

# Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy

2010

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Minister of Foreign Affairs of the French Republic Bernard Kouchner and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland Radosław Sikorski meet in Chobielino, 20 July 2009 (source: [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl))

Prime Minister Donald Tusks meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin at Westerplatte, 1 September 2009 (source: [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl))

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## From the Editor

The year 2009 crowned two decades of Poland's independent and sovereign foreign policy, initiated with the formation of the Tadeusz Mazowiecki Cabinet and Professor Krzysztof Skubiszewski's takeover as foreign minister. This circumstance brings forth reflections about the scoresheet of this policy, and therefore the introduction to the present Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy—the last with myself as editor-on-chief—should be of a different kind than has been the case previously.

In hindsight, looking at those past two decades through the prism of several hundred years' experiences, one can hardly exaggerate the importance of a favourable combination of international determinants which aided Poland in that period. This was noted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Radosław Sikorski, when in February 2009 he addressed the Sejm with an annual presentation of Polish foreign policy goals for that year. What were the factors which contributed to an international environment so propitious to Poland? Five of them should be pointed out in particular:

1. The fall of the Soviet empire spelled an end to the Cold War, the disintegration of the Soviet sphere of influence, and the collapse of the world's bipolar division.

2. The United States' involvement in the forging of a new European order gave rise to a *iunctim* between the success of systemic transformation in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in Poland, and the policy pursued by Washington under the motto of "Europe whole, free and at peace." A peripheral country, Poland, has consequently become an important ally of the world's hegemonic power in its European mission.

3. The German unification offered a chance for the European Communities' expansion into the eastern part of the continent, and also for a new nature of Polish-German relations. Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski used that opportunity to enter into a epoch-making political agreement with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, whereby they backed the idea of German unity in return for Germany's recognition of the Odra-Nysa border and support for Polish aspirations to join the European Communities and NATO.

4. The accession to the North Atlantic Alliance (1999) and the European Union (2004) provided Poland with new instruments of external action and greatly contributed to raising the country's international position.

5. Poland's immediate environment changed diametrically after 1989, with none of the new neighbours cherishing revanchist sentiments towards this country. That helped in the development of friendly relations with them, giving Poland a level of security unheard of for centuries.

Looking back at the past two decades of Polish foreign policy we can better realise the paradox of our position, something which we must never forget in our thinking about this subject. Regaining its sovereignty twenty years ago, Poland was a weak bankrupt state, dependant on the West's merciful political and economic aid, uncertain of its future, and still a part the Soviet zone of influence (whose disintegration could lead to either improvement of our security or chaos and conflagration). In 2009, Poland was incomparably stronger, as reflected in its membership of NATO and the EU, alongside the world's most developed countries, and in an economy that proved highly resistant to the turbulence of the global financial and economic crisis. And yet, may I venture this opinion, the international significance of the decisions taken in Warsaw twenty years ago was greater than of those taken towards the close of the 21<sup>st</sup> century's first decade—and so was the danger of wasting a favourable international conjunction. Krzysztof Skubiszewski's policy of *faits accomplis* and "working towards a better international conjunction" helped Poland to tap the opportunity which was provided by the expectations of a Polish contribution to the post-Cold War order in Europe, an order sought by the whole, US-led, world. One can easily imagine, though, that Poland could miss that opportunity, thus producing catastrophic consequences for world and European security.

In 2009, Poland actively participated in NATO discussions to choose a new secretary-general, and even had its own candidate for the post. Taking advantage of the Barack Obama administration's mistakes—related to the abandonment of the previous administration's plans to install missile defence infrastructure in Poland and the Czech Republic<sup>1</sup>—Poland gained considerable leverage on NATO's debate about the new Strategic Concept. And in the EU forum, this country effectively pursued its first grand political project, one perceptibly changing the EU's functioning, namely the Eastern Partnership. Poland thus wielded appreciable influence on the two structure in the hardcore of the world system which it found most important for the pursuit of Polish interests. And yet the weight of Polish foreign policy for the world's future was much lower in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century than it was two decades previously. This only confirms the

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<sup>1</sup> For more see S. Dębski, "Taking Central Europe for Granted," *New York Times*, 5 October 2009, and S. Dębski, „Missili Addio: Così gli USA si sparano sui piedi,” *Limes. Rivista Italiana di Geopolitica*, no. 5, 2009, pp. 145–150.

assertion that a state's position in the international system is often determined by the function it plays, a function which does not necessarily have to reflect, or be in any relation to, that country's actual potential. Take Afghanistan, which riveted the world's attention in 2009 and which we were referring to as a "state" only by force of convention. The consequences of the decisions taken in Kabul, or taken with a view to the situation unfolding there, were of much greater impact on the world's condition in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century than the decisions then being made in Warsaw. Poland's position today is determined by its capacity to constantly interact with the most developed countries in the world, as our participation in European and transatlantic integration processes amply demonstrates.

Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Poland well used its role as catalyst of change in Central Europe to ratchet up security—its own and of the whole region. A circumstance of key importance for that success was the backing of the United States, which partly resulted from a certain inertia of US attention, still drawn towards our region. With the passage of time that led to an erroneous belief here that the level of US interest in Poland and the region, as exhibited in the 1990s, would last forever.

In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, though, Poland is no longer of strategic significance to the United States,<sup>2</sup> even if remaining an important partner. Russia began to be perceived by Washington as a partner, not a major rival, and Central/Eastern Europe ceased to be a source of threat to the US. With transformation of the European order wrapped up, the role which Poland played in that process is no longer an asset in the country's relations with the United States.

Barack Obama's abandonment of plans to install the missile defence system in Poland, announced on 17 September 2009, while causing understandable disappointment here (because of its manner and the date alike), should be turned into a lesson similar to the one which the British learned from the McMahon Act. As it was, the United Kingdom closely collaborated with the United States on nuclear bomb development during World War II, but soon after the end of the war the Truman administration issued a regulation banning nuclear cooperation with even the closest allies. One therefore should constantly keep it in mind that the Americans always care more about their own interests than the interests of even the most ardent allies.

The British have been aware for decades that the "special relationship," a phrase coined by Winston Churchill, is just a rhetorical flourish, often used by

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., M.T. Klare, "The New Geography of Conflict," *Foreign Affairs*, no. 3, 2001, pp. 49–50.

Americans when seeking their own gains in relations with London. The lesson of 17 September 2009 should never be lost on Polish politicians. While planning and making our foreign policy, we should devote more attention to reflection on the role which Poland plays, or may play, in international politics. The past twenty years are proof of the importance of such reflection.

It will hopefully be reignited by this successive edition of the Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy. Please enjoy your reading.

*Sławomir Dębski*

*Translated by Zbigniew Szymański*



**I.**

## **The Basis of Polish Foreign Policy**



**Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009**  
(presented at the sitting of the Sejm on 13 February 2009  
by the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski)

Mr President,  
Mr Speaker,  
Mr Prime Minister,  
Members of Parliament,

Honourable Guests, your Excellencies and members of the Diplomatic Corps!

I am addressing you today to present the main tasks of Polish foreign policy. Yet I feel a moral obligation to precede the main part of my speech with a statement on the tragedy that has deeply shaken Poland and dominated the public debate, the savage murder of the Polish citizen, Mister Piotr Stańczak.

Not further than a week ago all signals bespoke that we were moving in the right direction. The kidnappers had extended their ultimatum. This was a sign that the ongoing talks and actions were bearing fruit. Hope appeared, only to make the news of the Pole's death the more shocking.

This cruel murder was a reminder that terrorism is a looming form of crime. It is ideologized and fanaticized. It knows no religion or nationality. It contradicts the laws and moral norms of all cultures.

Terrorists don't negotiate and they don't seek compromise. A terrorist-fanatic speaks only the language of ultimatum. Pakistan, where the Pole was abducted, is in a state of internal war against terrorism, a war to which innocent citizens of that country fall victim every day. All this made our efforts exceptionally difficult. But we never gave up and together with the Pakistani authorities we continued negotiations as well as various operational, political and diplomatic efforts of a bilateral and international character.

Many of you, as indeed entire Poland, are asking: how could this have happened? Did we honestly go to all lengths to save the Pole? Knowing the story from the inside, I can assure you that we did. We did everything and, yet, we lost.

Although our best consular officers, diplomats and intelligence agents were assigned to the task, although we engaged all the authorities of our state, beginning with the president and prime minister, although we were assisted by allied intelligence services, although NATO Secretary General and the EU Commissioner for External Relations stepped in, although we actively cooperated with Pakistani authorities and groups close to the Taliban, despite all this, we did not succeed.

We believe that a tragic blend of circumstances contributed to the death of Mr. Stańczak: unreasonable political demands, the otherwise desirable Pakistani offensive in the region and internal quarrels between the Taliban commanders - all beyond control of the Polish government.

We have joined the grim list of countries that have already suffered similar losses at the ruthless hands of armed fanaticism: the US, Great Britain, China, Germany, Japan and many others. A few days ago I conveyed my condolences to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of India, whose citizen died a few days ago the very same way.

We want to deliver sound information on the entire story. For the past few days we have presented it to the media, committees of the Sejm and the public opinion. At the request of the Prosecutor's Office, I exempt all those who may have information on the subject from the duty to safeguard state secrets.

In about a month's time the MFA and special services will have prepared a detailed report, which will be made available to the authorized institutions and the public, to the extent permitted by the protection of classified information.

Our efforts have not drawn to an end. They will not cease until we have regained the remains of the victim and brought the perpetrators to justice. As you know, I have posted a reward of one million zlotys for assistance in this cause.

Terrorism is a global threat, which we need to fight with solidarity, determination and increasing effectiveness. We have to engage all our possible resources and stand up to it on all fronts, so as to fend off further crimes. We shall do that in the memory of Mister Piotr Stańczak and for the sake of other lives.

With that in mind, I ask you, Members of the Sejm, to preserve this topic from dominating our discussion on Polish foreign policy. Not because we wish to conceal anything or avoid accountability—since we are sharing our full knowledge—but for the sake of the Victim's memory and out of respect for the sorrow of his Family.

Mr President,

Mr Speaker,

Mr Prime Minister,

Members of Parliament,

Honourable Guests, your Excellencies and members of the Diplomatic Corps!

This year is the time of particular reflection on the history of our Homeland. It incites us to summarize the past century. We might say that Poland, at the price

of enormous sacrifice—won the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is sufficient to compare where we stood in 1909, and where we are in 2009. Thus, we may draw at least two conclusions:

- first, we have all the historical and contemporary reasons to think of the future of Poland in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with optimism, faith in ourselves, and in our ability to survive even the hardest conditions, and to develop under the most adverse circumstances;

- second, at the times of some internal arguments, we should not forget how various attitudes of Poles in the 20<sup>th</sup> century merged into our collective success, achieved against alleged laws of the History. Advocates of the independence and realists, socialists and peasant activists, liberals and national democrats, advocates of the organic work and heirs of the uprising traditions rebuilt our country and put it together from the pieces which seemingly could not be matched. Those diverse traditions shaped the nation which stood united against two inhuman systems of fascism and communism, a nation that survived moving of national borders by hundreds of kilometres, annihilation of elites and entire social groups, as well as material and spiritual havoc. The Solidarity movement rose from that experience and triggered the chain reaction of the global fall of communism. Owing to the Solidarity, today we may enjoy security and prospects of modernisation which our country has not witnessed for several hundreds of years.

Security and favourable conditions of civilisational development are not given once and forever. An everyday effort is needed to predict and properly respond to challenges. The 21<sup>st</sup> century world turned out to be even more complex and unpredictable than we thought at the end of the previous century. Therefore we must keep setting new goals without forgetting the words of Seneca: “If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favourable”.

Honourable Members,

The government of the Civic Platform and the Polish People’s Party has been working for fifteen months. Summing up the foreign policy of the Government, we must remember that foreign policy goals are particularly affected by changes—especially those violent ones—in the international theatre. Such changes are the financial and economic crisis and the Russian and Georgian conflict. These are events of the past year that affected the international policy and the effects of which will considerably shape conditions for fulfilment of the goals of the Polish foreign policy for 2009.

The Russian and Georgian conflict made us realize the strength of thinking in the categories of power politics, exerting influence and of zero sum games in our neighbourhood, the neighbourhood of Poland and the neighbourhood of the European Union. It is the kind of thinking that should go out of date in the reality and neighbourhood of the European Union. This conflict also showed that such thinking **leads to intricacies of nationalistic instincts and stereotypes, doctrinal hostility and forceful confrontation**. Thus it carries an immense load for destabilisation.

The recent gas crisis made us realize again that fuels are used for the attainment of political goals. Lack of stabilisation may follow not only a burning, but also a frozen conflict.

