energy security. During their meeting held in September in Warsaw, Foreign Ministers Jacek Czaputowicz and Vadym Prystaiko discussed issues linked with transport, the situation on border crossings and cooperation between the customs services.²² The only document signed during these meetings was the Polish-U.S.-Ukrainian memorandum on boosting the regional security of gas supplies, which was intended to increase the diversification of gas supplies to Poland and to support Ukraine in efforts to achieve this.

¹⁹ "Ministers Czaputowicz and Wallström pay a two-day visit to Kyiv," MSZ, 31 May 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

²⁰ "Ukraina dużej wdzięczności wyraża za podtrzymanie swoich interesów w Unii Europejskiej i NATO – Prezydent," Office of the President of Ukraine, 4 June 2019, www.president.gov.ua.

²¹ "Wypowiedź Prezydenta RP po spotkaniu z Prezydentem Ukrainy," *Prezydent.pl*, 31 August 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

²² "Rozmowy ministrów spraw zagranicznych Polski i Ukrainy w Warszawie," MSZ, 2 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

Shortly after President Zelensky's first visit to Poland, Ukraine took several concrete steps: the controversial (from the Polish point of view) head of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance Volodymyr Viatrovykh was dismissed, and the Ukrainian authorities lifted the moratorium on exhumation activities. This change has not translated into increased frequency of bilateral meetings at the highest level. The two presidents met again on 24 September during the 74th meeting of the UN General Assembly, at which Andrzej Duda once again stressed Ukraine's right to self-determine its future and to maintain its territorial integrity. On 20 December, the two presidents held a telephone conversation during which they discussed the state of bilateral relations and security issues.

Defence Cooperation

Poland provided Ukraine with training assistance. In 2019 this included Poland's participation in NATO programmes addressed to Ukraine such as the Joint Multinational Training Group—Ukraine and the Defence Education Enhancement Programme. In 2009, the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian LITPOLUKRBRIG brigade was formed (it became combat ready in 2016) to act under the auspices of the UN, the EU and NATO. In 2019, it took part in numerous exercises and training missions (such as BRAVE BAND 2019, RAPID TRIDENT 2019). The importance of this initiative was highlighted for example on 22 February 2019, when Presidents Duda and Poroshenko and Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaitė visited LITPOLUKRBRIG's headquarters.

In 2019, the Military Institute of Medicine organised a training programme for Ukrainian specialist who treated individuals suffering from war trauma. The programme was commissioned by the Ministry of National Defence and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Cooperation in the sphere of security included expert consultations such as a study visit paid by representatives of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine at the level of directors and experts, which was held on 21–25 January at the invitation of the National Security Bureau. It was the result of consultations between the NSB head, Minister Paweł Soloch, and the NSDC Secretary Oleksandr Turchynov, and their decision to increase expert-level cooperation between the two institutions. During the visit, the Ukrainian delegation held a series of meetings with experts from the NSB, the ministry of national defence, the ministry of foreign affairs and the Government Centre for Security, as well as state-funded analytical centres (the Polish Institute of International Affairs and the Centre for Eastern Studies).²³

²³ "Wizyta przedstawicieli aparatu rady bezpieczeństwa Ukrainy w Polsce," BBN, 25 January 2019, <https://bbn.gov.pl>.

Economic Relations

2019 was a bumper year as regards Poland's trade with Ukraine. This was facilitated by economic growth in both states and Ukraine's integration with the European Union under the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). Poland's exports to Ukraine increased by more than 10% (PLN 3.1 billion) compared with 2018, and its imports rose by 3.7% (PLN 0.7 billion). Poland's exports to Ukraine mainly included products of the electromechanical industry (32.9%), products of the chemical industry (22%), agri-food products (17.7%) and metallurgical products (9.4%). The structure of Poland's imports from Ukraine was as follows: agri-food products (26%), mineral products (19.6%) and metallurgical products (18.8%).

Table. Commodity trade between Poland and Ukraine (in billions of PLN)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	25.0	20.1	19.0	23.7	27.7	30.0	33.1
Exports	18.0	13.1	12.4	15.1	18.2	19.0	21.4
Imports	7.0	7.0	6.6	8.6	9.5	11.0	11.7
Balance	11.0	6.1	5.8	6.5	8.7	8.0	9.7

Source: GUS.

Poland was among Ukraine's most important trade partners. According to data compiled by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, in 2019 it was the second largest recipient of Ukraine's exports after China (\$3.3 billion or around PLN 12.5 billion) and the fourth largest importer of Ukrainian-made goods (\$1.9 billion in the corresponding period or around PLN 7.2 billion) after China, Russia and Germany. 2019 saw a continuous increase in Polish direct investments in Ukraine. At the end of 2019, their value stood at \$693.7 million (around PLN 2.6 billion), up \$62 million versus 2018. Polish entrepreneurs mainly invested in various sectors of the Ukrainian processing industry, the finance and insurance sector, wholesale and retail trade. Ukrainian investors, for their part, operated in Poland mainly in the industrial, finance and insurance, engineering, and trade sectors. At the end of December 2019, Ukrainian investments in Poland stood at \$8.1 million (around PLN 30.7 million), up \$1.4 million versus 2018.²⁴ In the context of economic relations, the issue of

²⁴ Figures compiled by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (they do not cover the areas which are not controlled by the government in Kyiv, that is the Russian-annexed Crimean Peninsula including Sevastopol city and the territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts which are being occupied by irregular Russian armed groups).

remittances sent to Ukraine by Ukrainians working in Poland is worth noting. According to the National Bank of Ukraine, in 2019 these amounted to \$3.6 billion (around PLN 13.7 billion), which accounted for a third of all remittances sent from abroad. Remittances sent from Poland accounted for more than 3.6% of Ukraine's GDP.

Social and Cultural Relations

Ukrainians were the largest group of foreign nationals residing in Poland. The estimated number of Ukrainian migrants in Poland was 1–2 million individuals; the precise number was difficult to calculate due to the circulatory nature of migration and the still present practice of illegal employment. In 2019, the number of Ukrainian citizens entered in the registers kept by district employment offices reached almost 1.5 million and remained unchanged compared with 2018. The registers contained around 30,000 more entries documenting requests for issuing seasonal work permits (around 179,000). At the same time, 2019 saw a 20% increase in the total number of various residence permits issued to the citizens of Ukraine compared with 2018 (214,000 in 2019, 179,000 in 2018). Long-term migration to Poland will likely increase as the number of Ukrainian graduates of Polish universities will grow (in 2019 40,000 Ukrainians studied in Poland).

In 2019, Ukraine was the main recipient of Poland's Official Development Assistance (ODA)²⁵—it received PLN 303.55 million.²⁶ The biggest share of ODA were scholarships and educational cost refunds, as well as project activities carried out in three thematic areas: human capital, good governance, and entrepreneurship and the private sector. Bilateral assistance was mainly provided via non-governmental organizations, the Solidarity Fund, public administration bodies, local government bodies and Polish diplomatic missions. One important element of the Polish assistance programme (PM in Ukraine) involved support for reforms: the local government reform (decentralization), the education system reform, as well as projects focused on improvement of skills of public administration employees. Events organized in 2019 as part of the PM programme included training events for Ukrainian public servants under the Eastern Partnership Academy of Public Administration, assistance and training programmes for Ukrainian fire-fighting services, support for the construction

²⁵ In 2018, Poland was the fourth biggest donor of development aid to Ukraine (after the EU, Germany and the United States). Data for 2019 is not available.

²⁶ "Oficjalna Pomoc Rozwojowa (ODA) w 2019," MSZ, 23 July 2020, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

of the Vinnytsia Innovation and Technology Park and many other initiatives including humanitarian aid programmes.²⁷

Cooperation in science and research was an important component of programmes implemented by Polish public institutions and targeted at Ukrainian citizens. These included the Stefan Banach scholarship programme, the Stanisław Ulam scholarship programme and scholarships offered by the University of Warsaw (at the Centre for East European Studies) and the Scholarship Programme of the Government of Poland for Young Scientists. A field office of the Polish Academy of Sciences operated in Kyiv. In 2019, the Academy organised conferences focused on cross-border issues, promotion of Polish culture and science, and bilateral relations.

The Polish Institute in Kyiv was responsible for cooperation in the sphere of culture. In 2019, it coordinated the organisation of several exhibitions (such as 'Fighting and suffering. Polish citizens during the Second World War' held at the Kyiv History Museum on 1–17 September, 'Order no. 00485. The NKVD's anti-Polish operation in Soviet Ukraine in 1937–38' at the National Historical and Architectural Museum 'Kyiv Fortress' in Kyiv on 20 November – 8 December), competitions (such as the Joseph Conrad-Korzeniowski literary award which in 2019 was awarded to Artem Chekh), as well as meetings with writers, conferences and other events promoting Polish culture.

Despite an improvement in bilateral relations, in 2019 no meeting of the Polish-Ukrainian Forum of Historians was held. However, other bodies did meet, including the Polish-Ukrainian Partnership Forum (PUPF) which gathered experts from Poland and Ukraine. The main purpose of its activity was to revive dialogue between societies of Poland and Ukraine and to boost rapprochement and reconciliation between the two nations. The PUPF organised debates on the sidelines of various conferences and meetings. In 2019, the most important such events included the following panels: 'Strategic partnership between Poland and Ukraine. Slogan or reality?' held on 5 September during the Economic Forum in Krynica, 'New situation in Polish-Ukrainian relations' held as part of Polish-Ukrainian Meetings in Yaremche in Ukraine (30 September) and 'Can anything else be done in Polish-Ukrainian relations? An action plan' held on 28 November as part of a conference dedicated to Poland's eastern policy, which was organised by the Jan Nowak-Jeziorański College of Eastern Europe in Wrocław.

The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage implemented numerous programmes to support conservation works at Polish cemeteries in Ukraine. In 2019, this support included work carried out at the cemeteries in Lviv, Kremenets, Drohobych and many other locations. This form of support also

²⁷ For more, see: Polska pomoc, www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc.

covered inventory work which was carried out for example at Jewish cemeteries in Hutsulshchyna region and at cemeteries located in former Polish Tarnopol voivodeship. The 'Aid to Poles in the East' Foundation carried out initiatives focused on Polish heritage, the promotion of Polish culture and support for ethnic Poles living in Ukraine.

Assessment

Due to external factors (Russia's aggressive policy in the region), in 2019 Ukraine's territorial integrity continued to be violated. Over this year, Poland continued to actively support Ukraine in the international forum. It was successful in its attempts to maintain the issue of Russia's repeated acts of aggression against Ukraine, that is the annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas, on the agenda of major international organizations, including using its non-permanent UN SC member status. It also sought to draw the international community's attention to the issue of Ukrainian citizens held captive by Russia. September 2019 saw a POW exchange between Ukraine and Russia, which included the release of 24 Ukrainian seamen. Although this success should not be viewed as an immediate result of Poland's activity, there is no doubt that raising the issue of the Russian aggression in international forums was intended to support Ukraine's actions. Poland continued to support Ukraine's security by building its external and internal resilience, offering assistance and training programmes, as well as initiatives supporting the Ukrainian reform process.

In recent years, Poland's policy towards Ukraine was determined by the conflict over historical issues. While practical cooperation, mainly in spheres such as economic relations and security, was dynamic, bilateral political dialogue was being curbed by historical issues. The election of Ukraine's new president did not bring any major breakthrough. In the initial period, the Polish side maintained a restrained attitude in political relations and waited for concrete actions on the part of the new leadership. These finally happened in autumn 2019, when the moratorium on search for and exhumation of remains of Polish victims of wars and conflicts in Ukraine was lifted. This equated to a major obstacle hampering the development of bilateral relations being removed. In addition, the Ukrainian authorities' rhetoric regarding historical issues changed. The combination of efforts by Polish diplomats and the attitude of the new Ukrainian president and his political base resulted in a positive change in bilateral relations compared with the previous years.

Poland's Policy Towards the Baltic and Nordic states

KINGA RAŚ

Background

The basic determinant of Poland's policy towards the Baltic¹ and Nordic² states, which formed regional cooperation formats in the Baltic Sea region,³ included their geographical location and their diversified membership of Euro-Atlantic structures. The unique nature of Polish-Lithuanian relations was determined by their shared neighbourhood and the presence of an indigenous Polish population in Lithuania, whose rights have been the subject of a dispute between the two governments.

A particularly important determinant in the sphere of security involved the manner in which Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia perceived Russia's policy. Just like Poland, these states viewed Russia's actions as a threat to their security and as factors which destabilised the international order. As regards the Nordic states, they were more open to cooperation with Russia, and the policy of neutrality pursued by Sweden and Finland was an additional factor shaping the sphere of security.

Within the European Union, Poland cooperated with Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, as well as Denmark, Finland and Sweden, while Norway and Iceland remained outside of the EU. Finland's presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2019 impacted the joint activities. Another important fact was that Poland did not share all of Finland's priorities such as the EU's multiannual financial framework and its climate policy.

For many years, Poland had viewed the northern direction as important to its international cooperation, including in the regional aspect.⁴ Poland's participation in various initiatives and organisations was conducive to developing

¹ Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

² Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland, as opposed to Scandinavia which only comprises Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

³ Although geographically the Baltic Sea region comprises the states located at the Baltic Sea's coast, effectively the regional initiatives such as the CBSS include all Baltic and Nordic states.

⁴ V. Jóźwiak, K. Raś, "The Northern Dimension of Polish Foreign Policy after 2004—Relations with the Nordic States," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2018, PISM, 2021, p. 286.

this cooperation. The main such forum was the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), which was established in 1992 and comprised 11 states including Russia. Poland was also involved in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, which is one of the four macroregional strategies implemented by the EU. It comprises all of the EU's eight member states located at the Baltic Sea. 2019 saw the 10th anniversary of this initiative and Poland hosted the anniversary celebrations. The V4+NB8 cooperation format facilitated the cooperation between the Visegrad Group, including Poland, and the Baltic and Nordic states.⁵ In addition, the Baltic states were members of the Three Seas Initiative (TSI). Poland also held meetings with them in the B3+1 formula.

Goals and Assumptions

The most important goals of the northern dimension of Poland's foreign policy concerned security. To increase its level in the Baltic Sea basin,⁶ Poland supported the plan to boost regional cooperation, including with NATO's partner states,⁷ that is Sweden and Finland. Poland's goal was also to carry out joint activities in the energy sector and to become independent of Russian gas supplies.

From Poland's point of view, due to both geographical & historical reasons and the security priorities, successful cooperation with the Baltic states was more important than that carried out with the Nordic state. This was evident in the Polish foreign policy assumptions presented by minister Jacek Czaputowicz. The main aspects of Poland's cooperation with Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia involved security, mainly due to a shared assessment of the "dangers from the East", posed by Russia's aggressive policy, and Poland's support for the synchronisation of the Baltic states' energy infrastructure by connecting their electricity grids with the European system.⁸ Poland's goal in its dialogue with the Lithuanian authorities continued to be to expand the rights of the Polish minority, mainly in the sphere of education and the use of the Polish language in the public space.

As regards cooperation with the Nordic states, Poland usually identified separate goals with reference to each of these states. It viewed Denmark and Norway as important partners in the energy sector, while Sweden was a major partner in the development of the EU's Eastern policy under the Eastern

⁵ NB8 (Nordic-Baltic Eight) is an informal regional cooperation formula which includes the Baltic and Nordic states.

⁶ "Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021," MSZ, September 2017, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

⁷ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

Partnership (EP) programme. At the same time, Poland was hoping that Sweden and Finland would increase their involvement in the sphere of security.

Political Relations

Regional and multilateral cooperation. In 2019, Poland continued its cooperation in the Baltic Sea region in multilateral formats. The CBSS was the most important cooperation forum and a platform for political dialogue. Its annual summit dedicated, among other things, to the development of sustainable maritime economy and a debate on the Council's reform, was held in Jūrmala in Latvia.⁹ In Warsaw, as part of cooperation within the CBSS, the Polish ministry of internal affairs and administration organised a conference on combatting human trafficking, which summed up the implementation of several projects focused on this issue.¹⁰

The 10th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region was the most important regional event in which Poland was involved. Contrary to their initial assumptions, the organisers failed to ensure a high level of representation of individual states. The meeting attendees announced that the priority for the coming years would involve building a closed-circuit economy.¹¹ The forum summed up the cooperation results achieved thus far and confirmed that the region would focus on efforts to achieve the set climate policy goals. In August 2019, the European Commission launched a review of the so-called Action Plan which serves as the basis for the implementation of the Strategy's assumptions.

As part of the Visegrad Group, since 2013 annual meetings have been held with the Baltic and Nordic states in the V4+NB8 format. The talks held in April 2019 in Palanga in Lithuania focused, among other things, on hybrid threats, the preparations for a meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Washington, the Eastern Partnership and the future of the relations with Russia, Ukraine and China.¹²

The B3+1 format, which included regular meetings, was the smallest cooperation forum, which nevertheless from Poland's point of view was of major political significance. In December 2019, in Riga, Prime Minister Mateusz

⁹ "Conference: Development of sustainable maritime economy: opportunities and challenges for small and medium ports in the Baltic Sea Region," Council of the Baltic Sea States, 10 April 2019, www.cbss.org.

¹⁰ "Konferencja Rady Państw Morza Bałtyckiego," MSWiA, 27 November 2019, www.gov.pl/web/mswia.

¹¹ "10. Forum Strategii Unii Europejskiej dla Regionu Morza Bałtyckiego – Gdańsk 12–13 czerwca br.," MFiPR, 26 April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/fundusze-regiony.

¹² "Format V4 – NB8 w Połdże: Musimy wyznaczyć nowe cele, do których musimy dążyć," ZW, 1 April 2019, www.zw.lt.

Morawiecki talked with the prime ministers of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia about issues such as regional security and cooperation in the field of infrastructure. The effects of this cooperation were evident for example in the Via Baltica route, and the co-funding in the amount of PLN200 million offered to the Polish General Directorate for National Roads and Motorways (GDDKiA) enabled it to sign agreements with the contractors.¹³ The implementation of the Rail Baltica project was delayed but this was due to the new technical requirements adopted by the European Commission which increased the railway's speed from 130 km/h to 160 km/h.¹⁴

Security. Poland's activities in the sphere of security included efforts to increase NATO's presence on the Eastern Flank. Polish soldiers continued to be stationed in Latvia as part of the battalion battle group, and in January 2019 Poland took over the command of the Air Policing mission which monitors the air space of the Baltic states.¹⁵

Although NATO continued to be the main cooperation platform, regional cooperation forums also flourished. Poland participated in meetings with the Baltic and Nordic states (alongside Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) as part of the so-called Northern Group.¹⁶ In November 2019, in Stockholm the ministers of defence discussed the security situation in the Arctic and in Northern Europe, military mobility and strategic communication as part of the planned military exercises.¹⁷ Poland's cooperation with the Baltic states intensified. This was evidenced by Minister Błaszczak's visit to Tallinn in December, where he took part in a meeting of defence ministers of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia (in the B3+1 format). The talks focused on defence cooperation, the NATO summit in London and response to cyber terrorism.¹⁸

The energy sector. In Poland's cooperation in the Baltic Sea region the energy sector was of key importance. This was linked with the continuation of the implementation of several projects, including the most important one, the Baltic

¹³ J. Osowski, "Via Baltica z Warszawy na Litwę. Rząd dosypał pieniędzy, a drogowcy rozstrzygnęli powtórzone przetargi," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 21 November 2019, www.wyborcza.pl.

¹⁴ J. Madrjas, "Adamczyk: Zmieniamy projekt Rail Baltica na prośbę Komisji Europejskiej. Będzie 250 km/h?," *Rynek Kolejowy*, 25 July 2019, www.rynek-kolejowy.pl.

¹⁵ "Poland takes over NATO air policing mission in Baltic states," NATO, 3 January 2019, www.nato.int.

¹⁶ Northern Group is an informal cooperation platform which comprises 11 states of the region and focuses on security.

¹⁷ "Enhanced Nordic dialogue and information exchange in the event of crisis and conflict—summary of defence ministerial meetings on 19–20 November," Government Offices of Sweden, 21 November 2019, www.government.se.

¹⁸ "Together with the Baltic States, we care about security in the region," MON, 16 December 2019, www.gov.pl/web/national-defence.

Pipe, a new supply route enabling Poland to become independent of Russian gas. In April 2019, the EC approved a subsidy to the tune of €214.9 million for preparatory work.¹⁹ In addition, Poland obtained the required environmental and investment location decisions and GAZ-SYSTEM signed the first contract for investor supplies. Following its planned launch in 2022, the pipeline will be capable of transmitting 10 bcm of Norwegian natural gas annually, not only directly to the Polish market but also via Poland to the Baltic states and other destinations.

Continuation of activities aimed at launching the construction of the GIPL Polish-Lithuanian gas interconnector, including the efforts to obtain the required permits following the environmental and investment location decisions, was important to the region. The EC recognised the interconnector as infrastructure which contributes to the integration of the European gas system because it is intended to eliminate the so-called energy islands and to provide the Baltic states with access to the global LNG market, for example via the terminal in Świnoujście.²⁰

Poland continued its activities aimed at synchronising Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia with the European system of electricity grids. In June 2019, in Brussels the prime ministers of these states, the prime minister of Poland and the President of the EC Jean-Claude Juncker signed a political declaration in support of such synchronisation.²¹ As part of this initiative, Poland and Lithuania will also build the Harmony Link submarine electricity link in the form of a high voltage direct current cable. In October 2019, the project received co-funding from the EU in the amount of more than €10 million or half of the cost of the feasibility study.

Bilateral relations. Due to the shared neighbourhood, a similar assessment of threats to the region and similarity of other interests, Poland was dynamically developing its relations with the **Baltic states**.²²

In 2019, it mainly enhanced its relations with **Lithuania**. In February 2019, in Warsaw, the presidents of Poland and Lithuania, Andrzej Duda and Dalia Grybauskaitė, adopted a declaration on strengthening the Polish-Lithuanian security partnership. On this occasion, ministers of defence Błaszczak and Raimundas Karoblis signed an agreement on the affiliation of the Iron Wolf mechanised brigade and the 15th mechanised brigade based in Giżycko

¹⁹ F. Simon, "Poland wins €215m EU grant for gas link to Norway," *Euractiv*, 15 April 2019, www.euractiv.com.

²⁰ "Gazociąg Polska–Litwa," *Gaz System*, 20 February 2019, www.gaz-system.pl.

²¹ "Polska, państwa bałtyckie i szef KE podpisali deklarację o synchronizacji systemów elektroenergetycznych," *Biznes Alert*, 20 June 2019, www.biznesalert.pl.

²² K. Raś, "Poland's Policy towards the Baltic States," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2011–2015*, PISM, 2019, pp. 261–276.

to the command of the Multinational Division North East in Elbląg. Poland and Lithuania continued to cooperate within the joint Defence Council. The ministers of defence also met in November 2019 in Vilnius.²³ As part of the strategic energy partnership, in January a meeting of the Polish-Lithuanian energy group was held in Warsaw. It was attended by deputy ministers of energy of Poland and Lithuania, Tomasz Dąbrowski and Egidijus Purlys.²⁴ The topic of the meeting involved cooperation in the sphere of security in the gas and electricity sector.

Warsaw was the first capital visited by Lithuania's newly elected president Gitanas Nausėda. In July 2019, he took part in a meeting with Duda, Morawiecki and the speakers of the Sejm and the Senate. Poland's president visited Vilnius in November 2019 to attend the burial of the leaders of the January Uprising. The celebrations at the Vilnius cathedral and the Rasos Cemetery were also attended by Morawiecki and Błaszczak. Aside from the non-controversial issues regarding security, energy and the EU, the topics discussed during the presidents' meeting included the **problems faced by the Polish minority in Lithuania**. This group accounts for more than 5% of Lithuania's inhabitants. President Duda expressed his hope that as part of bilateral consultations an agreement would be reached, especially concerning the Polish school system and the use of Polish as the language of instruction. In November, in Warsaw, Poland's Minister of National Education Dariusz Piontowski and the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania Algirdas Monkevičius signed a declaration regarding these matters.²⁵ On the basis of this declaration, the two states committed themselves to monitor the quality of the Polish minority education in Lithuania and to improve the quality of Lithuanian education in Poland. The problems faced by Polish schools operating in Lithuania and those regarding the presence of the Polish language in public space, including the use of the original spelling of surnames, the return of land and the law on national minorities were also discussed during other meetings. They were raised by the Deputy Speaker of the Sejm Beata Mazurek during a Polish-Lithuanian parliamentary meeting which was held 2019 after a ten year pause²⁶.

Poland continued to develop its relations with the other Baltic states. In December, during his visit to Riga Morawiecki took part in bilateral talks with **Latvia's** Prime Minister Krišjānis Kariņš and in other events. The subject of the

²³ "Wizyta szefa MON na Litwie," *Defence24*, 25 November 2019, www.defence24.pl.

²⁴ "Posiedzenie polsko-litewskiej grupy roboczej ds. energii," MAP, 30 January 2019, www.gov.pl/web/aktywa-panstwowe.

²⁵ "Spotkanie ministrów edukacji Polski i Litwy," MNiSW, 20 November 2019, www.gov.pl/web/edukacja-i-nauka.

²⁶ "Wicemarszałek Sejmu: liczymy, że Litwa wypracuje rozwiązania dot. polskiej oświaty oraz języka," *Polsat News*, 12 December 2019, www.polsatnews.pl.

talks included the joint actions carried out by the two states in the EU, NATO, Baltic cooperation organisations and as part of regional infrastructural projects.²⁷ These issues were also raised during the visit of Latvia's Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkēvičs to Warsaw.²⁸ The ministers discussed the scope of the reform of the Eastern Partnership programme, which was intended to impart a new dynamism to this initiative. Poland and Latvia had a shared assessment of threats faced by the region. This stance was corroborated during President Egils Levits's visit to Warsaw in September 2019, during which he talked to President Duda. Furthermore, the Polish government supported the Polish schools operating in Latvia, for example by co-funding the renovation of Polish educational facilities. In May 2019, in Warsaw, Minister of National Education Anna Zalewska and the Latvian Minister of Education and Science Ilga Šuplinska launched the Polish-Latvian Cultural and Educational Cooperation Programme for 2019–22.

December saw the highest-level meeting in Poland's relations with **Estonia**. In Warsaw, President Kersti Kaljulaid talked to the Polish president about issues such as the TSI summit in Tallinn planned for 2020 (Estonia was interested in using this forum to promote its digitisation projects which it viewed as highly important). In addition, a meeting between foreign ministers of Poland and Estonia was held in May, when Urmas Reinsalu paid a visit to Warsaw. The talks focused on regional security, involvement in support for Ukraine and Georgia, and Russia's status in the Council of Europe.²⁹ Alongside this, in the bilateral relations Poland viewed Estonia as an increasingly important business partner, especially in the IT sector. This was corroborated by Polish-Estonian economic talks held in May, which were attended by Deputy Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology Tadeusz Kościński and Estonia's Deputy Minister for Economic Development Viljar Lubi³⁰.

The Nordic states were not the main target of the actions of Polish diplomacy. However, this did not mean that Poland failed to develop its relations with them.

Poland's relations with **Denmark** were mainly pursued as part of joint activities in the energy sector. The Baltic Pipe project and cooperation in the sphere of renewable energy sources were the main topics of the Polish-Danish round table which was organised in autumn in Warsaw. However, implementation of the key

²⁷ "Premier Mateusz Morawiecki spotkał się z szefami rządów Łotwy, Litwy i Estonii," KPRM, 6 December 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

²⁸ "Czaputowicz: Rosja głównym zagrożeniem dla Europy Środkowej," *Polsat News*, 30 April 2019, www.polsatnews.pl.

²⁹ "FM Reinsalu in Warsaw: Poland plays a key role in Estonia's security," Välisministeerium, 24 May 2019, www.vm.ee.

³⁰ "Polsko-estońskie rozmowy o gospodarce," MRPiT, 29 May 2019, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologia.

initiatives required political support. In September, ministerial consultations were held in Warsaw, during which minister Czaputowicz and his Danish counterpart Jeppe Kofod discussed the prospects for the development of bilateral relations, European and Eastern policy, and transatlantic cooperation.³¹ Furthermore, to mark the centenary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary Elizabeth visited Warsaw in November.

From Poland's perspective, **Norway** continued to be an important partner, including in the context of cooperation in the energy sector. February 2019 saw Polish-Norwegian energy consultations as part of which Deputy Minister Dąbrowski and the government's plenipotentiary for strategic energy infrastructure Piotr Naimski travelled to Oslo. They took part in talks regarding bilateral cooperation in the oil and gas sector, including the intention to increase the presence of Polish companies on the Norwegian continental shelf.³² Energy, security, European policy and the EU's involvement in the Eastern Partnership initiative were discussed during ministerial consultations for which minister Czaputowicz travelled to Norway. In Oslo, he met not only with his counterpart Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide, but also with representatives of the Norwegian-Polish Friendship Group. Norway was also important to Poland because of a large Polish diaspora (in 2019 it comprised 105,000 individuals who accounted for 2% of Norway's residents). A crisis in bilateral relations emerged in connection with this issue. It was caused by controversy surrounding the Norwegian Barnevernet office which deals with the protection of children (including those living in Polish families). Its actions came under criticism from consul Sławomir Kowalski. At the beginning of the year, Norway requested the Polish MFA to dismiss him. In response to Norway considering him a *persona non grata* Poland applied the same measure against the Norwegian consul in Warsaw.³³

The tenth anniversary celebrations of the Eastern Partnership, a crucial Polish-Swedish initiative, facilitated the development of Poland's cooperation with Sweden. This translated into increased diplomatic efforts at the EU level to boost the EP about which the EU member states were more and more sceptical. Several events related to the EP were held in Stockholm and were attended by

³¹ "Polish-Danish ministerial consultations," MSZ, 1 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

³² "Polsko-norweskie konsultacje energetyczne," MAP, 1 February 2019, www.gov.pl/web/aktywa-panstwowe.

³³ "Morawiecki o wydaleniu konsula z Norwegii: Będziemy walczyli o los polskich obywateli," *Forsal*, 22 January 2019, www.forsal.pl. The Polish diplomat challenged the activity of the Barnevernet office and defended the rights of Polish children in Norway by protesting against the Norwegian institution's decisions and supporting the affected families.

undersecretary of state at the Polish MFA Marcin Przydacz and other officials.³⁴ In addition, in August 2019, in connection with the centenary of the establishment of Polish-Swedish diplomatic relations Prime Minister Morawiecki paid a visit to Sweden at the invitation extended by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. The talks focused on strategic partnership and economic cooperation.³⁵

In 2019, Poland's bilateral relations with **Finland** mainly concerned security issues. Finland's defence minister visited the Polish General Staff. During that meeting, Generals Jarmo Lindberg and Rajmund Andrzejczak discussed the prospects for development of Polish-Finnish cooperation in the Baltic sea region, including as part of joint activities of the two navies.³⁶ Although in 2019 no bilateral meetings were held at the ministerial level (the last such visit took place in December 2018), in July 2019 Czaputowicz attended a meeting with ambassadors of EU member states accredited to Poland, which was held on the occasion of the inauguration of Finland's EU Council presidency. He assured the meeting attendees that "Poland will be fully engaged in constructive cooperation with the Finnish presidency".³⁷ What the two states had in common included their refusal to support the proposal to accelerate the political integration in the region and their ambition to boost the single market's competitiveness and to expand it. However, the divergences in their views were more prominent, mainly those linked with the Finnish presidency's plans to accelerate both the EU-wide debate on the rule of law and the work on the EU's long-term climate strategy.³⁸ Moreover, Poland and Finland had divergent views on the assessment of the concept of conditionality of access to EU funds on respect for the rule of law.³⁹ As a consequence, Poland rejected Finland's proposal of the EU budget.⁴⁰

Of all Nordic states, Poland's relations with **Iceland** were least active. Regional meetings continued to be the main cooperation forum. However, in 2019 minister Czaputowicz did pay a visit to Iceland and the topics discussed in

³⁴ "Jubileusz 10-lecia Partnerstwa Wschodniego," Embassy of Poland in Stockholm, 5 November 2019, www.gov.pl/web/szwecja.

³⁵ "Wizyta premiera Mateusza Morawieckiego w Sztokholmie," KPRM, 29 August 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

³⁶ "Szef SGWP rozmawiał o współpracy wojskowej z Finlandią," *Defence24*, 14 June 2019, www.defence24.pl.

³⁷ "Początek prezydencji Finlandii w Radzie UE," MSZ, 22 July 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

³⁸ V. Józwiak, "Finland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 96 (1342), 15 July 2019, www.pism.pl.

³⁹ V. Józwiak, "Prospects for Finland's European and Foreign Policy after the Parliamentary Election," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 42 (1288), 11 April 2019, www.pism.pl.

⁴⁰ "Morawiecki o budżecie UE: Nie akceptujemy propozycji fińskiej prezydencji," *TVP Info*, 17 October 2019, www.tvpinfo.pl.

Reykjavík included prospects for development of bilateral cooperation, including intensification of economic contacts and matters relating to the Polish diaspora.⁴¹ In 2019, 19,200 Polish nationals lived in Iceland, which accounted for more than 5% of the country's residents. The Polish diaspora was the biggest migrant community in Iceland.⁴²

Economic Relations

In 2019, Poland's trade with **the Baltic and Nordic states** was similar to the one recorded in 2018, although the value of exports increased slightly and the value of imports decreased slightly. The balance of trade was positive for Poland, however, none of these states belonged to its main trade partners.

As regards the volume of trade, **the Nordic states** were more important than the Baltic states. Sweden's significance increased, as it ranked 9th in the category of Poland's export partners (with a share of around 3%) and 12th in the category of import partners (almost 2%). Sweden was also exceptional in the category of Polish exports' growth dynamic, which increased by almost 6% year-on-year. The structure of Poland's trade with Sweden remained unchanged: the most important goods included products of the electromechanical industry and industrial goods, just like in the case of Finland, Norway and Denmark. Although none of the Nordic states was Poland's key investor, the importance of that region increased. In recent years, companies from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have become the third biggest group of companies with foreign capital operating in Poland.⁴³

Poland's economic cooperation with **the Baltic states** was most intensive in its relations with Lithuania. Due to the difference in potentials, Poland was one of Lithuania's main trade partners and an important trade partner for Latvia and Estonia. Lithuania ranked 18th on the list of Poland's export partners (its share was around 1.5%) and 24th on the list of its import partners (almost 1%). Polish-Lithuanian trade mainly involved mineral fuels, plastic goods, dairy products and furniture. Poland continued to carry out one of the biggest investment projects in Lithuania by gradually expanding the operation of the Mažeikiai oil refinery which is owned by Orlen. Poland's trade with Latvia and Estonia was much smaller, as was the scale of its investment. Estonia's share in Poland's imports was minimal (0.15%).

⁴¹ "Czaputowicz w Islandii m.in. o przemyśle okrętowym," *Portal Morski*, 9 April 2019, www.portalmorski.pl.

⁴² Data compiled on the basis of figures published by Statistics Iceland, www.statice.is.

⁴³ "Skandynawski biznes w Polsce—wczoraj, dziś i jutro," *Scandinavian-Polish Chamber of Commerce*, 2019, p. 4, www.spcc.pl.

**Table. Poland's trade with the Nordic and Baltic states
(in millions of €)**

State	Trade flow	2018	2019
Nordic states			
Sweden	Exports	6,232	6,589
	Imports	4,154	4,088
Denmark	Exports	3,911	3,819
	Imports	2,536	2,595
Norway	Exports	2,601	2,709
	Imports	2,519	2,274
Finland	Exports	1,900	1,955
	Imports	1,717	1,837
Iceland	Exports	105	168
	Imports	232	194
Baltic states			
Lithuania	Exports	3,361	3,579
	Imports	1,875	1,935
Latvia	Exports	1,404	1,424
	Imports	532	401
Estonia	Exports	1,091	1,131
	Imports	296	286

Source: the author's own calculations based on figures published by GUS.

Social and Cultural Relations

As regards the Baltic states, Poland's relations were most intensive with Lithuania, which was due to their historical links and other factors. This cooperation was facilitated by the dedication of the Polish Institute in Vilnius, the only Polish Institute operating in the Baltic states, which was responsible

for promoting Polish culture. In 2019, the Polish Institute in Vilnius carried out almost 150 projects focused on issues such as the 450th anniversary of the Union of Lublin, the bicentenary of Stanisław Moniuszko's birth and the 15th anniversary of Poland's and Lithuania's EU accession.⁴⁴ Promotion of Lithuanian or, more broadly speaking, Baltic culture in Poland was carried out by the Borderland Centre in Sejny and the College of Eastern Europe in Wrocław which publishes Lithuanian literature etc. 2019 saw the publication of a Polish translation of the 'Vilnius Poker' novel by Ričardas Gavelis, which is a highly appreciated book in Lithuania.

As regards the Nordic states, a Polish Institute operated in Stockholm alone. Initiatives intended to popularise history and spread knowledge of Polish-Swedish relations⁴⁵ were carried out during various anniversary events such as the anniversary of the coronation of Catherine Jagiellon as the queen of Sweden in 1569. In 2019, Poland received a great deal of publicity in Scandinavia due to the success of Olga Tokarczuk, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Poland recorded an increase in the public's interest in Scandinavian culture. Crime novels by Karin Fossum and Jo Nesbø were very popular among Polish readers. Cinematic reviews were organised during the 19th Scandinavian Film Festival and as part of the Scandinavian Film Academy. Scandinavian culture was also popularised by Filip Springer in his book 'Dwunaste: nie myśl, że uciekniesz' (The Twelfth. Do Not Think You Can Escape), and Swedish culture by Katarzyna Tubylicz in her book 'Sztokholm. Miasto, które tętni ciszą' (Stockholm. A Capital City Humming With Silence).