The US financial crisis has transformed into a global economic crisis. Leaving the economic evaluation of the crisis aside, I would like to draw your attention to its socio-political aspect, to reactions of societies and states. A thing of particular concern in such reactions are not only elements of panic and blind emotions as seen on stock exchanges, but also fearful reactions of protectionist closure, circumvention of values and mechanisms of joint action. **This crisis is becoming the time of trial, in particular for the Western civilization, which gave birth to the modern market economy, but also hedged it with mechanisms of regulation and correction, and initiated the integration process.** Therefore in counteracting the crisis, we deem it necessary that cohesion and solidarity of actions of the European Union be strengthened.

Experience of the Presidency of France and the first weeks of the Czech Presidency in the Council of the European Union shows that the importance of each state is manifested in the face of unexpected situations. Plans polished for years ahead will no longer suffice. An American proverb says that if you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans. Today, what we really need is political culture and administrative effectiveness which would allow us to develop subjectivity in the face of unexpected challenges. **Polish diplomacy must become a rapid response diplomacy as well.**

Members of Parliament,

After more than a year of activities of the Government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk, I would list eight positions on the side of assets of the Polish foreign policy.

**First**, we became more involved in deepening the integration of our continent. Poland became a predictable partner in Europe. It was able to provide a fast response during the days of the Russian intervention in Georgia, pressing for a fast and proper response of the European Union, believing that the

European Community was the powerful force uniting all its Member States. This brought measurable effects in the form of the actions of French Presidency and, upon the motion of Prime Minister Donald Tusk, calling a special meeting of the European Council and termination of armed clashes. We will continue actions for the solution of the conflict. With values and goals of the whole European Union in mind, in 2008 we were able to effectively seek respect for our specific, Polish and Central European interests.

**Second,** by common effort of several ministries and the personal involvement of the Prime Minister in the negotiations, we achieved a success at the December summit of the European Council on the climate and energy package. The compromise reduces the costs of planned changes for our enterprises and households. It was made possible owing to co-operation of Member States from the Central and Southern Europe. We proved that solidarity of states of the region in matters where their interests converged was possible.

In co-operation with our European partners, we agreed on the mandate to negotiate the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Russia. The mandate considers our interests and the long-term European interests, such as interests related to the energy security. Today I may say with great satisfaction that as regards energy security, Europe speaks now the language of Poland and thanks Poland for its resolute position.

**Third,** we promoted the Polish and Swedish initiative of the Eastern Partnership, which, by the power of an internal EU decision, has transformed into a joint European project. This project manifests the power of Polish diplomacy, based on reliable projects and rational arguments. It affirms the EU's recognition of Polish competencies on the Eastern affairs.

**Fourth,** we reinstated good neighbourly, partner dialogue with Germany. The past year was marked by intensive interactions crowned with the December inter-governmental consultations attended in Warsaw by members of the German Federal Government and Ms Chancellor Angela Merkel. Germany is our key ally and partner in the EU and NATO, an ally who appreciates Polish contribution to developing the spirit of integration and building the community of the Western world. We can also see that responsible political forces in Germany are able to correctly interpret the historical message. This can be manifested by the fact that the Government of Germany agrees with the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights which dismissed property claims of persons displaced after the Second World War.

**Fifth,** we unlocked the dialogue in the relations between Poland and Russia and demonstrated that we can have discussions with Russia without making

concessions in essential matters. The essence of a better trend in Polish-Russian relations is simple. It is about leaving the rhetoric of, I would say, threatening Russia through a keyhole, for the benefit of the language of pragmatics and seeking compromise, whenever we see a sign of good will on the other side.

**Sixth**, together with the United States we adopted the Declaration on Strategic Co-operation, which provides among others, permanent deployment of Patriot missile battery. This Declaration accompanied the agreement on potential deployment of elements of the missile defence system in the territory of Poland. We are interested in elevating the dialogue with our American ally to the strategic level. Poland advocates that the US remains a 'European power'.

**Seventh**, as declared by Prime Minister Donald Tusk during his Parliamentary statement, the Polish Army left Iraq with a sense of a well-fulfilled task, without harm to relations with Iraq or the United States. Owing to experience gained in Iraq, the level of military training increased, army modernisation was accelerated, and the soldiers who participated in the mission became the elite of our contemporary army. Released resources and funds allow us to strengthen our role in the NATO mission in Afghanistan.

**Eighth**, we started the reform of the Polish foreign service. I may assure you that the reform is prepared in accordance with the best European practices, in particular of the diplomatic services which are known for their ability to combine cost consciousness with effectiveness. This process will be heralded by the merger of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the Committee for European Integration. Following the merger, a **new Ministry of Foreign Affairs** will be actually established. Besides classic foreign policy, the Ministry will be responsible for co-ordinating European affairs, namely the dimension in which civilisational interests of Poland are decided.

Members of Parliament,

In summarizing year 2008 and discussing the assets, I cannot omit the liabilities.

**First**, the crisis surrounding ratification of the Lisbon Treaty is the joint failure of Europe. We are certain that the Treaty serves our interests by strengthening the political dimension of the European Union, reinforcing solidarity and deepening the integration, in particular in foreign and security policy. We already know **that it is safer to sail the stormy waves of global politics and economy not on a national boat, but on a European liner.**

The Government believes that finalisation of ratification process of the Lisbon Treaty lies in our interest since we need the European Union to be thriving and to act in unison in external relations, and to guard principles of free



competition and drawing power from diversity of its Member States while in internal affairs.

**Second**, despite co-operation with Mr President and co-operation with the US, we failed to convince all of our allies within NATO to grant Membership Action Plans to Ukraine and Georgia.

**Third**, the visas. Polish citizens are able to travel almost anywhere without visas. Last year, Australia and Canada abolished visas for Polish citizens. Unfortunately, the United States still did not include Poland in its non-visa programme, and our citizens are not always properly treated by the US immigration service.

As I already mentioned, our joint, tragic failure were actions co-ordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which unfortunately failed to save our citizen kidnapped in Pakistan from death.

Honourable Members,

In my statement on the foreign policy presented to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland in April 2008, based on guidelines of the Prime Minister, I defined five priorities:

- **Poland strong in Europe, a patron and promoter of Europe's eastern policy;**
- **Poland as a strong link in the North Atlantic Alliance;**
- **Poland as an attractive brand: a country of success which loves freedom and knows how to share freedom;**
- **Poland as a country which supports its diaspora and which is fuelled by its vitality;**
- **Polish diplomacy as an effective service.**

These priorities remain valid. These are strategic goals which will be pursued in the works of the current Government over the next years. We will fulfil these goals with unrelenting consistency despite the international crisis and turbulences.

Members of Parliament,

Integration of our continent constitutes an optimum response of Europe, until recently weakened by conflicts of the states and confrontation of blocs, to challenges presented by new and old powers in the developing, multi-polar world. It also provides an opportunity for Poland to display its advantages in the team play in global fields of competition, in one of the strongest teams of the world. It is our vital interest that Europe develops its political and economic

potential and that the values which lay at the heart of the European project retain their inspiring power.

At the same time we know that the European Union is a competition stage and our goal in the politics of the EU is to **protect Polish interests**. We believe that budgetary funds at the EU's disposal should correspond to the EU's goal. This is valid for the cohesion policy, common foreign and security policy, agricultural policy and support for innovations and scientific research. We would also like to remind of the principle incorporated in the Treaty of Rome which provides that each European state which fulfils the criteria may apply for membership in the European Union.

We are in favour of strengthening the Community method of action with retained principle of unanimity on the issues which are the most important for the interests of the Member States. As elections to the European Parliament will take place this year and new composition of the European Commission will be appointed, we will seek noticeable presence of Polish representatives in Community institutions.

The Czech Republic as the first of the Visegrád Four assumed Presidency in the Council of the European Union. We support priorities of the Czech Presidency, in particular inauguration of the Eastern Partnership and reinforcement of the European energy solidarity. In preparing for the Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union, we will establish in-depth co-operation with Denmark and Cyprus, our partners in group Presidency. Hungary will be also a close partner of ours, as they will hold Presidency in the European Union before Poland does.

Honourable Members,

We are using our current Presidency in the Visegrád Group to deepen co-operation on that forum. Not only do we share similar experience with the Visegrád and Baltic States, but common interests in the European Union as well.

We will still actively participate in the works on the Community strategy for the Baltic Sea and in the reform of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. When Sweden takes over the helm of responsibility for the Community affairs, we will use this opportunity to continue intensive co-operation with our Baltic neighbour.

For decades co-operation between Germany and France continued to be the pillar of stability for Europe and the driver behind integration. Co-operation within the **Weimar Triangle** presents an opportunity for Poland to participate in actions which are important for the entire European Union.

Germany is our neighbour, ally and the main economic partner in the Community. We have some problems in bilateral relations, but then again, will you not find problems in relations between two other members of the Weimar Triangle? In spite of appearances, such problems do not only arise from the conflict-ridden history of the last several hundred years, but also from objective differences in the potential, level of civilisational development, and the dynamics of internal processes. Such issues should not be clad with historical costume but made the subject of reflections and solutions. Even with problems, relations can be good or bad. We prefer the good ones. Yet we do not forget the history. What is more important is the **common, Polish and German, feeling of responsibility for the future of the European Union**. Co-operation between Poland and Germany proves that we should remember about our history and jointly create the future, considering the national and Community interest.

Relations with France, settled in a rich landscape of shared history, are filled with the content of strategic partnership. As with Germany, we are united by the will to build a strong European Union, active in relations with neighbours of Europe in the South and European neighbours in the East. We can use a number of proven mechanisms of co-operation with the Mediterranean countries to implement the Eastern Partnership, and thus reinforce the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Honourable Members,

After 20 years of successful system transformation and integration with the Western structures, Poland takes its deserved place among the leading players of the European league.

We can only fulfil our aspirations when Poland joins the debate on the subjects which are important for the entire European Community and brings its own ideas and initiatives.

In the second half of 2011 Poland will assume Presidency in the Council of the European Union. As we prepare for the Presidency, we are setting priorities for the Presidency today, priorities such as the eastern dimension of the Union, or, in a wider context, the development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

The shape of Polish Presidency depends on the future of the Lisbon Treaty. We hope that the Treaty will come into effect this year. We are also preparing for the eventuality that we have to assume duties of the state in charge of the works of the European Union, in accordance with the currently governing Treaty of Nice.

From the viewpoint of Polish interests, it is particularly important to implement the Eastern Partnership. The Partnership will provide significant support to our European partners in the East to carry out modernisation reforms. Effective completion of the reforms will translate to high standards of political and economic life, bringing such states closer to fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria.

We support the integration of Ukraine with institutions of the Western world. **But it should be Ukraine which desires such integration the most.** Modernisation effort will require nation-creating feeling of responsibility and determination in implementing reforms from the Ukrainian society and elites in particular. However, we should remember that **despite all of the shortcomings, Ukraine is a democracy, namely a country in which the winner of elections is not actually known before the election.**

We hope that Belarus will also chose the European view and open the path for tighter relations with the Western neighbours and the entire European Union. The scope of co-operation depends on the willingness of the Belarusian authorities to liberalise the political system. Poland will support efforts for development of the democratic society in Belarus, where all citizens, including Poles, associated in independent organisations will be able to freely express their opinions, needs and aspirations.

Honourable Members of Parliament,

We are concerned about the lasting instability in the Caucasus region, which plays an important role in the transit of fuels to Europe. After the Georgian and Russian conflict, which—as we wish to believe—was exceptional in nature, along with our allies we are particularly sensitive to the situation in this region. Once again I would like to re-affirm our solidarity with Georgia and recognition for its territorial integrity and I would like to declare that we will remain an advocate for the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of Georgia. We are encouraging the European Union to solve frozen conflicts in the region.

Russia is a strategic partner of the European Union. We are aware that the potential for developing mutual relations with Russian on the foundations of common values is extremely limited today. Therefore we propose that clear rules of co-operation are established, the ‘rules of the game’ for the relations, without swaying the existing institutional architecture in the European and Euro-Atlantic area.

We are looking forward to a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Russia that is in line with our interests. Unlocking of negotiations in this matter allowed us to affect the policy of the

entire Community towards Russia. The European Union should pursue a common strategy in relations with its eastern neighbourhood, as with numerous other states. It is commonly believed that **Europe needs Russia and this is true. We believe that Russia needs Europe even more.**

Members of Parliament,

Poland bases its security on three pillars: membership in the North Atlantic Alliance, which proved to be the most effective alliance of collective defence in history, membership in the European Union, which develops its defensive capacity, and bilateral relations, in particular with the United States.

For ten years of our membership in NATO we have proven to be a reliable ally. In addition to increased security and political benefits, NATO membership has also brought investments of the Alliance in our defensive infrastructure. Polish soldiers take part in numerous missions of the Alliance, often paying the highest price, as this week. At the end of this January, nearly two thousand of our soldiers participated in various NATO operations.

Currently, given the new international situation and new nature of threats, we believe time has come to work out a new strategic concept for the Alliance.

We are in favour of ensuring balance among tasks arising out of Art. 5 of the Treaty of Washington, which refers to mutual defence of allies in their territory and external missions of the Alliance. We support the policy of the 'open door' to the Alliance, which we benefited from.

We would also like the stabilisation missions in which Polish soldiers participate to better reflect priorities of the Polish international policy. We are forced to resign from some foreign military missions under the pressure of the economic crisis. To underline our responsibility as an ally, we will not exchange participation in harder missions for easier ones. On the contrary, by resigning from easier missions, we are increasing our involvement in harder missions, such as the most important NATO operation in Afghanistan.

Poland will participate in the development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). We attach particular significance to the development of Community's capacity to react during crisis situations. We care about complementary support and co-operation of NATO and the European Union. In 2008 we became a member of the Eurocorps.

Through anti-terrorist actions in Afghanistan, NATO military power is to improve the security, while the humanitarian and development aid of the European Union is to assist in winning the civilians to the government's side. If

both organisations, which we are a member of, fully co-operated, we would achieve much more. Unfortunately, it is not so.

The NATO mission in Afghanistan is a priority to us, since the credibility of the Alliance is at stake. The goal of allied actions is to reinforce the role of the Afghan authorities in the process of stabilisation and reconstruction and to prevent this country from becoming a terrorist base again. The Polish involvement has been manifested through an increase in the number of soldiers who participated in the operation last year. Assumption of responsibility for the Ghazni Province has made Polish contribution more visible and allowed us to exert greater influence on the progress of the operation.

Poland supports the unity of the West and the best possible co-operation between Europe and the United States. This Partnership performed well at the most difficult times of the Cold War and we would not like the common enemy to be the only think which mobilizes Europe and the United States to act together. We believe that the fundamental values and common interests will remain the best trans-Atlantic bond. The term of office of President Barack Obama, inaugurated a few weeks ago, gives us hope to renew the Western alliance.

**Poland cares about the best possible relations with the United States.** It is with satisfaction that we greet the opening of a new chapter in the American foreign strategy. We hope that the United States quickly reinstate their position as the wise and democratic leader which Europe needs. We actively participated in preparation of the proposal of co-operation presented by the European Union to the new American administration. We are interested in the new areas of co-operation for international institutions, fostered by the 'multilateral moment' in the policy of President Barack Obama.

In bilateral relations, Poland will reinforce co-operation on security and aim towards deepening the strategic dialogue. We are interested in expanding the infrastructure of military and political relations and fulfilment of specific goals of upgrading armed forces, the air forces, and the fulfilment of economic goals.

We are ready to finalise the bilateral negotiations on the package of agreements related to co-operation on the missile defence. We also understand that the final decision on the missile shield will be made by the administration of President Barack Obama after careful consideration of all aspects of this project. Regardless of the US decision on this matter, we expect that the Declaration on Strategic Co-operation is fulfilled.

We will continue to tighten co-operation with **Great Britain**. We are brought together by a strong will to improve trans-Atlantic relations and a vision of effective North Atlantic Alliance, responsive to contemporary challenges.

We will continue to perform actions to maintain the rank and importance of multilateral mechanisms to control conventional armament and measures for building trust and security. The future of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) faces particular challenge since Russia has suspended to perform this Treaty.

We will maintain the stance of Poland on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The most important step will be organisation of a regional meeting of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) in Poland in June 2009, with participation of EU institutions and the Member States. We will also continue to be involved in matters related to the control of arms export and imposition of sanctions.

The United Nations is indispensable for solving global problems: starting with security issues, including disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons, to the challenges of climate changes, to actions for relieving global inequalities, which are often the side effects of globalisation. The UN plays a particular role in the regions of unrest, in particular the role in seeking solutions to the Middle East conflict. These actions will be supported by the fulfilment of the announcement by the new US President on reinforcing the principle of multilateralism in international relations.

On the anniversary of the fall of communism, we cannot forget about the role of our country in the field of respecting human rights, democracy and promoting the rule of law. We want the standards of the Council of Europe to be respected. We are content that the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights is based in Poland. The Secretariat of the Community of Democracies is also based in Poland. We intend to submit a draft Act to regulate the status of these international institutions in Poland. We are considering that Raphael Lemkin Award be created, named after a Polish lawyer, who coined the term of 'genocide'.

Honourable Members of Parliament.

As it has been proved by the latest controversies between Russia and Ukraine, the disturbances on the market of energy raw materials have enormous political impact, the scale of which exceeds beyond bilateral relations. Today the whole Europe recognizes the power of arguments concerning the energy safety presented by subsequent Polish governments.

We support the endeavours aimed at reducing Europe's dependence on external energy supplies by diversifying sources and transmission routes, creating a single EU market for energy carriers and extending the internal transmission infrastructure. We strongly advocate for the adoption of an ambitious EU policy concerning the safety of supplies of energy raw materials. We propose amendments to the relevant community regulations so that the mechanism of the "energy solidarity" could be triggered in a situation when fifty per cent of the gas supplies to a single Member State become endangered and not as late as today, when already twenty per cent of supplies to the whole European Union are at risk.

At the same time Poland wants to remain an important transit state. We would also like to remind that the energy safety of some states cannot be built at the expense of the others. Therefore we reiterate our offer to deliver gas from Russia to the consumers in the Western Europe in the cheapest possible way, i.e. by building a new section of the Yamal-Europe pipeline.

For our part, we continue the policy that consists in diversification of sources and routes of supply of energy carriers to Poland. The new, significant direction of the activities undertaken by the Polish government in this respect shall be the countries that form part of the Eastern Partnership as well as the Persian Gulf states.

We will engage in negotiations over the global agreement concerning the climate protection for the period after 2012 that would replace the Kyoto Protocol.

Thanks to the Climate and Energy Package we have successfully negotiated with the European Union we have prevented the electricity price increase that would cost our economy around PLN 100 billion. Instead we have been given a real opportunity to obtain PLN 60 billion for modernization of the Polish energy sector.

Honourable Members,

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs monitors the efforts of the international community aimed at increasing the stability of global financial system and counteracting the effects of the current crisis. As the twenty-first economy in the world and one of the biggest Member States of the European Union we proactively participate in those undertakings as a member of international economic organisms. Our experiences gathered during the transformation from the command and control economy to the market economy predestine Poland to participate creatively in the works of groups and institutions that develop a new



model of managing the financial and economic system. Our realistic plan of preparations to introduce the euro shall favour those endeavours.

Especially at the times of global crisis we have to make together every effort to demonstrate and popularise the economic attractiveness of Poland in order to maintain the inflow of investments and technologies to the maximum extent possible, to foster the confidence in products and services originating from Poland and as a consequence: to retain the existing workplaces and sustain the economic growth. We shall aspire to make it possible in close co-operation with the Ministry of Economy. Despite the economic crisis we will be present at the EXPO International Exhibition in Shanghai. It demonstrates our interest in developing commercial, investment and technological co-operation with Asian states.

Esteemed Members of Parliament,

We have introduced to the Polish Foreign Service the notion of **public diplomacy**. The task of the public diplomacy consists not only in the widely understood promotion of Poland. It also consists in convincing the public opinion abroad of the merits of our evaluation and understanding of international issues.

This year we celebrate various important anniversaries that stimulate the debate about the place of Poland in Europe and the reflection over Europe itself. The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the breakout of the Second World War, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the collapse of the communist regime, the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our membership in NATO and the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our accession to the European Union mark the way our country has passed from the defeat suffered during the clash with totalitarian regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the triumph of liberty and complete integration with the Western structures. They also constitute milestones on our way to building a contemporary, united Europe. The celebration of the aforementioned anniversaries accompanied by political and artistic events shall be considered an opportunity to promote the knowledge about contemporary Poland—the country that fought in Europe “for our freedom and yours” and the country that nowadays strives for openness of interpersonal relations and co-operation within our continent.

Poland is proud of its image of a country that loves freedom and knows how to share it with others. The motto for the anniversary of the 1989 breakthrough shall be: **‘Freedom. Made in Poland’**.

The ignorance of history is frequently a source of misunderstanding, controversies, and false interpretations. We will persist in counteracting unintentional and sometimes conscious falsifications of Polish history, including the misleading clichés that continue to appear in foreign mass media. We will

insist on highlighting the need to create the area of common remembrance in Europe, based on historical truth and outlining the profile of our contemporary European identity. In this sense we will make history the science that teaches us about the future.

We are implementing the “Framework Strategy for Promotion of Poland until 2015.” We aspire to reinforce the prestige of Poland on the international arena and present our country as an attractive place for investment, studies, scientific co-operation as well as leisure and different forms of tourism.

After the successful Polish Year in Israel we proceed to organize the Polish Season in the United Kingdom. The promotion of Poland’s image in the country that on numerous occasions became a hospitable home for many Poles is extremely important at the moment. Next year Poland and the whole world will celebrate the **Year of Chopin**. We are going to seize this opportunity in order to promote our country. Music is the language easily understood worldwide, and the universal message of the Chopin’s music has a distinctive Polish accent.

Honourable Members of Parliament

One of the most important tools for eliminating differences and mitigating conflicts worldwide is the development aid. The ability to provide such aid will confirm the improving status of Poland as a country that does not require development assistance anymore but is eager to render it to others. The desire to share our experiences of successful democratic and free-market transformation with other countries constitutes a constant identifier of Polish foreign policy and the essential component of “Polish brand.”

**Increased activity in terms of development co-operation, especially in Eastern Europe that constitutes our priority, as well as in locations where our military contingents have their bases, creates the image of Poland as a stockholder involved in strengthening the stability in the world.**

We have to be aware that our partners from the European Union more often than before will expect Poland to fulfil our commitments and to earmark more than the current amount of PLN 1 billion for development aid. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has at its disposal 130 millions of the said amount. Creation of a professional Polish development aid system requires passing of an appropriate bill. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall submit the draft of the relevant bill to be signed into law.

Members of Parliament,

Now I would like to refer to the issues concerning Polish communities abroad and Polish minorities.

In our relations with neighbours, especially with Belarus, but also with Lithuania and Germany, we will continue to emphasize the necessity to respect the rights and the needs of Polish minorities that live on their territories. Simultaneously we shall require respect for equality of community labour and social rights of over million Polish citizens that reside in other European states and contribute with their hard work to the growth of their wealth and the wealth of the whole European Union.

In supporting the access to Polish education, language and culture we will facilitate the Poles that live abroad to participate in the life of their homeland. This will be achieved by amendments to the electoral law. We also carry out an informative campaign that helps them come back to Poland.

We will aspire to create a more partner-like model of co-operation with Polish organizations and milieus abroad that are eager to involve themselves in supporting Polish interests in relations with other states. I refer to those Polish communities that do not limit themselves to asking “what Poland can do for them” but also “what they can do for Poland.” We are also open to co-operation with communities that do not belong to Polish diaspora but are related to Poland by their origin, language, culture or sentiment. We have many friends among them and we want to cultivate those friendships.

The freedom of travel, resulting from the Poland’s accession to the Schengen Convention is combined with more responsibilities for protecting the frontiers of the Union, both the geographical and the “procedural” ones. For many foreigners, especially our eastern neighbours, these duties create more obstacles to their visits to Poland. We try to mitigate that effect by executing conventions on small cross-border traffic. The most important one, with Ukraine, was signed in December 2008 and submitted to Sejm for approval. Therefore I ask you, Honourable Members of the House, to ratify this convention as soon as possible.

Polish consular service is faced with a new and difficult task. The latest tragedy in Pakistan and the evacuation of Polish citizens from Iraq, Georgia or Gaza Strip demonstrate that assuming part of responsibility for global security also poses some threats. Practically, there is no natural disaster or tragedy in the world without Polish victims. Therefore, despite the restriction on expenditures we do not give up the project of creating fast-reaction consular services for crisis situations. I would like to appeal to our fellow citizens to treat the new threats seriously and use our information and advice concerning foreign travels and take into account the warnings published on the websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The liquidation of several consular posts does not lead to provision of deteriorated services to the interested citizens. Wherever the situation requires, we establish new offices. Last year we opened consulates in Manchester and Reykjavik and this year we are going to open offices in Sevastopol and Vinnitza.

Moreover, we will use more extensively solutions offered by modern technologies to establish 'mobile consulates' and a call centre, or to provide consular services online through a 'virtual consulate'.

We plan to use more effectively and partially turn into professionals the group of 150 honorary consuls who currently serve Poland in 94 countries. We will extend their powers and involve them in the implementation of political, community and promotional projects, providing them with broader support than to date.