Assessment

Just like in previous years, Poland's cooperation with the Baltic and Nordic states focused on security issues, which has brought positive results. Both Poland and those states increased their involvement in regional initiatives such as the Northern Group. Poland boosted its defence potential in the Baltic Sea by engaging in bilateral cooperation. The policy pursued by Sweden and Finland to enhance their bilateral cooperation and their collaboration with NATO structures, for example by increasing their military interoperability, helped to intensify these actions.

⁴⁴ "Litwa. Instytut Polski w Wilnie zrealizuje w 2019 r. blisko 150 projektów," *E-teatr*, 29 December 2018, www.e-teatr.pl.

⁴⁵ "Wywiad z Pawłem Ruszkiewiczem, dyrektorem Polskiego Instytutu Polskiego w Sztokholmie," *Radio Szczecin*, 28 August 2019, www.radioszczecin.pl.

Poland's activity in the energy sector should be viewed as positive as regards both the Baltic Pipe gas pipeline and the Polish-Lithuanian interconnector, despite the fact that in 2019 their construction was not yet launched. The ultimate purpose of these initiatives is not only to increase security in the region but also to foster Polish interests. Significant progress was achieved in the process of synchronisation of the Baltic states' electricity grids. Poland played a key role in this process because the connection of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian grids to the European system will be carried out via the Polish territory.

Poland successfully pursued its goals regarding its cooperation with the Baltic states. Most importantly, it managed to intensify its dialogue with Lithuania, which translated into increased activity of Polish diplomacy in the bilateral format. Although the Lithuanian side's pledge to diligently monitor and to take care of the system of educational facilities which use Polish as the language of instruction was promising, the two countries did not manage to resolve the remaining disputes. This is why an assessment of genuine results of these initiatives will be possible in some time.

Poland's activity within the relevant EU initiatives, that is those focused on the Baltic Sea region or those which involved specific states of the region as part of individual EU-level initiatives, was less effective. The organisation of high-level celebrations of the 10th Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region failed. As a consequence, the potential of this event, including the opportunity to promote Poland, remained unused. At the same time, cooperation in the Baltic Sea region created new prospects for development of an innovative economy. Despite its increased cooperation with Sweden to boost the Eastern Partnership initiative, Poland failed to fully achieve its goals. The efforts to reach a more ambitious consensus at the EU level to ensure the EP's continued development proved insufficient. Many EU member states gradually lost their interest in this initiative and the final declaration turned out to be insufficiently motivating for the countries involved, which disappointed in particular Ukraine and Georgia.

Poland's Policy Towards Belarus

ANNA MARIA DYNER

Background

In 2019, Poland's policy towards Belarus was determined by the fact that the two countries are neighbours and have social, historical and cultural links. Just like in previous years, due to the policy pursued by the Belarusian authorities, the situation of the Polish minority in Belarus, as well as issues linked with Polish language teaching and Polish schools continued to be a challenge for Poland.

One important factor which impacted Poland's policy towards Belarus involved the actions carried out by the European Union targeting the states located in its eastern neighbourhood. However, the development of the EU's policy towards Belarus was being blocked by Lithuania which voiced serious reservations regarding the construction of a Belarusian nuclear power plant in the vicinity of the Lithuanian-Belarusian border. This caused a deadlock in work on the agreement on EU-Belarus Partnership Priorities and hampered the launch of negotiations on the cooperation agreement.

Russia's approach towards the states of NATO's Eastern Flank was also important because the Russian leadership viewed all activities aimed at boosting these states' military security as aggressive and pressurized Belarus into voicing similar views. In addition, the security situation in Eastern Europe and the consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine continued to have a negative impact on Polish-Belarusian relations.

At the same time, one important determinant of cooperation in military and energy security spheres involved a shift in the U.S. policy towards Belarus. 2019 saw a major improvement in bilateral relations, which was evidenced by the visit that U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton paid to Minsk on 29 August.¹ This improvement was mainly resulted from a shift in how the U.S. perceived Belarus's role in the region—it began to view Belarus as a promising partner in energy and security issues. The U.S. was interested in issues such as supporting the Belarusian authorities in diversifying their sources of fuels and in selling

¹ A.M. Dynier, "U.S. National Security Advisor Bolton's Visit to Minsk," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 43/2018, 30 August 2019, www.pism.pl.

American fuels, including oil, to Belarus. Potentially, this could help Poland to pursue its policy towards Belarus. Compared with previous years, the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative was much less important for Poland in the context of its cooperation with Belarus.

Goals and Assumptions

According to the Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Polish Foreign Policy Tasks in 2019,² Poland viewed the existence of an independent Belarus as the basic element of the regional order. The goals of Poland's policy included maintaining practical bilateral cooperation, developing relations at the local level, developing economic relations as well as interpersonal and cultural contacts. Aside from that, Minister Jacek Czaputowicz emphasised that Poland's goals also included the development of cross-border cooperation which is being implemented under the EU's 'Poland–Belarus–Ukraine 2020' programme and other initiatives. Poland's policy assumptions included ensuring operational and development opportunities to organizations and schools run by the Polish national minority, and intensifying cooperation in history-related issues.

In order to pursue the above-mentioned goals, Poland used its status as an EU member state to support Belarus's independence. Just like in 2018, Polish diplomacy supported the Belarusian authorities' efforts regarding the prospective signing of a document of partnership priorities and a visa facilitation agreement.

Political Relations

Just like in 2018, in 2019 many bilateral visits were held, including ministerial consultations and working group meetings, which proved both states' willingness to develop the bilateral relations. Contacts between the parliaments were maintained. On 11–14 February, a delegation of Belarusian parliamentarians headed by Mikhail Myasnikovich, Speaker of the Council of the Republic (the upper house of the Belarusian parliament) paid a visit to Poland. Myasnikovich met with Poland's highest ranking officials including President Andrzej Duda³ and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki.⁴ The topics of their talks included

² "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

³ "Wizyta przewodniczącego Rady Republiki Zgromadzenia Narodowego Pana Michała Miasnikowicza," Embassy of the Republic of Belarus in Warsaw, <http://poland.mfa.gov.by>.

⁴ "Spotkanie premiera Mateusza Morawieckiego z Przewodniczącym Rady Republiki Zgromadzenia Narodowego Republiki Białorusi," KPRM, 13 February 2019, www.premier.gov.pl.

political and social relations, the development of economic cooperation and the security situation in the region. Aside from Warsaw, Myasnikovich also visited Białystok, where he met with representatives of the Belarusian minority.⁵ Polish parliamentarians paid a visit to Belarus on 6–7 June, the delegation was led by Marshal of the Senate of the Republic of Poland Stanisław Karczewski.⁶ Polish and Belarusian parliamentarians took part in the 'Good Neighbourhood' economic forum held in Minsk, and in other events. Another visit by Polish parliamentarians occurred on 21–23 August; this time the delegation was headed by Deputy Marshal of the Sejm Ryszard Terlecki.⁷ The topics discussed included the planned expansion of trade, economic and investment relations and the development of tourism, sport and social cooperation. The two states planned to sign an agreement on inter-parliamentary cooperation in 2020. Just like in previous years, such contacts formed the basis for bilateral political relations. However, due to the minor role of the Belarusian parliament in the country's political system, some of the declarations (in particular those regarding support for the development of the Polish minority school system) voiced during the visits, were not fulfilled or were only partly fulfilled. Despite their failure to bring any significant results, the visits paid by parliamentarians served the purpose of maintaining bilateral relations.

Consultations at the deputy foreign minister level were held twice: on 16 May in Minsk⁸ and on 4 November in Warsaw. The delegations were led by Marcin Przydacz and Aleh Krauchenka. The topics discussed during the consultations included the prospects for development of bilateral relations, cooperation opportunities within the framework of international organizations, the EU–Belarus relations and regional security issues. In addition, on 4 November the two deputy foreign ministers took part in a conference entitled 'The Polish-Belarusian Round Table', which was co-organised by the Polish Institute of International Affairs, the Centre for Eastern Studies, and Minsk Dialogue. The main purpose of the meetings and consultations was to discuss difficult matters and problems in bilateral relations, and to exchange expert opinions. The deputy ministers declared that these events formed an important substantive basis for developing political cooperation.

⁵ According to a census carried out in 2011, more than 48,000 Belarusians live in Poland.

⁶ "Wizyta marszałka Senatu na Białorusi," 7 June 2019, www.stanislawkarczewski.pl.

⁷ "Współpraca parlamentarna, spotkania z mniejszością polską. Wicemarszałek Sejmu z wizytą na Białorusi," Kancelaria Sejmu, 23 August 2019, www.sejm.gov.pl.

⁸ "Wiceminister spraw zagranicznych Marcin Przydacz z wizytą na Białorusi," MSZ, 17 May 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

The two states signed three important agreements: on 13 February 2019 an agreement on social security was signed in order to ensure coordination of relevant systems operating in Poland and in Belarus; on 1 March—an agreement on maintaining rail bridges on the Polish-Belarusian border, implementation of this agreement will enable the necessary modernisation and the expansion of border infrastructure; on 4 December—an agreement on cooperation within the ‘Polish Aid’ programme, which is intended to facilitate the implementation of Polish aid projects in the coming years. Moreover, throughout 2019 Poland supported Belarus during its negotiations with the EU regarding the visa facilitation agreement, and advocated signing this agreement in the EU forum.

Historical issues could have potentially posed a problem in political relations. President Alexander Lukashenko decided not to attend the celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War held in Warsaw, arguing that this was due to, among other things, the fact that Russia’s President Vladimir Putin was not invited. As a consequence, during the celebrations Belarus was represented by its ambassador to Poland Vladimir Chushev. In Belarus, the most controversial historical issue was the assessment of actions carried out by Romuald Rajs *nom de guerre* ‘Bury’, which Belarusian historians viewed as acts of extermination of the Belarusian national minority. Other disputes included the assessment of the Red Army entering Poland on 17 September 1939, which in Belarus is increasingly viewed, including by independent groups, as a day on which the state was united, and the assessment of actions carried out by the Red Army on the territory of Poland in 1944–45, which the Polish side, unlike the Belarusian side, never considered as acts of liberation.

2019 saw a change of Belarus’s ambassador to Poland—Alexander Averyanov, whose term had expired, was succeeded by Vladimir Chushev, who presented his letters of credence to President Duda on 21 March. On 2 October, in Katowice Belarus’s honorary consulate was opened. Marek Rasiński,⁹ a businessman cooperating with Belarus, was appointed honorary consul.

Defence Cooperation

Despite the fact that Poland and Belarus belong to two different politico-military pacts, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, in 2019 they maintained military contacts and security was among the most frequently raised issues during bilateral meetings.

⁹ Rasiński is the president of the Silesia regional office of the Association Poland-East Cooperation, he is active in sectors such as construction, trade, industrial production including the production of plastic goods.

On 4–6 March, in Warsaw consultations of the ministries of defence of both states were held. The topics discussed included military cooperation planning and current regional security issues. This set of issues was also raised by the Speaker of the House of Representatives Balaslau Pirshtuk, who attended a meeting of speakers of parliaments of Central and Eastern European states held in Warsaw on 4–5 June. On 31 August, also in Warsaw, a meeting of secretaries of security councils was held: Poland was represented by Paweł Soloch, Belarus by Stanisław Zas, Ukraine by Oleksandr Daniluk and the U.S. by John Bolton. The talks focused on the security situation in Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, on 4 November in Brest Stanisław Zas held talks with Paweł Soloch focused on the prospects for Belarusian-Polish cooperation in the field of security. Although no details were revealed, the intensity of contacts suggested that the authorities decided to expand communication, and perhaps also to boost cooperation in the field of security. In this way, the two states attempted to alleviate a portion of the risk present in this sphere, which is mainly linked with Russia's aggressive policy and the failure of international security guarantees, for example the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.¹⁰

On 19 June, representatives of defence ministries of the two states signed an agreement on exchange of information regarding the situation in cross-border air space, which is important from the point of view of joint defence of this air space. In addition, during his visit to Warsaw, Chief of the Air Force and Air Defence Command of the Armed Forces of Belarus Igor Golub held consultations with the heads of the Polish Armed Forces Operational Command. The visit contributed to an enhancement of institutional contacts between the two states.

In 2019, Poland supported the proposal to launch the certification process of the NATO–Belarus security agreement. The two states continued to fulfil their commitments defined in arms control treaties such as the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), the Vienna Document on Confidence and Security Building Measures and the Treaty on Open Skies. In 2019, Belarusian military officials carried out three inspections in Poland. Belarusian and Russian officers took part in one observation flight over Polish territory. Polish military officials, for their part, took part in one inspection and paid one assessment visit to Belarus.

Economic Cooperation

According to statistics compiled by the Ministry of Development, the value of Poland's exports to Belarus stood at €1,713,000,000 (up 19% compared with

¹⁰ A.M. Dyner, "Security Challenges in Relations between Poland and Belarus," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 173 (1419), 6 December 2019, www.pism.pl.

2018), and Poland's imports from Belarus—at €1,188,000,000 (down 2.4%).¹¹ In 2019, Poland was Belarus's fourth biggest foreign investor. Polish companies invested the equivalent of \$445 million in Belarus, mainly in the wood-processing and furniture production sectors.

In order to support Polish exporters, on 17 April in Warsaw Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (BGK) signed an agreement with Belarusbank to significantly simplify the lending procedures and thereby to facilitate the funding of Polish exports to Belarus. Belarusian entrepreneurs were the biggest group of importers taking part in the 'Financial Exports Support' programme funded by the Polish government. Under this programme, the BGK offered loans to foreign companies to finance the purchase of Polish goods and services.

In 2019, Poland and Belarus were actively involved in so-called twinning cooperation (twinning projects) targeted at public administration bodies. Both states considered the contacts between the National Banks of Poland and of Belarus in 2018–2019 as particularly favourable. Moreover, in 2019, under the 'Polish Aid' programme, Poland carried out 20 projects in Belarus worth a total of €2 million; around a quarter of this sum was spent on funding the development of companies operating in the tourism sector.

The 'Good Neighbourhood 2019' Economic Forum, held on 6–7 June in Minsk with the participation of politicians from both states, was the biggest event targeting Polish and Belarusian entrepreneurs. The topics discussed during the forum included prospects for boosting bilateral trade, regional cooperation, information technology, Polish experience in developing technology incubators. Other issues covered during the talks included prospective Polish investments in the Great Stone China-Belarus Industry Park and bilateral cooperation opportunities resulting from the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. The forum was attended by more than 500 entrepreneurs from Belarus and from Poland alike. Events of this type showed Polish business's growing interests in investing in Belarus which was increasingly viewed as an attractive export market.

2019 saw an increase in cooperation between petrochemical companies Orlen and Belneftekhim. This was due to, among other things, a pipeline failure that happened in Russia, as a result of which in April contaminated oil was pumped into the Druzhba oil transmission system. This cooperation was not limited to alleviating the consequences of this failure. Representatives of the two companies launched talks on collaboration prospects, on using the Druzhba pipeline to transport oil to Belarus via Poland, and on joint oil purchases on global markets.

¹¹ "Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski (styczeń–grudzień 2019)," MRPiT, February 2020, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologia.

Poland's experience in purchasing oil from various sources was valuable in the context of Belarus's declared intention to diversify its oil supplies and to reduce the share of oil purchased from Russia in its total oil imports, while the refineries in Płock and in Belarus were technologically equipped to refine Russian oil.

Despite repeated efforts on the part of Belarus, Poland was not interested in cooperation in electricity generation issues. This was due to concerns voiced mainly by Lithuania regarding the safety of the nuclear power plant in Astravets. At the request of Lithuania, Poland declared that it would not buy electricity generated by this power plant. Since it was impossible to verify where specific volumes of electricity were generated, Poland abandoned its intention to buy electricity. 2019 saw the decommissioning of the Ros-Narew interconnector, and the Polish government reiterated its declarations that Poland would not buy electricity generated by the Belarusian nuclear power plant.

Social and Cultural Relations

Cross-border and regional cooperation continued to be an important and constantly expanding element of bilateral relations. The EU's 'Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2020' programme played a particularly important part in its development and was assessed very positively by Poland, Belarus and the European Union. As a consequence, in 2019 Poland launched negotiations to extend this program for 2021–27. 2019 saw the implementation of 35 projects submitted in the first call for proposals. The most important of them included tasks focused on improving security at border crossing points, including the modernisation of the Sławatycze–Domachevo border crossing point (a decision was made to modernise the border bridge at this crossing point starting from 2020) and the Bobrowniki–Berestovitsa border crossing point. The 29 projects that received funding in the second call for proposals were waiting for their contracts to be signed, and on 15 November the third call for proposals was announced.

In addition, 2019 saw the development of contacts at the level of self-governments and the local authorities. On 29 November in Maładzyechna a meeting was held between representatives of Belarusian and Polish twin cities and towns; it was attended by 20 partners from Belarus and 19 partners from Poland. The talks focused on developing economic and investment contacts. During this event, a partnership agreement was signed between the Belarusian town of Vawkavysk and the Polish town of Łobez. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makey, who stressed that cooperation between the local-level authorities was an important element of Belarusian-Polish relations.

The task force for the development of the Augustów Canal held its annual meeting. Its tasks include making arrangements regarding the necessary repairs of this facility. Aside from that, the two states jointly sought to have this facility put on the UNESCO World Heritage List. At the end of August, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Polish Academy of Sciences signed an agreement on establishing a committee made up of members of these two institutions, which would be responsible for solving ecological problems emerging in the Białowieża Forest and for protecting this forest.

In addition, the two states carried out actions aimed at protecting the border. On 18 June, in Hrodna a protocol regarding the inspection of the border belt was signed. The work of a special committee established to carry out these activities was launched back in 2011. July 2019 saw joint exercises of emergency and rescue services held in the Brest region. In September 2019, a delegation of the International Centre for Chemical Safety and Security paid a visit to Belarus. Its representatives signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of Civil Protection of the Ministry for Emergency Situations.

In addition, Poland and Belarus developed cooperation in the tourism sector. In June, in the Białowieża Forest, near the Polish border, the August-Velo cycling route was opened, co-funded by the 'Polish Aid' programme, and on 12 December the Brest Regional Executive Committee signed a cooperation memorandum with the Polish Chamber of Tourism. On 20 December, in Brest a meeting of the Belarusian-Polish task force for cooperation in tourism was held. During the meeting, the Belarusian side presented the Polish partners with an initiative involving the preparation of a joint road map for the development of cross-border tourist infrastructure. All these activities were intended to boost the number of tourists visiting cross-border regions and were linked with the implementation of one of the goals of Poland's assistance policy towards Belarus, which involved supporting Belarusian business.

The two states' efforts to development cooperation in the tourism sector and to expand the border infrastructure were important in the context of intensive border traffic recorded in previous years. In 2019, the Polish-Belarusian land border was crossed more than 8.8 million times (down around 2% compared with 2018). In that year, more than 3,364,000 Belarusian citizens entered Poland (37 of them applied for international protection), which made them the second largest group of foreign nationals after the citizens of Ukraine (more than 10.4 million individuals). The Polish Border Guard refused entry to Poland to 4989 Belarusians, 1712 of whom did not have a valid visa.¹² Polish consular services issues almost

¹² "Statystyki SG," Polish Border Guard, www.strazgraniczna.pl.

360,000 visas to Belarusian citizens. Visa-free travel was increasingly popular with Polish nationals. It was available to tourists visiting the Brest and Hrodna regions and to travellers crossing the border at the Minsk-2 airport.

2019 saw numerous joint cultural events in both states. One such event involved the celebrations marking the bicentenary of Stanisław Moniuszko's birth:¹³ on this occasion concerts, exhibitions and other events were organised. 2019 was another year in which the Polish embassy in Minsk, in cooperation with the Polish Institute and the Polish Tourism Organization and the Minsk city authorities, organised a Polish Day which included exhibitions, performances and concerts. Another series of events promoting Poland was organised during the 2nd European Games held in Minsk on 21 June – 1 July (Polish athletes won 3 gold medals, 1 silver medal and 10 bronze medals).

In September, Polish theatres took part in the 'White Tower' theatre festival in Brest. At the 'Listapad-2019' film festival held in Minsk, Polish film director Krzysztof Zanussi received the special prize of the President of Belarus, which was handed to him by Deputy Prime Minister Igor Petrishenko. The Polish film 'Corpus Christi' directed by Jan Komasa received the audience award and the special jury award during this festival. Komasa was awarded the best director prize. The organization of all these events and cultural initiatives contributed to the promotion of Polish culture abroad, which was among Poland's policy goals.

Assessment

In 2019, the relations between Poland and Belarus were favourable, as evidenced by a series of visits and bilateral consultations. Judging by the topics discussed during those meetings, the most important issues in bilateral contacts included the intensification of economic relations, security issues, including cross-border and energy security, the problems faced by the Polish minority and Polish schools in Belarus. The cooperation between Orlen and Belneftekhim proved that Poland and Belarus have a major potential for energy cooperation, which however continued to depend on the political will on the part of the state authorities.

In 2019, Poland's activities focused on Belarus once again showed that Poland was making consistent attempts to pursue the most important goal of its policy towards this country, which involved maintaining its independence. This was evident in diplomatic activities intended to support Belarus in its relations with the EU, both in the signing of two most important agreements: on partnership

¹³ Moniuszko was born in the village of Ubel which at present is located in Minsk oblast. His work is viewed in Belarus as an element of joint Polish-Belarusian cultural heritage.

priorities and on visa liberalisation, and in using economic and regional support instruments offered by the EU. Aside from that, Poland sought to boost interpersonal and cultural contacts, including with the use of EU funds.

Although the effectiveness of Poland's policy towards Belarus in the sphere of security was limited due to strong links between Russia and Belarus, a number of successful cooperation initiatives were carried out in this field. Particular emphasis was placed on the implementation of commitments resulting from the Vienna Document, the Treaty on Open Skies and the CFE Treaty. However, Belarus's participation in the Partnership for Peace programme and its readiness to launch limited cooperation with NATO were insufficiently taken into account. This resulted from mistrust towards Belarus and from the fact that it was viewed as a country which was excessively dependent on Russia. Despite numerous contacts and talks, the Belarusian authorities continued to be critical of Poland's activities aimed at increasing the U.S. military presence on Polish soil and emphasised that this could provoke Russia to establish new military bases in Belarus. Prompted by Russia, the Belarusian Defence Ministry criticised the scenario of the 'Defender Europe' exercise planned for 2020 and considered it an offensive exercise.¹⁴ The OSCE was another forum in which the Belarusian authorities acted against the security interests of their country and avoided supporting amendments to arms control documents which were proposed by NATO member states and contested by Russia.

In 2019, Poland did not manage to achieve all of its goals. The status of the Union of Poles in Belarus was not regulated and the schools run by the Polish minority faced numerous restrictions despite the declarations voiced by some representatives of the Belarusian authorities suggesting their readiness to support the development of these schools. Historical issues were an increasingly important topic which required bilateral consultations. Moreover, no agreement has been reached regarding the effective date of the agreement on local border traffic, which had been signed and ratified by both states back in 2010–11, but continued to be blocked by the Belarusian side. Therefore, Belarus's policy hampered the implementation of one of Poland's most important policy goals which involved supporting the Polish minority and ensuring its problem-free existence, and developing cross-border cooperation.

Poland expected that in the coming years the bilateral relations would mainly be determined by Belarus's domestic situation, the Belarusian leadership's attitude towards continued contacts with Poland, and their decisions regarding the progress in Belarus's integration with Russia.

¹⁴ "Rawkow raskazał, kakije miery reagirowanija prijmiet Bielarus' na uczenija NATO," *Belta*, 28 October 2019, www.belta.by.

Poland's Policy in the Visegrad Group

VERONIKA JÓŹWIAK, ŁUKASZ OGRODNIK

Background

Just like in previous years, the governments of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary viewed the Visegrad Group (V4) as the most important regional cooperation platform. Aside from its role in sectoral cooperation, it was mainly used as a tool to impact the policy within the EU. 2019 saw the process of the new line-up of EU institutions being formed, which also included the EU member states, including V4, pushing through their candidates for the most important posts. At the same time, negotiations were underway regarding the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2021–27. The V4 states declared that they would advocate the plan to earmark as much funds as possible for the cohesion policy, and to allocate major funds to agriculture. From the point of view of the V4 states, the UK's likely exit from the EU equated to a decrease in EU funds and to a weakening of the group of states which were opposed to deeper integration. In addition, this had potentially negative consequences for the region's states' exports, which is why V4 was opposed to the so-called hard Brexit (a no-deal Brexit). Other challenges faced by V4 included the procedure launched on the basis of Article 7 of the Treaty on the European Union against two EU member states: Poland and Hungary, and the audit carried out by the European Commission (EC) regarding the Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš's conflict of interests.

Continuation of the existing coalitions in all V4 states helped to maintain intensive cooperation within the V4 group.¹ In 2019, the Czech Republic had a minority government made up of ANO, led by Babiš, and the Czech Social Democratic Party led by Jan Hamáček. In Poland, in November, following the victory of the Law and Justice party in the parliamentary elections, the second Mateusz Morawiecki government was sworn in. In Slovakia, the ruling coalition was composed of Smer—Social Democracy and two smaller coalition members: the Slovak National Party (SNS) and the Most-Híd party representing Slovak citizens who are ethnic Hungarians. In June, as a result of a presidential election

¹ See: *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2018*, PISM, 2025.

in Slovakia, Zuzana Čaputová, then Deputy Chair of the liberal Progressive Slovakia party, was elected the country's president succeeding Andrej Kiska, who was non-politically aligned. In Hungary, Fidesz led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán sustained its dominant role, having won the European Parliament election and the local elections. In the first half of 2019, presidency of the Visegrad Group was held by Slovakia, and in the second half of the year by the Czech Republic.²

Goals and Assumptions

In line with the assumptions of Poland's foreign policy, the Visegrad Group was among the most important regional cooperation forums, alongside the Three Seas Initiative (TSI) and the Bucharest Nine. Poland viewed it as an important framework for conducting its policy in Central Europe and for pursuing its interests in the international arena.³

From Poland's point of view, European policy continued to be the most important area of V4's political cooperation. The Polish government's most frequently mentioned issues included the proposed deepening of the single market, which was to be achieved by enhancing the four freedoms and by eliminating the application of protectionist measures, and its disapproval of the refugee relocation mechanism. The assumption that the V4 states stood out against other EU member states in terms of their cultural and ideological characteristics⁴ resulted in the need to seek partners among those states which would be willing to support the political and social model which, according to the Polish government, was typical of this region of Europe, in the debate on the future shape of the EU.⁵

In addition, Poland intended to use the V4+ format to pursue a pragmatic cooperation with its European non-V4 partners.⁶ One new ambition involved

² Ł. Ogrodnik, "Reasonable Europe': Czech Presidency of the Visegrad Group," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 99 (1345), 18 July 2019, www.pism.pl.

³ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

⁴ For example "The Visegrad Group has now become Europe's important pole, the pole of political reason and values, an oasis of peace and normality," *Exposé Mateusza Morawieckiego 2019*, KPRM, 19 November 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

⁵ For example *In his statement, minister Czaputowicz argued that we need a strong, democratic and effective European Union. To build such an EU, an in-depth debate attended by all member states is necessary. This plan will not succeed, if one specific model on the state and society is imposed on all member states.* ("W Budapeszcie o współpracy dwustronnej i regionalnej," MSZ, 27 February 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja).

⁶ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019..." *op. cit.*

using the V4 and TSI forums to establish 'technological alliances' at the European and regional level in order to combat cyber threats.⁷ In the sphere of security, Poland was hoping to receive its V4 partners' backing for the concept to boost the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), in particular for recognising its complementarity with NATO. Another important element of the Polish government's activity at the regional level, which was intended to guarantee Poland's security, involved developing defence cooperation within the V4.⁸ Other permanent goals included the strengthening of Poland's bilateral relations with the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, including through multilateral cooperation within the V4 framework. Other important cooperation areas included continued expansion of energy and transport infrastructure in Central Europe in order to boost the region's energy security and cohesion.

Multilateral Cooperation

At the EU level, the prime ministers of the V4 states had convergent views regarding the appointment of the EC leadership and were opposed to the concept of the so-called lead candidate procedure (German: *Spitzenkandidaten*). Moreover, they expressed their criticism of the proposed candidacy of Frans Timmermans for EC presidency in the new term. In 2014–19, Timmermans was the First Vice President of the European Commission representing the Party of European Socialists, responsible for the rule of law. Back then, he criticised Hungary and Poland for failing to observe the principles of the rule of law. On 30 June, the European Council rejected his candidacy, including by the votes cast by the Visegrad Group states. The V4 heads of governments held several rounds of consultations regarding the staffing of the most prominent posts, including on 13 June in Budapest,⁹ and ultimately they supported the candidacy of a German national Ursula von der Leyen for EC presidency. Prime Minister Morawiecki viewed the appointment of Maroš Šefčovič from Slovakia and Věra Jourova from the Czech Republic as Vice Presidents of the European Commission as a success for V4.

In the debate on the **future of the EU**, the V4 governments stressed the role of the member states in the work on EU reform and emphasised the need to

⁷ "I. Forum Cyberbezpieczeństwa w Krynicy za nami," MC, 5 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/cyfryzacja.

⁸ "Strategia polskiej polityki zagranicznej 2017–2021," MSZ, September 2017, p. 7, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

⁹ "A visegrádi országok meghatározó szerepet játszanak Európa jövőjének alakításában" ["The Visegrad countries are playing a key part in shaping Europe's future"], Magyarország Kormánya, 13 June 2019, www.kormany.hu.

strengthen the European Council. They continued to advocate the plan to secure the EU's external borders and to help third countries. However, they failed to issue new joint declarations regarding these matters.

The EU 2021–27 budget negotiations were an important area of V4 cooperation. In its attempts to seek partners to support the plan to maintain the current level of cohesion policy funding, Poland reached out not only to the Visegrad Group states. It used V4 as a platform to build a broader consensus. On 24 June, ahead of the EU Council meeting, a meeting of regional policy ministers in the V4+4 format (Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia) was held in Brussels on the initiative of Slovakia.¹⁰ On 5 November, in Prague, during the budget negotiations, 17 EU member states making up the so-called Friends of Cohesion group initiated by Poland¹¹ signed a joint declaration on sustaining the role of regional policy in the new financial framework being devised.¹²

On 1 July, the Visegrad Battlegroup (with the participation of Croatia) started its six-month standby within the EU.¹³ In this battlegroup, Poland acted as the so-called framework nation providing the biggest contribution of troops and command. During their meeting ahead of the Battlegroup's inauguration (10 June), the V4 ministers of defence decided to establish another, third, unit of this type in 2023.

On 10 March, on the 20th anniversary of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary joining NATO (on 12 March 1999), a meeting of V4 prime ministers was held in Warsaw. On 12 March, in Prague, a summit of V4 presidents was organised, which was preceded on 28 February by a meeting of presidents of states located on NATO's Eastern Flank, which was held in Košice. During these meetings, all leaders of this group of states emphasised that NATO was the guarantor and the most important pillar of their security.

During the Slovak and Czech presidency, the **V4+** format was mainly used to hold meetings with partners from Central Europe, including Germany. The talks held on 7 February in Bratislava in the **V4+Germany** format, attended by the prime ministers of V4 states and Chancellor Angela Merkel, had conciliatory overtones. They were held on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the political

¹⁰ "Minister Kwieciński na posiedzeniu Rady UE w Luksemburgu," MFiPR, 25 June 2019, www.gov.pl/web/fundusze-regiony.

¹¹ It includes the V4 states, the Baltic states, Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy.

¹² "Praga: Grupa Przyjaciół Spójności przeciw cięciu środków UE na rozwój," Kancelaria Sejmu, 7 November 2019, www.sejm.gov.pl.

¹³ The EU Battlegroups are intended to take part in humanitarian, preventive and stabilisation missions. The units on duty must be ready to act within 10 days following the decision to intervene.

changes triggered in 1989. The meeting participants declared their intention to seek more effective cooperation even in the field of migration policy in which they had divergent views.¹⁴

In addition, two meetings in the **V4+France** format were held: on 18 April ministers of foreign affairs met in Bratislava and on 30 June the prime ministers of the V4 states met with President Emmanuel Macron in Brussels. These were the first such talks covering a broad range of subjects (including transatlantic relations, the relations with Russia, the CSDP, the future of the EU, Brexit, the Western Balkans and the Middle East) to indicate France's intention to overcome divisions, mainly in its relations with Poland and Hungary.¹⁵

A meeting in the **V4+Benelux** format was also held at the level of foreign ministers. Although the announced V4+Israel summit did not take place due to the Polish-Israeli diplomatic conflict, a meeting between the prime ministers of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Israel was held in Jerusalem in February.¹⁶

Just like in previous years, the Visegrad Group supported the **Western Balkan** states in their European integration efforts and the **Eastern Partnership** states in their efforts to deepen their relations with the EU. During the Slovak and Czech presidency, support for the former group of states was more visible, which manifested itself, among other things, in the V4+Western Balkans summit held on 12 September in Prague with the participation of the prime ministers of the V4 states, Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and a representative of Kosovo. In a statement regarding the Western Balkans, issued in connection with the meeting, apart from declaring their support for EU accession efforts, the leaders of the V4 states stressed the need to diversify the sources of supply of natural gas to the EU via the Southern Gas Corridor and the importance of cooperation in border protection. At the presidential level, a V4 summit with the participation of the heads of state of Slovenia and Serbia was held on 2–3 October in Lány near Prague.

On 6–8 June in Bratislava, during the second meeting of foreign ministers of the V4 states and the Republic of Korea, the delegates focused on assessing the cooperation in such fields as trade, investment, science and research carried out thus far, and on the issue of security on the Korean Peninsula. On 6 September, on the sidelines of the Seoul Defence Dialogue conference organised by the Korean

¹⁴ "Państwa V4 i Niemcy przygotowują projekt pomocy dla Maroka," PAP, 7 February 2019, www.pap.pl.

¹⁵ See: Ł. Jurchyszyn, "Poland's Policy towards France," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2016, PISM, 2019, pp. 105–118.

¹⁶ See: M. Wojnarowicz, "Poland's Policy towards Israel" in this volume.

Ministry of National Defence, delegations from the V4 states held talks with representatives of the Republic of Korea focusing on the possible development of their cooperation to include cyber security issues.¹⁷

As regards sectoral cooperation, the V4 emphasised the **development of rail infrastructure** and proposed that high-speed rail connecting Warsaw and Budapest via Bratislava and Brno be built. These intentions were expressed in a joint declaration the ministers signed on 21 May. At the same time, the intention of the Polish government was to combine these investments with such project as the planned construction of the Solidarity Transport Hub.¹⁸

Alongside the activities carried out by the V4 governments, on 17 December in Budapest the opposition mayors of Bratislava, Budapest, Prague and Warsaw: Matúš Vallo, Gergely Karácsony, Zdeněk Hřib and Rafał Trzaskowski, signed the Pact of Free Cities. In this document, they committed themselves, among other things, to launch efforts to enable local governments to have direct access to EU funds.¹⁹

Poland's Relations with the V4 States

Political relations. Poland maintained very positive and friendly relations with **Hungary**. They were based on the proximity of political platforms of the two ruling parties: PiS and Fidesz. The common elements included the intention to defend Christian values, including the opposition to migration, and the plan to keep the state's institutions as independent of EU institutions as possible. The two governments viewed themselves as ones of their most important political partners in the EU.

In 2019, the frequency of high-level meetings decreased slightly. Presidents Andrzej Duda and János Áder with their spouses met on 23 March during the celebrations of the Day of Polish-Hungarian Friendship, this time held in Kielce.²⁰ The prime ministers did not pay official visits to Poland and Hungary. They met on 10 March in Warsaw during the ceremony involving Viktor Orbán awarding the Marshal Senior of the Sejm, Kornel Morawiecki, the Middle Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit with star (Hungary's second highest order), and on

¹⁷ "Międzynarodowa dyskusja o cyberbezpieczeństwie," MON, 4 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa.

¹⁸ "Minister Adamczyk na spotkaniu ministrów transportu krajów Grupy Wyszehradzkiej (V4)," MI, 21 May 2019, www.gov.pl/web/infrastruktura.

¹⁹ "Pakt Wolnych Miast podpisany," *City of Warsaw*, 17 December 2019, www.um.warszawa.pl.

²⁰ The Day of Polish-Hungarian Friendship (23 March) was established in 2007 by the two states' parliaments. Since 2008, its celebrations have been organised interchangeably in Poland and in Hungary.

15 March in Budapest during the central celebrations of the 171st anniversary of the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution of 1848, which included a speech delivered by Mateusz Morawiecki. These meetings stressed the historical and the symbolic aspects of bilateral relations and did not include any substantive talks or new decisions.

Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs Jacek Czaputowicz paid a visit to Budapest on 27 February. The topics he discussed with Péter Szijjártó, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, mainly included current European issues: the future of the EU, Brexit and the European Parliament elections. Similarity of interests of both states was emphasised. In addition, minister Czaputowicz gave a speech during a meeting of Hungarian ambassadors. Minister Szijjártó paid a return visit to Warsaw on 4 September and took part in the ambassadors' meeting as a guest. During his talks with minister Czaputowicz and Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology Jadwiga Emilewicz, the importance of the economic aspect of bilateral relations was stressed. Economic cooperation was the subject of talks between Deputy Minister of Development Funds and Regional Policy Grzegorz Puda and Minister of Innovation and Technology László Palkovics, held on 20 November in Budapest. On 1 October in Budapest, Ministers for European Affairs Konrad Szymański and Attila Steiner agreed to deepen their cooperation and to coordinate their strategy during the negotiations of the EU's 2021–27 budget. In Budapest, a meeting was held between Ministers of National Defence Mariusz Błaszczak and Tibor Benkő (on 29 March).

Ministerial level meetings focused on family policy were continued. During their talks held on 28 January in Budapest and on 24 April in Warsaw, Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy Elżbieta Rafalska and Secretary of State for Family and Youth Katalin Novák stressed that to remedy the birth rate decline both states need to pursue an effective family policy. This topic was discussed in the context of protecting strong nation states and, in a broader sense, of opposing the idea to solve demographic problems by accepting immigration.

14 March saw the opening of the Hungarian consulate in Wrocław, Hungary's third diplomatic mission in Poland after the embassy in Warsaw and the consulate general in Krakow.

Polish-Czech relations were characterised by close political cooperation especially between the prime ministers. Regular Polish-Czech inter-governmental consultations were an increasingly frequent cooperation format. They were held for the sixth time on 28 August in Warsaw. The above-standard friendly relations between the heads of government were evidenced by the presence of Andrej Babiš at the funeral of Kornel Morawiecki, the Polish Prime Minister's father (on 5 October). The Czech Prime Minister was the only such high-level representative

of a foreign state attending this ceremony. Top-level visits included President Duda's participation in the Visegrad Group summit held on 2–3 October in Lány near Prague. Unlike in 2018, in 2019 the Czech president did not visit Poland.

The signing of an inter-governmental agreement on cooperation in the military aviation sector, to regulate, among other things, the actions carried out as part of NATO's air defence,²¹ was one manifestation of the increasingly close relations. In addition, the Polish Minister of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation and the Czech Minister of Transport adopted a declaration on cooperation in developing inland waterways.²² The document envisages applying for EU funds for the construction of new barrages on the Oder and the completion of the Kędzierzyn Koźle–Ostrava section of the Danube–Oder water corridor.

Issues linked with the protection of the environment and climate were important elements of bilateral relations. This was mainly due to the need to coordinate the Polish and the Czech stance in the EU forum regarding the proposed common climate policy. Poland and the Czech Republic were among the states which blocked the adoption of the plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. Prime Minister Morawiecki explained that this was due to the level of industrialisation of the two states; in this context he stressed the need to protect the automotive industry.²³ Environmental issues were an increasingly frequent subject of bilateral negotiations. The Czech Republic emphasised the problem involving the illegal transport of barrels containing around 650,000 litres of hazardous waste from Poland to eastern Czech Republic. In response to this incident, the environment ministers of the two states announced closer cooperation between environmental protection inspectorates and the police in combating the so-called trash mafia. The Czech government voiced its objection to the plans to expand the area of the Turów brown coal mine. Due to protests organised by Czech local self-governments, focusing on the problem of the mine's negative impact on the environment and on the quality of life of local residents on the Czech side (including due to noise), inter-governmental consultations were launched regarding the investment.

Poland and the Czech Republic adopted increasingly divergent stances regarding the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. The Polish government was opposed to its construction, whereas the Czech government supported this investment. At the same time, the Czech Republic hinted that in

²¹ "Military cooperation with the southern neighbour," MON, 28 August 2019, www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa.

²² "Współpraca Polski i Czech ws. żeglugi śródlądowej," MG MiŻŚ, 28 August 2019, www.gov.pl/web/gospodarkamorska.

²³ "Premier: Relacje polsko-czeskie są pozytywne we wszystkich kluczowych obszarach," MC, 29 August 2019, www.gov.pl/web/cyfrizacja.

the future it may be interested in purchasing LNG imported via the gas terminal in Świnoujście. This intention was announced by Prime Minister Babiš following his meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump in the White House in July.²⁴

The Czech Republic showed moderate interest in the Three Seas Initiative. Despite this, the Czech-Moravian Guarantee and Development Bank joined the creation of the Three Seas Initiative fund and President Miloš Zeman attended the Three Seas Initiative summit held in Slovenia (5–6 June) for the first time.

Polish-Slovak relations continued to be close, especially at the intergovernmental level. These contacts were facilitated by meetings held during Slovakia's presidency of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and of V4. At the same time, Slovakia was one of the three states (out of 12 members) which were not represented at the highest level during the Three Seas Initiative summit held in Slovenia.

The shift in the office of the President of Slovakia translated into an increased reserve in bilateral relations at the highest level. However, during her visit to Poland in July (which was her fourth foreign visit since being sworn in), President Čaputová²⁵ did not offer any criticism of the reforms implemented in Poland, as she had done during her electoral campaign. At the same time, the presidents of Slovakia and Poland did share some views, e.g. regarding transatlantic cooperation and Russia.

The governments of Poland and Slovakia shared their willingness to earmark a significant portion of EU funds for agriculture. One manifestation of the importance of these goals was Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini's approval of Poland's efforts to convince the EU partners to allocate the office of the EU Commissioner for Agriculture to Poland. This approval was expressed on 12 September during the V4+Western Balkans summit in Prague. The two states had divergent views on climate-related goals. In June, having formed a coalition with the Czech Republic, Estonia and Hungary, Polska blocked the adoption of the 2050 carbon neutrality commitment, while Slovakia was in favour of this plan.

In its opposition to the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline Poland was increasingly isolated. The Slovak government attempted to mitigate Poland's protest against this investment, which was evident during Prime Minister Pellegrini's visit to Moscow in June.²⁶ Slovakia differed from Poland (and the Czech

²⁴ Ł. Ogrodnik, "Intensification of Czech-U.S. Relations," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 94 (1340), 11 July 2019, www.pism.pl.

²⁵ "Prezydent Słowacji z wizytą w Warszawie," *The Economic Forum*, 24 July 2019, www.forum-ekonomiczne.pl.

²⁶ Ł. Ogrodnik, "Slovakia's Pursuit of Better Relations with Russia," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 131 (1377), 18 September 2019, www.pism.pl.

Republic) in its approach to the plans of the Chinese Huawei company regarding the expansion of the 5G network. Pellegrini declared Slovakia's neutrality in these issues and did not intend to make them political. Meanwhile, in a Polish-American declaration signed on 2 September, Poland effectively excluded Huawei from the construction of the 5G infrastructure.²⁷

Economic relations. Poland has recorded a trade surplus in its bilateral trade with the V4 partners for several years. Trade with each of the V4 states continued to rise significantly.

Hungary maintained its status of Poland's 10th biggest export partner and was its 18th biggest import partner (while in 2018 it had been ranked 17th). From Hungary's perspective, Poland continued to be the country's third biggest import partner, after Germany and Austria. In 2019, the Polish-Hungarian trade turnover exceeded €10 billion (\$10.3 billion) for the first time, up 7% compared with 2018.²⁸ This was a standard annual increase and did not directly translate into strengthened political relations. Poland was Hungary's second biggest provider of agri-food products. It exported increasing volumes of clothes and leather products to the Hungarian market, alongside furniture, construction products, ceramic tiles and roof coverings.²⁹

In 2019, the value of Polish-Czech trade exceeded €20 billion for the third in a row and amounted to €22.17 billion. The Czech Republic was the second biggest market for Polish exports, after Germany. From the Czech Republic Poland mainly imported cars, machines and devices, industrial goods and chemical products. Its main exports included internal combustion engines, automotive parts, coal and furniture. The situation of Polish meat exporters to the Czech market aggravated in February, when Salmonella clusters were detected in Polish-made products, which resulted in these products undergoing detailed inspections. Following an intervention by the European Commission and other bodies regarding this issue, on 25 March the Czech Republic abandoned additional veterinary inspections.

The value of Polish-Slovak trade was record high and exceeded €10 billion (\$10.3 billion). Poland's exports to Slovakia mainly included vehicles, machines and mechanical and electrical devices, as well as metallurgical and agri-food products. Poland imported from Slovakia goods such as base metals and related products, as well as machines and mechanical devices.

²⁷ "Joint declaration of Polish and U.S. on 5G," MC, 2 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/cyfrizacja.

²⁸ "Foreign trade turnover of goods in total and by countries in January-December 2018," GUS, swaid.stat.gov.pl.

²⁹ "Rozmowy o polsko-węgierskiej współpracy," MRiT, 5 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologia.

Table. Poland's trade with the Visegrad Group states (in €billions)

State	Trade flow	2017	2018	2019
Total (V4)	Exports	23.54	25.62	27.07
	Imports	14.41	15.33	15.79
	Balance	9.13	10.29	11.28
Czech Republic	Exports	13.04	14.05	14.42
	Imports	7.3	7.72	7.75
	Balance	5.74	6.33	6.67
Slovakia	Exports	5.12	5.68	6.14
	Imports	3.62	3.98	4.19
	Balance	1.5	1.7	1.95
Hungary	Exports	5.38	5.89	6.51
	Imports	3.49	3.63	3.85
	Balance	1.89	2.26	2.66

Source: the authors' own calculations based on data compiled by GUS.

Social and cultural relations. In 2019, all V4 states celebrated various events linked with the 30th anniversary of their political transformation, and on 12 March Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary celebrated the 20th anniversary of their entry to NATO. As part of joint activities in the realm of culture, the V4 states adopted the Statute of the International Visegrad Prize³⁰ which has been awarded since 2005 for outstanding achievements in culture.

Increasingly positive relations between societies were facilitated by the fact that Poles had a friendly attitude to the remaining Central European nations. A survey conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre showed that Czechs were the nation which Poles liked most (56% of the surveyed individuals declared their affinity for Czechs). Nations inhabiting other V4 states were also assessed positively: 53% of the respondents declared their affinity for Slovaks and Hungarians.³¹ The Visegrad 4 Film Festival held between 16 May and 31 July in Taipei in Taiwan was a joint cultural initiative carried out by the V4 states.

³⁰ "Statute of the 'International Visegrad Prize,'" The Visegrad Group, 11 June 2019, www.visegradgroup.eu.

³¹ "Attitude towards other nations," *CBOŚ Report*, 2019, no. 17, www.cbos.pl.

Poland's cultural relations with Hungary focused on traditional historical topics which were common for both states. Events linked with these topics were frequently attended by members of the government, which confirmed their political significance. On 7 May, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture and National Heritage Piotr Gliński and Minister of Human Capacities Miklós Kásler jointly inaugurated an exhibition entitled 'History shared by brothers', which was organised at the Royal Łazienki Museum. In addition, on 27 June Gliński took part in the inauguration of a series of publications on Polish-Hungarian friendship, held at the Hungarian embassy in Warsaw. However, the activity of the state-funded Waław Felczak Institute for Polish-Hungarian Cooperation, which was established in 2018 in Warsaw and received an annual subsidy of PLN6 million, was limited. According to the institution's website, it involved the organisation of the second edition of a summer school for students in Krasiczyn and awarding three scholarships.

Polish-Czech cultural relations included both regular events such as the Polish-Czech Christian Culture Days organised in Prague, the 3Kino Fest Central European Film Festival held in Prague, the Polish-Czech Culture and Song Festival in Kudowa-Zdrój, as well as festivals organised in Cieszyn and Český Těšín: the 'Without borders' theatre festival and the 'Cinema on the border' film festival, and other one-time initiatives. Events commemorating the anniversaries which are important to both Polish and Czech history included the celebrations held at the Praha-Bubny railway station to commemorate the first transport of Jews to the ghetto in Łódź in October 1941. In addition, the authorities of the Czech capital commemorated the mayor of Gdańsk Paweł Adamowicz, who had been assassinated at the beginning of 2019, by naming an alley in the Riegrovy Sady park, near the Polish street, after him. The Polish-Czech Forum celebrated the 10th anniversary of the appointment of its Programme Council.

Just like in previous years, institutions such as the Polish Institute in Bratislava and the Slovak Institute in Warsaw were involved in promoting culture in Polish-Slovak relations. In Slovakia, controversy was raised when in March the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Kraków launched the process of beatification of János Esterházy (1901–57), member of the Czechoslovak parliament (in 1935–45) and leader of the conservative Hungarian National Party in Slovakia. This process received support from the Hungarian government. In Poland and Hungary alike, Esterházy is considered a hero and a martyr. President Lech Kaczyński decorated him posthumously with a Commander's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta for helping Polish refugees during the Second World War. In Slovakia, on the other hand, he is viewed as an anti-state activist accused of carrying out pro-Hungarian initiatives at the expense of Czechoslovakia's territorial integrity.

Assessment

Just like in previous years, cooperation within the Visegrad Group focused on European policy, which was consistent with Poland's goals. The V4 states managed to maintain intensive coordination of their actions regarding various EU issues (such as the budget, migration policy, staffing of top-level posts) and to persuade other EU member states to join them. However, speaking in one voice was difficult, as evidenced by the absence of a joint declaration of the prime ministers regarding the most important European policy areas. In previous years, documents of this type were adopted.

Poland viewed the rejection of Frans Timmermans's candidacy for the office of EC President as a success for V4. It should be noted, however, that the votes cast by the V4 states alone were not sufficient to block his candidacy. Moreover, the V4 states did not manage to maintain a unified stance during voting on important EU matters, such as the EU climate policy. However, the image of V4 as a uniform group of states resulted in France, Germany and other countries increasingly taking its interests into account. This was evident when these countries launched a dialogue with V4 regarding contentious issues. The Visegrad Battlegroup's standby was an important event in the context of defence cooperation, even though the V4 states did not manage to expand this cooperation to include other areas. Although the V4 announced ambitious plans to boost regional infrastructure development, mainly in the railway sector, the pace of implementation of infrastructure investments was slow.

Representatives of the Polish leadership increasingly frequently referred to the Three Seas Initiative as an equally important format as V4. However, cooperation within the TSI was incomparably smaller and did not compromise the relations among the V4 states. The Czech Republic was the only country where the authorities managed to overcome their initial caution towards the TSI, which Poland welcomed.

Poland's Policy Towards the Middle East and North Africa in 2018–2019

SARA NOWACKA

Background

In the analysed period, the most important events impacting the situation in the Middle East and North Africa¹ included: the war in Syria, which has been ongoing since 2011, and Turkey's attempts to create a buffer zone near the Syrian-Turkish border; the conflict in Libya; the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran; rivalry between regional powers; and regular outbreaks of anti-government protests in the region's states.

Russia's continued involvement in Syria's civil war on the side of President Bashar al-Assad enabled him to take control of subsequent areas up to the Jordanian border and to victoriously end the siege of Ghouta. Although in 2017 the Presidents of Iraq and the U.S. announced the defeat of so-called Islamic State (IS), its units (around 15,000 active fighters)² continued their activity having adopted a guerilla organisation formula. Despite this, in October 2019, the Trump administration ordered a portion of U.S. troops to leave the territories in north-eastern Syria and to maintain around 200 troops in the Kurdish administration-controlled part of the country.³ This enabled the Turkish military to launch a military operation codenamed Peace Spring which was intended to create a so-called safe zone along the Turkish-Syrian border and to draw the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) away from the Turkish border.⁴ These actions called into question the importance of U.S.-Kurdish cooperation and affected Turkey's relations with the EU which criticised the operation and argued that it was intended to result in a permanent demographic change to Syria's territory. As

¹ See: M. Wojnarowicz, "The Crisis in Poland's Relations with Israel in 2018–2019" in this volume. The author would like to thank Katarzyna Włodarczyk for her help in compiling the fragment focused on Turkey.

² A. Legieć, "Prospects for a Revival of ISIS," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 9 (1439), 22 January 2020, www.pism.pl.

³ "U.S. Withdrawal From Syria Gathers Speed, Amid Accusations of Betrayal," *New York Times*, 21 October 2019, www.nytimes.com.

⁴ K. Wasilewski, "Turkey's Operation in Northern Syria," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 143 (1387), 10 October 2019, www.pism.pl.

Turkey attempted to win support for the operation, it also presented its demand that NATO states should recognise the YPG as a terrorist organisation and threatened to veto an update to NATO's Baltic defence plan.⁵ In addition, Turkey's policy in the MENA region impacted the conflict in Libya. In November 2019, the Government of National Accord led by Fayeze al-Sarraj and Turkey signed two agreements:⁶ on granting military assistance to the Libyan government and on delimiting the Turkish-Libyan border in the Mediterranean Sea and concurrently ignoring the claims presented by other states of the region. Support offered by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Egypt enabled General Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army to reach southern districts of Tripoli in April 2019.

Although the 2016 EU–Turkey agreement, increased cooperation with North African countries on migration control and efforts to monitor the smuggling of migrants across the Mediterranean resulted in the reduction of irregular migration from the MENA region to the EU, migration issues continued to impact Poland's policy towards the region. In 2015, due to a dispute within the EU, these issues became one of the most important challenges to the EU's cohesion.

In the analysed period, the U.S. intensified its 'maximum pressure' policy towards Iran, which was manifested for example by the U.S. withdrawing from the nuclear deal with that state.⁷ As a consequence, the regional rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia increased as well. In Egypt, whose population reached 100 million individuals, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi introduced amendments to the constitution allowing him to remain in power until 2034. Cairo was selected to be the seat of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum established in 2019 by Egypt, Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Italy, Palestine and Jordan⁸ in order to create an energy hub in the region and to enhance cooperation between its member states in the field of gas trade. Many states of the region saw regular outbreaks of anti-government protests. Their magnitude resulted in a change of government in Jordan in 2018, and in Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan and Algeria in 2019.

In the analysed period, Poland's usual insignificant involvement in the situation in the Middle East gained new development opportunities. The most important such opportunity was linked with the organisation of a Middle Eastern conference in Warsaw in February 2019 on the initiative of the U.S. government.

⁵ "Turkey threatens to block NATO's Baltic defence plan over YPG," *Al Jazeera*, 3 December 2019, www.aljazeera.com.

⁶ K. Wasilewski, "Turkey's Involvement in Libya," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 14 (1444), 30 January 2020, www.pism.pl.

⁷ M.A. Piotrowski, "The U.S. Decision to Quit the Nuclear Deal with Iran," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 69 (1140), 12 May 2018, www.pism.pl.

⁸ K. Wasilewski, "Tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean: an Urgent Challenge for the EU," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 117 (1363), 19 August 2019, www.pism.pl.

The conference made it possible to take advantage of U.S.-Polish cooperation to initiate a series of working group meetings focused on security issues in the region. Poland's policy towards the Middle East was also influenced by the fact that the U.S. had begun to gradually withdraw from the region. At the level of international organisations, important factors included Poland's non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council in 2018–19 and its efforts to become a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2020.

Goals and Assumptions

In his Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Polish Foreign Policy in 2018, Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz mainly referred to the MENA region in the context of the migration crisis and humanitarian aid offered to the region's states. In 2019, he devoted much more attention to this region, which resulted from both the organisation of the Middle Eastern conference in Warsaw and Poland's candidacy for a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council. The Minister referred to issues such as international terrorism, uncontrolled migration and the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. While discussing the latter issue, in particular in the context of the U.S. withdrawal from the EU-backed nuclear deal with Iran, he stressed that one of Poland's foreign policy goals involved striving to maintain a transatlantic unity in these matters. He added that the assumptions of Poland's policy towards the region included the intention to build its relations with Iran "on the basis of the existing relations based on friendship and mutual respect".⁹

Poland's involvement in efforts to end the region's ongoing conflicts was another Polish foreign policy goal towards the MENA region mentioned by the foreign minister. Other goals included reducing these conflicts' destabilising impact on Europe which manifested itself, for example, in an influx of migrants and refugees from the Middle East to the EU countries (citizens of Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Iran were among the ten nationalities most frequently applying for asylum in EU member states in 2019¹⁰) and in the emergence of a terrorist threat.¹¹

The minister said that another Poland's foreign policy goal involved boosting Poland's economic relations with the MENA region,¹² in particular with the

⁹ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

¹⁰ M. Bierbach, "Seeking asylum in Europe in 2019: Facts and figures," *Info Migrants*, 29 December 2019, www.infomigrants.net.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² *Ibidem*.

Maghreb states and the Persian Gulf states including Iran (the GoIran¹³ programme established in the second half of 2017 served that purpose). In addition, in his interviews minister Czaputowicz stressed that the development of economic relations with the Middle Eastern states was to be facilitated by efforts to build Poland's image as a mediator in regional conflicts,¹⁴ which were linked with the organisation of the Middle Eastern conference.

At a NATO Parliamentary Assembly meeting in 2018, President Andrzej Duda emphasised the significance of destabilisation of NATO's southern borderland and the role played by Russia and Iran in this process. He also stressed that preventing such developments was in Poland's interest.¹⁵ When speaking at a General Assembly meeting in September 2018, the president stressed the increasing importance of issues related to human rights protection in Polish foreign policy.¹⁶ He also mentioned Poland's intention to renew its involvement in UN peace-keeping missions in 2019.

Other factors impacting Poland's policy towards the region included the assumptions discussed in Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021 adopted in 2017 by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland. It envisaged, among other things, efforts to stabilise the Mediterranean neighbourhood, the development of economic cooperation with the Middle Eastern states and Poland's involvement in EU actions aimed at resolving the region's conflicts in their early stages (for example by offering development assistance).¹⁷

Political Relations

The most important event which impacted the relations between Poland and the MENA states was the organisation in Warsaw in February 2019 of a ministerial conference on peace and security building in the Middle East. The conference was intended to contribute to a 'rapprochement between the EU and the United States as regards this important foreign policy direction, that is the Middle East'.¹⁸ The

¹³ "Program GoIran," *Polska – Portal Promocji Eksportu*, www.trade.gov.pl.

¹⁴ "Polska pyta Katar o gaz, oni o Euro 2012. 'Współpraca dobrze się zapowiada,'" *Wirtualna Polska*, 15 December 2019, wiadomosci.wp.pl.

¹⁵ "Wystąpienie Prezydenta RP na posiedzeniu Zgromadzenia Parlamentarnego NATO," *Prezydent.pl*, 28 May 2018, www.prezydent.pl.

¹⁶ "Speech of the President of the Republic of Poland Mr. Andrzej Duda at the general debate during the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly," General Assembly of the United Nations, 26 September 2018, <https://gadebate.un.org>.

¹⁷ "Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹⁸ "Czaputowicz: mamy nadzieję, że przyczynimy się do zbliżenia Unii i Stanów Zjednoczonych," *TVN24*, 7 February 2019, <https://tvn24.pl>.

organizers succeeded in inviting representatives of Arab states and representatives of Israel to the conference. The talks resulted in the establishment of seven working groups on cyber security, human rights, maritime and aviation security, energy security, ballistic missile proliferation, humanitarian and refugee issues, and countering terrorism and its illicit financing. The groups' task was to devise specific solutions to ensure peace and security in the Middle East. The conference sparked controversy because Iran had not been invited to it. As a consequence, Iran accused Poland of supporting the anti-Iranian policy pursued by the United States. Similar accusations were voiced by the media,¹⁹ which was facilitated by instances of open criticism of Iran, for example from U.S. Vice-President Mike Pence during the conference. However, the final statement did not contain any direct reference to Iran.

Poland's non-permanent membership of the UN SC was another important factor emphasising its support for peace building efforts in the Middle East. In August 2019, as part of its presidency of the UN SC, Poland organised a debate on challenges to peace and security in the Middle Eastern region. In October 2019, closed consultations on the situation in north-eastern Syria were held on the initiative of Poland, France, Germany, Belgium and the UK. Poland supported all UN SC resolutions regarding the situation in the MENA region, it also spoke several times during voting sessions and stressed the importance of humanitarian initiatives and of the protection of victims of conflicts and gender-based violence.²⁰ In February 2019, Jacek Czaputowicz took part in a ministerial meeting of the EU member states and the Arab League states. Using this opportunity, he also attended bilateral meetings with foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine, Lebanon and Sudan. In June 2019, during a UN SC briefing the Polish FM stressed the need to boost cooperation between regional organisations such as the UN and the League of Arab States.²¹

At the bilateral level, in 2018–19 Poland continued its intensive cooperation with the **Kingdom of Jordan**. At a meeting of the EU's Foreign Affairs Council, Jacek Czaputowicz explicitly referred to Jordan and emphasised its importance as a partner of the EU, in particular in the field of politics, security and migration. In May 2019, the Polish MFA chief visited Jordan to meet with the country's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Safadi. The meeting coincided with the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and

¹⁹ See: "A jednak wydarzenie w Warszawie okazało się mocno antyirańskie. Co wiemy o konferencji bliskowschodniej?," *Newsweek*, 13 February 2019, newsweek.pl, "Szczyt w Warszawie: To nie musiała być antyirańska konferencja," *Rzeczpospolita*, 7 February 2019, www.rp.pl.

²⁰ UN press release, www.un.org.

²¹ "O współpracy z Ligą Państw Arabskich," MSZ, 20 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

Jordan. The ministers signed an agreement on lifting the visa requirement for holders of diplomatic passports. They jointly chaired Polish-Jordanian political consultations during which several issues were discussed, including further development of bilateral relations and enhancement of political, economic, scientific and security-related cooperation.²² Other important topics included the terrorist threat, the Middle Eastern peace process, the situation in Syria and Poland's assistance to Jordan, which was targeted both at Syrian refugees staying in Jordan and Jordanian citizens.

In October 2018, the then Foreign Minister of **Lebanon** Gibran Bassil paid a visit to Poland. During his meeting with Jacek Czaputowicz, the two ministers signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of the Lebanese Republic on establishing a bilateral consultation mechanism. In addition, the Lebanese MFA chief met with the Polish Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Jan Krzysztof Ardanowski to discuss the prospects for development of cooperation between the two countries' agricultural sectors. Both sides expressed their interest in boosting trade in agri-food products. In addition, Minister Gibran Bassil mentioned Lebanon's interest in launching science and research cooperation.²³

For Poland, **Egypt**, its largest African trade partner, continued to be an important area of interest in the region. In July 2018, a Polish delegation led by Minister of Investment and Development Jerzy Kwieciński paid a visit to Egypt, and in April 2019 Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz visited this country. With his Egyptian counterpart Samah Hasan Shukri he discussed economic, cultural and security-related cooperation between the two states. In addition, the Polish MFA chief expressed Poland's support for socio-economic reforms intended to stabilise the state, and for the process of reviving the dialogue between the EU and Egypt. In Cairo, the Minister also met with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to discuss issues such as regional security, conflicts in Libya and Syria.²⁴ Another purpose of the visit was to emphasise the fact that Egypt was Poland's key partner in the region.

In the analysed period, the most important event in **Polish-Iranian** relations involved the U.S. withdrawing from the nuclear deal with Iran. Criticism of this decision was not in Poland's interest due to the fact that at that time Warsaw was striving to increase the number of U.S. troops stationed on its territory. However,

²² "Szef polskiej dyplomacji z wizytą w Jordanii," MSZ, 18 May 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

²³ "Rozmowy polsko-libańskie," MSZ, 25 October 2018, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

²⁴ "Minister Jacek Czaputowicz z wizytą w Egipcie," MSZ, 13 April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

the future of the GoIran programme, which was intended to facilitate the process of Polish companies entering the Iranian market, was jeopardised. To mitigate the crisis in Poland's relations with Iran (resulting from the fact that Iran had not been invited to the Middle Eastern conference in Warsaw), in January 2019 Deputy Foreign Minister Maciej Lang paid a visit to Tehran.²⁵ In addition, Minister Jacek Czaputowicz met with the Iranian MFA chief Mohammad Javad Zarif on the sidelines of a UN General Assembly meeting and during his visit to Qatar in December 2019 on the occasion of the 2019 Doha Forum. During the talks, Minister Czaputowicz stressed that Poland's goal during the Middle Eastern conference was to focus on 'horizontal problems' rather than to manifest hostility towards specific states.²⁶

In 2018–19, several meetings with representatives of the **Persian Gulf** states were organised focusing mainly on economic and military cooperation. Topics discussed during a visit paid by the Polish MFA chief to Saudi Arabia in 2019 included the situation in the region's states, which were affected by conflicts, and further actions related to the Warsaw Process. The Polish FM and his Saudi counterpart also referred to Poland's bid to become a member of the Human Rights Council.²⁷ Development of economic cooperation was the main topic of this visit and of other meetings between representatives of the governments of Poland and the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman.

In the analysed period, cooperation with **Turkey** focused on two areas: the economy and security. In March 2019, a Polish-Turkish Economic Forum was held. It was combined with intergovernmental consultations attended by Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology Jadwiga Emilewicz and the Turkish Minister of Trade Ruhsar Pekcan.²⁸ The talks mainly focused on the prospects for increasing bilateral trade. Another important event in bilateral relations was a meeting on security issues held between the foreign ministers in the so-called Trilogue formula (Poland–Romania–Turkey) in April 2019 in Ankara.²⁹ The topics discussed during the meeting included the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which was celebrated in 2019, and challenges faced by NATO including in the context of its future. During his visit to Turkey, Jacek Czaputowicz emphasised the importance of this country to both the EU (the migration issue) and Poland due to the long history of bilateral relations shared by the two states. He also emphasised Turkey's role in actions focused on

²⁵ "Wiceminister Maciej Lang w Teheranie," MSZ, 21 January 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

²⁶ "Polska pyta Katar o gaz..." *op. cit.*

²⁷ "Minister Jacek Czaputowicz z wizytą w Arabii Saudyjskiej," MSZ, 23 April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

²⁸ "Polsko-tureckie rozmowy o współpracy gospodarczej," MSZ, 7 March 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

²⁹ "Spotkanie szefów dyplomacji Polski, Rumunii i Turcji w Ankarze," MSZ, 19 March 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

security and peace in the Middle East, and expressed his willingness to include Turkey in the Warsaw Process as an active participant. As regards the Peace Spring operation, the Polish MFA decided to express its concern and at the same time to communicate its awareness of 'Turkey's legitimate interests in the field of security'. The Polish foreign minister also stressed that the conflict in Syria could only be resolved by political means.³⁰ As regards the most controversial issue in bilateral relations, i.e. Turkey blocking the update of NATO's defence plans for Poland and the Baltic states at the NATO summit, the initiative was seized by President Duda, who first held a telephone conversation with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and then in London met with him and with representatives of the Baltic states.³¹ Ultimately, Turkey consented to the continuation of work on the plans.

Defence Cooperation

In 2019, by sending 230 troops to Lebanon to join the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Poland returned to its involvement in UN peace-keeping missions following a ten-year pause. UNIFIL's tasks included monitoring the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon, as well as assisting the Lebanese armed forces in their peace-keeping operations in the southern part of the country and providing the civilian population with humanitarian aid. Poland's participation in this mission was intended to emphasise its intention to continue its involvement in international military operations.

On 28–30 January 2019, Operational Commander of the Armed Forces Branches Major-General Tomasz Piotrowski paid a visit to Jordan. The main purpose of his visit was to sign an agreement between the government of the Republic of Poland and the government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the status of the Polish Armed Forces on Jordanian territory. The agreement was signed on 29 January. This marked the end of the negotiation period which lasted almost two years. Around 80 Polish soldiers and civilian army employees were staying in Jordan in connection with Operation Inherent Resolve whose aim was to fight Islamic State. A visit to Amman paid by a delegation of the Polish Military Gendarmerie at the invitation of director general of Jordanian military gendarmerie was another manifestation of increasingly intensive military cooperation between Poland and Jordan.³² Aside from Jordan, Polish

³⁰ "Oświadczenie ws. eskalacji sytuacji w północno-wschodniej Syrii," MSZ, 10 October 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

³¹ "Szef BBN: Duda i Erdogan rozmawiali o jedności NATO," BBN, 3 December 2019, www.bbn.gov.pl.

³² "Wizyta delegacji Żandarmerii Wojskowej w Jordanii," Wojsko Polskie, 23 November 2019, www.wojsko-polskie.pl.

soldiers (a total of around 350 individuals) were stationed in military bases in Iraq, Qatar and Kuwait. Their presence was connected with the activities of the Global Coalition to Defeat so-called Islamic State.

Economic Relations

In the analysed period, a stable increase in the value of Poland's trade with the MENA states was recorded. Although in 2018 this value stood at around PLN57 billion, and in 2019 almost PLN60 billion (in 2017 around PLN53 billion),³³ it accounted for a mere around 3% of Poland's foreign trade. Turkey remained Poland's major Middle Eastern partner, although the value of Polish exports to Turkey fell from PLN12.5 billion in 2017 to PLN8.3 billion in 2019.³⁴ This process stood in contradiction to the assumptions of the Strategy for Responsible Development (the so-called Morawiecki plan) adopted in 2017, according to which Turkey was expected to be one of Poland's main non-EU export partners in 12 sectors which are of key importance for the Middle East.³⁵ A decrease in the value of Poland's exports to Iran was also recorded (from PLN 519 million in 2017 to less than PLN 169 million in 2019), which resulted from the Donald Trump administration reinstating sanctions against Iran. The share of Saudi oil in supplies to Polish refineries increased twofold (from 7% in 2017 to 13.9% in 2019³⁶). In 2018, PKN Orlen and Saudi Aramco signed an annex to their agreement to increase the volume of Saudi oil imported by Poland by 50%.³⁷ In 2018, the Polish oil giant began to purchase oil from the United Arab Emirates.³⁸ In November 2018, during the Polish-Emirati Business Forum, Poland's Minister of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation Marek Gróbarczyk and the UAE's Minister of Infrastructure Development Abdullah Belhaif Al Nuaimi signed an agreement on trade and transport facilitations. It enabled the creation of representative offices and commercial branches of shipping companies on the territory of the partner state, as well as recognition of their ships' documents.³⁹ At the same time, 2019 saw a major decrease in the value of imports from Iraq (from PLN 811 million in 2018 to PLN 110 000), which was due to increased oil imports

³³ GUS, <https://stat.gov.pl>.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ P. Sasnal, M. Wojnarowicz, "Polityka Polski wobec państw Bliskiego Wschodu i Afryki Północnej," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2017*, PISM, 2018, pp. 207–225.

³⁶ Reports compiled by the Polish Oil Industry and Trade Organisation, Polska Organizacja Przemysłu i Handlu Naftowego, www.popihn.pl.

³⁷ "PKN Orlen umacnia się w rejonie Zatoki Perskiej," PKN Orlen, 30 October 2018, <https://orlen.pl>.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ "Polska podpisała umowę o ułatwieniach w morskim handlu ze Zjednoczonymi Emiratami Arabskimi," *Gazeta Prawna*, 20 November 2019, www.biznes.gazetaprawna.pl.

from more stable monarchies of the Persian Gulf region (in 2018 oil accounted for 99.96% of Poland's imports from Iraq). Another initiative to increase Poland's energy security involved increasing LNG supplies from Qatar on the basis of an agreement signed in 2017 between the Polish Oil and Gas Company (PGNiG) and Qatargas.⁴⁰ In February 2019, an agreement was signed between the Warsaw Stock Exchange and the Qatar Stock Exchange to initiate cooperation between the two stock exchanges in order to create a Polish-Qatari investment fund, among other things. In an attempt to continue to develop cooperation in the field of finances, during his visit to Doha in March 2019 Poland's Deputy Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology Marcin Ociepa visited the Qatar Stock Exchange, the Qatar Investment Authority and the Qatar Development Bank.⁴¹

During his visit to Egypt to discuss economic cooperation, Vice-chairman of the Polish Chamber of Commerce Janusz Wiśniewski and Chairman of the Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce Abd al-Hamid Amir signed an agreement on establishing a Polish-Egyptian Business Council and an agreement on cooperation between Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego and Egypt's major financial institutions.⁴² Due to Egypt's membership of COMESA (the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa), Poland expected it to be its gateway to other African markets. This initiative was also convergent with the intention to support Polish entrepreneurs operating abroad, which was one of the assumptions of the Strategy for Responsible Development.⁴³ Economic cooperation was the main topic of the Polish MFA chief's visit to Sudan in July 2018. Jacek Czaputowicz was accompanied by a delegation of representatives of Polish companies. The visit resulted in the signing of four agreements: one was signed by the two states' Chambers of Commerce, and the remaining three were signed by individual companies.⁴⁴ Other meetings held during the analysed period included talks on the prospects of economic cooperation held with representatives of Jordan (these resulted in the signing of three cooperation agreements with Jordanian business environment institutions), Tunisia, Lebanon and Iraqi Kurdistan.

In 2018, the Polish Investment and Trade Agency opened several new Foreign Trade Offices in the region: in Saudi Arabia, Israel, the UAE and Turkey, and in Egypt.

⁴⁰ "Coraz więcej LNG zamiast gazu z Rosji. PGNiG podsumowuje 2018 rok," *Biznes Alert*, 9 January 2019, www.biznesalert.pl.

⁴¹ "MPiT: Katar – strategiczny partner gospodarczy Polski w regionie. Wiceminister przedsiębiorczości i technologii Marcin Ociepa z wizytą w Dosze (komunikat)," PAP, www.pap.pl.

⁴² "Relacja: Misja Gospodarcza do Egiptu, 30.06–2.07.2018," KIG, 5 July 2018, <https://kig.pl>.

⁴³ "PAIH stawia na Afrykę. Wkrótce rusza tam drugie Zagraniczne Biuro Handlowe," PAIH, 8 May 2018, www.paih.gov.pl.

⁴⁴ "Czaputowicz w Sudanie: liczymy na wzmocnienie naszej obecności gospodarczej," PAP, 21 July 2018, www.pap.pl.

Social and Cultural Relations

For many decades, archaeology has been an exceptional field of cultural relations between Poland and the MENA states. In 2018, researchers from the Jagiellonian University, who had been carrying out excavation work in Jordan since 2017, discovered a Neolithic settlement in the southern part of that country. In connection with this discovery, a scientific session on Polish research in Jordan was organised in the same year.⁴⁵ At the end of 2019, at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo an exhibition was organised (in collaboration with the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities and other institutions) on the achievements of Polish archaeological missions in Egypt.⁴⁶ In 2019, Polish archaeologists discovered the oldest settlement in what is now Kuwait and took part in the study of Sudan's national heritage.⁴⁷

Development cooperation was an important element of social relations between Poland and the region's states. It was a continuation of Poland's policy to increase the scope of humanitarian aid offered to victims of conflicts in the Middle East, launched in 2016. Aside from Turkey, for which the assistance worth PLN53.66 million was an element of the EU Facility for Refugees, in 2018 the biggest recipients of Polish ODA included Lebanon (PLN18.53 million), Syria (PLN13.13 million), Iraq (PLN12.53 million) and Jordan (PLN10.46 million). In 2018, the government amended its multiannual development cooperation plan and included Lebanon in the list of countries of priority importance in the context of Polish development assistance.⁴⁸ In line with the strategy announced in 2016, Iraqi Kurdistan was an important recipient of Polish ODA. In December 2018, Minister for Humanitarian Aid Beata Kempa visited Iraq to meet with the Iraqi minister of foreign affairs and the minister of health and the environment.

Regular educational exchanges were an important element of social relations between Poland and the inhabitants of the MENA region. In the analysed period, an increase in the number of Turkish nationals studying in Poland was recorded (from 1471 individuals in 2017⁴⁹ to 1928 in 2019⁵⁰). Although citizens of Saudi

⁴⁵ "Na południu Jordanii Polacy odkryli osadę z czasów neolitu," *The Epoch Times*, 13 October 2018, www.epochtimes.pl.

⁴⁶ "Wystawa o dokonaniach polskich archeologów w Muzeum Egipskim w Kairze," *Nauka w Polsce*, 3 December 2019, www.naukawpolsce.pap.pl.

⁴⁷ "Czaputowicz w Sudanie: liczymy na wzmocnienie naszej obecności gospodarczej," PAP, 21 July 2018, www.pap.pl.

⁴⁸ "Modyfikacja Wieloletniego programu współpracy rozwojowej na lata 2016–2020," *Polska Pomoc*, www.gov.pl/web/polskapomoc.

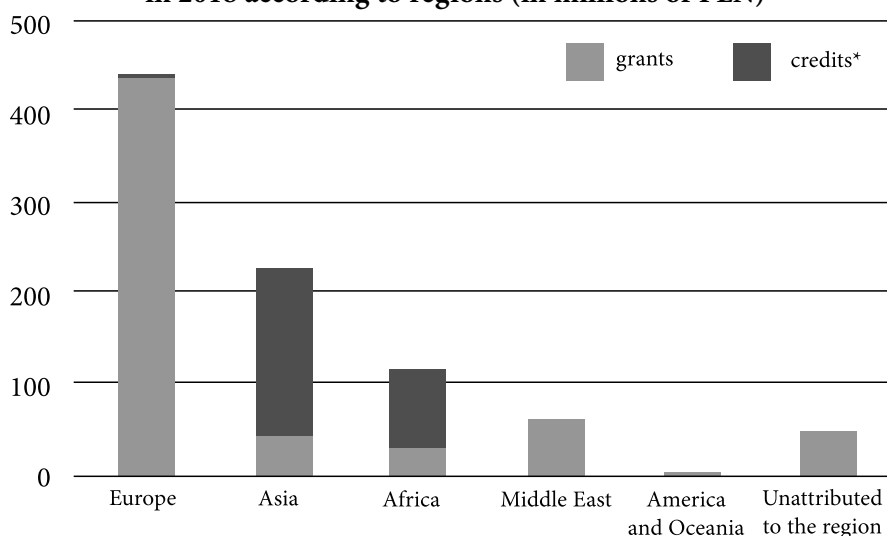
⁴⁹ "Foreign students in Poland 2017," *Study in Poland*, www.studyinpoland.pl.

⁵⁰ "Foreign students in Poland 2019," *op. cit.*

Arabia were another important group of students hailing from the Middle East, in recent years their number dropped from 871 in 2017⁵¹ to 697 in 2019.⁵²

The increasingly negative perception of Arabs and Muslims by the Polish public formed an obstacle to favourable social and cultural relations between Poles and the inhabitants of the MENA region.⁵³ A negative narrative promoted by Polish politicians and the media regarding refugees and migrants, which was particularly evident during the campaign ahead of local elections in 2018,⁵⁴ just like back in 2015, had a direct negative impact on how Poles viewed the inhabitants of the MENA states. A poll conducted by CBOS in 2018 showed that as many as 62% of Poles had a negative attitude towards Arabs.⁵⁵ The MENA states were aware of Poland's refugee policy and commented on it.⁵⁶

Chart. Bilateral official development assistance offered by Poland in 2018 according to regions (in millions of PLN)



Source: "Polska współpraca rozwojowa. Raport 2019," Grupa Zagranica, November 2019, <https://zagranica.org.pl>.

⁵¹ "Foreign students in Poland 2017," *op. cit.*

⁵² "Foreign students in Poland 2019," *op. cit.*

⁵³ For more, see: P. Sasnal, M. Wojnarowicz, *op. cit.*

⁵⁴ "Migranci, uchodźcy i ksenofobia w kampanii wyborczej 2018 – raport z monitoringu," Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, 12 December 2018, www.hfhr.pl.

⁵⁵ "Stosunek do innych narodów," *Komunikat z badań CBOS*, 2018, no. 37, www.cbos.pl.

⁵⁶ See: "Why will Poland not take in any Muslims?," *Al Jazeera*, 8 November 2019, www.aljazeera.com.

Assessment

In 2018–19, Poland continued to increase its involvement in political processes in the Middle East and North Africa mainly at the multilateral level (the Middle Eastern conference, membership of UN SC). This had a positive impact on the implementation of Poland's policy goals in the region and was significant in the context of Poland's election to the UN Human Rights Council on 17 October 2019.⁵⁷ The Warsaw Process, which was launched in February 2019, fostered the creation of a multilateral dialogue formula which was appreciated by Poland's Middle Eastern partners and received positive feedback during bilateral visits, for example from representatives of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar. The conference was assessed favourably by Federica Mogherini, who thanked the organisers for a 'constructive approach presented during the conference'.⁵⁸ However, the event also sparked controversy. Among those who had not been invited to the conference were representatives of Iran and representatives of Palestine, the residents of which called on the international community to boycott the conference due to the policy pursued by the Donald Trump administration. They viewed it as a policy which undermined the Palestinians' quality of life and their statehood ambitions (for example the relocation of the US embassy to Jerusalem, withdrawal of financing offered to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East). The conference has also failed to contribute to working out a consensus between the U.S. and the EU regarding the nuclear deal with Iran. Moreover, contrary to initial announcements, it was not continued and turned out to be a one-off event (although its working groups did continue to meet).

One negative consequence of Poland's policy towards the region in the analysed period involved a deterioration of Polish-Iranian relations in connection with the Middle Eastern conference held in Warsaw, which—despite Polish diplomats' efforts—was perceived as an anti-Iranian event. This had a negative impact on Poland's cooperation with Iran and jeopardised the successful implementation of the GoIran programme. In addition, despite the intention to boost Poland's relations with the Maghreb states, announced by the MFA chief, no high-level contacts were maintained.

In the context of the attempts to stabilise the region, important developments included Poland joining the UNIFIL mission, focusing its attention on Middle Eastern issues during its non-permanent membership of the UN SC, and offering

⁵⁷ R. Tarnogórski, "Poland Joins the Human Rights Council," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 55/2019, 25 October 2019, www.pism.pl.

⁵⁸ "Szef MSZ: W dłuższej perspektywie konferencja bliskowschodnia zostanie uznana za sukces [WYWIAD]," *Gazeta Prawna*, 20 February 2019, www.gazetaprawna.pl.

assistance to refugees and to the MENA states hosting them. However, due to the fact that Polish ODA amounted to a mere 0.14% of the country's GNI (much less than the EU-wide recommendation which is 0.33%) and the share of MENA states among its recipients was insignificant, these funds were insufficient to build Poland's image as an important actor involved in combatting the causes of humanitarian crises in the region. The assistance offered by Poland seemed insufficient particularly in Iraq, where humanitarian aid and development assistance continued to be the main axis of bilateral relations. The insignificant value of Polish ODA strongly contrasted with the attention Poland devoted to debates on instability in the Middle East, civilian victims of armed conflicts and the problems triggering irregular migration. It was also insufficient to genuinely contribute to the achievement of one of Poland's policy goals, which involved combatting the causes of conflict and instability in the region.

In line with what the minister had announced, Poland continued to develop its economic relations with the region's states, in particular with the Persian Gulf countries. Initiatives launched in previous years to diversify the sources of supplies of energy carriers to the Polish market were continued and the share of gas imported from Qatar and the share of oil imported from the Persian Gulf states in Poland's energy imports increased. In addition, the agreement signed with the UAE in 2018 was expected to facilitate the establishment of cooperation between seaports enabling transportation of energy carriers from that country.

Poland's Policy Towards the Western Balkans in 2018–2019

TOMASZ ŻORNACZUK

Background

In 2018–19, Poland's policy towards the Western Balkans¹ was based on boosting its involvement in transformation and democratisation processes in the region and was increasingly frequently pursued under bilateral actions.² This was a continuation of Poland's decision to cease viewing the Balkans mainly in the context of security policy and to shift towards initiatives supporting European integration. This stance had solidified following Poland's presidency of the Council of the European Union 2011.³

Other aspects which determined Poland's policy included its membership of the EU and NATO, as well as the Balkan states' membership aspirations. The European Commission (EC) announced its new approach to the region in a document published in February 2018, which was entitled 'A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans'. It was intended to restore the significance of the enlargement policy,⁴ which Poland supported as a member of an informal group of friends of EU enlargement (the so-called Tallinn group).⁵ Developments which influenced Poland's actions included the situation of Macedonia (in June 2018 it reached an agreement with Greece, on the basis of which in February 2019 it changed its name to North Macedonia) and the policy pursued by France, which continued to block Macedonia's integration progress in spite of this change. Another important factor involved Poland's membership of the Visegrad Group (V4), whose remaining members

¹ Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia (until February 2019 referred to as Macedonia), Kosovo (according to UN SC's Resolution 1244 and an opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on Kosovo's independence declaration) and Serbia.

² T. Żornaczuk, "Poland's Policy Towards the Western Balkans," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2017*, PISM, 2020, pp. 191–206.

³ T. Żornaczuk, "Poland's Policy Towards the Western Balkans," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2011–2015*, PISM, 2020, pp. 311–312.

⁴ For more, see: T. Żornaczuk, "EU Enlargement in the Balkans: New Prospects for Resolving Old Challenges," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 39 (1110), 2 March 2018, www.pism.pl.

⁵ This group also included the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Spain, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Sweden, Hungary, United Kingdom and Italy.

also declared their support for the Balkans' Euro-Atlantic integration. In addition, Poland maintained its involvement in stabilisation missions carried out in the region.

The most important new factor was an official invitation⁶ to take part in the Berlin Process which Germany extended to Poland at the beginning of 2018.⁷ This process had supported the Western Balkan states' development and European integration since 2014.⁸ Poland agreed to assume one-year-long chairmanship of this process in 2019 to organise an annual summit.

There were also several variables including the appointment in December 2017 of a new government led by Mateusz Morawiecki, who succeeded Beata Szydło as Poland's prime minister. This happened as part of a reshuffle within the ruling coalition made up of the Law and Justice party (PiS) and several right-wing parties.⁹ In January 2018, Jacek Czaputowicz succeeded Witold Waszczykowski as Poland's minister of foreign affairs and continued to hold this post also in Mateusz Morawiecki's second government which was formed in November 2019 by the same coalition after parliamentary elections. Andrzej Duda, a politician linked with PiS, has been Poland's president since 2015.

The Polish government had a strong public mandate to promote the Balkan states' EU integration. In March 2018, the level of support for EU enlargement among the Polish public stood at 65% (while 23% of Poles were against it), which indicated an increase of 9 percentage points since autumn 2017. This was the highest increase recorded in the EU. Poland's level of support was third highest after the one recorded in Spain (67%) and Lithuania (66%), while the average figure for the EU as a whole was 44% (with 46% of the respondents declaring their opposition to EU enlargement).¹⁰

Goals and Assumptions

Although the Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021 did not mention the Western Balkans, it listed support for NATO's and the EU's open door policy as one of foreign policy goals. Alongside this, it assumed that the implementation

⁶ Government representatives talked about it in an informal manner as early as 2017.

⁷ At that time, this was an expanding coalition of EU member states, mainly Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Slovenia, United Kingdom and Italy, as well as Western Balkan states.

⁸ For more, see: J. Wiśniewski, T. Żornaczuk, "The Berlin Process and the European Integration of the Western Balkans," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 87 (1335), 1 July 2019, www.pism.pl.

⁹ The Law and Justice parliamentary group was made up of the Law and Justice party (PiS), Jarosław Gowin's Agreement (until June 2018 known as Agreement) and Sovereign Poland.

¹⁰ "Spring 2018, The views of the Europeans on the European Union's Priorities," *Standard Eurobarometer* 89, European Council, www.ec.europa.eu, p. 28.

of enlargement plans would be difficult, including due to the Brexit decision, the EU's economic and migrant crisis, and the dispute over the future of the integration process.¹¹ The Balkans were not covered by Poland's development assistance programme for 2016–20.

Activities carried out as part of bilateral relations and the Berlin Process, which Poland had joined, were intended to support the Euro-Atlantic aspiration of the Balkan states and served as a platform for sharing experience regarding integration with them.¹² As part of this instrument, cooperation was carried out during events such as a meeting of foreign ministers held in Warsaw, the Forum of Cities and Regions organised in Rzeszów and a summit in Poznań. The purpose of this process was, among other things, to confirm Poland's involvement in efforts to promote stability in Europe.¹³

In the context of the valid EC recommendation to launch accession talks with Albania and Macedonia, which became possible when an agreement with Greece was reached, Poland's goal was to convince the EU to set a date for starting membership talks with these states.¹⁴

Political Relations

Security and NATO enlargement. Poland supported the Balkans' Euro-Atlantic integration for several reasons, including the conviction that it was necessary to boost these countries' security. Morawiecki emphasised that launching negotiations with the EU was important in the strategic and geopolitical aspects, as well as those linked with energy security, cyber security and migration security.¹⁵ Another frequently cited reason involved the 'interest on the part of great powers' in the Balkan states, which Poland viewed as a threat. Thus, the government increasingly frequently drew parallels between the region's stability

¹¹ "Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021," MSZ, September 2017, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹² "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2018 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 21 March 2018)," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹³ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

¹⁴ "Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu RP o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie styczeń–czerwiec 2019 r. (Przewodnictwo Rumunii w Radzie UE)," Kancelaria Sejmu, 5 July 2019, www.sejm.gov.pl.

¹⁵ Ł. Orliński, "Premier: Polska na szczycie UE za wyciągnięciem dłoni do Bałkanów Zachodnich," PAP, 17 May 2018, www.pap.pl.

& Euro-Atlantic integration and Poland's security¹⁶ and argued that the Western Balkans were a region of key importance Europe's security.¹⁷

Poland supported NATO enlargement to include North Macedonia, which was the region's final state with a realistic membership perspective. Following the invitation announced by the Alliance in July 2018, the accession document was signed in February 2019, and once Greece ratified it, other member states followed suit. In April, the Polish parliament enacted a law which authorised the president to ratify the protocol; Poland was the tenth NATO member to do this.

Poland continued its involvement in all three stabilisation missions in the Balkans. At the end of 2019, the president extended the period of deployment of the Polish Military Contingent to the international forces in Kosovo, North Macedonia and Bosnia & Herzegovina in the same size (up to 300 soldiers and civilian employees). At the beginning of 2018, the 4031-strong KFOR mission in Kosovo included 252 Poles. The Polish contingent was the seventh biggest out of the 28 contingents present there. In 2019, despite the mission's reduction to 3525 troops, the Polish 240-strong contingent continued to be the seventh biggest and remained almost unchanged until the end of the year. In August 2018 it was visited by Minister of National Defence Mariusz Błaszczak. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, around 40 Poles provided training and advisory assistance as part of the EUFOR Althea mission.

Following the reduction of the tasks performed by the EULEX mission, which operated in Kosovo, to operational and monitoring activities and the reduction of its personnel to around 500 individuals in mid-2018, 95 Poles remained the only international police unit carrying out the task of assisting the Kosovan units (acting as the so-called second security responder). As a consequence, the mission's operational component relied on Polish involvement. At the end of 2019, a Polish police officer, Inspector Cezary Luba, was appointed deputy head of EULEX.

In addition, 30 Polish border guards helped North Macedonia to protect its border with Greece. They rotated in the monthly system.

EU enlargement. From the beginning of his mission as foreign minister, Czaputowicz presented Poland as a "strong advocate of EU enlargement to

¹⁶ "Szyński vel Sęk: UE zależy na przyciąganiu państw Bałkanów Zachodnich," *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, 2 October 2018, www.gazetaprawna.pl.

¹⁷ "Odpowiedź na interpelację nr 33689 w sprawie współpracy z nowymi państwami członkowskimi NATO i wsparcia procesu dalszego rozszerzenia Sojuszu Północnoatlantyckiego," Kancelaria Sejmu, 2 October 2019, www.sejm.eu.

include the Western Balkans”.¹⁸ The government increasingly frequently viewed this process as strategic not only from the European perspective, as emphasised by the minister,¹⁹ or from the perspective of the Balkan states, as highlighted by Morawiecki and other officials,²⁰ but also from the Polish point of view, as indicated for example by Deputy Foreign Minister for European Affairs Konrad Szymański.²¹ The government emphasised the positive impact of this policy on the security situation and economic development of the EU and the candidate countries alike. It also motivated the need for EU activity in the region citing the argument of strategic rivalry on the part of third countries, in particular Russia, and also China and Turkey. These arguments were raised by the prime minister in May 2018 at the EU–Western Balkans summit in Sofia and by the FM during a meeting of foreign ministers of Central and South-Eastern European countries at Cape Sounion. President Duda also highlighted the need for the Balkans’ integration with the EU, for example during a summit of South-Eastern European states held in Tirana in May 2019.

Moreover, Poland continually supported the plan to maintain the technical nature of the enlargement process. It was to be carried out based on the principle of conditionality, which requires the candidates to meet the membership criteria. The government considered it necessary to make sure that the implementation of reforms is linked with a realistic prospect of another step in the integration process.²² This is why it did not see the need to employ additional political requirements and criticised those EU member states which were reluctant to accelerate the enlargement process.

Poland was hoping that the ‘credible enlargement perspective’ announced in February 2018 and the EU–Western Balkans summit, which was the first such meeting organised at the level of heads of state and government in 15 years, would be a breakthrough in the region’s European integration process.²³ The setting of the date for the launch of accession talks with Albania and Macedonia, following

¹⁸ M. Sommer, “Czaputowicz: Polska od zawsze za rozszerzeniem UE o Bałkany Zachodnie,” PAP, 12 March 2018, www.pap.pl.

¹⁹ “Minister Czaputowicz: Polska popiera rozszerzanie Unii Europejskiej,” *Wprost*, 12 May 2018, www.wprost.pl.

²⁰ Ł. Orliński, “Premier: Polska na szczycie UE...,” *op. cit.*

²¹ For more examples see: “Szymański: Polityka rozszerzenia UE ma dla Polski wymiar strategiczny,” *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, 15 May 2018, www.gazetaprawna.pl.

²² “Odpowiedź na interpelację nr 30610 w sprawie wyhamowania działań polskiego rządu na rzecz rozszerzenia Unii Europejskiej i NATO,” Kancelaria Sejmu, 17 March 2019, www.sejm.gov.pl.

²³ The most recent enlargement, to include Croatia, happened in 2013, and noticeable progress in the integration process involved Serbia launching its accession talks and Albania receiving the status of an official candidate for accession in 2014.

the latter's agreement with Greece, was viewed as a confirmation of the revival of the enlargement process.²⁴ Although Poland supported this recommendation issued by the EC, in June 2018 the European Council postponed its decision on this matter for a year. This was due to the policy pursued by France and the Netherlands, backed by Denmark, which demanded that the candidate countries step up their fight against corruption and organised crime.²⁵

In May 2019, foreign ministers of the Visegrad Group and the Western Balkans met in Bratislava. In a joint declaration, the V4 ministers reiterated their support for both the enlargement, which 'remains a key policy of the EU and continues to represent a strategic investment in peace, democracy, prosperity, security and stability in Europe,' and the decision to launch accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia.²⁶ Poland was particularly interested in achieving this ahead of the July summit of the Berlin Process in Poznań. This is why, together with Slovenia and Italy, it initiated the statement issued on 11 June by thirteen states²⁷, in which they called on the Council to announce the launch of the talks.²⁸ On 18 June, the European Council once again postponed its decision on this matter and committed itself to complete the decision-making process by October.

On 12 September in Prague the first meeting in the V4 + Western Balkans formula at the level of prime ministers was held. In the closing declaration, the V4 called for launching accession talks with two candidates and emphasised that this could enable them to focus on further reforms and help the EU to reach the status of the key actor in the region.²⁹ The presidents of V4 states also expressed their support for the Balkan states' ambitions, when they met with the presidents of Serbia and Slovenia on 2–3 October in Lány near Prague. In response to reports suggesting that France, which was advocating a reform of the EU which should take place ahead of another enlargement, might once again block the launch of the EU's talks with Albania and North Macedonia³⁰ (despite the European

²⁴ T. Żornaczuk, "Euro-Atlantic Integration of North Macedonia," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 26 (1272), 20 February 2019, www.pism.pl.

²⁵ E. Zalan, "EU delays Macedonia and Albania Talks," *EUobserver*, 27 June 2018, www.euobserver.com.

²⁶ "V4 Foreign Ministers' Joint Statement on the Western Balkans, Bratislava, 28 May 2019," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovakia, 28 May 2019, www.mzv.sk.

²⁷ Including Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia and Hungary.

²⁸ "Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu RP...", *op. cit.*

²⁹ "Oświadczenie Grupy Wyszehradzkiej w sprawie Bałkanów Zachodnich," KPRM, 12 September 2019, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

³⁰ G. Baczynska, "France opposes EU membership talks with North Macedonia, Albania: diplomats," Reuters, 10 October 2019, www.reuters.com.

Council's commitment announced in June), in an article published by 'Politico' on 14 October the V4 foreign ministers called on the EU to launch accession talks.³¹ Several days later, the European Council failed to announce such decision due to France's opposition.³²

In response to the French proposal to reform the accession process, which was put forward in mid-November, a month later Poland and eight other countries³³ presented a non-paper entitled 'Elements of enhanced enlargement process and maintained and accelerated integration of the Western Balkans'. In it they emphasised that shifts in the methodology should not affect the decision to launch the negotiations, which should be made in March 2020 at the latest, and that the reform of the EU should not be a precondition of EU enlargement.³⁴ In December, in the 'Rzeczpospolita' daily Czaputowicz openly argued that "the absence of the EU's decision to launch accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia was a mistake".³⁵

Presidency of the Berlin Process. A Berlin Process summit held in London in July 2018 was attended by PM Morawiecki,³⁶ the host of this format's consecutive meeting. He announced that this meeting would be dominated by economic issues and its purpose would be to achieve 'significant progress' as regards the Balkan states' integration with the EU.³⁷ The priorities listed in the presidency agenda announced in April 2019 included economic affairs, mutual infrastructural links, civil society and security.

In October 2018, secretary of state at the MFA Szymon Szyński was appointed the government's plenipotentiary for the Western Balkans Summit. Before the end of the year, he held consultations in all states of the region. The summit was also preceded by other preparatory meetings. In February 2019, ministers for European affairs of the Western Balkan states met in Warsaw with

³¹ T. Petříček, P. Szijjártó, J. Czaputowicz, M. Lajčák, "Let's move forward in the western Balkans," *Politico*, 14 October 2019, www.politico.eu.

³² In its decision to halt the talks with Albania France was supported by the Netherlands and Denmark. For more, see: T. Żornaczuk, "Slowing Down EU Enlargement to the Balkans," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 163 (1409), 21 November 2019, www.pism.pl.

³³ Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Slovenia and Italy.

³⁴ J. Barigazzi, "9 countries push back on French enlargement revamp," *Politico*, 16 December 2019, www.politico.eu.

³⁵ "Jacek Czaputowicz: Polska wspiera Bałkany Zachodnie," *Rzeczpospolita*, 18 December 2019, www.rp.pl.

³⁶ The attendees also included Czaputowicz and Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration Joachim Brudziński.

³⁷ "Premier Mateusz Morawiecki na szczycie nt. integracji Bałkanów Zachodnich z UE," PAP, 10 July 2018, www.pap.pl.

representatives of the EC, and in April the ministers of foreign affairs of the Berlin Process states met with President Duda. The beginning of 2019 also saw several civil society round tables in Belgrade, Tirana, Podgorica, Sarajevo and Pristina. In May, a forum of think-tanks from the region's states, the V4 states and the Berlin Process states was held in Skopje. It was attended by Szyrkowski vel Sęk.³⁸

On 4–6 June, the Forum of Cities and Regions was held in Rzeszów under the slogan 'Investing in the Western Balkans—investing in Europe'. It was attended by Minister of Investment and Development Jerzy Kwieciński. The debates focused on support for the region during its economic transformation and on cooperation at various levels, as well as on the Via Carpatia highway which does not run through these states.

During the summit held in Poznań on 3–5 July 2019, a top-level meeting took place between the Polish president, prime minister and minister of foreign affairs and Vice-President of the EC and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini. In addition, three ministerial meetings were held between the ministers of foreign affairs, internal affairs and the economy. The ministers also attended a business forum. Aside from the regular civil society forum, a forum of think-tanks was organised for the first time.

During the summit a decision was made to allocate €180,000 to eight new infrastructural and energy projects carried out in the Balkans (31 such projects have already been completed) and a memorandum was signed to establish the South East European International Institute for Sustainable Technologies. Poland's financial contribution to the development of the Balkans involved a donation of PLN 100,000 provided to the Civil Society Observatory to Counter Organised Crime in South-Eastern Europe, which was a Global Initiative project. Poland also donated PLN 180,000 to the small arms and light weapons (SALW) action plan to curb arms trade.³⁹

Until the end of the year, Poland continued its activities under the Berlin Process, which included summing up the summit and sharing the related experience with the hosts of the next meeting, that is Bulgaria and North Macedonia. On 17 September, representatives of the MFA and other ministries held consultations with these states. In October, in Poznań Szyrkowski vel Sęk took part in a debate on the prospects for using the Polish-German experience in the process of reconciliation in the Balkan and in a meeting of think-tanks focused on the future role of expert communities in the Berlin Process. In December, in

³⁸ Cooperation between the V4 states and the Western Balkans in the context of the Berlin Process was also discussed at a conference organised by the Think Visegrad consortium in May in Bratislava.

³⁹ "Ku wspólnej Europie. Raport z przewodnictwa Polski w Procesie Berlińskim i Szczytu Bałkanów Zachodnich," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

Skopje he attended a conference entitled 'Experiences from Poznań: before the joint presidency of Northern Macedonia and Bulgaria in the Berlin Process in 2020'.

Bilateral relations. Poland was most active in developing its relations with **North Macedonia**, which was the destination of minister Czaputowicz's first visit to the Balkans on 12 March 2018. He assured Prime Minister Zoran Zaev and Foreign Minister Nikola Dimitrov of Poland's support for their state's dialogue with Greece and its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.⁴⁰ He also attended the Skopje Conference which involved Poland sharing its integration experience with other countries. This formula was revived after a two-year pause which had been caused by a political crisis in Macedonia and a government change in Poland. The seventh edition of this conference was the second one to be attended by the Polish minister in Skopje (the first was the inaugural one held in 2010). For the first time the conference was combined with a think-tank round table. The eighth edition held on 20 September 2019 in Warsaw was attended by Macedonia's Deputy Prime Minister in charge of European affairs Bujar Osmani.

Prime Minister Zaev's statement uttered in October 2019 in Vienna cast a shadow on bilateral relations. He said that North Macedonia believed in European values "sometimes more strongly than some member states" meaning "Poland and Hungary, which both have problems with the rule of law". The Macedonian media took note of this statement.⁴¹ In response, Poland's ambassador to Skopje sent a statement to the media outlets, in which he explained Poland's stance in its dispute with the EC.⁴²

In May 2018, in **Albania** Czaputowicz inaugurated the Tirana Conference,⁴³ which was intended, just like the Skopje Conference, to be a platform for sharing integration-related experience. He also assured President Ilir Meta, PM Edi Rama and FM Ditmir Bushati of Poland's support for Albania's integration aspirations. In September, the third edition of the Polish-Albanian economic forum was organised in Tirana, whereas in 2019 this event was not held. In September, the second edition of the Tirana Conference was organised in Warsaw. It was attended by Deputy Minister for European and Foreign Affairs Gent Cakaj. Following an

⁴⁰ "Czaputowicz: UE powinna otworzyć się na społeczeństwa Bałkanów Zachodnich," PAP, 12 March 2018, www.pap.pl.

⁴¹ "Zaev says Poland and Hungary have problem with rule of law, internal problems," *Republika*, 17 October 2019, www.republika.mk.

⁴² "Diplomatski odgovor na polskiot ambasador Ticiński na nediplomatskite obvinuwania na Zaew," *Kurir*, 18 October 2019, www.kurir.mk.

⁴³ "Czaputowicz: Społeczeństwu Albanii należy dać sygnał otwartości UE," PAP, 7 May 2018, www.pap.pl.

earthquake which hit Albania in November, Polish firefighters transported 500 camp beds to Tirana.

In June 2018, in **Serbia** Czaputowicz met with the country's President Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister Ana Brnabić and Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić. He expressed his hope that Serbia would be the first new EU member state. He also attended the second edition of the Belgrade Conference,⁴⁴ which was modelled on the Skopje Conference. The third edition planned for 2019 did not take place. In the second half of 2019, Poland's relations with Serbia worsened due to the failure to invite this country to take part in the celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. The Serbian media commented on this issue extensively and President Vučić referred to it as a manifestation of historical revisionism.⁴⁵ In November, after a three-year pause, the 5th Polish-Serbian economic forum was organised in Belgrade.

President Duda's visit to **Bosnia and Herzegovina** was his first trip to the region and at the same time the first ever visit paid by the president of Poland to this state. On 15 April 2019, during talks with members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, he reiterated Poland's support for the Euro-Atlantic path of this country. Alongside Defence Minister Błaszczak he also met with Polish soldiers.⁴⁶ The minister also visited Bosnia and Herzegovina in January.

The highest level of bilateral contacts between Poland and **Montenegro** was the level of deputy ministers. In November 2018, a meeting was held in Warsaw between Tomasz Szatkowski and Ivica Ivanović from the defence ministries.

Poland continued to be the only EU member state which failed to establish diplomatic relations with **Kosovo** despite having recognised this country's independence. It also advocated the lifting of the Schengen visa regime valid for the citizens of Kosovo, once this country meets the EU requirements.⁴⁷ FM Czaputowicz held several meetings with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Behgjet Pacolli on the sidelines of multilateral talks.

Poland continued its initiatives targeted at all states of the region. The **Enlargement Academy** run by the MFA in Warsaw had its fourth edition in September 2018 and fifth edition in late May and early June 2019. The Academy's activity involved sharing European integration experience with Balkan civil

⁴⁴ "Czaputowicz: Chcemy, aby Serbia była w pierwszej grupie państw przyjętych do UE," PAP, 13 June 2018, www.pap.pl.

⁴⁵ "Srbija i Rusija nisu pozvane na obeležavanje početka Drugog svetskog rata," RTS, 30 August 2019, www.rts.rs.

⁴⁶ "Prezydent w Bośni i Hercegowinie," *Prezydent.pl*, 15 April 2019, www.prezydent.pl.

⁴⁷ In June 2018, the European Commission announced that although Kosovo did meet all the requirements, the visa regime was not lifted mainly due to protest from France and the Netherlands.

servants. In July 2018 in Wrocław the MFA and its partners (including the Krzyżowa Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe) organised the second edition of the **‘Reconciliation and Memory’** seminar, whose next edition organised in June 2019 was called **‘Memory, Understanding, Future’**. The purpose of these meetings was to inspire young people from the Western Balkan states to act to promote reconciliation between societies and foster mutual understanding. In December 2019, in Zagreb Szykowski vel Sęk took part in a meeting of Poland’s ambassadors to the Western Balkan states. For the first time Polish state-funded think-tanks participated in the debates on Poland’s policy towards the region.⁴⁸

Poland continued to develop its **parliamentary cooperation** with the region’s states. January 2019 saw the establishment of the Polish-Balkan Parliamentary Group. Its representatives visited Skopje, Belgrade and other cities.

Economic Relations

In 2018, Poland’s trade with the Western Balkans accounted for 0.46% of its total trade (0.67% including Croatia⁴⁹) and in 2019 0.47% (or 0.71%). For comparison, in 2010 this share recorded for the region, which at that time included Croatia, stood at 0.35%. This indicates that over 10 years the share of the region in Poland’s foreign trade has doubled.

The trend in trade as a whole was positive, although a minor decrease was recorded for Poland’s exports to Bosnia & Herzegovina and North Macedonia, as well as in its imports from Montenegro. Poland’s trade balance was highly positive for all of the region’s states except for North Macedonia. In 2017–19, its imports from the Western Balkans more than doubled, while its exports increased insignificantly. The change in figures reflecting Poland’s imports from the region was almost four times bigger than as regards its total imports, whereas the change in exports was five times smaller.

Poland’s trade with Serbia accounted for around 60% of its trade with the Western Balkan states. In 2019, Serbia was ranked 35th on the list of Poland’s export partners and 46th of its import partners. Since 2012, Serbia has been a more important trade partner than Croatia despite the fact that in 2018 Croatia reached the status of a bigger export partner than Serbia. Over the last two years, the biggest increase in trade cooperation was recorded for Poland’s imports from North Macedonia (which almost doubled) and the biggest decrease for Poland’s exports to this country (several per cent).

⁴⁸ “Wiceminister Szymon Szykowski vel Sęk z wizytą w Zagrzebiu,” MSZ, 3 December 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

⁴⁹ Croatia was included in the analysis and in the table for statistical purposes.

Table. Poland's trade with the Western Balkan states in 2017–19
(in €millions)

		2017	2018	2019	Change 2017–19
Serbia	Imports	330.7	378.2	485.3	47%
	Exports	807.3	821.3	827.7	3%
North Macedonia	Imports	128.1	188.5	261.9	104%
	Exports	123.1	110.4	114.9	-7%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Imports	62.3	71.1	79.7	28%
	Exports	243.6	240.1	239.6	-2%
Albania	Imports	17.6	17.4	25.6	45%
	Exports	51.3	56.3	66.5	30%
Kosovo	Imports	6.5	11.0	10.1	55%
	Exports	59.9	64.6	76.6	28%
Montenegro	Imports	16.8	19.4	16.6	-1%
	Exports	45.2	29.9	46.7	3%
Western Balkans	Imports	562	685.6	879.2	56%
	Exports	1330.4	1322.6	1372	3%
Croatia	Imports	173.0	176.9	184.7	7%
	Exports	720.5	854.0	930.5	29%
Poland's total trade	Imports	206,084.4	228,172.3	236,976	15%
	Exports	206,647.3	223,596.4	238,147.5	15%

Source: "Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski, styczeń–grudzień 2018 roku w mln euro," MRPiT, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologia; "Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski, styczeń–grudzień 2019 roku, w mln euro," MRPiT, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologia.

The main categories of goods Poland exported to the Balkan states included cigarettes, coke and semi-coke, paper products and combustion engines. The imports included paper products, products of the chemical industry, tyres, furniture, shoes, metal ores and fish.⁵⁰ Poland's foreign direct investments in the region were insignificant and were almost entirely located in Serbia.

⁵⁰ "Informacje o państwach i współpracy gospodarczej z Polską," MRPiT, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologia.

Social and Cultural Relations

Promotion of Polish culture in the Western Balkans was the task of the embassies because no Polish Institute operated in the region. The Polish embassies organised various events including meetings to promote Polish literature, visual arts and tourism, as well as concerts of Polish bands and Polish theatre performances.

Poland's presidency of the Berlin Process helped it to promote Balkan culture in Poland, mainly in Poznań. In May 2019, this city hosted a Balkan Culture Week and a Balkan Film Fest, in August a Balkan Weekend, in October a Balkan Date in the form of meetings focused on culture. In June 2019, as part of a study visit, journalists from the region familiarised themselves with the results of 15 years of Poland's membership of the EU.

The culture of the Balkan nations was also presented during regular events such as the Warsaw Film Festival and the Pannonica Folk Festival in Barcice. Goran Bregović, who is popular in Poland, performed during the 2019 edition of the latter event. He also played in Wrocław in November 2019 alongside the legendary Yugoslav band Bijelo Dugme. The promotion of Balkan culture also included the book by Małgorzata Rejmer entitled 'Mud Sweeter than Honey: Voices of Communist Albania' for which in 2019 the author received the Paszport Polityki reward in the literature category.