Thanks to those changes Polish consular service will become more efficient and closer to the citizens. **We are fully aware that many Polish and foreign citizens develop their opinion about the Polish diplomacy on the basis of their contacts with consuls, their effectiveness and their attitude towards the people.**

Esteemed Members of Parliament,

I ask you today, Honourable Members, to amend the Foreign Service Act in the year 2009. The amended act will give a new shape to Polish diplomacy enabling the foreign service to meet the challenges and will be more adequate to the resulting tasks. We also have to increase the competitiveness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the labour market. The work in diplomatic corps is a service that requires round-the-clock availability and often sacrificing the family life. Meanwhile the salaries paid for this job and the social conditions offered to the families of diplomats, however improved since the day I took the office of the Minister, are not comparable with the salaries earned in private sector or offered by the international institutions that have become strong competitors for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Foreign policy also requires representation at an adequate level. Polish embassies and consulates, lacking repairs for many years now, located in not-so-fine districts do not constitute the evidence of frugality but are simply a flaw in the country's prestige. We should provide Polish embassies and consulates with functional offices in decent locations, and Polish ambassadors should have presentable residences, which are, first of all, their workplaces and then their homes. We have already made initial decisions in this respect that have translated into the purchase of new buildings for embassies in Georgia and for the Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Poland to the European Union in

Brussels and also a new residence for the ambassador of the Republic of Poland in the United States. This year we will commission a new building of the General Consulate in Lviv and—despite the crisis—we will carry on with several critical investments, among others the Polish Embassy in Berlin, as well as the computerization of the whole Ministry.

The Council of Ministers has adopted a decision that starting from the year 2010 the key investments for foreign representation of Polish interests, including first of all the construction of diplomatic offices in Berlin, will be financed on the basis of governmental long-term programme. In our opinion the programme will also include the indispensable investments in the infrastructure of our delegations in the East, including Moscow, Kiev and Minsk.

The implementation of the program of strategic investments in the residential infrastructure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the next years would allow us to take advantage of this important asset, which is a global network of appropriately organized and equipped offices. The network will be used not only by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but also by other state institutions and also by our tourists, businesspersons and local friends of Poland and Polish communities. But in order to make this global network really efficient, mobile, and dynamic there is a need for consistent implementation of the second big modernization programme that consists in the comprehensive overall computerization of the whole Ministry initiated last year. At the beginning of our term we encountered the biggest delays in this particular area and this is the very field where, due to our future presidency of the European Union, we have the least time for changes. Last year we made some investments in this area that brought the Polish diplomacy into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But now we have to go further on in order to reach the standards characteristic of our main partners and competitors.

Many of the changes that took place last year would not have been possible without the decisions made by the Members of the House in respect of the budget. Thank you again for them. As I appreciate the acceptance thereof by members of all the parties, I would like to remind you, that we spend the public money sparingly. All the more, items justified only by historical reasons cannot be financed. This was the reason for sometimes distressing decisions about liquidation of more than ten posts and several hundreds of jobs abroad, the existence of which had been unjustified for years. At the same time those decisions were accompanied, as in previous years, by creation of a few new, indispensable posts and dozens of jobs.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has had a long history of lack of proper financing. In 2008 the share of foreign affairs in the state budget amounted to 0.34 per cent. Meanwhile the French spend 1.6 % of their budget on diplomacy, and the Germans spend 0.91%. The example of Spain is particularly impressive: with GDP twice higher than the one of Poland, the Spanish expenditures on diplomacy are six times higher than ours.

The economic crisis, and in particular the sudden depreciation of zloty against foreign currencies in which we make more than 60 per cent of our expenses, means for us currently more than a 20% decrease in the real value of the ministerial budget. In the long run such a shortage cannot be covered even by the most extensive, but rational thriftiness. The Polish diplomatic service may be—like a modern army—a little less numerous, but it must be incomparably better trained, remunerated, equipped, mobile and efficient. I hope that you, Members of the House, and the whole political class in Poland will understand this approach.

Members of Parliament,

Efficient preparations for presidency of the Council of the European Union constitute the most formidable challenge to the Polish diplomacy from the time of Poland's accession to the European Union. **That will be an examination in efficient organization, coordination within the Union, negotiations and essential competences.** We must prepare ourselves well to it. The success of the Polish presidency will be the best tool for promoting the image of modern Poland. Therefore I am asking you already today, Honourable Ladies and Gentlemen, to support our preparations.

Members of the House,

The essence of the philosophy of (adopting) foreign policy advocated by the government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk is that we want to act towards *negotiations* and not towards *confrontation*. We have passed on to constructing alliances, thus avoiding the articulation of our demands, which is little efficient, but offers the delusive feeling of “moral superiority.” We are open to dialogue and exchange of arguments. Not only with our friends and allies, but also with those, with whom we do not share common values and interests, but with whom we share the responsibility for the security and future of our planet. “This is because dialogue consists in constructing mutuality.” And this does not mean at all decreasing the scope of or weakening the will to strive for the basic interests of the Republic of Poland.

Compromise is the “daily bread” of diplomatic service, which needs to react to challenges that arise in the world of problems and threats and which exhibit

many shades of gray. Similarly as *arrogance* and *impudence* should not be mistaken for *courage*, *compromise* is not an evidence of *weakness*. Compromise is an expression of *maturity*, which means the ability to define the boundary conditions for concessions and to set lines that may not be crossed.

In the Polish debate on foreign policy there are definitely too many strong words and accusations of clientelism. Meanwhile, foreign policy should not be strong or weak. It should be **efficient**. Therefore I am asking you, Members of the House, to assess my work on the basis of long-term results, and not of the strength of banging the desk with my shoe.

This is what Polish foreign policy is today: reliable and open to co-operation, able to accept different points of view, but ready to oppose when the viable interest of the state is at stake; **playing chess and not Russian roulette**.

I believe that my mission is to model courageous and thoughtful diplomacy against the background of global political turning point. The world is quickly leaving the two decades of illusions that arose after the end of the Cold War. Our diplomatic service enters the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a situation where demand is growing for Poland as one of the organizers of the European and the Atlantic political process. This is how we also see the position of our country: a thoughtful partner and stabilizer and a constructor of bonds of co-operation in all directions.

Esteemed Members of Parliament,

I am aware that I have not managed to discuss many important issues within such a short time. Nevertheless, I would like to stress that implementation of the plan that I have presented requires co-operation with Mr President and with the Opposition. I want to state that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remains open to such co-operation. This is because I am convinced that we all have the same goal: the well-being and prosperity of Poland.

I would like to thank you again, Members of the House, for listening to this statement and ask you to accept it. Thank you, Mr President and Mr Prime Minister, for your presence here. I believe that we will not have to wait for another 20 years until a future minister of foreign affairs in free Poland can perceive its affiliation with the leading countries of the world as something natural and self-evident.

Thank you very much.

Source: [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl)

Translated by Elżbieta Gołębiowska

## **Poland's Policy in the European Union**

In 2009 Poland's membership in the European Union was dominated by activities preparatory to the coming into force of the Treaty of Lisbon and to putting in place new institutional solutions. Poland, the only EU member to have registered economic growth in this period, was struggling with the financial and economic crisis. The energy/climate package negotiations were one of the landmark events. The fifth year of integration was also an occasion for drawing up a balance sheet of Poland's presence in the EU. The launch of the Eastern Partnership evidenced the Republic's of Poland growing influence on the shaping of EU policy.

### **Determinants**

The paramount determinant of Poland's European policy, one arising from the dynamics of European integration, was the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon. This process having been brought to a halt by Ireland, the Czech Republic and Poland following the "No" vote in the June 2008 Lisbon Treaty referendum in Ireland, the elections to the European Parliament in the member states, between 4 June 2009 and 9 June 2009, were held according to the Treaty of Nice which was then in effect. At the same time uncertainty about the ratification was prolonging the process of forming a new European Commission. Ultimately, after the second referendum in Ireland, the Treaty of Lisbon came into force on 1 December 2009. With the prospect of adoption of the Treaty, the second half of the year saw the stepping up of preparatory work for the implementation of new decisions and institutional solutions.

Poland's European policy was conducted amidst the financial and economic crisis which had hit the EU economy in the third and fourth quarter 2008. The worst performance was recorded in the first quarter 2009 and an upturn became observable only in the second quarter of the year. The remedial measures instituted in 2009 were based on the European Economic Recovery Plan adopted in December 2008 by the European Council. Steps taken by the EU to prevent

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grave disturbances in the financial system in the future were an important element. On 23 September 2009 the European Commission unveiled draft legislation on a new architecture of financial supervision in the EU. Relevant political decisions were adopted by the ECOFIN Council and the European Council in December 2000.<sup>1</sup>

Poland's European policy was also influenced by changes in the EU neighbourhood. The turn of 2008 brought two crises: the Ukraine-Russia gas dispute and the Israeli-Palestinian war in Gaza. These events dominated the EU's agenda in early weeks of the year, resulting in the EU's increased concern with matters of key importance to Poland: European Neighbourhood Policy-related issues, in particular their Eastern dimension, and energy policy, in particular gas supply security issues.

Poland's EU policy benefited from a considerable convergence of the priorities of the Czech and Swedish rotating Presidencies with Poland's interests in the EU. The Czech Republic, which held the Presidency of the EU Council in the first half of the year, had included the strengthening of energy security and the development of the Eastern Partnership initiative among its targets. Sweden, which co-authored the Eastern Partnership initiative, emphasised, alongside the counteracting of the consequences of the economic crisis, climate change issues, the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, and the adoption of the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.<sup>2</sup>

2009 brought no major changes on the Polish political scene. The Civic Platform-Polish Peasant Party (PO-PSL) coalition, which had been in power since the 2007 parliamentary election, was ruling the country. Differences persisted between the Donald Tusk government and the main opposition party, Law and Justice (PiS), on a number of issues: the directions and ways of conducting European policy, in particular in its Eastern dimension, the pace of ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon; and the adoption by Poland of the common currency, the euro. President Lech Kaczyński, who came from the opposition party, also engaged in the dispute. The PiS objected to Council of Ministers-proposed changes in the government's system of Poland's European policy coordination. Eventually the President signed, on 18 September 2009,

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the EU's position on the financial and economic crisis see M. Koczor, *Lisbon Strategy implementation in 2009. an analysis*, Polish Institute of International Affairs, Warsaw, 2009, pp. 103–124.

<sup>2</sup> *Work Programme for the Swedish Presidency of the EU 1 July–31 December 2009*, [www.se2009.eu](http://www.se2009.eu).

a law whereby the coordination centre for Polish European policy has been situated since January 2010 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MFA].<sup>3</sup>

Following a Constitutional Tribunal ruling of 20 May 2009 on the central constitutional body of the State empowered to represent the Republic of Poland at European Council meetings<sup>4</sup> the conflict over powers and responsibilities between the Prime Minister and the President abated. The Tribunal's finding, to the effect that while the President is free to participate in EU summits at his or her discretion, it is the Council of Ministers that determined the State's position and the Prime Minister who represents the Republic of Poland and presents the position at European Councils,<sup>5</sup> prompted the both sides to develop communication channels through which to establish the scope and forms of the President's participation in European Council meetings.

### Objectives

The objectives of Poland's policy in the European Union were presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in an address to the Sejm on 13 January 2009.<sup>6</sup> Radosław Sikorski emphasised that, like in 2008, "a Poland strong in Europe, a supporter and promoter of Eastern policy" was the priority. He pointed out that the political and economic development of the European Union and the preservation of values underlying the integration project were in Poland's interests. He noted at the same time the necessity to take care of national interests with respect to policies of fundamental importance for Poland, namely the cohesion policy, common foreign and security policy, agricultural policy, research and innovation policy, and the enlargement policy.

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<sup>3</sup> *Dziennik Ustaw* [Journal of Laws], no. 161, item 1277, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> On 17 October 2008 Prime Minister Donald Tusk applied to the Constitutional Tribunal for the resolution of a dispute over powers and responsibilities between the President of the Republic of Poland and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, requesting the identification of a central constitutional body of the State empowered to represent the Republic of Poland at meetings of the European Council with a view to presenting the State's position. For more see R. Kołatek, "Polish Policy in the European Union," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2009, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> "Komunikat prasowy po rozprawie dotyczącej sporu kompetencyjnego w sprawie określenia centralnego konstytucyjnego organu państwa, który uprawniony jest do reprezentowania Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w posiedzeniach Rady Europejskiej," [www.trybunal.gov.pl/Rozprawy/2009/rozprawy.htm](http://www.trybunal.gov.pl/Rozprawy/2009/rozprawy.htm). The memorandum decision was published on 28 May 2009 in *Monitor Polski*, no. 32, item 478.

<sup>6</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009 (presented at the sitting of the Sejm on 13 February 2009 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski)," above, p. 11.

The Minister recognised the strengthening of cohesion and solidarity of European Union-adopted actions as the paramount aspect of combating the financial and economic crisis. Thus he projected a message that fighting protectionism and upholding the principles of the single internal market would be Poland's aim in the EU.

Addressing the EU's institutional reform, Minister Sikorski expressed the hope that the Treaty of Lisbon would come into force still in 2009. He said that this covenant was in Poland's interests and that its adoption would determine the shape of the rotational EU Presidency for which Poland had been preparing since 2008.

With the prospect of elections to the European Parliament and the appointment of a new European Commission, Polish diplomacy set itself a goal of ensuring "a visible presence of representatives of Poland in EU institutions;" this heralded government efforts in support of Polish candidates for senior positions in the EU.

Eastern policy, in particular the implementation of the Eastern Partnership, figured prominently among the 2009 goals. At the same time Minister Sikorski reaffirmed that Ukraine would receive support on its road to integration with European structures and he expressed the hope that Belarus would opt for a similar course. He also spoke of the need to base relations between the EU and Russia on a new treaty on partnership and cooperation.

With regard to energy issues which, like in preceding years, were covered extensively in the Minister's Sejm address, the stated goals comprised improving Poland's and the EU's energy security through the diversification of sources of supply and transmission routes; creating a single EU energy resources market; developing the internal transmission infrastructure; and strengthening energy solidarity mechanisms.

### Poland's Policy in the European Union

**Political relations.** In 2009 Poland participated in work designed to bring to completion the Lisbon Treaty ratification process. Already at the beginning of the year the Polish government, championing prompt entry into force of this instrument, obtained support of the Sejm which adopted, on 23 January 2009, a resolution on the immediate ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon.<sup>7</sup> However, the

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<sup>7</sup> "Rezolucja Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 23 stycznia 2009 r. w sprawie jak najszybszego ratyfikowania Traktatu z Lizbony," *Monitor Polski*, no. 6, item 64, 2009. "For" votes cast: 256 (PO, PSL, the Left); "Against" votes cast: 147 (PiS and independent Deputies); abstentions: 7; non-voters: 49.

government's position on this matter was not fully compatible with the position of the chief opposition party, the PiS, or with that of President of Poland. Lech Kaczyński made the signing of the Treaty ratification instrument dependent upon the outcome of the next Irish referendum. Citing the situation after the French and Netherlands referendums, which had brought to a halt the ratification of the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, the President argued that the Irish "No" carried no less weight than a "No" from the citizens of one of the largest EU member states.<sup>8</sup>

At a European Council meeting on 18–19 June 2009 the Polish delegation agreed to a package of legal guarantees for Ireland which clarified the Irish's doubts concerning the right to life, family and education, taxation, and security and defence. Poland saw the package as a good compromise between the Irish people's demands and the positions of the other member states and it was of an opinion that the steps taken were capable of contributing to a positive outcome of the next referendum in Ireland and to the Treaty of Lisbon's coming into force at the turn of 2009.<sup>9</sup> In the referendum held on 2 October 2009 the Irish opted for the adoption of the Treaty by a 67.1% majority, at an about 59% voter turnout. This made it possible for the ratification process to be completed in Poland. President Kaczyński signed the ratification instrument on 10 October.<sup>10</sup> Then, after President Václav Klaus had obtained for the Czech Republic an opt-out from the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Treaty of Lisbon was ratified also in the Czech Republic and it entered into force on 1 December 2009.

It was an important part of Poland's 2009 European policy to participate in preparatory work for putting in place the institutional solutions laid down in the Treaty of Lisbon. This work had commenced still before the completion of the ratification process. Initially, its progress was strongly influenced by the elections to the European Parliament and the subsequent election of a new President of the European Commission. At the European Council on 18–19 June the member states agreed unanimously to re-appoint to the position José Manuel Durão Barroso and—also by a universal consensus—to postpone the appointment of the other Commission members until the entry into force of the Treaty of

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<sup>8</sup> "Wystąpienie przed korpusem dyplomatycznym," 20 January 2009, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>9</sup> *Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie styczeń–czerwiec 2009 roku (podczas Prezydencji czeskiej)*, printed matter no. 2285, Sejm RP, Warszawa, August 2009, p. 33, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>10</sup> "Prezydent podpisał Traktat z Lizbony," 10 October 2009, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

Lisbon. The Polish government supported the Barroso candidacy on the grounds that the election of the Commission President would have a stabilising effect on further Treaty-reform-related work.<sup>11</sup>

The appointment of a new Commission President took place amidst a debate on the candidates for the position of President of the European Parliament. Commenting on the support for Barroso, the Head of the Office of the Committee for European Integration, Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, hinted that this nomination had helped the candidacy of Jerzy Buzek<sup>12</sup> for the President of the European Parliament.<sup>13</sup> However, it is worth noting that the Polish government had set out to promote the Polish MEP much earlier, entering in first talks with European politicians on this subject a year before the elections to the European Parliament.<sup>14</sup> It was owing to this that political support for Jerzy Buzek was strong enough to ensure him victory over Mario Mauro, a counter-contender supported by Italy's Silvio Berlusconi government.<sup>15</sup>

After the Irish referendum the groundwork for the implementation of institutional solutions provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon visibly gained momentum. The main debate concerned the filling of the new positions of permanent President of the European Council and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Poland came up with a controversial proposal for a three-step election procedure for the both positions. It wanted the EU Presidency to publish, following bilateral consultations, a list of candidates who would be invited to present to the Council their own visions of exercise of the office; then, after a debate, voting by qualified majority would follow. The proposal was subsequently narrowed down to the position of the Union diplomacy chief, but even then the Polish concept won no significant support.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Informacja dla Sejmu...*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>12</sup> Jerzy Buzek served as the Prime Minister of Poland in 1997–2001. Since June 2004 he has been a Civic Platform Member of the European Parliament.

<sup>13</sup> "Pierwszy dzień szczytu w Brukseli korzystny dla Polski," 19 June 2009, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl).

<sup>14</sup> "Wywiad z premierem Donaldem Tuskiem przeprowadzony przez M. Antosiewicza," 12 July 2009, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl).

<sup>15</sup> "Nadal dwóch kandydatów jest w grze – powiedział premier Donald Tusk po spotkaniu z Silvio Berlusconim," 18 June 2009, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl).

<sup>16</sup> Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski in: "Polska chce 'castingu' na szefa dyplomacji UE," 16 November 2009, <http://fakty.interia.pl/fakty-dnia/news/polska-chce-castingu-na-szefa-dyplomacji-ue,1397717>. See also a statement by UKIE Chief Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, "Rada ds. Ogólnych i Stosunków Zewnętrznych," Brussels, 16–17 November 2009, 16 November 2009, <http://polskawue.gov.pl>.

At an informal meeting of the EU heads of state and of government on 10 November 2009 the member states elected Herman Van Rompuy for the permanent President of the European Council, Catherine Ashton for the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Pierre de Boissieu for the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union. Poland's favourite for the office of permanent President was the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Jean-Claude Juncker, yet—as Donald Tusk said after the Council—“the European Union is not yet ready to put such large-format personalities in the highest position in the Union.” Poland backed Rompuy and Ashton, on the grounds that these choices, while not very ambitious, were safe for Poland.<sup>17</sup>

The future manner of functioning of the new institutions was a matter of importance for Poland. In the opinion of Secretary of State for European Affairs Mikołaj Dowgiewiecz, many Polish proposals—including on the role of the rotating presidency, on the manner of communication between the rotating presidency and the President of the Council, on the respective roles of the President of the European Council and of the Council for General Affairs, and on the model of cooperation between the Council and the European Parliament—were incorporated in the final compromise unveiled by the Swedish Presidency and adopted in December by all member states.<sup>18</sup>

What's more, Poland made its presence felt in the course of work on the shape of the European External Action Service (EEAS). It succeeded in having important elements of the Polish position included in the political agreement on this subject adopted at the December European Council.<sup>19</sup> Poland requested that the EEAS staff be recruited according to the principle of geographic balancing, with monitoring mechanisms put in place; that a high proportion of EEAS positions be filled by representatives of member states' diplomatic services;<sup>20</sup> and

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<sup>17</sup> “Tusk: Van Rompuy... to mało ambitny wybór,” PAP, 19 November 2009, <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1342,title,Tusk-Van-Rompuy-to-malo-ambitny-wybor,wid,11702754,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=1a05b>.

<sup>18</sup> See *Implementacja traktatu lizbońskiego. Polski non-paper*, Warszawa, 19 October 2009, [www.ukie.gov.pl/dc12576570043e52f/\\$FILE/Non\\_paper\\_PL.pdf](http://www.ukie.gov.pl/dc12576570043e52f/$FILE/Non_paper_PL.pdf). See also a statement by Mikołaj Dowgiewiecz, Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in: *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej*, no. 171, 2009, no 3539/VI kadencja, p. 4, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>19</sup> A. Rettman, “Poland Sets Out Vision for EU Diplomatic Corps,” 20 October 2009, <http://euobserver.com/9/28851>.

<sup>20</sup> this case Poland consented to 30% of EEAS staff's coming from the diplomatic services of Member States. The Polish proposal provided for 50%.

that consular tasks be included in the responsibilities of the European External Action Service.<sup>21</sup>

The Treaty of Lisbon having entered into force, the member states resumed the task of electing European Commission members. In this connection early in December the Polish government proposed Janusz Lewandowski, an European Parliament Member and the chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Budgets, for the Budget and Financial Programming Commissioner of the European Commission. This candidacy was approved already at the beginning of 2010.

Poland's 2009 European policy was concerned, besides the institutional aspects, with the EU's efforts to fight the financial and economic crisis. Poland was critical of schemes designed to protect the euro area to the exclusion of the remaining EU members' interests. On these grounds Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Minister of Finance Jan Vincent-Rostowski objected to the concept of an issue of common euro-zone bonds proposed in February at an informal ECOFIN Council meeting.<sup>22</sup> Underlying the Polish position was the assumption that the member states should "reject the temptation of protectionism" and observe the principles of the single internal market and the freedom of movement of persons, goods and capital.<sup>23</sup> This was a response to emerging symptoms of protectionism in EU states, the most serious one being French president Nicolas Sarkozy's announcement that financial support would be provided to automotive sector producers provided they undertook to maintain employment in France and refrained from removing production to such countries as the Czech Republic, where French brands could be produced at a lower cost.<sup>24</sup> On that occasion Poland gave firm support to the Czech Republic, which was then holding the Presidency and which lodged a protest against such protectionist schemes.<sup>25</sup> Before the informal European Council summit on the financial crisis, scheduled for 1 March a meeting was held, at the initiative of the

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<sup>21</sup> See statement by Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs..., p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Statement by Prime Minister Donald Tusk in: *Sprawozdanie stenograficzne z 36. posiedzenia Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskie w dniu 19 lutego 2009 r.*, pp. 137–138.

<sup>23</sup> "Premier: nasz cel w Brukseli został osiągnięty w 100 proc.," 1 March 2009, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl).

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Nicolas Sarkozy: „Le Président invité de France 2 pour l'émission 'Face à la crise',” 5.02.2009, [www.elysee.fr/president/les-actualites/interviews/2009/le-president-invitede-france2-pour-l-emission.5722.html](http://www.elysee.fr/president/les-actualites/interviews/2009/le-president-invitede-france2-pour-l-emission.5722.html).

<sup>25</sup> *M. Topolánek's Response to the Commentary of the French President Regarding Car Manufacturing*, 6 January 2009, [www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/news/response-of-mtopolaneek-to-the-commentary-of-the-french-president-regarding-car-manufacturing-9154/](http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/news/response-of-mtopolaneek-to-the-commentary-of-the-french-president-regarding-car-manufacturing-9154/).

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, of the prime ministers of the Visegrad Group states, the Baltic states, Bulgaria and Romania and the European Commission President José Manuel Barroso. All participants of the meeting agreed that at times of crisis all-European solidarity and the observance of rules arising from Treaty commitments were of paramount importance.<sup>26</sup> This common position contributed in a significant way to curbing protectionist tendencies in EU countries.

Early in 2009 the economic crisis became acutely manifest in some Central and East European countries, including Hungary and the Baltic states. Given considerable disparities in the economic situations of the different states Poland objected to a “blanket” treatment of the region in assessments of the depth of crisis and of the solutions adopted. At an informal European Council meeting in March Hungary’s proposal to set up a special aid fund in support of financial stability in the countries in the region aroused much controversy. Poland, like a majority of the member states, did not endorse this scheme, both for procedural and political reasons: the proposal was submitted two days before the meeting and Poland, having no balance of payments problems, needed no such facility.<sup>27</sup> Eventually, the European Council decided that the appropriate approach was to deal with aid to countries in the region on a case-by-case basis.