One negative manifestation of the relations between societies involved brawls started by Polish hooligans in June 2019 in Skopje, on the occasion of a football match between North Macedonia and Poland. During the clashes, aggressive football fans vandalised a part of the promenade in Ohrid. The Macedonian police detained 223 individuals.

Assessment

The Western Balkans have never occupied more space in Poland's foreign policy than in 2018–19. This change was mainly due to the Polish presidency of the Berlin Process. The government viewed the Balkans' security and European integration in strategic terms, and its declarations and actions during the EU–Western Balkans summits and the Berlin Process meetings, as well as its reaction to the policy pursued by France, indicated that its approach to EU enlargement was more ambitious than just 'supporting the present shape and pace of implementation' of this policy, as the MFA's website stated at that time.⁵¹

⁵¹ "Rozszerzenie UE: Zaangażowanie i stanowisko Polski," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

The presidency of the Berlin Process has prompted Poland to provide financial assistance to the development of the Balkan states despite the fact that they were not formally included in the programme of Polish development assistance. It has also encouraged the government to increasingly frequently engage think-tanks in the consultation process regarding its policy towards the Balkans and in the organisation of various events. However, it has failed to contribute to the development of a strategy towards the region. Thus, 'The Guidelines of Poland's Policy towards the Western Balkans' announced in 2014 continued to be a valid policy document.

In 2018–19, Poland continued its bilateral initiatives targeting the Balkans. These included the Enlargement Academy, the 'Reconciliation and Memory' seminar, followed by 'Memory, Understanding, Future', as well as the Skopje, Belgrade and Tirana Conferences. A pause in the operation of the Belgrade Conference in 2019 was one exception.

Although regional cooperation had ceased to be the main platform for Poland's contacts with the Balkans several years ago, numerous V4 initiatives were carried out. In 2019, over several months, Poland held meetings with the partners from the region at the level of ministers, prime ministers and presidents, and another ministerial meeting was planned for the beginning of 2020. Declarations announced during these meetings served as arguments to boost the EU's activity in the region. However, the plan to set a date for launching accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania failed. Although North Macedonia did not join NATO during the London summit in December 2019, its formal accession has been planned for the beginning of 2020.

North Macedonia was a priority partner in Poland's policy in the region. This was evidenced by the number of contacts on different levels and by Poland's involvement in promoting North Macedonia's Euro-Atlantic integration. At the same time, Poland's relations with this country were affected by the negative impact of the dispute with the EC over the rule of law on the Polish policy of promoting European values and integration in the Balkans.

III.

SELECTED PROBLEMS OF POLAND'S FOREIGN POLICY

An Assessment of Poland's Membership of the UN Security Council

SZYMON ZARĘBA

Background

In 2018–19, for the sixth time in its history, Poland was a non-permanent (elected) member of the Security Council (SC), a United Nations body mainly responsible for maintaining international peace and security. It held its rotating presidency twice: in May 2018 and August 2019.

Poland's term began in difficult circumstances which were mainly linked with the growing political divisions between the 'permanent three' SC members which have the right to veto (P3: France, the United Kingdom, the United States) and the remaining two permanent members, that is China and Russia. These divisions concerned issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the situation in Syria and in Ukraine. However, the lack of understanding also began to be visible in matters which had previously not sparked controversy, such as the decisions to extend the presence of UN peace-keeping missions in African states. Although no resolutions were vetoed, there were increasingly fewer instances in which they were adopted by consensus. Examples include the 2018 voting on extending the peace-keeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Western Sahara and Haiti.¹

The political divisions between the UN SC members were combined with growing differences of interests between the U.S. President Donald Trump's administration (on the one hand) and America's traditional allies in the SC, that is the United Kingdom and France, and the remaining elected SC members hailing from Europe (on the other hand). These differences concerned issues such as the stance on Iran and the reaction to Israel's consecutive moves regarding the occupied territories. This was particularly important to Poland because it required taking into account the opinion of the U.S., which is Poland's most important non-European ally, on the one hand, and the interests and commitments resulting from its EU membership on the other hand.

¹ P. Grzebyk, "Czerwony alarm dla świata – działalność Rady Bezpieczeństwa w 2018 r.," *Rocznik Strategiczny 2018/19*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar 2019, p. 81.

Another challenge Poland faced during its SC term involved an increase in tensions between the permanent SC members and the elected ones.² These were evident for example in criticism offered by African states regarding the UN's involvement in matters relating to this continent,³ especially in Sudan and South Sudan. They also took the form of appeals voiced by the non-permanent members to make them more responsible for shaping the SC's working agenda. There was no doubt that attempts made at the beginning of the 21st century to radically alter the manner of SC's operation, including to improve its legitimacy by expanding its line-up to include additional permanent members, stalled for good as a result of actions carried out by those states which were put forward as permanent member candidates and of the response offered by their regional rivals.⁴

From Poland's point of view, the fact that throughout its term EU member states, which largely shared Poland's stance on the vast majority of issues raised in the SC forum, accounted for a third of the SC's line-up, was favourable. Aside from the permanent members, that is France and the United Kingdom, in 2018 the SC line-up included the Netherlands and Sweden, and in 2019 Germany and Belgium. Due to the United Kingdom's exit from the EU (at the end of January 2020), this situation may never happen again.

Goals and Priorities

From the Polish government's point of view, Poland's membership of the SC was mainly intended to contribute to boosting its external security, for example by promoting actions to stabilise the situation in the region, including in Ukraine.⁵ Another important goal was to strengthen Poland's position in the

² Aside from Poland, in 2018 the non-permanent UN members included, according to regions: the Netherlands and Sweden, Bolivia and Peru, Kazakhstan and Kuwait, as well as Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea and Ivory Coast. When the line-up was partly modified in 2019, this group included Belgium and Germany, the Dominican Republic and Peru, Indonesia and Kuwait, as well as South Africa, Equatorial Guinea and Ivory Coast.

³ "Council of Despair? The Fragmentation of UN Diplomacy," International Crisis Group, 30 April 2019, www.crisisgroup.org.

⁴ This concerns in particular the diplomatic actions carried out by the so-called G4 states (Germany, Japan, Brazil, India), which sought to obtain the status of permanent members, and the opposite attempts made by the so-called Uniting for Consensus group (which includes Italy, Spain, South Korea, Argentina, Mexico, Pakistan), cf. P. Pacuła, "Zarys problematyki reformy Rady Bezpieczeństwa ONZ," *Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe*, 2015, no. 4, *passim*.

⁵ R. Tarnogórski, S. Zaręba, "Poland on the UN Security Council," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 1 (1072), 3 January 2018, www.pism.pl. These goals were discussed in October 2017 by the then undersecretary of state at the MFA Joanna Wronecka, "Zapis przebiegu posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych Sejmu RP," Kancelaria Sejmu, 26 October 2017, www.sejm.gov.pl.

European Union in the context of its involvement in solving problems which are of interest to the EU, such as the conflicts in Libya and Syria. The government was also hoping to consolidate Poland's image as a reliable and pragmatic partner including outside the EU and to make new trade and economic contacts with non-EU partners. In addition, increased activity in the sphere of multilateral diplomacy was intended to improve the professional skills of the MFA employees. The government also intended to promote knowledge of the SC's importance and activity among the Polish public.

While the goals of Poland's membership of the UN SC were fixed, the priorities changed several times. When seeking election, Polish diplomacy cited the need to bolster respect for international law as the main goal. Some statements by MFA representatives emphasised issues linked with the basic rules valid in interstate relations, such as sovereignty, territorial integrity, ban of using force,⁶ while other statements highlighted the humanitarian law.⁷ Another Poland's priority was the need to boost the effectiveness of conflict prevention, mainly by using mediation as a method for resolving disputes. Back in October 2017, Polish officials also declared their readiness to support dialogue between religions and cultures as a means of reducing tensions in conflict situations, and expressed their support for actions promoting the reform of the UN and the SC itself.⁸ At the end of 2017, the then minister of foreign affairs Witold Waszczykowski declared that combining security-related issues with development would be Poland's 'trademark'.⁹ In statements offered by his successor Jacek Czaputowicz in January 2018, these priorities were replaced with spreading information about 'new threats to peace and security' (although no details were provided) and preventing conflicts which result in increased terror threat, mass-scale migration and humanitarian crises.¹⁰ In April 2018, minister Czaputowicz only mentioned 'new threats', that is challenges posed by non-state actors, hybrid threats and threats linked with climate change.¹¹ A summary of Poland's activity in the SC in 2018, which was published by the MFA, listed another priority involving the protection of the civilian population

⁶ Cf. for example: "Jacek Czaputowicz: 'jesteśmy wciąż rzecznikiem obecności USA w Europie,'" *Obserwator międzynarodowy*, 8 April 2018, www.obserwatormiędzynarodowy.pl.

⁷ "Miesiąc przewodnictwa Polski w Radzie Bezpieczeństwa ONZ," *MSZ*, 7 June 2018, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

⁸ "Zapis przebiegu posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych Sejmu RP," *op. cit.*

⁹ "Waszczykowski: Polska w Radzie Bezpieczeństwa ONZ skupi się na umacnianiu prawa międzynarodowego," *Gazeta Prawna*, 28 December 2017, www.gazetaprawna.pl.

¹⁰ Cf. for example "Szef MSZ weźmie udział w debacie RB ONZ o bezpieczeństwie i rozwoju w Azji Centralnej," *MSZ*, 18 January 2018, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹¹ "Address by Minister of Foreign Affairs Jacek Czaputowicz 'Poland's presidency in the UN Security Council in the context of its UN SC membership in 2018-2019,'" *MSZ*, 26 April 2018, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

during armed conflicts.¹² At the beginning of April 2019, minister Czaputowicz listed the following ‘three main priorities’ of Poland’s SC membership: bolstering respect for international law, promoting the protection of the civilian population during armed conflicts and advocating peaceful methods for conflict solving.¹³ However, in July 2019 he suggested that protection of the civilian population and respect for humanitarian law were of key importance to Poland, while other less crucial goals included respecting other norms of international law and ensuring security in Poland’s immediate neighbourhood.¹⁴

Main Lines of Activity

There were three main directions of Poland’s diplomatic activity in the UN SC in 2018–19. The first involved promoting respect for international law as a pillar of global peace and security. However, as time went by, Poland’s emphasis on respecting such norms as the ban on using force or the commitment to respect territorial integrity gave way to issues linked with humanitarian law and the protection of the civilian population during armed conflicts. This is evidenced by the issues raised during the main events organised by the MFA during two one-month-long spells of Poland’s SC presidency. Six out of the eight such events were dedicated precisely to these issues, with as many as five to broadly understood humanitarian issues.¹⁵ The topics discussed (especially during the 2018 presidency) included issues which had already been raised in the SC forum. Polish diplomacy presented new issues on other occasions, especially during informal meetings held in October and December 2018. These concerned the problems of exclusion and stigmatisation of children born as a result of acts of sexual violence and the situation of people with disabilities during armed conflicts.¹⁶ The member states

¹² “Pierwszy rok członkostwa Polski w Radzie Bezpieczeństwa ONZ – podsumowanie,” Poland in the UN, April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/onz.

¹³ “Rada Bezpieczeństwa o wzmacnianiu prawa międzynarodowego,” MSZ, 1 April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹⁴ “Przewodnictwo Polski w Radzie Bezpieczeństwa ONZ tematem spotkania ministra Jacka Czaputowicza z korpusem dyplomatycznym,” MSZ, 29 July 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹⁵ An Arria formula meeting (7 May 2018) and an open debate (2 August 2019) on the situation of children in armed conflicts, an open debate on the role of international law in the context of maintaining international peace and security (17 May 2018), an open debate on the protection of the civilian population in armed conflicts (22 May 2018), a high-level briefing on the observance of international humanitarian law (13 August 2019) and an Arria formula meeting on the security of individuals belonging to religious minorities (22 August 2019). The remaining two events were a briefing on the security of conducting UN peace-keeping operations (9 May 2018) and a debate on the security situation in the Middle East (20 August 2019).

¹⁶ “Kolejna inicjatywa Polski w RB ONZ: spotkanie w formule Arria poświęcone problematyce dzieci zrodzonych z przemocy seksualnej,” MSZ, 30 October 2018, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

were particularly interested in the latter event. Poland took advantage of this interest in the following year and on 20 June 2019 convinced the SC to unanimously adopt its resolution 2475 on the protection of persons with disabilities in armed conflict.¹⁷ During its SC presidency in May 2018, Poland also initiated a week of events dedicated to the protection of the civilian population. In May 2019, the Indonesian presidency followed suit,¹⁸ which created an opportunity for this pattern of behaviour becoming a common practice in the UN SC. It should also be noted that during Poland's SC membership in May 2019, on the initiative of Poland and other countries, the UN General Assembly designated 22 August as the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief.

The second line of Poland's activity in the SC, which to some degree supplemented the first one, involved acting as a spokesperson for the states from the Central and Eastern Europe, which fell victim to aggression, especially Ukraine. Particularly in the first half of Poland's term its representatives highlighted the situation in Ukraine and emphasised the illegality of the Russian aggression and occupation of the Donbass, the annexation of Crimea and the instances of violation of human rights and the humanitarian law. They did this on a number of occasions, for example during a briefing focused on the goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which was organised by Kuwait in February 2018, an open debate on the protection of the civilian population during armed conflicts, and a briefing on the situation in Ukraine, which were organised during the Polish SC presidency in May 2018, and a similar briefing co-initiated by Poland in October 2018. The Polish government also supported the plan to establish a UN peace-keeping mission in the Donbas and called for appointing a special envoy for Ukraine.¹⁹ However, the proposal to increase UN involvement in this conflict was criticised not only by Russia, but also by France which feared that this could undermine the Normandy format.²⁰ Despite its failure to implement this plan, Poland's involvement contributed to the EU member states maintaining their shared policy towards Ukraine in the SC. Manifestations of this policy included a joint statement issued by eight EU member states which

"Polska podejmuje w Radzie Bezpieczeństwa ONZ kwestię praw osób z niepełnosprawnościami," MSZ, 4 December 2018, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹⁷ "Polski sukces na forum ONZ – Rada Bezpieczeństwa przyjęła jednogłośnie rezolucję 2475 dot. osób niepełnosprawnych w konfliktach zbrojnych," MSZ, 20 June 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹⁸ "Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Open Debate," *What's in Blue*, 22 May 2019, www.whatsinblue.org.

¹⁹ "Minister Jacek Czaputowicz poprowadził briefing Rady Bezpieczeństwa ONZ ws. Ukrainy," MSZ, 30 May 2018, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

²⁰ "Council of Despair?," *op. cit.*

were members of the SC in 2017–20,²¹ which highlighted their full support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity (30 October 2018), and a statement calling for the release of seamen who had been detained during the so-called Kerch Strait Incident²² and de-escalation of the situation in the Sea of Azov (26 November 2018). Poland also active in advocating respect for territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of other states which the UN viewed as Eastern European states, including Georgia. For example, it joined the initiative to organise closed consultations of the SC on the 10th anniversary of Russia's attack on this country (8 August 2018) and, following this meeting, issued a statement together with P3, the Netherlands and Sweden similar to the one issued in October 2018 regarding Ukraine.

The third main line of Poland's activity during its non-permanent membership of the UN SC involved efforts to promote peace and security in the Middle East. Poland began to show greater interest in these issues in the second half of its term. This was reflected for example in the organisation, alongside the U.S., of a conference in Warsaw on 13 and 14 February 2019.²³ Minister Czaputowicz emphasised Poland's commitment, which resulted from its SC membership, to become involved in actions intended to defuse tensions and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region.²⁴ This stance was later presented by Polish diplomats for example during a UN SC high-level briefing on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction held in April 2019²⁵ and during consultations between EU countries which were SC members in June 2019. In addition, Poland supported closer cooperation between the UN and the Arab League for more effective problem solving in the region. During its second spell of SC presidency, Poland organised a debate dedicated to challenges to peace and security in the Middle Eastern region (20 August 2019). This was one of the only two official events organised on Poland's initiative during its presidency, which did not directly focus on international law or the protection of the civilian population during armed conflicts. During the debate, the Polish foreign minister emphasised

²¹ Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Italy. Due to their close cooperation, they began to be referred to at the UN as the 'EU8'. "10 points on Sweden's membership of the UN Security Council 2017–2018," Government Offices of Sweden, 30 December 2018, www.government.se.

²² A.M. Dyer, D. Szeligowski, "Political and Military Aspects of the Russia-Ukraine Kerch Strait Incident," *PISM Spotlight*, no. 79/2018, 27 November 2018, www.pism.pl.

²³ For more, see: K. Wasilewski, M. Wojnarowicz, "Po konferencji w Warszawie – bliskowschodni gambit Polski," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, 2019, no. 3.

²⁴ "Ministerial to Promote Peace and Security in the Middle East," MSZ, 14 February 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

²⁵ "Minister Czaputowicz in New York on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," MSZ, 3 April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

the role of the so-called Warsaw Process which had been initiated during the conference held in February.²⁶ Alongside this, Poland was involved in solving the problems faced by the region's states. It supported the proposal to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict using the two-state model, and during an escalation of tensions on the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip in May 2018 it called on the parties to the conflict to reach an agreement. As regards the conflict in Syria, it emphasised the need to improve the humanitarian situation and highlighted the ban on using chemical weapons. It also supported the operation of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the peace talks in Yemen, including the December 2018 ceasefire agreement. As part of the activities intended to boost its presence in the Middle East, in November 2019 Poland sent 230 soldiers to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).²⁷

Other Activities

As a result of decisions taken by the SC members at the beginning of January 2018, Poland's representatives were appointed as chairs of the sanctions committees for Iraq, Sudan and South Sudan, and vice-chairs of the committees for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, North Korea, Lebanon and Yemen and of the informal working group for documentation and other procedural issues.²⁸ Poland retained all these functions also in 2019, whereas it did not act as the penholder for any of the permanent issues on the SC agenda.²⁹ This may have been due to the lack of clarity regarding the priorities of the Polish SC membership. However, it cannot be ruled out that by abandoning its efforts to assume this role the Polish government intended to assume chairmanship and vice-chairmanship in a bigger number of committees, while the states which act as penholders usually chair fewer committees.

²⁶ "UN Security Council debate on the challenges to peace and security in the Middle East," MSZ, 20 August 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

²⁷ In the context of Polish membership in the Security Council, M. Bużański called for the return of Polish to peacekeeping missions, "Komentarz: Polska niestałym członkiem Rady Bezpieczeństwa ONZ," Casimir Pulaski Foundation, 6 June 2017, www.pulaski.pl.

²⁸ "Note by the President of the Security Council," no. S/2018/2, 2 January 2018, United Nations Documents, www.docs.un.org.

²⁹ This function enables its holder to have a genuine influence on solutions contained in a resolution regarding a specific matter. See: "Lead Roles within the Council in 2019: Penholders and Chairs of Subsidiary Bodies," *Security Council Report*, 31 January 2019, www.securitycouncilreport.org. One exception involved a very limited time-frame for using this opportunity with reference to a resolution regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina during the presidency of a contact group dealing with the situation in that state.

The activity of most of the committees did not raise any major doubts. The committees for South Sudan and Yemen were the only exceptions. As regards the former, reservations voiced by the African SC members, as well as China and Russia, regarding the legitimacy of maintaining sanctions against individuals who were responsible for violating the ceasefire agreement and international humanitarian law were the source of controversy. In the end, in cooperation with the EU member states and the U.S. Poland managed, both in 2018 and 2019, to convince the SC to adopt resolutions extending the sanctions against South Sudan by a small majority (with no veto from Russia and China). As regards Yemen, the sanctions were also extended alongside the mandate of the group of experts who supervised their enforcement. In 2018, a draft of the relevant resolution, which was proposed by the United Kingdom and backed by Poland and other countries, was vetoed by Russia which was opposed to including a passage on Iran's violation of the embargo on arms supplies to Yemen. As a consequence, the sanctions were finally extended on the basis of a compromise solution presented by Russia, which the SC adopted unanimously.

Poland closely cooperated with EU countries which were members of the SC, and with the U.S. This was particularly important in the above-mentioned issues and in voting on the resolutions linked with the conflict in Syria. Manifestations of this solidarity included the EU member states and the U.S. voting unanimously in April 2018 in favour of a resolution condemning Syria's use of chemical weapons (in the end Russia vetoed the resolution) and against Russia's proposals, including resolutions condemning France, the U.S. and the United Kingdom for bombing Syrian air bases³⁰ (as a result of this objection these resolutions were not adopted³¹). In February 2019, alongside the EU member states and the U.S., Poland demonstrated its solidarity during voting on the situation in Venezuela. Although the U.S.-proposed draft resolution condemning the anti-democratic actions of the Nicolás Maduro government, which these countries supported, was not adopted due to a veto expressed by China and Russia, the stance of the EU member states and the U.S. prevented the SC from adopting a Russian-proposed resolution which was favourable to the Maduro government.

In the few instances, when the EU's stance was not unified, Poland chose an option which was closer to the American one. For example, in June 2018, during voting on a draft resolution criticising Israel's reaction to increased tensions on the border with the Gaza Strip, Poland abstained from voting alongside the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and several other countries, while France and

³⁰ This attack was a response to Syria using chemical weapons against the civilian population in the city of Douma.

³¹ Thus, no veto was necessary.

Sweden supported the draft. Ultimately, the resolution was not adopted due to the U.S. veto. Similarly, in December 2019, during voting on a Russian-proposed draft resolution on the humanitarian situation in Syria, Poland voted against alongside France and the United Kingdom (and the U.S.), whereas Belgium and Germany abstained. In addition, in SC debates Poland's representatives were more restrained than diplomats from other countries in their criticism of some U.S. actions (such as the decision to abandon the nuclear deal with Iran). However, when the EU's stance was homogenous, even when it was critical of U.S. initiatives, Poland voted in concert with other EU member states. For example in June 2018 it voted against a U.S.-proposed draft resolution to put the blame for increased tensions on the border with the Gaza Strip on the Palestinian Hamas organisation.

Alongside this, in cooperation with other EU member states Poland proposed various initiatives in the SC forum. These mainly included the organisation of events and issuing statements on the situation in Ukraine and Georgia, as well as in Kosovo and Syria. Some initiatives were carried out in smaller groups of states, for example the closed consultations on the situation in the Korean Peninsula held in January 2018 (with Sweden) and the meeting in the Arria formula³² held in December 2018, which was devoted to boosting the effectiveness of prevention of the most serious crimes according to international law (with Belgium, Germany and several other states).

During Poland's SC presidency the likely biggest challenge involved the increase in tensions in the relations between Pakistan and India following India's decision to curb the autonomy of the Kashmir region, which happened during Poland's second SC presidency. In response to Pakistan's and China's attempts to internationalise this dispute by bringing it to the SC forum, Poland expressed its opinion that it should be resolved by way of bilateral negotiations (this stance was convergent with the opinion shared by the EU, including France and the United Kingdom, as well as the U.S. and Russia), and ultimately it convened so-called informal consultations behind closed doors. Officially, both sides of the dispute welcomed these activities. India emphasised Poland's efforts to seek a bilateral solution and its refusal to organise a formal meeting, while Pakistan thanked

³² The practice of convening meetings in this formula was initiated in 1992 by a Venezuelan ambassador Diego Arria, after whom it is named. These meetings are informal and are convened on the initiative of one SC member (not necessarily the presiding one) with no involvement of the UN Secretariat; its co-organisers may be non-SC members. The presence of all SC members is not required, and the meeting's format enables an exchange of opinions between the invited guests (mainly representatives of states which are not SC members, as well as international and non-governmental organisations) and the representatives of the SC member states. See: "Background Note on the 'Arria-Formula' Meetings of the Security Council Members," United Nations, 25 October 2002, www.un.org.

Poland for raising the issue of Kashmir in the SC forum for the first time since 1965.³³

Poland was also involved in efforts to achieve disarmament and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear and chemical weapons. This was for example emphasised in January 2018 by President Andrzej Duda during a high-level briefing on confidence-building measures in the sphere of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction³⁴ and in April 2019 by FM Jacek Czaputowicz during a similar briefing dedicated to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).³⁵ This was coherent with Poland's efforts to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East and de-nuclearise the Korean Peninsula.

The Polish government was also involved in initiatives linked with the consequences of climate change for international security. In January 2019, Deputy Energy Minister Michał Kurtyka took part in an open debate in the SC on the consequences of natural disasters linked with climate change for international peace and security.³⁶ In February 2019, Poland organised a meeting focused on ways to use the UN peace-keeping missions in Mali, Sudan and the Central African Republic to mitigate the effects of climate change.³⁷

Assessment

The manner in which most of Poland's policy goals regarding its UN SC membership in 2018–19 were defined makes it difficult to assess whether and to what degree they have been achieved, especially as a portion of them was designed to have a long-term effect. As regards those instances in which an assessment was possible, the overall result seems moderately positive.

Possibilities of improving Poland's external security as a result of its SC membership were limited. Due to Russia's stance and its privileged status as a permanent SC member, using the SC as an instrument to improve the situation in Ukraine, which is a country of key importance from the point of view of Poland's security interests, was not a viable solution. However, certain steps that

³³ "First Since 1965, UN Security Council to Hold Rare Closed-Door Meeting on Kashmir Today on China, Pak Request," *CNN News-18*, 16 August 2019, www.news18.com.

³⁴ "Minister Jacek Czaputowicz z wizytą w Nowym Jorku," MSZ, 18 January 2018, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

³⁵ "Minister Czaputowicz o nieprolifracji broni masowego rażenia," MSZ, 2 April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

³⁶ "Przewodniczący COP24 minister Michał Kurtyka z wizytą w Nowym Jorku," MSZ, 29 January 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

³⁷ "Powiązanie skutków zmian klimatu z sytuacją bezpieczeństwa," MSZ, 25 February 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

Poland took with the interest of the region's states in mind, especially Ukraine and Georgia, helped to prevent a deterioration of their situation. They also were manifestations of political support and were much appreciated by Ukrainian and Georgian diplomats.³⁸ In addition, the promotion of norms such as the commitment to respect territorial integrity and the ban on using force had a positive impact on boosting the role of international law as an instrument to regulate inter-state relations. For Poland as a medium-sized country, this was in line with its efforts to ensure security to itself.

Although Poland was a reliable and predictable partner to other EU member states which were members of the SC, there is no proof that Poland's activity in the SC had a direct influence on successful pursuit of specific interests in the EU forum. Similarly, there are no statements by diplomats representing the EU as a whole or its specific member states which could suggest that owing to Poland's activity in the SC its position in the EU got consolidated.

Positive assessments from Ukraine and Georgia, as well as from other states such as India and Pakistan, suggest that Poland's SC membership has had a positive impact on its image at least in the eyes of some non-EU states. However, it would be difficult to verify whether and how it contributed to an increase in the frequency of trade and economic contacts. Certain positive economic occurrences, such as a rise in foreign trade, could have resulted from more active economic diplomacy, for example linked with the expansion of foreign trade offices of the Polish Investment and Trade Agency.

Poland's SC membership created opportunities for Polish diplomats to gain new experience, which in the future may have a positive impact on the pursuit of Polish foreign policy. Despite this, information on the initiatives undertaken was not widely known to the public due to the absence of a well-thought-out information and promotion strategy.

The continuous evolution of Poland's priorities in the SC has had a negative impact on their implementation, perhaps with the exception of the promotion of respect for international law and the protection of the civilian population in armed conflicts. This lack of cohesion was to some degree due to the foreign minister change at the turn of 2018 and the new minister's efforts to increase his impact on the activities carried out as part of Poland's SC membership.

Placing emphasis on the protection of the civilian population was right because it reflected the genuine importance of this problem, which continued

³⁸ "Ukraine: Statement by H.E. Mr. Sergiy Kyslytsya," Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations, 15 March 2019, www.ukraineun.org; Georgia: a statement by Georgia's permanent representative at the UN Kaha Imnadze published on Twitter on 8 August 2019, www.twitter.com.

to rise during Poland's term. As regards these issues, Poland managed to make a unique contribution to the SC's work by highlighting the aspect of persons with disabilities, which had been ignored thus far. Convincing the SC to adopt a resolution regarding this issue was a major success which Poland shared with the United Kingdom which acted as the penholder for matters linked with the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. Therefore, it was necessary to step up efforts to assume this role.³⁹ The civilian population protection week initiated by Poland can be viewed as a symbol of its activity in the SC, one that could help to build a positive image for Poland in the United Nations. In October 2019, these activities facilitated Poland's election by the General Assembly to the UN Human Rights Council for 2020–22, which enabled it to continue a portion of its initiatives launched during its SC membership. This in particular involves the activities to boost the protection of the rights of children, persons with disabilities and members of religious minority groups, as well as to spread information about instances of Russia's violation of the humanitarian law and human rights including in Ukraine and Georgia.

Insufficient activity in other areas which had been listed as priority areas ahead of the beginning of Poland's SC membership and during it was disappointing. Poland's failure to highlight the impact of climate change on international peace and security can be viewed as a lost opportunity. Poland's chairmanship of global climate talks in 2019, following the COP24 summit in Katowice, was a favourable occasion to do so.

Poland's informal priorities during its SC membership included activities focused on Eastern European states and on peace-building measures in the Middle East. As regards the latter issues, the Polish government encountered certain obstacles, as evidenced by the low rank of the delegation representing Western Europe at the Warsaw conference and during an open debate at the SC on challenges to peace and security in the Middle East. Thus, any continuation of these activities will be difficult for a number of reasons including the fact that due to the COVID-19 pandemic the process was halted and it is unclear whether it will be revived. The return of the Polish military mission to the UN's peace-keeping operation in Lebanon (UNIFIL) after ten years of non-involvement has created an opportunity for Poland to increase its role in Middle Eastern affairs.

³⁹ This is what P. Grzebyk suggested following the end of the first year of Poland's term, "Czerwony alarm...", *op. cit.*

20 Years of Poland's NATO Membership: a Gradual Strengthening of Collective Defence

WOJCIECH LORENZ

The Evolution of NATO's Strategy

By joining NATO in 1999, Poland achieved one of its main strategic objectives set after the end of the Cold War and after regaining sovereignty. With security guarantees from its Allies, including the strongest Western powers, it could count on optimal conditions conducive to its long-term development. However, political guarantees had to be backed up by adequate plans, forces, commands and exercises to enable a defence operation to be carried out.

Since after the end of the Cold War in the 1990s the threat of a massive attack from the USSR (Russia) effectively disappeared, NATO reduced its conventional and nuclear potential and lowered the level of its troops' readiness. In its 1991 and 1999 strategies, the Alliance declared that it would maintain a collective defence capability and also emphasised its intention to develop its capability to conduct crisis response missions.¹ The conflicts in the Balkans in 1995 and 1999 showed that the ability to use force quickly outside one's own territory is essential in order to respond to crises while they are at a sufficiently early stage and thereby to reduce their magnitude and negative consequences for the Alliance.² In addition, developing NATO's ability to shape the security situation beyond its own territory was an important element of the process of boosting its political cohesion at a time when a portion of its member states no longer regarded Russia as an immediate threat. This is why, in the 2010 strategy, the Allies highlighted crisis response and cooperative security, boosted by cooperation with other states and organisations, as their two new missions.³

¹ "The Alliance's New Strategic Concept, agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, 7–8 November 1991," NATO, www.nato.int; "The Alliance's Strategic Concept Approved by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington D.C.," NATO, 24 April 1999, www.nato.int.

² R. Kugler, "The NATO Response Force 2002–2006. Innovation by the Atlantic Alliance," *Case Studies in National Security Transformation*, no. 1, December 2006.

³ A.D. Rotfeld (ed.), *NATO 2020: Zapewnione bezpieczeństwo, dynamiczne zaangażowanie*, PISM, Warszawa, 2010.

Following the United States' strategic decision to expand NATO to include Central Europe, the Alliance launched measures intended to reduce concerns shared by Russia and some NATO member states regarding this enlargement. NATO signalled that it treated Russia as a partner rather than as a threat. In 1997, before Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary received their official invitations to become NATO members, the Alliance signed a political declaration of partnership with Russia (the NATO–Russia Founding Act) in which it assured that “in the current and foreseeable security environment” it would not deploy any substantial combat forces to the territory of new member states.

Despite these concessions, Russia did not accept this variant of the European security system which included, among other things, the possibility of enlarging NATO and the European Union. Using political methods, as well as economic and military pressure, it tried to prevent the integration of its neighbours into these organisations. In 2008, it launched an attack on Georgia, which was a clear signal that it was prepared to use military force to prevent further NATO enlargement into the former USSR. It also launched an ambitious programme of modernisation of its armed forces.⁴ In 2014, it annexed Crimea and, in an attempt to block Ukraine's integration into the EU and NATO, it supported pro-Russian separatists and threatened to divide Ukraine. Alongside this, it stepped up hybrid actions (including cyber attacks, acts of disinformation) against NATO states and carried out unannounced exercises near their borders, thereby increasing the risk of an accidental confrontation or a planned use of force.

Despite NATO's enlargement and its pledges to maintain its ability to conduct collective defence missions, there was a certain resistance within the Alliance to the intention to boost mechanisms intended to enhance NATO's ability to defend its own territory. The 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks targeting the U.S., carried out by al-Qaeda terrorists, increased the pressure on NATO to adapt to new types of threats. The United States made the fight against terrorism its most important objective and began to reduce the number of its troops in Europe to less than 100,000; back in the 1990s this threshold was considered necessary for NATO's deterrence of Russia to be credible.⁵ In response to the attacks on the World Trade Centre, NATO invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty for the first time in its history and provided political and operational support to the U.S. Subsequently, the Alliance took over command of the mission in Afghanistan,

⁴ A.M. Dyer, “Nowe uzbrojenie Rosji – propaganda, uzupełnianie braków czy wyzwanie dla NATO?,” *Raport PISM*, September 2015, www.pism.pl.

⁵ “A National Security Strategy for a New Century,” The White House, October 1998, <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/1998.pdf>.

which was intended to prevent that country's territory from being once again used to prepare attacks against the U.S. and its allies.⁶

Due to the burden linked with the mission in Afghanistan, attempts to build a partnership with Russia, low risk of an armed attack on NATO territory, increased terrorist threat (including the attacks in Madrid in 2004 and in London in 2005) and financial constraints, the member states were unable to achieve NATO's intended size and quality of forces which were necessary to conduct both collective defence and crisis response missions outside the Alliance's territory. As a consequence, there were problems with creating the NATO Response Force (NRF), a multinational unit designed to provide the Alliance with a rapid response capability. The 2011 intervention in Libya was another instance which demonstrated the limited ability of NATO's European member states to carry out combat operations and their dependence on U.S. support.

The United States warned its partners that it viewed China as its main threat in the long term and announced a shift of its strategic focus to the Asia-Pacific region (the so-called pivot to Asia). This is why it demanded that its European allies should boost their capabilities and assume greater responsibility for Europe's security. Although the U.S. and NATO had reduced their involvement in Afghanistan, the absence of adequate defence spending continued to hinder the capacity development of the European NATO members. This led to constant tensions in transatlantic relations and intensified debates on the European Union's so-called strategic autonomy.⁷ Under this notion some states understood the ability to independently conduct crisis response missions outside their own territory, one that could complement NATO. Others saw it as an alternative to NATO's collective defence and to a strong relationship with the U.S.

The negative trend in NATO policy was successfully reversed after Russia's annexation of Crimea. The Allies increased their defence spending and began to adapt their command structures and to create forces prepared to defend the new

⁶ This mission went beyond the Euro-Atlantic area, which is covered by security guarantees, and was not conducted on the basis of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

⁷ The term 'strategic autonomy', as used in the context of European security policy, emerged in France's White Book of Security and Defence published in 1994. The European Union taking over the Western European Union's (WEU) commitments regarding the so-called Petersberg tasks (crisis response measures), followed by it taking over the WEU's commitments regarding collective defence, which were later enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty, have created an institutional basis for developing an autonomous policy in the sphere of security and defence (CSDP). See: "Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union," *Official Journal of the European Union*, 30 March 2010, C83, www.eur-lex.europa.eu. The evolution of the EU's security and defence policy was discussed for example in: S. Biscop, J. Coelmont, *Europe, Strategy and Armed Forces*, Routledge, New York 2012; A. Hyde-Price, "European Security, Strategic Culture and the Use of Force," *European Security*, 2004, no. 4, pp. 323–343; O. de France, N. Witney, "Europe's Strategic Cacophony," *ECFR Publications*, 2013, no. 77, pp. 4–8, www.ecfr.eu.

member states. At the same time, amid increasing destabilisation of the Middle East and North Africa, NATO had to step up its support to countries that felt threatened by uncontrolled migration and terrorism. Both within NATO and on the basis of bilateral agreements, the United States continued to increase its military presence in Central and Eastern Europe and invested in infrastructure enabling redeployment of additional troops. At the same time, at the beginning of his term, U.S. President Donald Trump challenged NATO's usefulness to the United States and suggested that the U.S. would not defend those Allies which had insufficient defence spending. In addition, the U.S. began to put pressure on the Alliance to adapt to China's rising power and to the related security challenges. The concern that, in the event of tensions or a crisis in the Indo-Pacific region, the U.S. would reduce its military presence in Europe provided an additional impetus for some countries to develop the concept of strategic autonomy within the EU.

Goals

After joining NATO in 1999, Poland's priority involved the North Atlantic Alliance maintaining its collective defence capability based on Allied solidarity and nuclear deterrence.⁸ To accomplish this, NATO needed to devise plans and prepare its commands and forces to defend the territory of the new member states. Poland consistently viewed the presence of U.S. troops and U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe as a precondition for maintaining security on the continent. Poland's goal was to have elements of the NATO command structure deployed in its territory to enable the defence mission. Modernisation of the armed forces and their adjustment to NATO standards were also necessary, as well as ensuring their ability to participate in joint missions, including in the field of crisis response. Following Russia's aggression against Georgia in 2008, Poland stepped up its efforts to adapt NATO plans, commands, forces and exercises to the needs of collective defence. It also sought U.S. military presence and deployment of Allied troops in its territory. It also repeatedly declared its support for such defence cooperation within the EU which would complement NATO and boost its ability to conduct crisis response missions, rather than serve as an alternative to the Alliance and to strong transatlantic ties. In addition, Poland's strategic goal was for the Alliance to maintain its so-called open-door policy which included the prospect of further NATO enlargement.

⁸ "Strategia Bezpieczeństwa Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (2000)," in: R. Kupiecki (ed.), *Strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego. Pierwsze 25 lat*, Wojskowe Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej, Warsaw 2015, pp. 240–260.

Two Decades of Poland's Policy in NATO

When Poland joined NATO, it became the Alliance's frontier state obligated to maintain its ability to protect its borders in line with NATO standards. Following the Baltic states' admission to NATO in 2004, Poland became a state of key importance to their security. In the event of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia being threatened by Russia, the ability to defend them would depend on mobilisation of significant NATO forces on Polish soil and on their redeployment via a narrow land corridor located between Belarus and Kaliningrad Oblast (the so-called Suwałki Gap). Due to geographical conditions, the military threats were mainly linked with the size, structure, level of preparedness and deployment of Russian land forces. Moreover, in a potential conflict situation, Poland had to take into account the possibility of Russia launching air strikes on its territory and, in the worst-case scenario, the threat of Russia using nuclear weapons.

As a NATO member, Poland was required to develop its military potential and infrastructure in three main areas: the ability to defend its own territory until receiving assistance from Allies, the ability to host support forces as a host nation, and the ability to allocate appropriate forces to NATO missions linked with the need to provide support to another attacked Ally or to carry out crisis response missions outside NATO territory. The ability to organise missions jointly with other Allies required appropriate weaponry and a relevant level of armed forces training.

At the time of joining NATO, the Polish armed forces had 240,000 soldiers, including nine land divisions equipped with 1,600 tanks among other things. Although this potential was significant, it required a thorough modernisation. In the initial period of its NATO membership, Poland was able to fulfil its basic NATO obligations using the help offered by the Allies who donated their equipment that met NATO standards or sold it to it at a bargain price. This is how the Polish navy received two large combat ships and four helicopters from the U.S. and four submarines from Norway. This enabled it, for example, to support NATO's standing naval forces, including during operations outside the Baltic Sea. Germany donating 23 MiG-29 multi-role aircraft and reselling, at a bargain price, 128 Leopard tanks facilitated Poland's efforts to achieve its minimum modernisation goals.

To ensure funding for armed forces modernisation in a long-term perspective, in May 2001 the Sejm passed a law which introduced the requirement to earmark at least 1.95% of the previous year's GDP for defence. This made it possible to finance the purchase of 48 U.S.-made F-16 aircraft, in its Advanced Block 52+ version, which was a significant boost to the air force's combat potential. At

the same time, Poland made efforts to reduce the size of its army in order to find additional funds for modernisation. By 2010, the Polish armed forces were transformed into a professional army and reduced to 100,000 soldiers, including three divisions and three independent land brigades. However, the Polish armed forces' ability to defend the country's territory until NATO support is received raised certain doubts. The process of phasing out obsolete equipment from the existing military units was faster than the process of introducing new types of armament. As a consequence, even the ambitious modernisation plans adopted following the Russian-Georgian war have failed to result in a boost to the armed forces' combat potential.⁹

NATO's financial support helped Poland to meet the minimum standards linked with the responsibilities of a host nation which needs be able to host the support forces. In 1999–2015, under the NATO Security Investment Program (NSIP) Poland received more than PLN500 million for the expansion and modernisation of ports, airfields and fuel depots. Funding was also provided for the development of signalling and command systems as well as radars as part of the NATO Integrated Air Defence System.¹⁰

Alongside this, Poland sought to boost NATO's ability to conduct collective defence missions, which required, among other things, properly deployed and trained commands. As part of the reform of the command structure, NATO adapted the commands in the Netherlands (Brunssum) and Italy (Naples) to perform command operations of NATO's multinational rapid reaction force. However, the potential of these forces was insignificant and commanding a larger collective defence operation required command structures in the region of the planned operation. Although the command of the Multinational Corps Northeast was established in Szczecin just before Poland's accession to NATO, in practice it was not prepared to conduct any operations and in the first years of its existence its significance was mainly political.¹¹ It was only after NATO's involvement in Afghanistan that elements of this command began to be used during ISAF missions. Although the command's practical significance began to increase, it continued to be linked with crisis response missions rather than collective defence. NATO's Joint Force Training Centre was established in Poland, in Bydgoszcz (2004). However, due to the fact that it is a training institution it had

⁹ "Strategiczny Przegląd Obronny. Profesjonalne siły zbrojne w nowoczesnym państwie," *Raport*, 2010/2011, April 2011, MON, www.mon.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa.

¹⁰ "Inwestycje NATO w Polsce w ramach NSIP," MON, 2016, www.mon.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa.

¹¹ The command was established by Poland, Germany and Denmark. However, in the event of a crisis it could be included in NATO structures upon the approval of all Allies.

no impact on the Alliance's ability to carry out defence operations. The creation of NATO's Signal Battalion in Bydgoszcz (2010) and the establishment of expert centres focused on military police (2013) and counterintelligence (2014) were also of minor significance.

Attempts to strengthen Poland's strategic relations with the U.S., and thereby to boost Poland's influence on NATO's reform, were among the main reasons behind the Polish authorities supporting the U.S. intervention in Iraq in 2003. Poland was one of merely four countries (alongside the U.S., the UK and Australia) to take part in the first stage of the combat operation, which were carried out on the basis of flawed analyses of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programme.¹² Around 150 special forces soldiers and 70 soldiers from units trained in defence against weapons of mass destruction took part in the operations. In the subsequent stage of the mission, following the regime's overthrow, Poland sent a 2400-strong contingent to Iraq, which took over responsibility for one Iraqi province and command of the multinational division as a whole.

The intervention triggered a deep political crisis within NATO and exposed Poland to problems in the relations with those of its European allies which opposed it, i.e. France and Germany. Starting from 2004, Poland began to gradually reduce its involvement in the Iraq mission and to increase its involvement in the operation in Afghanistan, for which NATO assumed responsibility in 2003. At its peak in 2011, the Polish Military Contingent (PMC)—Task Force White Eagle—had around 2500 troops and was the seventh largest contingent of the 46 countries involved and fifth largest among the European allies.¹³ Poland was one of the few countries which failed to impose restrictions on the use of troops in combat operations. It also assumed responsibility for the security and training of Afghan security forces in Ghazni province, one of particularly dangerous provinces in the eastern part of the country. This is how Poland evolved from mainly strengthening its bilateral relations with the U.S. to supporting the cohesion of the Alliance as a whole and to boosting its image as a reliable U.S. ally.

Poland's participation in missions made it necessary to modernise its armed forces. This particularly concerned soldiers' personal equipment. However, it also accelerated the process of replacing the infantry fighting vehicles used thus far with modern Rosomak vehicles. Around fifty thousand Polish soldiers gained combat experience and learned to cooperate with U.S. forces. For the purposes

¹² S.A. Carney, "Allied Participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom," Center of Military History, United States Army, 2011, pp. 98–100.

¹³ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 16 March 2011)," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

of this mission, Poland also purchased less than twenty CASA C-295M transport aircraft, and received five C-130 Hercules aircraft under a programme of non-refundable U.S. financial assistance (Foreign Military Financing). In addition, Poland joined an initiative established by twelve countries to jointly fund a fleet of three Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC) transport aircraft. As a consequence, it increased its ability to redeploy troops and to participate in crisis response missions.

Poland's involvement in most NATO missions was proportionate to its potential. Aside from the mission in Afghanistan, it took part in the KFOR mission in the Balkans (from 1999), the training mission in Iraq (from 2005), missions carried out in the Mediterranean Sea including 'Active Endeavour' (from 2001) and 'Sea Guardian' (from 2016). Since 2005, it has regularly taken part in the Baltic Air Policing mission. However, it was not involved in 'Operation Open Shield', an anti-piracy mission carried out in the Horn of Africa (2008). Similarly, it did not provide military support to NATO's mission in Libya in 2011, as a result of which it came under direct criticism from the U.S.¹⁴

Following Russia's aggression against Georgia, the Polish authorities stepped up pressure to update NATO's defence plans, as those adopted at the time of the Alliance's enlargement no longer reflected the new realities associated with Russia's aggressive policy on the one hand, and with the Alliance's weakened capabilities, including reduced U.S. presence in Europe, on the other. Under pressure from Poland, in 2010 NATO adopted plans which were code-named 'Eagle Guardian' and envisaged the involvement of nine divisions in defending Poland and the Baltic states.¹⁵ Five of these divisions were to be provided by the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States, while Poland would provide the remaining four.

In addition, Poland gained significant influence on NATO's new Strategic Concept which was adopted as a result of discussions at the Lisbon Summit in 2010.¹⁶ Although NATO recognised collective defence, crisis response and cooperative security as its three main missions, it also emphasised—in line with Polish expectations—that the ability to defend its member states continued to be its most important task. The Strategic Concept contained a provision regarding 'visible assurances', which enabled Poland to seek an opportunity to have Allied troops trained and at least temporarily stationed on Polish soil.¹⁷ However,

¹⁴ "Remarks by Secretary Gates at the Security and Defense Agenda, Brussels, Belgium," Department of Defense, 10 June 2011., www.archive.defense.gov.

¹⁵ M. Górka, "Ewentualnie 9 dywizji," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 5 November 2010, www.wyborcza.pl.

¹⁶ A.D. Rotfeld (ed.), *op. cit.*

¹⁷ "Klich: Polska usatysfakcjonowana nową koncepcją NATO," *Newsweek*, 13 November 2010, www.newsweek.pl.

the expectations regarding the deployment of elements of NATO's command structure in Poland were not fulfilled.

The summit held in Chicago in 2012 marked an important stage of Poland's efforts to boost NATO's capability to conduct collective defence and deterrence missions.¹⁸ At that time, NATO approved, among other things, its Deterrence and Defence Posture Review (DDPR), one of the most important documents setting the directions for the development of conventional and nuclear forces. Poland played an important part in devising various initiatives including a compromise on nuclear deterrence, while some states were considering the plan to remove U.S. nuclear weapons from their territory. In line with Poland's expectations, the DDPR emphasised the need for NATO to have an adequate set of conventional and nuclear forces capable of defending its member states and serving as a deterrent.¹⁹ This was important because, after the end of the Cold War, in its strategy the Alliance considerably reduced the size and importance of nuclear forces in Europe, while Russia was modernising its nuclear potential and increasing its role in its doctrine. The Alliance expressed its readiness to continue to reduce U.S. nuclear forces in Europe. However, these initiatives were to be conditional on Russia behaving likewise. In addition, NATO stressed the importance of conventional deterrence and the need to have the forces necessary to participate in a high-intensity conflict. As a consequence, Poland proposed to take the military capabilities which are necessary for collective defence into account in subsequent planning documents.

At that time, Poland was already negotiating with the U.S. the deployment of an element of the so-called missile defence shield in its territory, and attempted to strengthen its strategic relations with the United States in the wake of Russia's aggression against Georgia. In 2008, the Polish government had signed an agreement enabling the construction of a U.S. military base with missile launchers to protect U.S. territory against a limited ballistic missile attack. However, the system sparked controversy. It was opposed by Russia and also by a portion of NATO Allies who feared Russia's reaction. However, Poland was hoping that the presence of installations which were of strategic importance to the U.S. would help

¹⁸ "Wystąpienie Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych RP Pana Radosława Sikorskiego pt. Szczyt w Chicago: co z NATO po Afganistanie?," PISM, 17 May 2012, www.pism.pl; A. Bugajski, "The NATO Summit in Chicago: Poland's Priorities," *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*, 2012, no. 1, pp. 19–28; P. Pietrzak, "Szczyt NATO w Chicago—determinanty, oczekiwania i rezultaty," *Bezpieczeństwo Międzynarodowe*, 2012, no. 2, pp. 47–64.

¹⁹ M. Madej, "NATO po szczycie w Chicago: stan i perspektywy rozwoju," in: R. Czulda, R. Łoś, J. Reginia-Zacharski (eds.), *NATO wobec wyzwań współczesnego świata*, Uniwersytet Łódzki, Łódź 2013, pp. 26–38; J. Durkalec, "Assessment of NATO's Deterrence and Defence Posture Review," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 53 (918), 24 May 2012, www.pism.pl.

to boost the credibility of U.S. security guarantees. During the negotiations, the U.S. pledged to deploy the Patriot air and missile defence system in Poland and to devise a permanent mechanism for bilateral consultations with Poland.²⁰ After the change of government in the U.S. in 2009, the new Barack Obama administration introduced major changes to the concept of missile defence. The U.S. decided that the range of the European part of the system would be reduced and would protect European territory rather than U.S. territory. The reconfiguration could have been perceived as a concession to Russia, as it was an element of a policy to improve relations with Moscow. However, by implementing these modifications the U.S. convinced NATO to jointly develop a missile defence system.

Contrary to its initial declarations, the U.S. failed to create a garrison for Patriot missile launchers in Poland. Instead, it offered to ensure a rotational presence of F-16 and C-130 Hercules aircraft and to create a permanent logistical facility for these aircraft (Aviation Detachment, AV-DET). 2012 saw the launch of an initiative involving the stationing of 10–20 personnel to support the periodic rotations of a U.S. Air Force subdivision. This marked the first breakthrough in the policy of the Allies, who had thus far refused to deploy their troops to Poland.

As agreed at the Lisbon and Chicago summits, NATO also decided to practice the redeployment of rapid reaction forces to Poland and the Baltic States as part of the Steadfast Jazz exercise held in 2013. From among Poland's allies, the largest contribution to this exercise was made by France which was preparing to take command of the NATO Response Force. Other countries, including the U.S., only sent very small forces, which was below Poland's expectations.²¹

A Durable Change in Poland's Security Environment

Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its involvement in the conflict in eastern Ukraine corroborated Poland's concerns regarding Moscow's attempts to create a sphere of influence in its neighbourhood by issuing threats that it might use military force or by actually using it. Poland accelerated its efforts to boost its defence capability: it launched the creation of 17 brigades of territorial defence troops and announced the reconstruction of a fourth division. In 2016, it increased its defence spending to 2% of its GDP in line with NATO standards and announced its intention to increase it further up to 2.5% of its GDP by 2030.

²⁰ "Deklaracja w sprawie współpracy strategicznej między Rzeczpospolitą Polską a Stanami Zjednoczonymi Ameryki," BBN, 20 August 2008, www.bbn.gov.pl.

²¹ "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)," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

Over a couple of years, it signed contracts with the U.S. regarding the purchase of Patriot air and missile defence systems (2018), HIMARS rocket launchers (2019) and negotiated the purchase of fifth generation F35 fighter jets.

The Polish authorities recognised that Russia's actions caused a durable change in the security environment and began to openly seek U.S. and NATO troop presence on Polish soil. At the time of Crimea's annexation, they invoked Article 4 of the Washington Treaty to convene special NATO consultations and to increase the number of exercises of Allied troops in the territory of Eastern Flank states. At its summit in Wales in September 2014, the Alliance refrained from making a decision on deploying in Poland units prepared to carry out collective defence missions under NATO structures and procedures. It only decided to boost its rapid reaction forces, to reduce the time needed for their redeployment and to adjust the command structure, including the command in Szczecin, to the needs of collective defence.²²

The NATO summit in Warsaw in July 2016, during which the Allies approved the decision to deploy multinational battalion battle groups in the Baltic states and in Poland, was a breakthrough. As a consequence, in 2017 a NATO battle group (consisting of around 1,100 soldiers) commanded by the U.S. was stationed in Orzysz. In addition, the U.S. launched 9-month rotations to Europe of an armoured brigade, whose major component began to be stationed and to exercise in Poland. The U.S. has also increased its spending on infrastructure development to enable defence operations on Polish soil, among other things.

At the same time, Poland advocated continued strengthening of the capability to conduct collective defence operations which required a rapid involvement of more substantial NATO combat forces. In 2018, at a summit in Brussels, NATO decided to boost its rapid response capability by forming additional forces able to launch defence actions within less than 30 days. In addition, the Polish Ministry of Defence attempted to convince the U.S. to permanently deploy in Poland its forces of the size of a division, and announced its intention to earmark \$1.5–2 billion for the development of the necessary infrastructure.²³ These actions sparked major controversy within the Alliance. Some member states argued that bilateral cooperation, which could provoke Russia, should be consulted with all NATO states beforehand. The tension were eased through the required consultations and

²² "Informacja Ministra Obrony Narodowej oraz Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych na temat rezultatów szczytu NATO w Newport (5–6 września 2014 r.)," National Defense Commission, 11 September 2014, no. 95.

²³ "Proposal for U.S. Permanent Presence in Poland," MON, 2018, www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa.

attempts to convince all NATO allies that U.S. presence would boost the security of the Alliance as a whole.

In their strategic partnership declaration signed in 2018 and their defence cooperation declaration signed in 2019,²⁴ the United States and Poland emphasised their readiness to continue to develop cooperation. The latter document envisaged, among other things, an increase in U.S. presence in Poland from 4500 to 5500 troops. Moreover, the agreement paved the way for the deployment in Poland of the necessary elements (command, reconnaissance, support forces) to facilitate the U.S. division's operation.

Conclusions

Over the two decades of its NATO membership, Poland has pursued a consistent policy aimed at strengthening the Alliance's ability to conduct collective defence missions. However, at the beginning of this period, it had to focus on building its image as a credible ally which was ready to engage in NATO missions in proportion to its potential. Therefore, it gradually increased its ability to influence NATO's policy. Its main objectives were only achieved following Russia's annexation of Crimea, when the deployment of NATO forces and U.S. troops on Polish soil on the basis of bilateral agreements boosted the credibility of the collective defence guarantee. The Allies' decision was mainly influenced by the new assessment of threats and the related increase in Poland's importance as the largest state located on NATO's Eastern Flank. However, activities undertaken by Poland also played an important part, including its political capital built up during the mission in Afghanistan, the coordination of activities carried out within regional formats (such as the Visegrad Group, the Bucharest Nine), the modernisation of its own military potential and the fulfilment of its commitments to NATO, for example regarding the level of defence spending and the participation in NATO's major missions. However, the rather small number of Polish nationals holding important positions in NATO structures is among several aspects suggesting that Poland's influence in NATO was limited. So far, the highest ranking Polish NATO officials were Adam Kobieracki, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Operations in 2003–07, and General Mieczysław Bieniek, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Transformation in 2010–13.

One challenge for Poland will involve continuing to strengthen the mechanisms of collective defence through the development of NATO support

²⁴ "Wspólna deklaracja o polsko-amerykańskim partnerstwie strategicznym," *Prezydent.pl*, 18 September 2018, www.prezydent.pl; "Deklaracja o współpracy obronnej Polski oraz USA," BBN, 23 September 2019, www.bbn.gov.pl.

forces and the ability to redeploy them, among other things. It is in Poland's interest to make sure that these forces are properly armed and trained, and that the ability to redeploy them is accompanied by the development of the necessary infrastructure. In addition, Poland will need to pursue a consistent policy in its relations with the U.S. and with European NATO members to consolidate the presence of Allied troops in its territory. This will require efforts to deepen strategic contacts, including cooperation, in developing military capabilities for the needs of collective defence and crisis response missions, as well as in engaging in missions outside of NATO's territory. Poland will need to pursue an active policy within the EU to ensure that the concept of 'strategic autonomy' will serve to bolster European defence capabilities as one of NATO's pillars, rather than to undermine the relations with the U.S. It will be in the common interest of Poland and other European NATO member states to boost NATO's capabilities and transatlantic ties so as to prevent the possible rise of the threat posed by China in the Indo-Pacific region from becoming a pretext for a significant reduction in U.S. military presence in Europe.

Poland's pPlyc Towards India since 2004

PATRYK KUGIEL

Background

Increasing diversification of Poland's foreign policy directions and the economic and political transformation in India were the key determinants of Poland's policy towards India post-2004. Poland achieving its strategic goals after the end of the Cold War, that is its accession to NATO in 1999 and to the European Union in 2004, opened up prospects for strengthening its relations with non-European states which back in the 1990s received less attention due to Poland's focus on European and American policy directions. In addition, the financial and economic crisis affecting Europe and the U.S., which began in 2008, made the Polish authorities realise that Poland's dependence on the European market (which accounted for more than 80% of its exports) was not favourable for the Polish economy which required greater diversification of exports and investment cooperation. Poland's sustained economic growth and improvement in its position within the EU boosted its opportunities for improving its relations with countries located on other continents. As a dynamically growing large economy and Poland's traditional partner during the communist era, India began to be viewed as a promising cooperation partner.

Poland's interest in India was due to economic reforms launched there in 1991, combined with the country's greater openness to international cooperation, which resulted in a surge in economic growth and an improvement in socio-economic conditions. In 2004–19, India's annual growth rate exceeded 6% of its GDP, which made the country the fastest growing economy among the G20 members, starting from 2016. As regards the nominal GDP value, over that period India has moved up from 10th to 5th place, and when purchasing power parity (PPP) is taken into account, it is the world's third largest economy after the U.S. and China. India's dynamic economic growth and its expanding middle class have made the country one of the most attractive consumer and investment markets attracting foreign partners' interest. Although the Indian market continued to be relatively difficult and closed, the economic reforms implemented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government since 2014 have improved the conditions for doing business there (e.g. India improved its position in the World Bank's

Doing Business ranking by moving up from 132nd place in 2014 to 63rd place in 2019)¹ and economic modernisation programmes have created new business opportunities.²

In 2004–19, India was governed by a centre-left coalition government led by the Indian National Congress and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (2004–09 and 2009–14) and by a right-wing coalition government centred around the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2014–19 and again from May 2019 onwards). India's unchanging strategic goal was to improve its own international standing to enable faster economic growth and to achieve a global power status, which would be manifested by India's increased influence in international organisations, most notably by obtaining a permanent membership of a reformed UN Security Council. India focused on developing favourable relations with all other powers (e.g. through cooperation in the BRICS group which also includes Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa) and on improving security in South Asia. The country's international activity increased when Prime Minister Modi came to power. He promoted India as a defender of globalisation and a rules-based international order, which was convergent with Poland's strategic objectives.

From Poland's point of view, a permanent trend involving India boosting its cooperation with Western democracies, that is the United States and European countries, was important. Starting from 2004, the European Union developed its strategic partnership with India, systematically expanded and deepened the scope of bilateral cooperation and negotiated the Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement since 2007 (so far without success). As regards the European aspect, in that period Poland's assets included the fact that Polish nationals held important posts impacting the EU's external activity: Donald Tusk was the President of the European Council in 2014–19 and Tomasz Kozłowski was the European Union's ambassador to India in 2015–19.

India in Polish Foreign Policy Goals and Assumptions Post-2004

The Strategy of the Republic of Poland vis-à-vis non-European developing countries, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers back in November 2004, was the basic strategic document specifying the goals and tasks of Poland's policy towards India. It recognised India as a priority country in South Asia and

¹ "Doing Business 2020: Reforms Boost India's Business Climate Rankings; Among Top Ten Improvers for Third Straight Year, Press Release," The World Bank, 24 October 2019, www.worldbank.org.

² See: P. Kugiel, "Indie w procesie reform: szanse dla Polski," *Raport PISM*, February 2018, www.pism.pl.

identified several sectors which were particularly promising for Polish exports: deliveries of military equipment, machinery, equipment and services for the coal mining industry; deliveries of machinery and equipment for the power industry; construction of roads and gas pipelines; export of equipment and services for the railway sector and of food-processing machines and equipment.³ Despite major changes in international economic and political relations, in 2019 the document continued to be formally valid and was not updated.⁴ Similarly, no new regional strategy towards Asia was devised to more precisely define Poland's goals towards India.⁵ Moreover, other more recent documents setting the general directions for Polish foreign policy (prepared in 2012 and 2017) failed to devote sufficient attention to India.⁶ In the analysed period, the annual speeches delivered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Sejm made no mention of India at all or merely mentioned it as one of Poland's Asian partners. For example, in his Information on Polish Foreign Policy Tasks in 2019, Minister Jacek Czaputowicz devoted two sentences to India: "Development of economic cooperation is our priority also in our relations with India. Poland is the largest recipient of Indian investments in Central and Eastern Europe and one of the largest in the European Union".⁷

Thus, India occupied a distant place on Poland's list of goals and Warsaw continued to focus primarily on transatlantic relations, on strengthening its position in the European Union and in its immediate neighbourhood. It is also difficult to spot clear differences between the political parties that ruled in Poland over that period, when it comes to their approach to India. Poland's increased interest in Asia following the 2008 global economic crisis seems to have been limited to highly developed Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea, as well as to an increasingly dynamic China.

Poland's goals towards India were mainly reduced to intensification of economic cooperation. The Polish authorities were interested in increasing trade exchange and attracting Indian investments to Poland. Therefore, during Prime Minister Donald Tusk's visit to India in 2010, the goal of doubling the value of

³ "Strategia RP w odniesieniu do pozaeuropejskich krajów rozwijających się," *Kenyan-Polish Forum*, November 2004, p. 23, www.kenya.com.pl.

⁴ P. Kugiel, "Go Global: Towards a New Polish Strategy on Developing Countries," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 7 (739), 20 January 2015, www.pism.pl.

⁵ P. Kugiel, "Poland's Pivot to Asia: Illusion or Necessity?," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 69 (801) 8 July 2015, www.pism.pl.

⁶ See: "Priorytety polskiej polityki zagranicznej 2012–2016," MSZ, March 2012, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja; "Strategia polskiej polityki zagranicznej 2017–2021," MSZ, September 2017, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

⁷ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

trade by 2015 was announced. In a gesture of appreciation of India's economic importance, in 2015 Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Economy Janusz Piechociński announced a special government programme known as Go India to assist Polish entrepreneurs in expanding to the Indian market. However, after the change of government in autumn 2015 and the reorganisation of the export support system, the initiative was discontinued. India was viewed as one of the five promising markets in the context of export promotion for 2017–19, and companies interested in the Indian market were invited to take part in several sectoral programmes run by different government agencies including the Polish Investment and Trade Agency and the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development.⁸

Poland's political goals were less specific. Consecutive joint declarations and statements by Polish politicians emphasised both countries' commitment to the principles of democracy, support for the fight against international terrorism and closer cooperation between the European Union and India. Poland was hoping to upgrade the status of the bilateral relationship to that of a strategic partnership, which would mainly have a symbolic significance indicating Warsaw's growing international position. A possible rapprochement was also limited by the need to maintain good relations with Pakistan, which is in conflict with India. This was because since 2006 Poland had maintained its military contingent in Afghanistan as part of a NATO mission.

Political Relations

In the analysed period, the political dialogue was not intensive. Over these fifteen years, there have been merely two top level visits. In 2009, India's President Pratibha Patil paid a visit to Poland, although due to the fact that in India the president performs a merely representative function, the visit's significance was mainly symbolic. The visit of the Vice President of India to Warsaw in April 2017 was even less significant. The most significant political event was Prime Minister Donald Tusk's state-level visit to India in September 2010. The delegation took part in an investment summit in Bangalore and held meetings with Indian business representatives and key politicians in New Delhi. The main result of this visit involved the signing of a Cooperation Programme for 2010–13 between the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Culture of the Government of the Republic of India. More frequent visits to India were paid by ministers serving as Deputy Prime Ministers: the

⁸ India was included in five out of twelve sectoral promotion programmes for 2017–19: 1) machines and devices, 2) biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, 3) Polish fashion, 4) furniture, 5) Polish food specialities.

Minister of the Economy Janusz Piechociński in 2015 and the Minister of Culture and National Heritage Piotr Gliński in 2015 and 2017. Attempts to organise a visit of Poland's President to India launched in 2014 failed. Since 1979, no Indian Prime Minister has visited Poland.

Contacts between foreign ministers were also sporadic. Radosław Sikorski was the only foreign minister to visit India twice: the first visit took place in July 2011, during Poland's presidency in the EU Council, when minister Sikorski represented the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton, and the second visit was organised in connection with a meeting of ministers of European and Asian countries in the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) dialogue formula in November 2013 in New Delhi. India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar paid a visit to Warsaw as late as August 2019; this was the first such visit since 1987. On that occasion, Minister Czaputowicz emphasised that India was "a prominent regional power" and "Poland's key partner in South Asia".⁹ Both sides agreed that "the exchange of the highest level visits would give a strong impetus to bilateral cooperation" whose "potential still remained untapped". In Warsaw, Minister Jaishankar officially invited the Polish President to pay a visit to India. In addition, he expressed India's interest in increasing its engagement in Central Europe and in cooperation with Poland, including in the Visegrad Group format. The Minister's visit could be interpreted as an attempt to launch a new stage of more intensive Polish-Indian relations.

More regular talks were held under the political consultation mechanism at the deputy foreign minister level, which was initiated in 1996. In January 2018, consultations were held for the eighth time in New Delhi and this time were attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Marek Magierowski. During this event, the delegates discussed, among other things, preparations for return visits, economic cooperation, coordination of positions in international fora, the migration crisis, Brexit, the situation in Ukraine and in South Asia.¹⁰

Parliamentarians played a marginal role in political relations. Although a bilateral group for the relations with India did operate in the Polish Parliament, it failed to submit any significant initiatives to improve Poland's relations with India. Cooperation at the central level was complemented by regional contacts between Polish voivodeships and Indian states. In recent years, a number of regional cooperation agreements were signed (e.g. the Małopolskie voivodeship

⁹ "Joint Statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Poland and India," MSZ, 29 August 2019, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹⁰ "India-Poland Relations, Embassy of India in Warsaw," February 2020, www.indianembassy.warsaw.gov.in.

with Andhra Pradesh, the Mazowieckie voivodeship with Gujarat), however, these have not translated into specific results.

This low intensity of contacts between the heads of state and government and the foreign ministers contrasted particularly strongly with the much higher intensity of mutual visits between Poland and China starting from 2008. This situation was proof of the fact that India did not occupy an important place on the list of Poland's Asian partners. Cooperation was complicated by long-standing mistrust between India and Poland's allies, the U.S. and the EU, as well as by India's close relations with Russia. Polish diplomats were disappointed, among other things, by India's failure to condemn Russia's annexation of Crimea and its interference in Ukraine's Donbas region in 2014. Poland preferred to focus on developing its cooperation with China, as this country seemed to offer much bigger economic benefits and at the same time showed greater interest in developing cooperation with the Central European region and in increasing its engagement there. In addition, Polish diplomats emphasised the absence of reciprocity and little interest in cooperation on the part of India, which was manifested, among other things, by the lack of visits by the Indian Prime Minister and the repeated postponement of the Polish President's visit to India. The Polish side's suggestions to upgrade the bilateral relations to the level of strategic partnership remained unanswered, and Indian experts indicated that the level of cooperation achieved thus far was not conducive to filling such a format with content.¹¹ Therefore, in its cooperation with India, Poland did not succeed in strengthening the bilateral relations like it did in its relations with other large Asian economies: China, Japan and South Korea.

Despite these limitations, Polish-Indian relations continued to develop in a favourable atmosphere, paving the way for closer contacts in the future. Since 2004, several cooperation agreements in specific fields have been signed. These included an agreement on economic cooperation (signed in 2006), an agreement on cooperation in the field of tourism (2009), health and medicine (2009), agriculture (2017).

At the same time, the political relations were free from serious disputes and disagreements. In the analysed period, both countries supported each other in international organisations to a limited degree. Poland, which was a member of the so-called non-proliferation regimes (e.g. the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and the Wassenaar Arrangement), made an exception and agreed to India joining these regimes despite the fact that New Delhi had not signed the Treaty on the

¹¹ See: "India and Poland: Vistas for Future Partnership. A report from the 3rd Roundtable of the Polish Institute of International Affairs and the Indian Council of World Affairs," *PISM Report*, July 2012, www.pism.pl.

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It also expressed its conditional support for India's efforts to obtain a permanent membership of the UN Security Council, making its full support conditional on the development of a common EU-wide position on this issue.¹² As the host of the global climate conference COP19 in Warsaw in 2013 and COP24 in Katowice in 2018, Poland adopted a stance which took into account the socio-economic constraints of specific countries in meeting ambitious climate goals, which was more favourable to countries such as India. India also welcomed the favourable approach assumed by Poland, which at that time was holding a rotating presidency of the UN Security Council, regarding the modifications to the legal status of the Jammu and Kashmir state, which had repeatedly triggered protests from Pakistan and increased tensions in the region.¹³

Economic Relations

Economic cooperation formed the core of Polish-Indian relations. Since 2004, there has been a dynamic increase in trade exchange. Trade in goods increased more than sevenfold from almost PLN1.5 billion (\$390 million) in 2004 to almost PLN11 billion (\$2.8 billion) in 2019. Over that period, Poland's exports increased from PLN311 million (\$84 million) to PLN2.8 billion (\$730 million) and its imports rose from PLN1.1 billion (\$310 million) to PLN8.1 billion (\$2.1 billion). This equated to an increase in trade deficit on the Polish side (PLN -5.3 billion in 2019), as the value of Poland's imports was three to four times bigger than the value of its exports (see Chart 1).

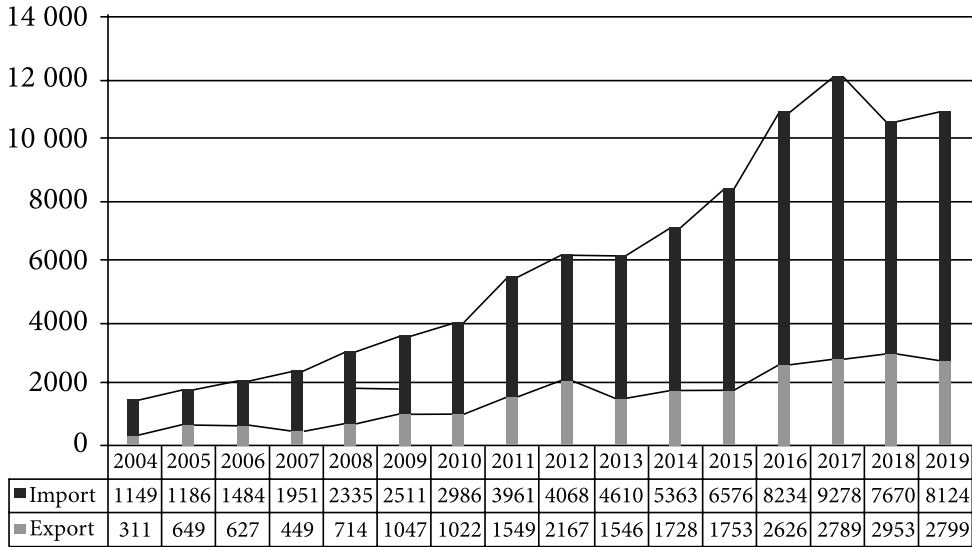
Although India's share in Poland's total exports continued to be insignificant, in the analysed period it increased from 0.11% in 2004 to 0.28% in 2019.¹⁴ India moved up on the list of Poland's biggest export markets from the 47th place to the 40th place (and was ranked fifth in Asia, after China, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Japan). India has become the 25th biggest source of Poland's imports (0.88% of total imports) as it moved up from the 36th place (accounting for 0.35% of total imports) in 2004 to the 5th place among Asian trade partners after China, South Korea, Japan and Vietnam.

¹² "Sikorski poparł Indie w sprawie stałego członkostwa w RB ONZ," *Gazeta Prawna*, 12 July 2011, www.gazetaprawna.pl.

¹³ S. Roy, "Pakistan goes to UNSC, its chief Poland puts it bluntly: Find bilateral solution to J-K," *The Indian Express*, 13 August 2019, www.indianexpress.com.

¹⁴ "Dziedzinowa Baza Wiedzy: Handel Zagraniczny," GUS, www.swaid.stat.gov.pl.

Chart 1. Trade exchange between Poland and India in 2004–19
(in millions PLN)



Source: „Dziedzinowa Baza Wiedzy Handel Zagraniczny”, GUS, <http://swaid.stat.gov.pl>.

The goods Poland exported to India mainly included machines and mechanical devices, electrical devices and parts thereof, mineral products, as well as base metals and products made from them. Poland mainly imported from India chemical industry products, textiles, as well as base metals and products made from them. In 2019, the Ministry of Development and Entrepreneurship estimated that the most promising areas of cooperation would include green technologies (including methods of drinking water treatment, wastewater management, treatment of industrial waste and other types of waste), agriculture and agri-food processing (in particular chicken farming and chicken meat production and processing, foodstuffs cooling and packaging, as well as production lines to produce fruit and vegetable juice, jam and other processed foods), mining (underground and opencast mining including activities such as the construction of complete facilities, supply of mining machines and devices, as well as of services and works for the coal mining sector), defence industry (including cooperation, technology transfer and development of science and research collaboration), and medical equipment (hygienic and medical materials).¹⁵

¹⁵ “Indie. Informacja o stosunkach gospodarczych z Polską,” MRPiT, April 2019, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologie.