Poland also contributed to developing solutions designed to protect the financial markets against another crisis. It participated—indirectly, through Leszek Balcerowicz’s membership in the High-level Group on Financial Supervision in the EU (known as the Jacques de Larosière group)<sup>28</sup>—in the drafting of a report on problems involved in supervision of European financial markets.<sup>29</sup> The report, released by the group in February 2009 and pronounced by the UKIE chief “to set a proper course for next years’ work on improving

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<sup>26</sup> “Wspólne stanowisko państw Grupy Wyszehradzkiej, krajów bałtyckich, Bułgarii i Rumunii,” 1 March 2009, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl).

<sup>27</sup> Secretary of State in the Office of the Committee for European Integration, Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, on the results of the summit meeting of the European Council of 19–20 March 2009, in *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji do spraw Unii Europejskiej*, nr 107, 2009, no. 2076/VI kadencja, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> The group was appointed in October 2008 at the request on the European Commission President José Manuel Barroso with the mission of advising on the future of financial markets regulation and financial supervision in Europe. Its members included, besides Jacques de Larosière, Leszek Balcerowicz, Otmar Issing, Rainer Masera, Callum McCarthy, Lars Nyberg, José Pérez Fernández and Onno Ruding.

<sup>29</sup> *The High-Level Group of Financial Supervision in the EU*, Brussels, 25 February 2009, [http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/finances/docs/de\\_larosiere\\_report\\_pl.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/finances/docs/de_larosiere_report_pl.pdf).



regulation of financial markets in the EU,”<sup>30</sup> had an impact on the shape of a political agreement arrived at during the Swedish Presidency and subsequently converted into draft legislation during the Spanish Presidency.<sup>31</sup>

European Union's crisis-fighting efforts produced concrete financial results for Poland. Poland became a beneficiary of the European Economic Recovery Plan. At the European Council on 19–20 March substantial funding was successfully negotiated for Polish energy infrastructure projects: the Skanled Baltic gas pipeline connection from Norwegian gas fields via Denmark to Poland; a LNG terminal in the Świnoujście port; an interconnection between the gas transmission systems of Slovakia and Poland; an offshore wind farm in the Baltic Sea; a carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS) installation in the Bełchatów power plant.<sup>32</sup>

For several years now Poland has been very active in shaping the EU's energy-and-climate policy. This was also the case in 2009. While no breakthrough energy policy decisions were taken in the period under survey, Poland commended the Czech Presidency's actions towards strengthening the security of energy supply and transmission routes to the EU and the adoption of the recommendations of the second strategic energy review. It welcomed in particular the European Council's March decision inviting the Commission to present early in 2010 its proposal for a new EU Energy Security and Infrastructure Instrument.<sup>33</sup> A decision to provide financial support to the Nabucco gas pipeline project, adopted at this summit in connection with the implementation of the European Recovery Plan, was advantageous from the perspective of Poland's gas supply diversification interests.<sup>34</sup>

Poland made its presence felt in the course of development of the EU's position for the December 2009 Copenhagen climate conference. Plans were for the conference to adopt a post-2012 climate agreement. The matters under

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<sup>30</sup> Secretary of State in the Office of the Committee for European Integration, Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, on the results of the summit meeting of the European Council, Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji do spraw Unii Europejskiej, no. 107, Kancelaria Sejmu, 1 April 2009, p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> For more see M. Koczor, *op. cit.*, pp. 121–126.

<sup>32</sup> Secretary of State in the Office of the Committee for European Integration, Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, on the results of the summit meeting of the European Council..., p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> “Wypowiedź sekretarza stanu w Ministerstwie Spraw Zagranicznych Mikołaja Dowgielewicza...”, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Statement by Undersecretary of State in the Office of the Committee for European Integration, Piotr Serafin, in: *Zapis stenograficzny (793) z 57. posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Unii Europejskiej w dniu 25 marca 2009 r.*, Senat RP, p. 3.

discussion included the EU's greenhouse gas emissions commitments and the financing of emission-reduction and adaptation projects in the developing countries. The member states consented to the EU's undertaking unilaterally to reduce its total emissions by no less than 20% by 2020, relative to 1990, and to declaring itself ready to reduce emissions by 30% provided an ambitious global climate treaty was signed with similar commitments on emissions reduction and emission increase limits from the most economically advanced developing countries. This decision was compatible with Poland's stated position.<sup>35</sup>

For Poland, the matter of an international adaptation fund in support of the developing countries' emissions reduction and adjustment efforts was of crucial importance. A majority of the EU members were in favour of creating this financial mechanism first and postponing the allocation of the resulting financial burdens among the member states to a later date. In this context a proposal was also put forward that the individual levels of financial support by the developed countries, including EU members, be proportional to the sizes of their emissions. Poland raised fundamental objections on this issue, out of concern that this would put the burden of financing the EU climate policy in the future on the economically weaker, coal-dependent EU members<sup>36</sup> and it called for the earliest possible determination of both the EU's financial contribution and the principles of its allocation among the member states. The Polish demands were taken into account in the conclusions of the March European Council. Thereafter, Poland's position influenced importantly the decisions taken on this issue by the European Council of 29–30 October. It was agreed at that meeting that the member states' contribution funding the EU's activities in the developed countries in 2010–2012 would be voluntary and that post-2012 contributions by the less affluent EU members would be linked to their emission levels and GDP, a decision on the allocation of commitments to be taken unanimously by the European Council based on recommendations of a specially appointed working group.<sup>37</sup>

Poland's position on climate negotiations having been taken into account to so large an extent, Polish diplomacy can be said to have been highly effective.

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<sup>35</sup> *Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej..., op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> *Konkluzje Prezydencji*, Rada Europejska w Brukseli [Brussels European Council, 29–30 October 2009, Presidency Conclusions], pp. 3–7; *Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie lipiec–grudzień 2009 roku (podczas Prezydencji szwedzkiej)*, printed matter no. 2809, Sejm RP, Warszawa, 15 February 2010, pp. 31–32, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

Doubtless, what worked to Poland's advantage was a convergence of interests of a large number of the new EU members, on which a strong coalition was successfully built. Before the October summit meeting of the European Council the heads of government of the Visegrad Group states, the Baltic states, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovenia met in Brussels. Based on Poland's proposals Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia and Lithuania agreed a joint position on climate issues, which they subsequently presented it at the European Council.<sup>38</sup>

2009 saw the launch of the Eastern Partnership initiative proposed by Poland and Sweden in May 2008. The approval of this project by the European Council in March [2009] was preceded by vigorous efforts of Polish diplomacy.<sup>39</sup> From late 2008 to March 2009 Poland had conducted consultations on this subject, chiefly with the Visegrad Group states, the Baltic states and with Germany. The Eastern Partnership had also been discussed at different levels with the remaining EU states, including France and the U.K., and with the neighbouring states including Ukraine. In January 2009 Poland organised Visegrad Group-Russia consultations with an agenda including the Eastern Partnership project.

The launch of the Eastern Partnership at a meeting of the heads of state and of government of the participating states on 7 May in Prague indubitably had a symbolic dimension for Poland's policy in the Union, reflecting as it did Poland's growing influence on European policy. Yet, after the success that the adoption of Eastern Partnership had been the activity of Polish diplomacy in implementing this initiative appeared to wane. Possibly, this was because in the field of regional cooperation the Swedish Presidency accorded priority to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and, with respect to the Eastern Partnership, it confined itself to implementing decisions adopted earlier thus subduing, as it were, the Partnership's profile.<sup>40</sup> Some of the blame must be put on the weakness of Poland's information policy and promotional efforts to highlight Poland's input into the implementation of Eastern Partnership in the second half of 2009, when Poland was actively involved in the work of thematic platforms and in drafting project proposals. It should be noted that the Polish MFA planned, without waiting for the implementation of the Eastern Partnership by the

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<sup>38</sup> "Spotkanie przywódców nowych państw unijnych przed szczytem UE," 29 October 2009, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl).

<sup>39</sup> Poland's position on the Eastern Partnership, see B. Wojna, "Poland," [in:] B. Wojna, M. Gniazdowski (eds.), *The Eastern Partnership—the Opening Report*, Warszawa, 2009, pp. 42–43.

<sup>40</sup> See statement by Mikołaj Dowgilewicz, Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs..., p. 5. See also A. Kreczmańska, "Sweden," [in:] B. Wojna, M. Gniazdowski (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 52.

European Commission, first pilot projects to be financed from the national budget. These projects are concerned with human rights promotion, regional development and the preservation of cultural heritage. Moreover, Poland highlighted the importance of coordinating member states' and the European Commission's efforts to provide development assistance to the East Partnership beneficiaries. It proposed the setting up of a financial mechanism to enable establishing cooperation in implementing the Eastern Partnership with non-EU states, such as the U.S., Canada and Japan, referred to by a working title of the Group of friends of the Eastern Partnership.<sup>41</sup>

**Economic relations.** The global financial and economic crisis brought about an economic slowdown in Poland. In 2009 GDP rose 1.7%, against 5% in 2008. Even so, seen against the EU countries Poland's economic situation appeared highly advantageous. Poland as the only EU member showed economic growth in 2009.<sup>42</sup>

One repercussion of the crisis was the drop in inbound foreign direct investment [FDI] in Poland. At €8.4bn in 2009, FDI was €1.6bn less than in 2008. At the same time, with the good—compared with the other EU and Central and East European states'—situation on the Polish market, perceptions of the investment climate in this country underwent a significant revaluation. Although relatively little headway had been made in introducing regulations to facilitate economic activity,<sup>43</sup> investors came to acknowledge and appreciate the political and economic stability, the availability of materials and human resources, and the level of fiscal burdens. This attitude holds, in the medium term, a promise of a rebound of foreign direct investment in the Polish market. It is also worth noting that an increasing proportion of [foreign] investment in Poland consists of projects which require high skills and technology. Business service centres and R&D-related projects accounted for one-third of investment undertakings implemented in Poland in 2009.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> "Informacja ministra spraw zagranicznych Radosława Sikorskiego na temat Partnerstwa Wschodniego" in: *Sprawozdanie stenograficzne z 41. posiedzenia Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w dniu 7 maja 2009 roku*, pp. 148–149. See also a conference address by Andrzej Cieszkowski, Plenipotentiary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Eastern Partnership.

<sup>42</sup> *Analiza sytuacji gospodarczej Polski w 2009 r.*, Ministerstwo Gospodarki, Departament Analiz i Prognoz, Warszawa, February 2010, p. 3, [http://beta.mg.gov.pl/files/upload/8436/4q2009\\_pl\\_AP.pdf](http://beta.mg.gov.pl/files/upload/8436/4q2009_pl_AP.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> For more see *Doing Business 2010. Country Report—Poland*, World Bank, International Finance Corporation, 2009, [www.doingbusiness.org/Documents/CountryProfiles/POL.pdf](http://www.doingbusiness.org/Documents/CountryProfiles/POL.pdf).

<sup>44</sup> "Polska: zielona strona mocy, wywiad z Waldemarem Pawlakiem, wicepremierem oraz ministrem gospodarki", PAliIZ, 3 December 2009, [www.paiz.gov.pl/nawosci/index.php?id\\_news=2302](http://www.paiz.gov.pl/nawosci/index.php?id_news=2302).

The EU countries are Poland's most important trade partners. In 2009 the total value of Poland's trade was €201.3bn, of which €140bn with EU countries. The latter's share in Poland's exports was 79.3% and in imports 61.5%. Following the slowing down of Poland's economy and the collapse of Poland's major markets in the EU, from November 2008 onwards "an exceptionally deep downturn in exports was noted, followed—with a two months delay—by an even deeper slump in imports."<sup>45</sup> Overall, the 2009 value of trade, at current prices, registered 17.1% down from 2008 in exports and 26.3% down in imports. In trade with EU countries the drop in exports was lower (by 15.6%), while imports fell by 26.8%. One positive effect of this was that the trade deficit, which had been mounting steadily for two years, was reduced significantly, predominately in the wake of contracting imports from developing countries. Also contributing to the improvement of the overall balance of trade were changes in trade in the EU markets, with the decline in exports (by €14.1bn) lower by some €9.5bn than in imports (by €23.5bn). Among the EU markets, Germany and Italy had the greatest positive impact on the change in the balance of trade. All in all, in 2009 Poland's trade deficit registered at €8.7bn, less by €17.5bn than in 2008.<sup>46</sup>

The crisis caused changes in the geographic structure of trade, with the share of the developed countries' (including EU members) in Polish exports rising. The EU countries accounted for 79.3% of Poland's exports (up 1.5 percentage point on 2008) and for 61.5% of Poland's imports (down 0.4 percentage point from a year earlier). At the same time, there was a deep drop in trade with the Community of Independent States countries, by about 32% in exports and about 42% in imports. Also, 2009 saw a changed by-commodity structure of trade, including the strengthening of electrical engineering and agricultural-food exports which registered only a modest decrease in value.<sup>47</sup>

In 2009 the adoption of the euro receded to the background. At the beginning of January the government appointed a plenipotentiary for the adoption of the

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<sup>45</sup> *Sytuacja w handlu zagranicznym po 3 kwartałach 2009 r.*, Ministerstwo Gospodarki, Departament Analiz i Prognoz, 30 November 2009, p. 1, <http://beta.mg.gov.pl/NR/rdonlyres/2556BC8A-2D6D-473D-AFF6-7E1A6ABE7798/58398/Ocenahzpo3kw2009r.pdf>.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*; *Analiza sytuacji gospodarczej Polski w 2009 r.*, *op. cit.*, p. 3. See also *Rozwój wymiany towarowej Polski z zagranicą w latach 2005–2009*, Ministerstwo Gospodarki, Departament Analiz i Prognoz, 14 February 2010, pp. 12–15, <http://beta.mg.gov.pl/files/upload/8437/Ocena%20na%20www.pdf>.