In the analysed period, the Polish administration particularly supported the sale of Polish equipment and technology intended for the mining sector and sent government delegations to several sectoral fairs in Kolkata. The export of military equipment lost its momentum, partly due to the controversy surrounding Bumar's unfulfilled contract for the sale of WZT-3 armoured recovery vehicles, which was signed back in 2012.¹⁶ The exchange of services, including in the audiovisual sector, grew dynamically. In recent years, several Indian films and commercials have been filmed in Poland.

Investment has become an increasingly important area of economic cooperation. According to Indian statistics, the cumulative value of all Polish investments carried out by December 2019 stood at \$683 million.¹⁷ This ranked Poland 27th on the list of India's biggest investors, as it accounted for 0.15% of total foreign investments. India was Poland's top investment destination in Asia.¹⁸ The main investors included Toruńskie Zakłady Materiałów Opatrunkowych (TZMO), which has manufactured hygienic products in India for around fifteen years (according to Indian statistics the estimated value of this investment stood at \$200 million), CanPack (production of cans, \$200 million), Famur (the mining sector, \$75 million), Geofizyka Toruń (geological surveys, \$50 million), Ekolog (green technologies, \$50 million), Solaris (public transport, \$50 million), BBT (defence sector, \$50 million), Meble Forte (furniture industry, \$2.3 million), Thaiger Nutraceuticals (nutrition, \$0.6 million), Maflow (automotive parts), Inglot (cosmetics).¹⁹

It should be noted that capital flows were going in both directions and Poland was becoming an increasingly attractive market for Indian investors. According to Polish statistics, at the end of 2018 the balance of liabilities linked with Indian direct investments in Poland stood at PLN280 million (\$74 million).²⁰ Although this accounted for a minor portion of total FDI in Poland (0.03%), India was Poland's seventh largest Asian investor (after South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Israel, China and Singapore). India's biggest IT sector and business services sector companies, such as Infosys, Wipro, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies Ltd, Zensar Technologies and KPIT Cummins, opened their branches in Poland

¹⁶ "India Likely to Sue Polish Firm for Not Honoring Armored Recovery Vehicle Contract," *Defense World*, 17 June 2017, www.defenseworld.net.

¹⁷ "Fact Sheet on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from April, 2000 to December, 2019," FDI Statistics, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, March 2020, <https://dipp.gov.in>.

¹⁸ "Polish direct investment abroad 2018," NBP, www.nbp.pl.

¹⁹ "India-Poland Relations," Embassy of India in Warsaw, February 2020, www.indianembassy.warsaw.gov.in.

²⁰ "Foreign direct investment in Poland and Polish direct investment. Annual report, 2018," NBP, 2019, www.nbp.pl.

and created around 15,000 jobs. Indian companies were also active in other sectors including the pharmaceutical sector (Strides Arcolab, Ranbaxy, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals), the electronic sector (Videocon), the machine building sector (Escorts), the packaging sector (UFLEX, EsselPropack), the consulting sector (CRISIL), the measuring devices sector (Rishab Instruments) and other sectors (Jindal Stainless, Berger Paints India). The biggest Indian investment, which was carried out by the Arcelor Mittal company (with its estimated value standing at \$2 billion) and involved a steel mill in Kraków, was not formally included in the statistics due to the fact that the company was incorporated in Luxembourg.

As a result of reforms of the Polish export support system implemented by the United Right government post-2015, Polish companies interested in expanding to the Indian market could use more comprehensive support system options, including insurance (KUKE), access to export loans (BGŻ) and professional consultancy services (Polish Investment and Trade Agency, PAIH). The establishment in 2018 of PAIH's Foreign Trade Office in Mumbai, which was intended to facilitate Polish companies' expansion onto the Indian market, help them to find local partners and to promote their activities, was an important element of the system of practical support offered to companies.

Social and Cultural Relations

Social contacts and cultural & scientific cooperation played an increasingly important role in Poland's policy towards India. On the basis of a 2010 agreement on cooperation between cultural institutions, and using small grants offered under the Polish development aid mechanism, Poland carried out, among other things, a restoration of Stefan Norblin's works which he had created in the palaces of Indian maharajas in the 1940s. Alongside this, Poland launched activities to commemorate the history of Polish refugee children who had found refuge in India during the Second World War. At the same time, publicity surrounding these events was an element of promotional and informational activities focused on Poland.²¹

The opening in June 2012 of the Polish Institute in New Delhi was a major event as regards cultural cooperation and the promotion of Poland in India. The institution, which since 2015 has had its office in a prestigious district of the Indian capital, organised Polish film reviews, concerts, theatre shows, performances by visual artists, as well as lectures by scientists and diplomats. Thus, it significantly

²¹ For example, Poland's embassy in New Delhi was the producer of a documentary filmed in 2011 on Norblin's work, which was directed by Małgorzata Skiba, entitled "Chitraanjali. Stefan Norblin w Indiach," MKiDN, <http://www.mkidn.gov.pl>.

contributed to bridging the gap in the knowledge about modern-day Poland, which was viewed as a major barrier to strengthening the bilateral relations.²²

The development of tourism has sparked increased intensity of contacts, including a major increase in the number of Indian citizens visiting Poland. In 2017 alone, around 25,700 Polish tourists visited India, and in 2016 the estimated number of Indian visitors travelling to Poland was 16,800 (while back in 2004 the corresponding figure was a mere few thousand).²³

Although the Polish authorities attempted to facilitate the process of issuing business visas, the availability of Polish visas was one of the main problems raised by Indian diplomats. Increased interest on the part of Indian nationals in travelling to Poland, combined with insufficient staffing of Polish consulates in India (in New Delhi and Mumbai) and problems with the online visa application system, resulted in queues lasting many months and delays in issuing consular decisions.²⁴ The launch in September 2019 of direct flights between Warsaw and New Delhi by LOT Polish Airlines, the Polish national carrier, was a long-awaited decision which facilitated the development of people-to-people and business contacts.

India viewed Poland as an increasingly attractive cooperation partner, which was evidenced by a surge in the number of Indian nationals studying at Polish universities. While back in 2014 slightly more than 300 Indian citizens studied in Poland, in 2018 their number increased to more than 3500.²⁵ The vast majority of these individuals paid a tuition fee for their education in Poland and at the same time took up employment. As a consequence, Indian nationals have become the third largest national minority at Polish universities (after Ukrainians and Belarusians). At the central level, scientific cooperation received financial support from the National Agency for Academic Exchange on the Polish side and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) at the Indian Ministry of Science on the Indian side, which jointly organised competitions for bilateral science and research projects. According to statistics compiled by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, there were 70 binding cooperation agreements between universities from Poland and from India. These covered a variety of activities including student and academic staff exchanges, participation in EU programmes

²² P. Kugiel, "What Does India Think about Poland," *PISM Policy Paper*, no. 15 (63), June 2013, www.pism.pl.

²³ D. Roy Chaudhury, "Indian Foreign Minister visits Poland ahead of direct Delhi–Warsaw flight," *The Economic Times*, 28 August 2019, www.economictimes.indiatimes.com.

²⁴ "Ambasada w New Delhi nie nadała z wystawianiem wiz. Hindusi, Nepalczycy i Banglijczycy chcą pracować w Polsce," *Gazeta Prawna*, 10 September 2018, www.gazetaprawna.pl.

²⁵ "Higher education institutions and their finances in 2018," GUS, 31 October 2019, p. 162, <https://stat.gov.pl>.

(Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus), vocational traineeship programmes, cooperation agreements with scientific organisations etc.

As a consequence, the growing population of Indians and people of Indian origin living in Poland became an increasingly important element of Poland's policy towards India. In 2014, this diaspora was estimated at around 4000 individuals,²⁶ while in 2018, according to the Eurostat, it increased to more than 20,000.²⁷ According to official statistics compiled by the Office for Foreigners, at the end of 2019 9979 Indian citizens had a valid Polish residence permit (while in 2013 the corresponding figure was 2600).²⁸ As regards foreigners living in Poland, Indians became the sixth largest nationality after Ukrainians, Belarusians, Germans, Russians and Vietnamese. This group mainly included students, small business owners and professionals hired by Indian and multinational companies operating in Poland. The Indian community has acted as a bridge between the two countries, fostering closer business, cultural and educational cooperation through a network of associations, chambers of commerce and community leaders.²⁹ Due to the fact that the Narendra Modi government placed major emphasis on the relations with this diaspora, the situation of this group could become a new challenge in the context of Polish-Indian contacts and an important asset for Poland in its cooperation with India.

Assessment

Despite its dynamic economic growth and an increasingly important international position, India continued to be an underrated partner of secondary importance for consecutive Polish governments post-2004. The Polish side has failed to prepare a sufficiently attractive offer for political and economic cooperation with India and to convince New Delhi to build a strategic partnership with Warsaw. The political will to boost Poland's diplomatic and consular presence and the efforts to increase outlays on the promotion of scientific and educational contacts, as well as on cultural diplomacy and promotion, were insufficient. As a consequence, Polish-Indian relations focused on economic cooperation, which—despite a dynamic increase in trade and mutual investments—failed to fulfil

²⁶ P. Kugiel, K. Pędziwiatr, "The Indian Diaspora and Poland-India Relations," *PISM Report*, November 2014, p. 23, www.pism.pl.

²⁷ "All valid permits by reason, length of validity and citizenship on 31 December of each year (updated 31 January 2020)," Eurostat, www.appso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu.

²⁸ Office for Foreigners, Table 26: The number of individuals holding a valid document confirming their right to stay on the territory of the Republic of Poland (as at 1 January 2020), www.migracje.gov.pl.

²⁹ P. Kugiel, K. Pędziwiatr, *op. cit.*

the potential and aspirations of both sides. In addition, Poland failed to directly engage in the process of shaping the EU's policy towards India. Following the adoption of the first EU strategy towards India in 2018, this policy was of major importance to bilateral relations. The advantage offered by the fact that several Polish nationals held senior EU posts was insufficiently used to boost cooperation between the EU and India.

India continued to be an underrated Polish foreign policy direction in an increasingly multipolar world. India's growing interest in Europe and in Poland created opportunities for a new stage in bilateral relations, as evidenced by the Indian Foreign Minister's historic visit to Warsaw in 2019 and by plans to organise several long-postponed top-level visits. Similarly, Poland's increasing disillusionment with its cooperation with China, combined with U.S.-China tensions and India's increasing rapprochement with the US and the EU, created favourable circumstances for boosting the Polish-Indian cooperation. In this context, it can be stated that the last 15 years have been a period of making preparations for a more active Polish policy towards India. Taking into account the limited resources and the insignificant level of interest on the part of consecutive Polish governments in cooperation with India, the establishment of the Polish Institute in New Delhi and of the PAIH office in Mumbai, the launch of direct air connections and the expansion of the treaty base can be regarded as important achievements of Poland's policy towards India. The weak points of Polish institutions operating in India included insufficient funding and staff shortage, which is particularly important considering India's size and diversity. The dynamically developing trade and investment collaboration combined with increasingly stronger people-to-people contacts (including the Indian diaspora) created favourable conditions for a more intensive cooperation in the future.

Poland's Policy Towards Romania in 2007–2019

JAKUB PIEŃKOWSKI

Background

In 2007–19, the most important determinant of Poland's policy towards Romania was the two states' increasingly convergent perception of security: they viewed NATO membership and strong bilateral alliances with the United States as the foundations of security. This view was rooted in the history of Soviet domination and the two countries' location on the eastern flank of NATO and the European Union. Unlike the leadership of most Orthodox states, the Romanian authorities had a restrained attitude towards Russia and following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014 this approach finally transformed into one characterised by fear. This is why Poland frequently viewed Romania as a closer partner than the partners from the Visegrad Group (V4).

Upon entering the EU on 1 January 2007, Romania became the second largest member (after Poland) to join the bloc in 2004–2007. Therefore, the two states could act as key allies or regional competitors, and due to the fact that they were among the less affluent EU member states, they could jointly make efforts to increase the level of funding earmarked for the cohesion policy and the common agricultural policy and, at the same time, compete for these funds. However, in their first years as EU members, Poland and Romania focused on building their relations with the bloc's largest states, while cooperation in Central Europe was mainly carried out in the V4 format. Starting from 2015, Poland began to view various forms of regional involvement as priority issues, while Romania—although it took part in these formats—chose not to give priority to these relations at the cost of its traditional cordial relations with France and Germany. At the same time, Bucharest attempted to avoid conflicts with EU institutions.

Initially, Romania viewed Poland as its regional competitor. It distanced itself from the Eastern Partnership because it considered it as a threat to its special relations with Moldova and to its own initiative launched in 2007, known as the Black Sea Synergy.¹ Unlike Poland, Romania assumed a restrained attitude

¹ It included Romania, Bulgaria and Greece, as well as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine.

towards Ukraine due to old disputes between these two countries.² Despite this, in the situation of failed initiatives launched by the Black Sea Synergy and the 2014 Russian aggression, it became involved in supporting Ukraine and the Eastern Partnership.

In 2007–19, Poland was governed by two different political blocs which nevertheless viewed Romania as a potential ally. Until November 2007, power had been held by the Law and Justice party (PiS) and its coalition partners; these parties were distrustful of EU institutions and the EU's largest states. In 2007–15, the ruling coalition consisted of the Civic Platform (PO) and the Polish People's Party which both supported Poland's participation in the mainstream of European integration. In 2015, the government was once again formed by PiS alongside several smaller right-wing parties. In Romania, the consecutive governments were centred around the centre-right National Liberal Party (PNL), the post-Communist Social Democratic Party (PSD) or the centre-right Democratic Liberal Party (PDL). The governments formed by the coalition consisting of the PSD and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE), which ruled the country in 2017–19, were more focused on seeking cooperation with Poland due to the fact that, just like the Polish authorities, they came under criticism from EU institutions for failing to observe the rule of law. However, the Polish government made attempts to avoid connecting these two issues because in Romania the reason behind certain legal amendments was the PSD leader Liviu Dragnea intending to avoid being sentenced for corruption.³

The fact that in Romania foreign and defence policy is the prerogative of the president was important in the context of Poland's relations with this country. This is why the presidential cooperation format was of key importance in bilateral relations. In 2005, Lech Kaczyński, a politician associated with PiS, was elected Poland's president. In 2010, after his death, he was succeeded by Bronisław Komorowski of PO, who was not fond of Traian Băsescu,⁴ Romania's president in 2004–14. In 2015, Andrzej Duda, a politician designated by PiS, was elected

² These concerned the rights of the Romanian minority in northern Bukovina, the Hertsa region and portions of Bessarabia, that is regions which the USSR annexed in 1940 and incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR. Romania was also opposed to Ukraine distinguishing a separate Moldovan minority aside from the Romanian one. The disputes were also linked with the delimitation of the border in the Danube delta.

³ J. Pieńkowski, "Attempts to Weaken Romania's Anti-Corruption Law: Implications for Internal and European Policy," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 40 (1613), 6 March 2018, www.pism.pl.

⁴ One reason involved Băsescu's absence from the summit of presidents of countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which Komorowski organised in 2011; see: P. Pacuła, "Polsko-rumuńska współpraca obronna. Stan obecny i perspektywy," *Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe*, 2015, no. 3, p. 17, www.bbn.gov.pl.

Poland's president. His vision of how regional cooperation should be strengthened was met with enthusiasm from Klaus Iohannis, Romania's president since 2014.

Cooperation between Poland and Romania was facilitated by historical memory, including the history of a military alliance established in 1921, of help Romania offered to Polish refugees and of assistance it granted to Poland in evacuating gold reserves owned by the Polish Bank during the Second World War. In addition, the two states shared their later experiences with Communism, transformation and democratization, and Euro-Atlantic ambitions.

Goals and Assumptions

The Polish authorities supported Romania's EU accession in 2007, although they feared that it might have a damaging effect on Poland's interests. Poland's Foreign Minister Anna Fotyga warned against limiting the EU's eastern policy to the Black Sea region.⁵ These concerns were only amplified by the Black Sea Synergy, a Romanian initiative established in 2007.

In subsequent years, Polish diplomacy viewed Romania as one of its many regional partners. Despite the fact that in 2009 presidents Kaczyński and Băsescu declared a strategic partnership between their countries, in his Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2010 Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski did not mention Romania,⁶ in 2011 he did mention it but in the context of another issue,⁷ and in 2012 he listed Romania, alongside Bulgaria, among the potential partners of the V4.⁸

In 2013, Poland decided to intensify its cooperation with Romania as an important political and military partner,⁹ which was all the more valuable because

⁵ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2007 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Anna Fotyga at a sitting of the Sejm on 11 May 2007)," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

⁶ "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2010 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 8 April 2010)," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

⁷ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2011 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 16 March 2011)," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

⁸ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2012 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 29 March 2012)," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

⁹ "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2013 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 20 March 2013)," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

it was modernising its army.¹⁰ Russia's aggression against Ukraine has encouraged Poland and Romania to enhance their alliance. In 2015, minister Grzegorz Schetyna emphasised its value and highlighted the convergence of Romanian and Polish assessments of threats and challenges.¹¹

The *Polish Foreign Policy Strategy for 2017–2021* recognised Romania as a key regional partner in the field of security—it was listed before the Visegrad Group, the Baltic and Nordic states. The Polish diplomacy's task was to continue to cooperate with Romania in strengthening NATO's Eastern Flank and to develop bilateral economic and infrastructural collaboration in the region,¹² which since 2016 has begun to materialise in the form of the Three Seas Initiative. As a consequence, in 2018 minister Jacek Czaputowicz recognised Romania as an important ally with which Poland shared “a similar assessment of the international situation and a history of an alliance from the interwar era”.¹³ In addition, starting from 2016, Poland was hoping to develop economic and defence cooperation in a trilateral format with Romania and Turkey.¹⁴ However, these hopes gradually faded due to the anti-Western policy pursued by the Turkish authorities.

Bilateral Relations

The Polish-Romanian relations, which since 1989 were friendly, albeit not particularly close, were revived by President Kaczyński. In his vision of regional cooperation, Romania was a significant ally. He paid his first visit to Bucharest in February 2007, one month following Romania's EU accession, to discuss the two countries' position regarding the EU's Constitutional Treaty.

The fact that 2009 saw the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations served as an opportunity for Poland and Romania to intensify their bilateral contacts. In March, President Băsescu paid a visit to Warsaw to discuss issues linked with the economic crisis in the EU, energy cooperation and the situation

¹⁰ “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),” MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹¹ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2015 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski at a sitting of the Sejm on 23 April 2015),” MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹² “Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021,” MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹³ “Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2018 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 21 March 2018),” MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹⁴ “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),” MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

in Moldova and Ukraine. However, the main result of the meeting between the two presidents was a statement regarding Polish-Romanian partnership.¹⁵ During President Kaczyński's visit to Bucharest in October this statement was expanded and took the form of a Strategic Partnership Declaration. It proposed to tighten cooperation within the EU, in particular as regards the Common Foreign and Security Policy, supported EU membership ambitions expressed by Turkey, Croatia and the remaining Balkan states, and endorsed the plan to establish an EU accession perspective for Moldova and Ukraine. It highlighted the importance of a strong NATO which is capable of fulfilling its declarations. It declared an end to the rivalry between the Eastern Partnership and the Black Sea Synergy, and stated that these two formats were complementary. Poland and Romania intended to cooperate in the spheres of energy security and climate policy, develop economic partnership and infrastructural links, and to seek full access of Polish and Romanian citizens to the employment markets of all EU member states.¹⁶ In October 2010, an Action Plan for 2010–15, which complemented the Declaration, was agreed, and another Action Plan for 2016–20 was adopted in December 2015.

Due to a personal conflict between Băsescu and Komorowski, cooperation between the presidents was halted in spring 2011.¹⁷ Although the Romanian president did visit Poland to attend the Eastern Partnership summit in September 2011, the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the 1989 democratic transition organised in June 2014 and the Central and Eastern Europe summit held in July 2014, these were multilateral meetings. Bilateral cooperation was reduced to the level of parliaments and ministries. One exception involved the June 2013 visit to Warsaw paid by Prime Minister Victor Ponta and Deputy Prime Minister Liviu Dragnea and ministers of defence and EU funds, Mircea Duşa and Eugen Teodorovici, who represented the PSD party which was hostile to Băsescu.

Klaus Iohannis's presidency brought about an improvement in bilateral relations. In March 2015, together with Komorowski, in Warsaw he adopted a declaration intended to revive the bilateral strategic partnership which had effectively been suspended since 2011. It was intended to boost defence cooperation in the face of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and NATO's uncertain decision to strengthen the Eastern Flank.¹⁸

¹⁵ "Działalność międzynarodowa Prezydenta RP Lecha Kaczyńskiego w pierwszym półroczu 2009 r.," *Prezydent.pl*, www.prezydent.pl, pp. 12–13.

¹⁶ "Wspólna deklaracja J.E. Pana Lecha Kaczyńskiego, Prezydenta RP oraz J.E. Pana Traiana Băsescu, Prezydenta Rumunii dotycząca polsko-rumuńskiego partnerstwa strategicznego," *Prezydent.pl*, 7 October 2009, www.prezydent.pl.

¹⁷ See: footnote 4.

¹⁸ "Wspólna deklaracja Prezydenta RP, Pana Bronisława Komorowskiego oraz Prezydenta Rumunii, Pana Klausa Wernera Iohannisa," *Prezydent.pl*, 12 March 2015, www.prezydent.pl.

President Duda, who took office in August 2015, paid an official visit to Bucharest as early as November 2015 to attend a Central and Eastern Europe summit. During this visit, he established positive relations with Iohannis, whose views on regional cooperation and the role of NATO and the U.S. in ensuring Europe's security were convergent with the Polish views. This resulted in Iohannis paying official visits to Poland on the occasion of a NATO summit in July 2016 and a summit of the Bucharest Nine (B9)¹⁹ in June 2018, both held in Warsaw.

Intergovernmental consultations were a new format of bilateral cooperation. The first round of these consultations was held in May 2018 in Warsaw, and the second one in September 2019 in Bucharest. The talks focused on defence and energy cooperation, trade, the construction of the Via Carpatia transnational highway, and coordination of European policy, including in the context of Brexit and the EU budget for 2021–27.²⁰ Prime Ministers Mateusz Morawiecki and Viorică Dănciula, who chaired the meetings, emphasised the multifaceted partnership which linked both states.

Defence Cooperation

Defence cooperation between Poland and Romania was mainly stimulated by these countries' close bilateral alliances with the U.S. They viewed the establishment of U.S. military installations on their respective territory as the most effective security guarantee. This is why, despite Russia's threats, in 2009 they made their bases available for the purpose of the construction of the so-called U.S. missile defence shield—Romania made a site in Deveselu available, while Poland in Redzikowo. This formed a favourable basis for a Polish-Romanian exchange of experience regarding the legal aspects of their military cooperation with the U.S. and for consultations focused on the NATO missile defence system.²¹

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has undermined Romania's feeling of security.²² At a NATO summit in Newport held in September 2014, Romania joined Poland and the Baltic states in demanding support in the form of permanent contingents to be stationed on their territory. Despite efforts made by Komorowski, Bănescu and the presidents of the Baltic states, this goal has been

¹⁹ A meeting of presidents of Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria.

²⁰ "Premier Mateusz Morawiecki: Poprzez wymiar środkowo-europejski chcemy budować silną Unię Europejską," KPRM, 25 maja 2018 r., www.gov.pl/web/premier; M. Roszak, "Konsultacje polsko-rumuńskie w Bukareszcie," PAP, 18 September 2019, www.pap.pl.

²¹ P. Pacuła, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–19.

²² The distance between the Russian-annexed Crimea and the Romanian coast was just around 200 km, whereas the Romanian and the Russian-controlled exclusive economic zones were adjacent.

attained only to some degree, as NATO has only announced plans to create the so-called spearhead which could be deployed on the affected territory within several days.²³

The final decisions to strengthen NATO's Eastern Flank were made during a NATO summit held in Warsaw in June 2016. In line with the expectations voiced by Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, multinational battalion battle groups with rotating sub-units were deployed in these countries. As regards Romania, a multinational training brigade was only established there. However, this boosted the Polish-Romanian bilateral alliance which had thus far involved political cooperation. For the needs of the battle group stationed in Orzysz, Romania allocated its 'Scorpionii Albaștri' sub-unit made up of around 120 soldiers and 6 Oerlikon 35 mm cannons operated by the 205th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion from Craiova.²⁴ Poland, for its part, was the only country to permanently maintain a rotating sub-unit at the Multinational Brigade South-East in Craiova—it was composed of around 230 personnel and 14 Rosomak wheeled armoured infantry fighting vehicles operated by the 17th Greater Poland Mechanised Brigade from Międzyrzecz.²⁵

An agreement signed back in 1994, which did not meet NATO standards, formed the legal basis for bilateral Polish-Romanian defence cooperation until June 2013. It was superseded by an agreement signed by defence ministers Dușa and Tomasz Siemoniak.²⁶ Scientific and technical cooperation between Polish and Romanian defence industries has failed to bring any major results, despite numerous agreements being signed between Polish and Romanian companies.²⁷

Cooperation within the EU

Starting from the first day of Romania's EU membership, Poland opened its labour market to Romanian workforce. This was a merely symbolic gesture because Romanians were mainly interested in seeking employment in Western European states. One factor which encouraged Poland and Romania to tighten their cooperation, which until that time had not been particularly intensive, involved the nearing EU's another multiannual financial framework for 2014–20.

²³ W. Lorenz, "NATO Spearhead Needs a Shield on the Eastern Flank," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 16 (748), 9 February 2015, www.pism.pl.

²⁴ M. Enache, "Scorpionii Albaștri veghează cerul Poloniei," *Presă al MAPN*, www.presamil.ro.

²⁵ "PKW Rumunia," MON, www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa.

²⁶ "Umowa między Rządem Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej a Rządem Rumunii o dwustronnej współpracy obronnej, podpisana w Warszawie dnia 5.06.2013 r.," *Monitor Polski*, 2018, item 975.

²⁷ P. Pacuła, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–21.

Due to the fact that Poland and Romania were the main beneficiaries of EU funds, they coordinated their stances in the 2013 budget negotiations in order to maintain a high level of funding earmarked for the common agricultural policy and the cohesion policy. Efforts to coordinate stances were also boosted during the negotiations regarding the subsequent multiannual financial framework for 2021–27.

Poland intensified its cooperation with Romania during the Romanian presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2019. It focused not only on budget-related issues but also included energy cooperation. The Romanian presidency became involved in pushing through an energy directive to hamper the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, which was convergent with what Poland had long been seeking.²⁸ The positions of the two states as regards gas issues were not fully convergent. Poland was critical of the plan to expand the Russian TurkStream gas pipeline from Turkey to the Balkans, while Romania was more restrained, as it did not rule out the possibility of getting connected to this pipeline in the future.²⁹

Poland and Romania presented different stances as regards the EU's policy towards the migration crisis which began in 2015. The Polish government was consistent in opposing the obligatory relocation of migrants from southern EU member states to other countries. Although Romania was also critical of this mechanism, ultimately it did accept it. However, the implementation of the relocation plan was incomplete, as Romania only took in more than 700 out of the planned more than 4100 migrants.

Regional Cooperation

In 2012, on Romania's initiative, Poland and Turkey launched trilateral consultations of deputy foreign ministers. They were intended to coordinate the positions of the three biggest states located on NATO's eastern border. This cooperation was facilitated by Poland and Romania's traditionally close relationship with Turkey and by Polish diplomats' efforts to increase Poland's activity in the Black Sea region. As a consequence, in 2016 the dialogue was upgraded to the ministerial level. Despite this, in the subsequent years its significance for Poland and Romania decreased due to a gradual change in Turkey's policy involving its disputes with the U.S. and its rapprochement with Russia.

²⁸ J. Pieńkowski, "Cohesion as a Common European Value: Romania's EU Council Presidency," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 10 (1256), 21 January 2019, www.pism.pl.

²⁹ *Idem*, "The Role of Nuclear and Gas in Romania-U.S. Relations," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 146 (1392), 21 October 2019, www.pism.pl.

One particular achievement of presidents Duda and Iohannis involved a new cooperation format which they established. It focused on cooperation between the presidents of the region's states which simultaneously are members of NATO and the EU. Since its first meeting in Bucharest in November 2015, it has been known as B9. It served the purpose of coordinating a joint stance ahead of a NATO summit in Warsaw in 2016, during which decisions were to be made regarding the manner of strengthening those states which feared Russia's aggressive policy. As a consequence, request for support for the Eastern Flank, which was only sought by Poland, Romania and the Baltic states, became a demand voiced by the region as a whole.³⁰ The attendees of another B9 meeting held in Warsaw in June 2018 pledged to organise this type of meetings on a regular basis. Another summit took place in Košice in February 2019 on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of NATO and the 20th anniversary of its eastward enlargement (in the case of Romania and Bulgaria it was their 15th anniversary).

Poland also cooperated with Romania in the V4+ formula which includes selected non-Visegrad Group countries invited to participate on an ad hoc basis. In 2007–19, 18 meetings were held to which Romania was always invited together with Bulgaria, frequently also with Croatia, Slovenia, sometimes with the Baltic states and Sweden. Usually, the consultations were focused on working out a joint stance at the EU level regarding issues such as agriculture, the environment and regional development. Poland offered no response to suggestions voiced by some PSD leaders who argued that Romania should officially join the Visegrad Group.

Romania also became involved in the Three Seas Initiative (TSI) which was initiated by President Duda and Croatia's President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović. During the first TSI summit held in August 2016 in Dubrovnik, Romania was only represented by its transport minister, whereas the second summit, held in July 2017 in Warsaw, was attended by President Iohannis who hosted another TSI summit in 2018 in Bucharest. This change resulted from Romania abandoning its fears that the TSI as a bloc could act in opposition to the Western European states. Another factor which convinced Romania to modify its stance was the fact that U.S. President Donald Trump expressed his support for the TSI. Romania viewed the Warsaw TSI summit as a success and therefore intended to capitalise on its involvement in this initiative to boost its alliance with the U.S. and to rebuild its international prestige following the failures of the Black Sea Synergy.³¹ Although Poland assessed the Bucharest summit as positive, it expressed an ambivalent

³⁰ "President in Bucharest: We showed unity and capacity for decisions," *Prezydent.pl*, 4 November 2015, www.prezydent.pl.

³¹ For more on Romania's attitude to the TSI: O. Milewski, "Trójmorze—nowy instrument w polskiej polityce zagranicznej," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, 2017, no. 4 (71), pp. 56–67.

opinion regarding the decision to grant Germany the status of an observer at the TSI.³²

Economic Relations

Romania's EU accession has boosted its economic credibility. It has also contributed to the ultimate elimination of barriers to trade and to the Polish companies' access to the Romanian market. As a consequence, Polish-Romanian trade recorded a very dynamic development in both exports and imports. A decrease in Poland's exports was only recorded in 2009 due to a crisis which had hit the Romanian economy in the first half of that year. Despite this, between 2006 and 2019 the value of Polish exports increased almost 4.5-fold from PLN4 billion to PLN21.8 billion. As a consequence, Romania's importance as Poland's trade partner increased significantly: while in 2006 it was Poland's 20th biggest export market which accounted for 1.18% of Polish exports, in 2019 it was ranked 14th and accounted for 2.15% of Poland's foreign trade. At the same time, between 2006 and 2019 Poland's imports from Romania increased by 475% from PLN2 billion to PLN9.5 billion. As a consequence, while in 2006 Romania was ranked 28th on the list of Poland's import partners and accounted for 0.5% of Poland's demand, in 2019 it was ranked 23rd and its share stood at 0.95%.³³

Poland's exports to Romania mainly included machines and electrical devices, processed foodstuffs, non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages, plastics and plastic goods, vehicles, products of the chemical industry, as well fabrics and textiles. Poland's main imports from Romania included machines and electrical devices, vehicles, plastics and plastic goods, goods made from base metals, fabrics and textiles, and products of the chemical industry and similar industries.³⁴

³² Although Romania was in favour of granting full membership to Germany, the remaining states were against it. Ł. Janulewicz, T. Żornaczuk, "Germany and the Three Seas Initiative," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 120 (1366), 22 August 2019, www.pism.pl.

³³ "Dziedzinowa Baza Wiedzy Handel Zagraniczny", GUS, www.swaid.stat.gov.pl.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

	Imports to Poland				Exports to Romania			
	Value in billions PLN	Change versus the preceding year	Total share in imports	Romania's place among the import partners	Value in billions PLN	Change versus the preceding year	Total share in exports	Romania's place among the export partners
2006	2.0	+29.2%	0.50%	28.	4.0	+22.9%	1.18%	20.
2007	2.3	+14.2%	0.50%	29.	6.0	+48.0%	1.55%	18.
2008	2.3	+1.8%	0.46%	30.	6.2	+4.5%	1.54%	18.
2009	2.5	+8.1%	0.54%	28.	5.6	-9.6%	1.33%	18.
2010	3.8	+50.7%	0.70%	25.	6.6	+16.7	1.37%	19.
2011	4.2	+12.5%	0.68%	25.	8.6	+30.7%	1.54%	19.
2012	4.2	-1.3%	0.65%	24.	9.1	+5.9%	1.51%	20.
2013	4.7	+12.5%	0.72%	24.	9.7	+6.0%	1.49%	19.
2014	5.5	+17.9%	0.79%	24.	10.9	+12.7%	1.57%	18.
2015	6.1	+9.8%	0.82%	25.	12.4	+13.8%	1.65%	17.
2016	7.0	+15.6%	0.89%	23.	14.3	+15.4%	1.78%	15.
2017	7.9	+12.6%	0.90%	23.	16.4	+14.7%	1.86%	16.
2018	8.8	+11.2%	0.91%	23.	19.4	+17.0%	2.03%	14.
2019	9.5	+8.1%	0.95%	23.	21.8	+12.7%	2.15%	14.

Source: the author's own calculation based on Knowledge Databases—International Exchange, Statistics Poland, www.swaid.stat.gov.pl.

Romania was also an attractive market for Polish direct investments whose value as at the end of 2017 stood at €664 million. The biggest Polish investors included Tymbark Maspex (fruit juices and soft drinks, instant products, pasta), Ciech (a soda producer), Asseco (IT), Porta (wooden doors), Orlen Asphalt (bituminous products), Profi (discount grocery stores), Cersanit (ceramic sanitary ware), VOX (windows and doors), Selena (chemical products for the construction sector), KLER (furniture), Atlas (plaster products and paints), CanPack (cans and glass packaging), KRUK (debt collection) and Idea Bank.³⁵

Cooperation between companies was facilitated by the Polish-Romanian Bilateral Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which was established in 2015. It had offices in Warsaw, Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca, and provided assistance to 40 companies.³⁶

The TSI was another factor boosting the potential for development of Polish-Romanian economic cooperation. In June 2019, the Polish Development Bank (BGK) and the Romanian EximBank signed an act of incorporation of the TSI Investment Fund which is intended to invest in transport, energy and digital infrastructure.³⁷ However, despite numerous declarations, Poland and Romania have not managed to achieve major progress as regards the construction of the Via Carpatia highway. Meanwhile, a positive example of cooperation in the transport sector involved the signing of a memorandum in July 2017 between the sea ports of Gdańsk and Constanța and between PKP Cargo and CFR Marfa.³⁸

Social and Cultural Relations

In 2009, Poland and Romania signed an agreement on the rules of operation of the Polish Institute in Bucharest (established in 2001) and the Romanian Cultural Institute in Warsaw (established in 2006). These institutions were elements of public diplomacy, they organised cultural events, meetings with artists, experts and the media, and offered Polish and Romanian language classes.³⁹

Due to the work of these institutes, film screenings began to play an important part in bilateral cultural relations. Poland hosted events such as *Przystanek Kina*

³⁵ "Rumunia. Informacja o stosunkach gospodarczych z Polską," MRPiT, www.gov.pl/web/rozwoj-praca-technologie.

³⁶ Polish-Romanian Bilateral Chamber of Commerce and Industry, www.prbcc.pl.

³⁷ A. Czyż, "The Three Seas Initiative Investment Fund officially established," BGK, 5 June 2019, www.media.bgk.pl.

³⁸ "PKP CARGO i Port Gdańsk na kolejnym etapie realizacji idei Trójmorza," PKP CARGO, 21 July 2017, www.pkpcargo.com.

³⁹ "Umowa o działalności Instytutu Polskiego w Bukareszcie i Rumuńskiego Instytutu Kultury w Warszawie, podpisana w Warszawie dnia 5.03.2009 r.," *Monitor Polski*, 2010, no. 36, item 513.

Rumuńskiego (Romanian Cinema Highlights) at the Iluzjon cinema in Warsaw in 2013, Panorama: Rumuńska Nowa Fala (Panorama: the Romanian New Wave) at the Sopot Film Festival in 2017, the Romanian Cinema Review at the Centre of Culture in Białystok and the Warsaw-based Muranów cinema in 2019. Since 2014, Romania has hosted reviews of contemporary Polish films known as CinePOLSKA. The two institutes have also supported projects involving translation and publication of books. Books published in Romania mainly included works by Poland's most distinguished writers such as Henryk Sienkiewicz and Czesław Miłosz, and several prominent contemporary writers such as Andrzej Sapkowski and Olga Tokarczuk. Romanian writers became increasingly popular in Poland, including as a result of the German-Romanian writer Herta Müller having been awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2009. In 2016, the Angelus Central European Literature Award, which is presented by the City of Wrocław, and the Natalia Gorbaniewska Readers' Choice Award was given to Romanian writer Varujan Vosganian for his book 'The Book of Whispers'. Other Romanian authors who were shortlisted for Angelus awards included: in 2010 – Norman Manea for his book 'The Hooligan's Return' and Eginald Schlattner for his book 'The Piano in the Mist', in 2015 – Lucian Dan Teodorovici for 'Matei Brunul', in 2016 – Cristian Teodorescu for 'Megdidia, a City Nearing the End', in 2017 – Filip Florian for 'The Days of the King' and Andrea Tompa for 'The Hangman's House'. Books by Teodorovici and Tompa have also received the Natalia Gorbaniewska Readers' Choice Award. In addition, in May 2019 Romania was an honorary guest of the 10th Warsaw Book Fair.