<sup>47</sup> *Sytuacja w handlu zagranicznym po 3 kwartałach 2009 r.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 8 and 11.

common European currency<sup>48</sup> and the Council of Ministers reaffirmed that Poland's accession to the euro area in 2012 remained a priority of the government.<sup>49</sup> Yet it soon transpired that the turmoil in the financial markets and the global economic downturn rendered unviable the agenda for the adoption of the euro unveiled by the government late in 2008.<sup>50</sup> With the condition of Poland's public finances deteriorating in the wake of the protracted crisis the fulfilment of the convergence criteria became a more remote prospect. On 13 May 2009 the European Commission subjected Poland to the excessive deficit procedure, just as it did many other EU members in the first half of 2009. The ECOFIN Council upheld this decision on 7 July 2009, recommending at the same time deficit-reducing measures. The decision was based on the 2008 public finance sector deficit of 3.9% of GDP. According to the recommendations the deficit should be brought down to below 3% of GDP by 2012.<sup>51</sup>

Faced with the economic crisis and the deterioration of public finances, the government had to re-schedule the inclusion of the zloty in the exchange rate mechanism II (ERM II), originally scheduled for the first half of 2009, and to give up the originally declared deadline for the adoption of the euro by Poland.<sup>52</sup> In the present economic situation the government did not announce a new date for the adoption of the euro, yet this does not mean that activities to this end have been cancelled. Late in 2009 a regulation was adopted on the establishment of a National Coordination Committee for the Euro, a Coordinating Council and Inter-institutional Working Groups for Preparations for the Adoption of the Euro.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Dziennik Ustaw*, 2009, no. 11, item 60. The office of Plenipotentiary was filled by Ludwik Kotecki, Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Finance.

<sup>49</sup> "Rząd chce wprowadzić Polskę do strefy euro w 2012 r.," 20 January 2009, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl).

<sup>50</sup> "Rada Ministrów przyjęła mapę drogową wejścia do strefy euro," 28 October 2008, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl). See also: "Mapa Drogowa Przyjęcia Euro Przez Polskę," Ministerstwo Finansów, Warszawa, October 2008, [www.mf.gov.pl/\\_files/\\_aktualnoci/2008/10/mapa\\_drogowa\\_28\\_10\\_2008.pdf](http://www.mf.gov.pl/_files/_aktualnoci/2008/10/mapa_drogowa_28_10_2008.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> "Odpowiedź podsekretarza stanu w Ministerstwie Finansów Ludwika Koteckiego na Interpelację nr 10346 w sprawie podjęcia przez Komisję Europejską procedury nadmiernego deficytu w stosunku do Polski," <http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl>.

<sup>52</sup> "Sprawozdanie za okres od dnia 1 kwietnia do dnia 30 września 2009 r. z działalności Pełnomocnika Rządu do Spraw Wprowadzenia Euro przez Rzeczpospolitą Polską," Warszawa, November 2009, p. 9, [www.mf.gov.pl/\\_files/\\_euro/pełnomocnik/sprawozdanie\\_z\\_q2-3\\_2009.pdf](http://www.mf.gov.pl/_files/_euro/pełnomocnik/sprawozdanie_z_q2-3_2009.pdf).

<sup>53</sup> *Dziennik Ustaw*: 2009, no. 195, item 1505.

## Appraisal

Dominating in Poland's 2009 European policy were activities connected with the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, economic crisis fighting, energy-climate negotiations, and the implementation of the Eastern Partnership. Yet, far from confining itself to these aspects, Poland engaged also in a range of activities the effects of which will be seen only in years to come. Among other things, with the Financial Perspective after 2014 in mind, it presented its position in debates on the future of the cohesion policy and common agricultural policy; it involved in the shaping of regulations governing trade between the EU and non-EU countries with the object of causing them allow, to the largest possible extent, for Polish economic interests; it championed the continuation of the process of EU enlargement by willing countries which meet the accession criteria. Preparations for the Polish Presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011 figured prominently in Poland's European policy. However, their full assessment will be possible only after the end of the Polish Presidency.

In the context of the targets adopted early in 2009, Polish European policy can be said to have been highly effective—but in many cases the actions undertaken were of an immediate-term nature, with no underlying clear strategy. Poland participated actively in designing solutions related to the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, even though the uncertainty about the completion of the ratification procedure appears to have weakened Poland's position in talks on a future shape of the EU institutions. The defence of the single internal market, of which Poland was a major champion, contributed—in accordance with Poland's expectations—to curbing protectionist undertakings in the EU and to making the principle of solidarity and joint efforts the basis of the EU's crisis-fighting strategy. On the other hand, Poland activity with respect to protecting the EU financial system against disruptions in the future and working out a strategy to overcome the crisis was much lower. Poland's credibility as a champion of the free market was undermined by the existing problems with the transposition of [EU] directives and with market liberalisation and by irregularities in the provision of public aid. Owing to the election of Jerzy Buzek for the President of the European Parliament the target of increasing the visibility of Poles' presence in EU institutions was achieved. Yet it should be remembered that Poland's quota of European Commission positions is still far from filled, with only 69% of senior management positions and 54% of middle management positions staffed.

The transformation of the Polish-Swedish proposal into a EU initiative and the launch of the Eastern Partnership should be seen as a success.

Disconcertingly, the activity of Polish diplomacy appears to have tailed off in the second half of 2009. This is attributable, at least in part, to the weakness of the national information policy and promotional activity showing Poland's presence in the implementation of the Eastern Partnership. Credit is certainly due to efforts to secure energy-climate arrangements benefiting Poland. Both the additional funding secured for infrastructure projects in this field and the recognition of Poland's point of view in the EU's position at the Copenhagen climate conference evidence high effectiveness of Polish policy in this area.

The cases of Eastern Partnership and of the energy-climate package demonstrated that negotiating an advantageous solution, or launching a new initiative, are results of years of activity and of gradually introducing issues relevant to Polish national interests into the Union's agenda. Doubtless, the key to success was cooperation by states with converging interests. Poland succeeded in playing a constructive role in building a coalition based—like a year earlier—on the Visegrad Group and the Baltic states and joined, on matters of energy-climate negotiations or the defence of the single internal market, by Romania and Bulgaria. What's more, 2009 saw the emergence of a practice of pre-summit meetings with the Visegrad Group states at their core. In this context an opinion voiced by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, that should regular meetings of this type prior to European Council meetings become a routine, this could give rise to concern in the EU, shows that Poland and the Visegrad Group states have come to be recognised as increasingly important players in the Union.

When assessing 2009, significant changes in the perception of Poland in the EU should be noted. As the only EU member to have registered economic growth, Poland came to be perceived as a stable and economically attractive country. In the short term this could mean an increase in inbound [foreign] direct investment. In the long term, the result could be a positive change in the overall image of Poland, particularly since the new perception of the Polish economy is increasingly accompanied by an opinion that Poland is a political partner capable, besides standing up for interests, of coming up with interesting and inventive proposals. Whether this image takes roots will depend, among other things, on economic developments and on a right image-building and information policy, which in 2009 was not at all times flawless. The implementation of the Eastern Partnership will be another test, a gauge of Poland's capability to nurture a project it authored.

*Translated by Elżbieta Gołębiowska*



## The Political and Military Dimension of Polish Security Policy

### Background

Poland's security environment in 2008 was the scene of significant and largely unfavourable changes. The August conflict between Georgia and Russia over South Ossetia's status—whatever its causes and regardless of who is to blame for the outbreak—forced Euro-Atlantic states to revise their appraisals of the region's security. The crisis also provided an efficiency test for international organisations (NATO, the EU, OSCE)—and its results, as of early 2009, were hardly unambiguous.<sup>1</sup> The adverse impact which the crises had upon regional stability was further strengthened by the circumstance of its being both a manifestation and a consequence of Russian policy assertiveness in recent years, especially in relations with its neighbours. Russia's growing firmness had yet another consequence of importance for Poland, namely the mounting tensions in that country's relations with Ukraine, culminating in their successive dispute over settlements for gas shipments to Ukraine and transit fees for Russian gas sent further westwards. That crisis led to a major curtailment of gas deliveries to a number of European countries (including Poland), which only added to the uncertainty in Russia's relations with some of its neighbours and the European Union. On the other hand, regional security was positively influenced by improved stability and predictability in the Western Balkans (notwithstanding an increase in tensions following the announcement of Kosovo's independence in February 2008).

Poland's security policy was also influenced by new elements in the global environment. The victory in the US presidential election by the Democratic Party candidate, Barack Obama—who promised deep changes in U.S. foreign policy and who declared his commitment to multilateralism and intention to

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<sup>1</sup> For more see Ł. Kulesa (ed.), "Business as usual? Konsekwencje konfliktu rosyjsko-gruzińskiego," *Materiały Studialne PISM*, no. 11, 2009.

renew U.S. relations with allies and partners—aroused hopes for a more intense international cooperation, including the lessening, or elimination, of tensions in relations among western states, including within NATO. For Poland, which in the George W. Bush era strove to tighten its relations with the United States in the field of security (resulting, e.g., in an August 2008 agreement on the deployment of U.S. missile defence assets in Poland, and a declaration on strategic cooperation), the announcement of U.S. policy revision translated into uncertainty as to the direction and intensity of further contacts with the United States, and even implementation of the previously agreed decisions.<sup>2</sup> The situation was further complicated by an unfavourable evolution of global geo-strategic determinants in 2008. No conflict or crisis was solved among those having the strongest impact on global security. The instability of the world's most inflammable hot spots—the Middle East and South Asia—was deteriorating further; the level of security in Afghanistan and Pakistan declined; efforts to resolve the problem of the Iranian nuclear programme proved unsuccessful; and tensions in the Israeli-Palestinian relations were on the rise, especially towards the end of 2008. Only in Iraq did the situation improve, although it was still far from stable.

But the key negative factor influencing the international situation was the fast deepening global economic crisis—and not only its extent or intensify, but also the circumstance that the effects of the crisis hit most fiercely Poland's allies and partners, the United States and countries of the European Union. Consequently, their room for manoeuvre narrowed, their available resources dwindled, and their efforts were focused on countering the crisis and mitigating its social consequences.

These geo-strategic changes and the economic crisis considerably influenced the character of cooperation within NATO and the EU, which are the most important actors from the standpoint of Polish security policy. As far as the North Atlantic Alliance is concerned—in view of the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan (despite the allies' increasing involvement), in the aftermath of the

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<sup>2</sup> Such fears arose from the awareness of the president-elect's critical attitude towards the missile defense project in the version implemented by the outgoing administration, which—given the weight of MD collaboration in Polish-U.S. security relations—suggested that the U.S. might downgrade these relations and the intensity of mutual cooperation. An unambiguous articulation of these fears came e.g. from Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski, in his replies to MPs' questions after presentation of Polish foreign policy objectives for 2009; *Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Radosław Sikorski, on the goals of the Poland's foreign policy for 2009 (at the Sejm sitting on 13 February 2009)*, [http://www.msz.gov.pl/Minister,of,the,Foreign,Affairs\\_„Mr,Radoslaw,Sikorski,,on,the,goals,of,the,Poland%E2%80%99s,foreign,policy,for,2009,25449.html](http://www.msz.gov.pl/Minister,of,the,Foreign,Affairs_„Mr,Radoslaw,Sikorski,,on,the,goals,of,the,Poland%E2%80%99s,foreign,policy,for,2009,25449.html).