A network of honorary consulates was another important element boosting the bilateral contacts. Romania open such consulates in 2008 in Białystok and in 2011 in Kielce. Poland inaugurated its honorary consulates in 2011 in Câmpania Turzii (it shut it down in 2017) and in 2019 in Cluj-Napoca, Timișoara and Brașov.

In 2017, Poland and Romania also agreed to carry out a cooperation programme in the field of science, education and culture. It envisaged activities such as student and academic staff exchange, in Romania mainly those specialising in Polish philology and in Poland—in Romanian philology. It also committed the signatories to start to offer Romanian language classes at the Jagiellonian University, the University of Warsaw, the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, and Polish language classes at the Bucharest University, the Alexandru Ion Cuza University in Iași and the Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Program realizacji Umowy między Rządem Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej a Rządem Rumunii o współpracy w zakresie nauki, szkolnictwa i kultury, podpisany w Warszawie dnia 20.12.2017 r., Dz.U. [Journal of Laws] 2018, item 185.

The Polish diaspora in Romania, which includes around 2500 individuals mainly living in Bukovina, enjoyed the status of a national minority. As a consequence, the Dom Polski Union of Poles of Romania, which represents this group, is allowed to elect one deputy to the Chamber of Deputies. In 2002–16 Ghervazen Longher was this deputy and was later succeeded by his wife Victoria. Using the support offered by the Romanian and Polish authorities,⁴¹ the Union was involved in animating the Polish diaspora's life including by co-organising Polish language classes, publishing magazines such as 'Polonus' and 'Mały Polonus' and organising the annual 'Blżej Siebie' Polish Days which are combined with a scientific symposium.

Assessment

In 2007–19, Poland's policy towards Romania underwent a significant change. As a result of this change, Romania stopped being just one of many different partners with which Poland shared some historical experience and had relatively friendly, albeit indifferent, relations. Instead, it became Poland's key regional ally which in security issues was even more prominent than the V4 partners. This is why from Poland's point of view strategic partnership with Romania was one of the most effective such partnerships, although not all fields of cooperation were equally successful.

One particular achievement involved the success in convincing NATO allies to strengthen the Eastern Flank. This was facilitated by the B9 cooperation format established by presidents Iohannis and Duda. It helped Poland, Romania and the Baltic states to successfully lobby in favour of NATO's increased involvement on the Eastern Flank, which was presented as a demand voiced by the region as a whole, despite the fact that the Czech Republic and Slovakia were not interested in this proposal and Hungary and Bulgaria had pro-Russian views. The participation of Polish troops in a NATO brigade in Craiova and the Romanian soldiers in the battalion stationed in Orzysz corroborated the viability of the Polish-Romanian alliance, while it should be noted that troops from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary were absent from this cooperation.

Polish-Romanian cooperation within the EU did not cover all of the topics. Both states successfully collaborated in issues of key importance to them, including the efforts to maintain a high level of funding for the common agricultural policy and the cohesion policy. However, coordination of cooperation in other fields was

⁴¹ For example in 2010–12 the Polish Senate allocated PLN4.3 million for the construction of a Polish House in Nowy Sólonec (Solonețu Nou); "Uroczystość otwarcia Domu Polskiego w Nowym Sółcu," Kancelaria Senatu, 24 November 2012, www.senat.gov.pl.

hampered by the fact that starting from autumn 2015 Poland pursued a policy of loosening its relations with the largest EU member states and displaying a confrontational attitude towards the EU institutions, whereas Romania, including during the PSD-ALDE's rule, attempted to maintain favourable relations with them.

The Visegrad Group most frequently invited Romania (alongside Bulgaria) to the V4+ cooperation format, which indicated that all sides appreciated this consultation platform, in particular in issues regarding the agricultural policy which was discussed during most of these meetings. As regards trilateral cooperation with Turkey and Romania, it failed to meet Poland's expectations, as Warsaw was concerned about Turkey's increasingly pro-Russian views and its confrontational policy towards the U.S. The success of the Warsaw summit of the Three Seas Initiative did help to dispel President Iohannis's initial scepticism regarding this format. Alongside Poland, Romania became another country which was strongest involved in its development.

The Crisis in Polish-Israeli Relations in 2018–2019

MICHAŁ WOJNAROWICZ

January 2018 will be viewed as a turning point in the history of contemporary Polish-Israeli relations. The political and diplomatic crisis triggered by Poland amending the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) changed the former dynamic of bilateral relations which since their renewal in February 1990 had, as a rule, been developing without major tensions and conflicts. Thus, one of the goals of Poland's foreign policy was to mitigate the crisis, especially as it began to go beyond the bilateral level. These attempts failed, as evidenced by another diplomatic crisis which occurred in 2019 and resulted in a reduced intensity of political relations at the highest level. However, no decline in cooperation in other fields, such as economic and social, was recorded.

The Anatomy of a Political Crisis

At the beginning of January 2018, Polish-Israeli relations were progressing in line with their standard course. On 5 January, Poland's new Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki held a telephone conversation with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu.¹ On 8 January, Deputy Defence Minister Tomasz Szatkowski paid a visit to Israel.²

The crisis started on 26 January, when the Polish Sejm adopted a draft amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance, which had been submitted back in 2016 by a group of MPs. According to the amended provisions, attributing responsibility or co-responsibility for the Nazi crimes perpetrated by the German Third Reich during the Second World War "to the Polish Nation or to the Polish State" was now punishable (by imprisonment for up to 3 years, this also applies to foreign nationals). Artistic and scientific activity was not prosecuted.³ The declared purpose of this amendment involved a more effective fight against

¹ "Rozmowa telefoniczna premiera Mateusza Morawieckiego z premierem Izraela Benjaminem Netanjahu," KPRM, 5 January 2018, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

² "Wiceminister T. Szatkowski w Izraelu," MON, 8 January 2018, www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa.

³ "Act of 26 January 2018 amending the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance - Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, the Act on war graves and cemeteries, the Act on museums and the Act on the responsibility of collective entities for acts prohibited under penalty," MS, 2 February, www.gov.pl/web/sprawiedliwosc.

phrases such as ‘Polish death camps’ which are sometimes used in the public space and the media, suggesting Polish people’s agency and decision-making power in the plan to exterminate the Jewish population. The Sejm’s decision coincided with the celebrations of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January.

The Israeli politicians, public and media, as well as the Jewish diaspora, quickly took note of this legislative amendment. The reception was clearly negative. The amendment came under harsh criticism from the most prominent Israeli political leaders representing both the opposition and the ruling coalition, who demanded that PM Netanyahu immediately take action. They emphasised the provocative nature of the fact that the move was made on the eve of International Holocaust Remembrance Day.⁴ They accused the Polish government of attempting to block the debate on the participation of Poles in crimes targeting Jews and to ‘whitewash’ the instances of collaboration with the Nazis. The critics argued that the amendment’s wording was imprecise and could be interpreted in a broad and discretionary manner by the prosecution bodies. Accusations that Holocaust survivors could be punished for giving account of their experience in occupied Poland were frequent.⁵ Although the media emphasised that terms such as ‘Polish extermination camps’ were false, at the same time they formulated accusations suggesting that Poles took an active part in the Holocaust. For example, they argued that the Nazi leadership’s decisions to locate the extermination camps in occupied Poland were motivated by anti-Semitic views of the local population. Israel expressed its official protest against the amended act on the IPN as early as 27 January, when during the celebrations commemorating the 73rd anniversary of liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp Israel’s ambassador to Poland Anna Azari criticised the new legislation. The Israeli side also presented the reservations which it had voiced during the legislative process regarding this act in previous years.⁶ In response to the new Polish legal act, 80 Knesset MPs representing various political groups backed the proposal to amend the Israeli law on prohibition of Holocaust denial (to make it more specific by adding information on crimes perpetrated by Nazi collaborators) and on providing assistance to Holocaust researchers and survivors.⁷

On 28 January, PM Morawiecki and PM Netanyahu held another telephone conversation in which they reiterated their readiness to arrive at a compromise

⁴ G. Hoffman, Sh. Kranish, “Israeli politicians slam Poland for passing controversial Holocaust law,” *The Jerusalem Post*, 1 February 2018, www.jpost.com.

⁵ “Israeli politicians, survivors blast Polish Holocaust law,” *Ynet*, 2 February 2018, www.ynetnews.com.

⁶ “Ambasador Izraela o nowelizacji ustawy o IPN,” Embassy of Israel in Poland, 29 January 2018, www.embassies.gov.il/warsaw.

⁷ Ultimately, the relevant bill was not included in the legislative process.

regarding the amended law.⁸ 1 February saw the establishment of a task force for legal and historical dialogue with Israel, which was led by deputy foreign minister Bartosz Cichocki.⁹ The planned visits of the head of the Polish National Security Bureau (BBN) Paweł Soloch to Israel and of the then Israeli minister of education and head of the Jewish Home party Naftali Bennett to Poland were cancelled, while the participation of President Reuven Rivlin in the March of the Living in April was confirmed. The Polish authorities refused to abandon the amended law and decided to complete the legislative process. On 1 February, the Polish Senate passed the amended law without modifying its wording. On 6 February, President Andrzej Duda signed the amended law and at the same time forwarded it to the Constitutional Court (CC) to verify the constitutionality of some of the provisions.¹⁰ Poland's decision to enact this law sparked major protest from the Israeli side. For example, Holocaust survivors held a demonstration in front of the Polish embassy in Tel Aviv.¹¹

A meeting between PM Morawiecki and PM Netanyahu on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference on 17 February could have served as an impetus for defusing the tension, especially as the Israeli government had declared its willingness to engage in a dialogue.¹² However, during an open meeting with the Polish PM, when answering a question asked by an Israeli journalist, Morawiecki used the term 'Jewish perpetrators'¹³ in the context of various nations' complicity in Nazi crimes. These words were interpreted as an attempt to shift a portion of responsibility for the Holocaust onto the Jews themselves and triggered another wave of criticism from Israel's most prominent politicians and the public alike, including President Reuven Rivlin and PM Netanyahu. As a consequence, the meeting between the prime ministers was cancelled.¹⁴ Israel's demands regarding

⁸ "Morawiecki rozmawiał z premierem Izraela. 'Zgodzili się na otwarcie bezpośredniego dialogu,'" *Polsat News*, 28 January 2018, www.polsatnews.pl.

⁹ The remaining members of this task force were: deputy head of the Institute of National Remembrance Mateusz Szpytma, deputy director of the Museum of the Second World War Grzegorz Berendt, director of the Legal Department of The Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Armen Artwich and columnist Bronisław Wildstein; see: A. Kazimierczuk, "Premier powołał zespół ds. dialogu z Izraelem," *Rzeczpospolita*, 1 February 2018, www.rp.pl.

¹⁰ "Statement of the President of the Republic of Poland on the amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance," *Prezydent.pl*, 6 February 2018, www.prezydent.pl.

¹¹ "Protest pod ambasadą Polski w Tel Awiwie. 'Polskie prawo pluje w twarz Izraelczykom,'" *Wprost*, 8 February 2018, www.wprost.pl.

¹² A transcript of the Knesset session of 7 February 2018, knesset.gov.il.

¹³ "Israel rebukes Poland PM for 'Jewish perpetrators' remark," *BBC News*, 18 February 2018, www.bbc.com.

¹⁴ A telephone conversation was held, during which both sides once again clarified their stances; "Komunikat po rozmowie telefonicznej premiera M. Morawieckiego z premierem B. Netanjahu," KPRM, 18 February 2018, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

a possible response to the Polish amended law included proposals to recall ambassador Azari¹⁵ and to sever diplomatic relations with Poland. In the public space, aside from accusations suggesting that the Polish leadership supported anti-Semitic views, other contentious issues which had been raised in previous years began to re-emerge, including ritual slaughter and the problem of restitution of heirless Jewish property. In Israel, PM Morawiecki's words and the actions of the Polish government were also interpreted as an element of a broader trend involving attempts made by other states of the region, for example Ukraine and the Baltic states, to downplay their involvement in the Holocaust.

Polish politicians emphasised that the purpose of the amendment was not to impose censorship, but to prevent the spread of false information about the Second World War, and the president's decision to forward this amended law to the CC was intended to foster a compromise.¹⁶ On 1 March, the Polish task force for legal and historical dialogue paid a visit to Israel. Minister Cichocki announced that 'substantial, legal and scientific dialogue' was launched with the Israeli side and said that the act on the IPN would be given a more precise wording.¹⁷ The crisis in Poland's relations with Israel was reflected in the presentation given by Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz at the Sejm, which contained just a brief remark regarding the confirmed participation of Israel's president in the 30th March of the Living in Auschwitz and an announcement of the intention to focus on economic and scientific cooperation.¹⁸ These issues were the most important topics of the highest-ranking state visits in the first half of 2018. During the celebrations held in Auschwitz in April, President Rivlin talked to his Polish counterpart. However, the first meeting of the heads of state since the beginning of the crisis sparked another dispute over the Israeli president's alleged words regarding the Polish people's attitudes towards Jews during the Second World War.¹⁹ In May, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Science Jarosław Gowin paid a visit to Israel, where he met with his Israeli counterpart Ofir Akunis and PM Netanyahu. Although his three-day visit focused on cooperation in the sphere of technology and research

¹⁵ "Knesset foreign affairs committee to urge recall of Israel's envoy to Poland," *Times of Israel*, 12 February 2018, www.timesofisrael.com.

¹⁶ "Minister Szczerski: Nowela ustawy o IPN nie ma drugiego dna," *Prezydent.pl*, 8 February 2018, www.prezydent.pl.

¹⁷ "Cichocki o wizycie w Izraelu: Zaczęliśmy dialog merytoryczny zamiast wzajemnych oskarżeń," *TVP Parlament*, 2 March 2018, www.tvpparlament.pl.

¹⁸ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 21 March 2018)," MSZ, www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja.

¹⁹ K. Rogacin, "Prezydent Izraela w Oświęcimiu oskarżył Polaków o mordowanie Żydów?," *Polska Times*, 12 April 2018, polskatimes.com.

(e.g. in robotics), issues linked with the act on the IPN were also discussed.²⁰ The atmosphere during a visit paid in June by Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology Jadwiga Emilewicz was similar. During this visit, an agreement on cooperation in innovation between the V4 group and Israel was signed and a Polish-Israeli Economic Forum was held, which was linked with the opening of the Foreign Trade Office of the Polish Investment and Trade Agency. During the meeting with minister Emilewicz, her Israeli counterpart, Regional Development Minister Tzachi Hanegbi, said that a return to 'normal relations' would only be possible when modifications are made to the act on the IPN.²¹ Also in June, deputy foreign minister and former presidential spokesman Marek Magierowski was appointed as Poland's ambassador to Israel.

The United States joined the Polish-Israeli dispute as an active participant. U.S. diplomacy expressed its dissatisfaction with the adoption of the amended act on the IPN. U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson argued that its adoption had 'a negative influence of freedom of speech and scientific research.'²² Soon after that, reports emerged in the public space suggesting that high-level contacts between the U.S. administration and the Polish leadership got suspended as part of some form of U.S. sanctions being imposed on Poland.²³ The Polish side and the U.S. Department of State officially denied these reports.²⁴

The high reputational and political cost of the dispute over the act on the IPN has prompted the Polish leaders to liberalise their stance. Parallel to the public debate and official bilateral meetings, Poland and Israel opened a secret channel of communication in order to negotiate and reach a compromise. The talks were carried out by MEPs Tomasz Poręba and Ryszard Legutko (on the Polish side) and PM Netanyahu's aides Joseph Ciechanover and Prof. Jacob Nagel (on the Israeli side).²⁵ The Polish authorities agreed to remove the provision specifying criminal

²⁰ "Wizyta Gowina w Izraelu: rozmowy o IPN i współpracy badawczej," MEiN, 28 May 2018, www.gov.pl/web/edukacja-i-nauka, "Gowin: Netanjahu nie poruszył tematu ustawy o IPN," *Gazeta Prawna*, 29 May 2018, www.gazetaprawna.pl.

²¹ H. Keinon, "Hanegbi: Polish-Israeli ties won't recover until Holocaust law is revised," *The Jerusalem Post*, 20 June 2018, www.jpost.com.

²² "Polska ustawa dotycząca zbrodni popełnionych w czasie Holokaustu," Embassy and Consulate of the United States of America in Poland, 31 January 2018, <https://pl.usembassy.gov>.

²³ A. Gajcy, A. Stankiewicz, "Amerykańskie sankcje wobec polskich władz," *Onet*, 5 March 2018, www.onet.pl. Presidents Duda and Trump met on 25 June, during the Polish president's previous visit to the U.S. they did not meet.

²⁴ "Szef MSZ potwierdza istnienie tajnej notatki ws. relacji z USA," *RMF24*, 9 March 2018, www.rmf24.pl; "Oświadczenie Heather Nauert, rzeczniczki Departamentu Stanu," Embassy and Consulate of the United States of America in Poland, 6 March 2018, <https://pl.usembassy.gov>.

²⁵ "Premier Netanjahu o ustawie IPN," Embassy of Israel in Poland, 28 June 2018, www.embassies.gov.il/warsaw.

sanctions from the amended law. On 27 June, a relevant amendment was adopted by the Polish parliament and signed by President Duda. During the negotiations, the two sides also agreed on the wording of a bilateral Joint Declaration of the Prime Ministers of the State of Israel and the Republic of Poland, which was announced on 27 June by Netanyahu and Morawiecki. It emphasised the unique nature of the crime of the Holocaust, condemned the use of the term ‘Polish death camps’ and clearly emphasised that Germans were responsible for their establishment and operation. As regards the events which took place during the Second World War, the two sides condemned ‘every single case of cruelty against Jews’ perpetrated by Poles. The declaration also stated that “blaming Poland or the Polish nation as a whole for the atrocities committed by the Nazis and their collaborators of different nations” was unacceptable. It emphasised the importance of free and open historical expression and research on all aspects of the Holocaust, especially in relation to the witnesses and their families, condemned anti-Semitism and rejected anti-Polonism.²⁶ The two governments viewed the announcement of the declaration as an official end of the crisis which lasted since January. The U.S. welcomed the modification to the act and the compromise reached by Poland and Israel.²⁷

In Israel, the declaration came under harsh criticism triggered by the document’s publication in the Israeli media, which was funded by the Polish government. The Israeli opposition accused Netanyahu of prioritising political interests over historical memory linked with the Holocaust and creating parallels between anti-Semitism and anti-Polonism.²⁸ Several politicians from the ruling coalition, e.g. minister Bennett, also called on the prime minister to renounce the declaration. Israeli historians, including the researchers from the Yad Vashem Institute, expressed their opposition to the document’s wording.²⁹ The magnitude of this criticism has forced the government to respond. Deputy Foreign Minister Michael Oren announced that the publication of the declaration in the media was not consulted with the Israeli leadership and the document’s translation did not convey the actual meaning of the text.³⁰ The reaction to the declaration

²⁶ “Wspólna deklaracja premierów Państwa Izrael i Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej,” KPRM, 27 June 2018, www.gov.pl/web/premier.

²⁷ “Polska ustawa dotycząca zbrodni popełnionych w czasie Holocaustu,” Embassy and Consulate of the United States of America in Poland, 27 June 2018, <https://pl.usembassy.gov>.

²⁸ “Israeli Cabinet minister condemns joint statement on Poland’s wartime record,” Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 6 July 2018, www.jta.org.

²⁹ “The International Institute for Holocaust Research Yad Vashem historians respond to the joint statement of the Governments of Poland and Israel concerning the revision of the January 26, 2018, amendment to Poland’s Act on the Institute of National Remembrance,” Yad Vashem, 5 July 2018, www.yadvashem.org.

³⁰ See: transcript of the Knesset session of 11 July 2018, Knesset, www.knesset.gov.il.

contributed to the fact that in the second half of 2018 the intensity of political relations continued to be low. President Duda met with PM Netanyahu in September on the sidelines of the opening of the meeting of the UN General Assembly in New York. The previously cancelled visit of the BBN head to Israel did take place.³¹ On 24 December, due to growing political pressure linked with an investigation opened against him, Netanyahu decided to call an early election on 9 April 2019.³²

2019 did not bring any improvement in Polish-Israeli relations despite the planned renewal of dialogue at the governmental level. PM Netanyahu's participation in a Middle East security conference, which was organised in Warsaw by Poland and the U.S., was expected to serve as a starting point for this process.³³ A week later, the Polish prime minister was expected to visit Israel to attend a meeting in the V4+ format, which was organised there. However, during PM Netanyahu's stay in Poland another diplomatic crisis happened, when in response to a question asked by Israeli journalists the PM emphasised Polish people's cooperation with the Nazis during the Holocaust.³⁴ The disclaimer issued after this statement³⁵ did not satisfy the Polish side which decided to lower the rank of its delegation to the V4+ summit (Poland was to be represented by FM Czaputowicz). On the eve of this visit, the crisis aggravated due to a statement offered by the newly appointed Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz, who in an interview with the I24 TV station referred, in a positive way, to the words of former PM Yitzhak Shamir, who said that "Poles imbibed anti-Semitism with their mothers' milk". In response to this statement, Poland issued a sharp protest, cancelled its participation in the V4+ meeting³⁶ and called on minister Katz to take back his words (U.S. diplomacy backed this demand³⁷). The minister's words

³¹ "Szef Biura Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego wybiera się do Izraela," *TVN24*, 27 September 2018, www.tvn24.pl.

³² M. Wojnarowicz, "Israel's Political Scene Ahead of the Early Parliamentary Election," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 11 (1257), 22 January 2019, www.pism.pl.

³³ The conference initiated the so-called Warsaw Process (see the chapter by S. Nowacka, "Poland's policy towards the Middle East and North Africa in 2018–19" in this volume).

³⁴ The contentious issue was whether in his statement the PM used the definite article *ä*, which could indicate that his words were meant to refer to the Polish nation, see I. Sharon, R. Ahren, "What Netanyahu actually said on Poles' collaboration with Nazis," *Times of Israel*, 15 February 2019, www.timesofisrael.com.

³⁵ "Ambasador dementuje informacje Jerusalem Post," Embassy of Israel in Warsaw, 15 February 2019, www.embassies.gov.il/warsaw.

³⁶ "Morawiecki odwołał wizytę polskiej delegacji na szczycie V4 w Izraelu," *Gazeta Prawna*, 18 February 2019, www.gazetaprawna.pl.

³⁷ "Ambasador USA w Polsce: Minister Katz powinien przeprosić za swoje słowa," *Wprost*, 20 February 2019, www.wprost.pl.

and the lack of willingness to apologise on Israel's part³⁸ resulted in the curbing of inter-governmental relations. In his presentation delivered back in March, FM Czaputowicz said that the Polish-Israeli dispute over the act on the IPN was over and expressed his readiness to continue cooperation, although at the same time he pointed to "unjust accusations" and statements offered by Israeli politicians, which "reinforced false stereotypes".³⁹

The limited nature of the relations was maintained until the end of 2019. No government level visit took place and the March of the Living was held without the participation of the highest-ranking officials from both states. Another stage of the crisis triggered another wave of anti-Semitic and anti-Polish statements in the public space. In May, the Polish ambassador was attacked and abused in Israel,⁴⁰ and the planned visit of Israeli diplomats was cancelled following a statement offered by Minister of Social Equality Gila Gamliel, who said that restitution of property was to be the topic of the talks.⁴¹ The reduction in the intensity of political relations was also linked with parliamentary elections held in that year both in Poland and in Israel, where the electoral cycle was extended.⁴² In 2019 Anna Azari was succeeded by Alexander Ben Zvi as Israel's ambassador to Poland.

Other Fields of Cooperation

The crisis in the political relations did not affect the remaining fields of Polish-Israeli cooperation. Cooperation in the sphere of security was maintained and in June 2018 Israeli soldiers took part in the 'Swift Response-18' exercise held in Poland. The Polish side emphasised that its renewed participation in UN peace-keeping missions in the Middle East was an important aspect of bilateral relations. November 2018 saw the beginning of the mission of the Polish contingent (200 soldiers) as part of the UNIFIL forces in southern Lebanon. Their tasks involved monitoring the security situation on the Lebanese-Israeli border, among

³⁸ "Israel Katz mówił o Polakach. Nie powtórzył oskarżeń, ale nie przeprosił," *Polskie Radio 24*, 25 February 2019, www.polskieradio24.pl.

³⁹ "Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2019 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz at a sitting of the Sejm on 14 March 2019)," see p. 13 in this volume.

⁴⁰ "Polski ambasador zaatakowany w Tel Awiwie," *TVN24*, 15 May 2019, www.tvn24.pl.

⁴¹ "Strona polska podjęła decyzję o odwołaniu wizyty izraelskich urzędników," *Polsat News*, 13 May 2019, www.polsatnews.pl.

⁴² M. Wojnarowicz, "Israeli Politics Ahead of the Repeat of Parliamentary Elections," *PISM Bulletin*, no. 129 (1375), 12 September 2019, www.pism.pl.

other things.⁴³ Poland also sustained its stance, which was convergent with the EU-wide political line and international law, on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the context of growing differences in transatlantic relations linked with a series of pro-Israeli decisions made by the Donald Trump administration.⁴⁴ Unlike other V4 states, Poland decided against increasing its diplomatic presence in Jerusalem in any manner, for example by opening a foreign trade office (which is what Hungary did) or a culture centre (the Czech Republic, Slovakia). The common line of voting in the UN, including in the Security Council was maintained to a large degree. Poland was a non-permanent member of the UN SC in 2018–19.⁴⁵ In June 2019, Poland approved the first element of the U.S.-planned peace initiative for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The presentation of the economic aspect of the plan, which was held in Bahrain (Peace to Prosperity Workshop), was attended by the then Minister of Finance Marian Banaś.

The economic relations recorded a small, although stable growth. In 2018, the value of Polish-Israeli trade stood at around PLN4.2 billion, in 2019 PLN4.4 billion. Polish exports mainly involved agri-food products, while its imports included electrical machines and chemical & pharmaceutical products. In 2018, Israel's foreign direct investments carried out in Poland stood at just PLN141 million, and Polish FDIs in Israel amounted to PLN7 million.

Table. Polish–Israeli trade exchange in 2019

Year	2017	2018	2019
Imports (in PLN)	1,564,056.2	1,713,475.0	1,718,600.4
Exports (in PLN)	2,313,193.0	2,483,324.9	2,701,911.0

Source: the author's own analysis based on data compiled by GUS.

The intensity of tourism remained stable and high. According to data compiled by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2018 and 2019 169,500 and 177,800 Polish tourists visited Israel respectively.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the Polish Ministry of

⁴³ “PKW Liban,” Wojsko Polskie, www.wojsko-polskie.pl.

⁴⁴ These included the decisions to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the U.S. embassy there, to recognise Israeli sovereignty in the Golan Heights, to halt financial assistance for the Palestinian Authority, as well as various actions at multilateral cooperation formats (for example the decision to withdraw from UNESCO). The Trump administration's approach openly contrasted with the EU's stance and with a broader international consensus regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

⁴⁵ See: the chapter by S. Zaręba, “An assessment of Poland's membership of the UN Security Council” in this volume.

⁴⁶ “Tourist arrivals and day visits, by country of citizenship,” Central Bureau of Statistics, www.cbs.gov.il.

Sports and Tourism announced that in 2018 more than 262,000 Israelis travelled to Poland, up 19% compared with 2017, and the figure for 2019 was 256,000.⁴⁷ This increased mobility was facilitated by the growing network of air connections. The Polish Tourism Organisation commissioned a study on Poland's image as seen by Israelis. The survey showed that Poland continued to be a relatively attractive and cheap travel destination for Israelis and was assessed positively by those who visited it. However, the most frequently reported association with Poland was the place where the Holocaust happened, which was frequently cited as a factor which discourages people from travelling to Poland.⁴⁸

Both diplomatic posts actively supported the development of Polish-Israeli projects (including in promoting innovation⁴⁹ and women entrepreneurs⁵⁰). The Polish embassy has also conducted an opinion poll among the Israeli public regarding the image of Poland (this was the first such survey ever made). The poll showed that 49% of Israelis had a negative view of Poland (including 16% very negative), while 42% had a positive view (including a mere 5% whose opinion about Poland was very positive). The level of positive opinions among the surveyed individuals increased to 76%, when they were presented additional information about Poland (such as low official rates of crime and anti-Semitic incidents). More than two thirds of the survey participants agreed with the statements that Poles fell victims to Nazi crimes, although to a degree which is incomparable with the Holocaust, and that Poland was reluctant to recognise its responsibility for its citizens' actions during the Holocaust. A similar proportion of the surveyed individuals said that Polish-Israeli relations should focus on the present and future cooperation rather than on history (23% of the respondents pointed to history as a priority).⁵¹ Town twinning initiatives, regional business chambers and other forms of local government diplomacy continued to be an important sphere of Polish-Israeli contacts. Cultural cooperation also flourished (the Israel Camerata Orchestra Jerusalem played a concert in Poland, the 'Cold War' film was premièred during the Haifa International Film Festival, youth exchanges were carried out). In their narrative, the Polish authorities also attempted to utilise certain historical policy tools linked with Polish-Jewish relations during the

⁴⁷ "Turystyka w 2018 roku," GUS, <https://stat.gov.pl>; 3 July 2019, "Turystyka w 2019 roku," GUS, 30 June 2020, <https://stat.gov.pl>.

⁴⁸ "Wizerunek Polski i Polaków w Izraelu," A report compiled by ARC Rynek i Opinia commissioned by the Polish Tourism Organisation, October 2018, Polska Organizacja Turystyczna, www.pot.gov.pl.

⁴⁹ "Pociąg Innowacji," Embassy of Israel in Warsaw, 1 June 2018, www.embassies.gov.il/warsaw.

⁵⁰ A. Kijanka, "Największe wydarzenie polsko-izraelskie w 2019: konferencja dla przedsiębiorczych kobiet za nami," *Nowy Marketing*, 25 September 2019, www.nowymarketing.pl.

⁵¹ R. Ahern, "One in two Israelis has negative view of Poland, new survey shows," *Times of Israel*, 8 February 2019, www.timesofisrael.com.

Second World War. For example, they popularised the knowledge of the so-called Bernese Group and decided to build a Warsaw Ghetto Museum.⁵² In addition, in 2019 the two national teams took part in the UEFA Euro 2020 qualifiers.

Assessment

The Polish-Israeli crisis which occurred in 2018–19 had several aspects. Its basic aspect involved a dispute over historical policy or, speaking more broadly, the reception of shared historical memory among the Polish and the Israeli public. The most important difference involved this debate's centre of gravity, as the Israeli side focused on negative attitudes of the Polish population towards the Jews during the Second World War and on assessing their actual scale, whereas the Polish side concentrated on the broader context of the German occupation and the suffering inflicted on the Polish nation as a whole. These differences were combined with the delicate issue of the legislation defining the limits of freedom of speech and freedom of research, especially as all this concerned the still living memory of the Second World War.

Another aspect involved the information and image-related crisis. From the perspective of Polish state institutions, the moment when the relations worsened greatly contributed to this crisis. The outbreak of the crisis coincided with the temporary absence of Poland's ambassador to Israel. In December 2017 Poland saw a government reshuffle which also included the prime minister (Beata Szydło was succeeded by Mateusz Morawiecki) and the minister of foreign affairs (Jacek Czaputowicz was appointed to this post). The media reports published some time after the crisis indicated that there was an insufficient exchange of information between the ministries involved in preparing the amendment.⁵³ This resulted in deficiencies in the Polish communication strategy, incoherent messages and PR policies, especially in the initial stage of the dispute.⁵⁴ Starting from the moment preceding the adoption of the amended law until the failure to mitigate the crisis in 2019, the sequence of events involved instances of faulty communication, misinterpretation and imprecise statements. A major portion of the Polish-Israeli

⁵² "Minister kultury Piotr Gliński utworzył Muzeum Getta Warszawskiego," MKiDN, 7 March 2018, www.gov.pl/web/kultura; "Ukazała się Lista Ładosia – spis Żydów uratowanych przez polskich dyplomatów," *TVP Info*, 12 December 2019, www.tvp.info.

⁵³ "Sporu o ustawę o IPN można było uniknąć? Czemu notatka z ostrzeżeniami USA szła z MSZ do MS aż osiem dni? [DOKUMENT]," *W Polityce*, 2 March 2018, www.wpolityce.pl.

⁵⁴ In this context, the organisation which was to co-author this policy, the Polish National Foundation, came under particularly harsh criticism, see A. Czupryn, "Polska Fundacja Narodowa miała dbać o wizerunek Polski za granicą, a stała się źródłem kryzysu wizerunkowego," *Polska Times*, 2 April 2018, www.polskatimes.pl.

crisis was taking place on social media and was affected by all the flaws typical of this dialogue platform. The amendment to the act on the IPN has significantly influenced Poland's image across the world and has quickly become the main point of reference (for example in the media discourse) not only in the context of Poland's relations with Israel, but also regarding all actions linked with the historical policy pursued by the Polish authorities. Another problem affecting Poland's reputation involved a surge in anti-Semitic and xenophobic content, especially on social media.⁵⁵

In the political aspect, the crisis involving the amendment to the act on the IPN has slowed down the development of Polish-Israeli relations which until 2018 had been facilitated by several factors including the ideological similarity between the ruling parties and both countries' similar foreign policy orientation (such as their contacts with the Trump administration). The crisis became one of the most important international challenges faced by the Morawiecki government. For the new Polish government, improvement in Poland's relations with Israel was the basic foreign policy goal until the curbing of these relations in February 2019. The reduced intensity of bilateral relations has undermined Poland's cooperation with Israel in the V4+ format, its relations with the U.S., and disrupted the celebration of important anniversaries in 2018 (the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the state of Israel and the centenary of Poland's independence). In 2019, the electoral context posed another obstacle to resolving the dispute, as attempts to improve the relations did not generate any political gain for the authorities of both states at that time. From the Israeli perspective, the crisis in the relations with Poland was an element of domestic political fight. Although the dispute was never a dominant subject in Israeli debates (the issue of Polish-Israeli relations was not a major topic during the consecutive electoral campaigns), it was used by Netanyahu's opponents, both from the opposition and from his political camp, to attack him. Moreover, the debate has revealed that the image of Poles as anti-Semites is firmly rooted in the minds of the Israeli political elite and that Polish historical experience is often ignored, which in particular results in attempts to hold Poles accountable for perpetrating the crimes of the Holocaust.⁵⁶ The dispute has also confirmed the important role of the United States as a mediator in the relations between allies.

The Polish-Israeli crisis can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it has highlighted the superficiality of the relations pursued thus far, which

⁵⁵ "Ambasada Izraela o fałszywych treściach," Embassy of Israel in Warsaw, 2 February 2018, www.embassies.gov.il/warsaw.

⁵⁶ "Yair Lapid's rhetoric on Poland feels like Holocaust denial, Auschwitz museum says," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 10 May 2019, www.jta.org.

involved problems with understanding the intentions of both sides and the lack of readiness to make concessions despite the political dialogue which had been ongoing for more than 30 years. On the other hand, mutual willingness to reach an agreement was maintained. The diplomatic relations were not severed and cooperation in other areas was continues, which confirmed the importance of the bilateral partnership to both states. The authorities of Poland and Israel managed to arrive at a satisfactory compromise, which was expressed in the joint declaration of the prime ministers adopted in June 2018. However, this only resulted in an improvement at the bilateral level, as Poland maintained its former policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict despite the differences in opinions on this issue present in transatlantic relations and within the EU. The continuous development of grassroots contacts between the two societies, which were of key importance to the future of bilateral cooperation, was a measure of durability of the relations between Poland and Israel. The dispute has demonstrated the importance of an efficient diplomatic apparatus and the need for the Polish government institutions to devise a coherent communication strategy and crisis management mechanisms.

We are presenting our readers with another volume of the 'Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy', a unique publication on the Polish publishing market, in which analysts of the Polish Institute of International Affairs, who specialize in the discussed issues and follow the process of how Polish political activity is being shaped in the international environment on an ongoing basis, describe the implementation of Polish foreign policy. In their papers, each year they apply a uniform method, which makes the description of Polish foreign policy more systematic and ensures that it is objective. 2019 saw two developments which were capable of significantly impacting the process of how Polish foreign policy was being shaped and pursued, as they triggered a shift in its internal determinants. The first such development was the 2019 European Parliament election held on 26 May. Another major development were the parliamentary elections held on 13 October.

Sławomir Dębski

The Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) is a leading Central European expert institution that positions itself between the world of politics and independent analysis. PISM provides analytical support to decisionmakers and diplomats, initiates public debate and disseminates expert knowledge about contemporary international relations. The work of PISM is guided by the conviction that the decision-making process in international relations should be based on knowledge that comes from reliable and valid research.

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