Georgian–Russian conflict, and following the economic crisis—the year 2008 brought not only a curtailment of NATO’s leeway and resources, but also differences of opinion among the allies on an array of issues of fundamental importance for cooperation within the Organisation. In particular, these differences were about the extent and hierarchy of tasks undertaken by the Alliance, and also the nature of its relations with Russia. As was indicated by NATO’s December 2008 decisions on an unconditional resumption of (initially informal) contacts with Russia (suspended after that country’s conflict with Georgia) and on an indefinite postponement of NATO’s possible enlargement on Ukraine and Georgia, most of the allies did not share Poland’s arguments on these questions (which Poland saw as its priorities). At the same time, though, the strategic changes in Euro-Atlantic area and the problems encountered by the Afghan mission worked towards making the Polish position more convincing (Poland has always laid emphasis on the importance of the Alliance’s traditional functions related to collective defence). It was thus warranted to expect that in 2009 this stance would meet with greater understanding among the allies, which was especially important in a situation where the April summit (commemorating the Alliance’s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary) was to mark the beginning of work on NATO’s new strategic concept.

The European Union continued to focus on finalising its internal reforms, which were rendered much more complicated in the aftermath of the Lisbon Treaty’s rejection in the Irish referendum of June 2008. In addition to that, the EU was forced to adapt its political plans to a new situation that emerged after important and not-fully-predictable developments in the region and around the world, such as the announcement of Kosovo’s independence, the Georgia-Russia conflict and, last not least, the economic crisis. Consequently the development of European Security and Defence Policy—initially regarded as one of the most important elements of EU cooperation, especially after initial pronouncements by France, presiding the EU in the latter half of 2008—was put to the back burner. At the same time, largely in response to these changes in the external environment, the EU opted to launch new operations which, from its perspective, could often be described as precedent-setting (EULEX mission in Kosovo, EUMM mission to monitor ceasefire in Georgia, Atalanta operation against pirates off Somali coast).

The internal determinants of Poland’s security policy were generally favourable. The coalition of the Civic Platform and the Polish Farmers’ Party, in government from autumn 2007, had more room for manoeuvre than in the previous year in developing and implementing the foreign policy programme for 2009—which in the security context involved implementation of a programme

to professionalise the armed forces by 2010. It is true that the opposition used to take a different stand on some security policy issues than the government did—especially in respect of relations with the U.S. (right-wing Law and Justice) and engagement in Afghanistan (left-wing, primarily the Democratic Left Alliance, SLD)—but these were mostly differences over policy implementation and tactics, not strategy and policy objectives, leaving the government with much latitude. Some complications were posed by the President Lech Kaczyński's reservations about foreign policy, turning into open criticism on some issues, such as e.g. relations with the U.S. Still, public support for the Cabinet and its foreign policy (including security policy) continued running at a relatively high level, and the foreign minister was among the politicians enjoying a high degree of public trust.<sup>3</sup>

A factor adversely influencing the potential for Polish security policy implementation was the global economic crisis and its consequences for the Polish economy and national budget. As a result, in later 2008 and early 2009, the government was forced to revise budgets of individual ministries, including defence.<sup>4</sup>

## Objectives

Overall, the Polish security policy goals in 2009, whose fullest presentation came in the annual foreign policy address to the Sejm by Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski (13 February 2009), were identical with the goals declared in 2008.<sup>5</sup> Minister Sikorski confirmed that consolidation of Poland's security—working towards Poland's being a strong partner within NATO—was among the top five foreign policy priorities (presented in the second place, after European integration). This was to be pursued by means of a security policy based on three pillars: active participation within the Alliance, activity within

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<sup>3</sup> In December 2008, 45% of Poles were satisfied with the government's performance, against 40% complaining, and in January 2009, the pattern was 48% vs. 36%, respectively. Minister Radosław Sikorski was trusted by 60% Poles in December 2008 (with Prime Minister Tusk scoring 61%), and 8% declared distrust in him (23% distrusted Tusk). See *Stosunek do rządu w styczniu. Komunikat z badań* (CBOS), January 2009, no. BS/9/2009, p. 1; *Zaufanie do polityków w grudniu. Komunikat z badań* (CBOS), December 2008, no. BS/189/2008, pp. 1–2.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Defense spending was finally cut down by PLN 1,947 million. *Informacja Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej na temat aktualnej sytuacji finansowej Ministerstwa. Zapis Stenograficzny* (693), 32. posiedzenie komisji obrony narodowej, Senat RP, 5 February 2009, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> That was in line with Minister Sikorski's 2008 presentation of Polish foreign (including security) policy goals and priorities, which were described as strategic, to be pursued throughout the government's term in office. Cf. *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2009*, pp. 9–26.

the European Union, and cooperation with the United States. The minister also spoke about active participation in other forums (the UN, OSCE, disarmament and arms control regimes). Stressing the importance of Polish engagement in the Alliance's out-of-area operations, he also emphasised the need for Poland's military activity abroad to be reorganised in line with the government strategy, adopted in January, and he explained that the motive behind the changes was to focus on the most demanding missions of NATO and the EU.<sup>6</sup> Minister Sikorski outlined the Polish position on NATO's new strategic concept.<sup>7</sup> He emphasised the need for developing the EU's crisis response capability and mechanisms of cooperation with NATO. Expressing Polish hopes for a further development of cooperation with the U.S. to the widest possible extent, the minister spoke about the need to consolidate the achievements that were already attained, and especially seek the implementation of the August 2008 Declaration on strategic cooperation. He also made general comments about continuation of measures to keep up multilateral mechanisms of arms control and disarmament (pointing to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, CFE, as a major challenge) and also about the importance of the United Nations as an indispensable institution committed to resolve global problems and crises.

Such definition of the strategic priorities of Polish security policy, coupled with the external determinants (economic crisis, change of the U.S. administration, a complicated situation in Afghanistan, NATO's jubilee summit), influenced the operational-level hierarchy of goals and plans to be pursued in whole or in large part in 2009. In the light of pronouncements by Polish officials,<sup>8</sup> and the political practice of last year, it seems that the Polish government's key objectives in that period were to:

- ensure that the U.S. fully implements the decisions and commitments made back in 2008, including a confirmation of deployment in Poland of a Patriot

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<sup>6</sup> Such reorganisation was outlined in the Strategy for Polish military engagement abroad, adopted in January 2009, which provided that its main points would be implemented by the end of the year; *Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Radosław Sikorski, on the goals of the Poland's foreign policy for 2009, op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> The minister emphasised the need to reach a balance between NATO's tasks under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and out-of-area activity; he also spoke about the value of a continued open-door policy. *Ibidem*, p. 251.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Prime Minister Tusk's address to the conference "NATO, Challenges and Tasks Ahead" in Warsaw on 13 March, see *Challenges and Tasks Ahead*, Warszawa, 2009, pp. 9–13; "Patrzmy na siebie bez złudzeń," interview with Minister Sikorski, *Rzeczpospolita*, 22 September 2009; address by the minister of defense to the Euro-Atlantic Association, Warsaw, 8 January 2009, [www.mon.gov.pl/artikul/6366](http://www.mon.gov.pl/artikul/6366).

missile defence battery, which would guarantee constant presence of U.S. troops on Polish territory;

- strengthen the Polish contingent in Afghanistan and develop a solid negotiating position within the Alliance, so as to make possible an unrestricted presentation of the Polish position during the debate about the new strategic concept, initiated in 2009;

- an effective reorganisation of Polish military presence in missions outside Poland, including withdrawal of forces from UN peace operations.

Another important goal for the Polish government in 2009 was to intensify cooperation under the European Security and Defence Policy. But that was largely sought as part of preparations for the Polish presidency of the EU in 2011, where ESDP development was among the government-declared priorities. Consequently, the final results of this effort could emerge at a later time than late 2009.<sup>9</sup>

### **Transatlantic Direction: NATO and Cooperation with the U.S.**

The Atlantic direction was in the focus of Polish security policy in 2009, as determined by the weight of cooperation with NATO. In the early months of the year, the emphasis was on preparations for the Alliance's jubilee summit in Strasbourg/Kehl (3–4 April 2009), where some role was played by an informal meeting of member states' defence ministers in Kraków (19–20 February). The Polish government sought to use the meeting not only to present its position on the lines of the Alliance's transformation (including updating of contingency plans ) but also to promote Minister Sikorski as successor to NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, retiring in July 2009.<sup>10</sup> In accordance with the Alliance's practice such candidatures are informal, but it was right from the beginning of the year that the Polish diplomatic service was making such attempts, and so was Minister Sikorski himself (even though consistently denying his intention to run for the post, he often presented his views on the Alliance's future and objectives in his public appearances early in the year).<sup>11</sup> Despite those

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<sup>9</sup> *Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Radosław Sikorski, on the goals of the Poland's foreign policy for 2009, op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> "NATO jak muszkieterowie," interview with Minister B. Klich, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 19 February 2009; "Będą patrioty, a Sikorski w grze," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 21 February 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Minister Sikorski's most important manifesto of this kind can be found in his opening remarks at the Council on Foreign Relations "NATO At 60" Symposium in New York, "Oto NATO Sikorskiego," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 27 February 2009.

endeavours, Minister Sikorski was not perceived by allies as a favourite runner for the secretary general office, for reasons which included his image as a critic of Russia.

In the lead-up to the jubilee summit, the allies sought to have the most controversial issues resolved, at least in part. One such issue, along with the future of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, was about the relationship with Russia. It was the main subject of discussions at the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Brussels on 5 March. Even despite some reservations, Poland then backed a full restoration of official contacts with that country (suspended after the Russia-Georgia war in 2008), as proposed by the U.S. and unambiguously supported by a majority of member states.<sup>12</sup>

From the Polish perspective, the most important decisions taken at the Strasbourg/Kehl summit included the election of the new secretary general and the launch of work on the new strategic concept.<sup>13</sup> Poland did not withdraw from promoting Minister Sikorski's candidacy to the secretary general post, but given the scant chances of success, this was more of a tactical activity, serving to snatch concessions from allies (on e.g. deployment of allied assets in Poland, or additional positions within NATO military structures) in return for resignation. The expected results did not materialise, though, and besides the Polish delegation engaged in a dispute—involving the delegation chairman, President Lech Kaczyński, and Cabinet representatives—over how to pursue the negotiating tactics.<sup>14</sup> At the end of the day, the Polish delegation backed the Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who was tipped to win the secretary general race still before the summit.

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<sup>12</sup> Poland did not back Lithuania, the only member state to oppose a full restoration of NATO's official relations with Russia, but made its consent to restoration of contacts conditional, demanding that the agenda of NATO-Russia Council meetings should include all contentious issues involving its members. "NATO postanawia wznowić kontakty z Rosją," *Gazeta Prawna*, 5 March 2009, [www.gazetaprawna.pl](http://www.gazetaprawna.pl).

<sup>13</sup> For more on the summit see B. Winid, A. Bugajski, "Bilans szczytu NATO w Strasburgu i Kehl," *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, no 2, 2009.

<sup>14</sup> The president declared his support for Danish PM Anders Fogh Rasmussen right at a working dinner on the eve of the summit, and government representatives complained that the moved prevented them from winning concessions from other allies—in return for withdrawing Minister Sikorski's candidacy—in the course of further talks. The president replied that in this respect the Cabinet's brief was equivocal (he demanded that its content be made public) and that he acted on information indicating that the Danish candidate was backed by Prime Minister Tusk still before the summit. He also observed that Minister Sikorski's candidacy was not formally put forward by Poland. "Polska awantura o Rasmussena," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 6 April 2009.

Another summit decision of importance for Poland was the adoption of the Declaration on Alliance Security, to which former Polish foreign minister Adam Daniel Rotfeld contributed significantly. The declaration contained a sort of guidelines for NATO's future strategic concept, while simultaneously stressing the priority of the Alliance's readiness for collective defence and effective deterrence, which brought the document closer to the Polish position on the tasks of the Alliance. The declaration opened a discussion among the allies about the new strategic concept (which Poland had sought for some time), and the document specified the procedure to be followed towards this end. It was then decided that an initial draft of the strategic concept (serving as a recommendation) would be provided by a Group of Experts, and that the member states would directly participate only at next stages of the discussion, when the main responsibility for the final text was to be assumed by the secretary general.<sup>15</sup>

After the April summit of NATO, the new strategic concept became the main topic of political cooperation among the allies. Poland succeeded in having Adam Daniel Rotfeld within the 12-person Group of Experts<sup>16</sup> which inaugurated its proceedings on 17 July (and which did not yet complete the job at the end of the year). A.D. Rotfeld, just as the Polish diplomats supporting him, sought to ensure that he should represent not only the Polish position but also that of other Central European member states not present on the Group.<sup>17</sup>

Even though the member states (and Poland among them) sought to avoid open presentations of their positions on the new strategic concept in the course of 2009, fearing that such declarations might influence the course of the Group's proceedings, Polish government representatives several times signaled the most important elements of the Polish vision of the document and of the future of the Alliance. These included a firm insistence that the Alliance's traditional collective defence-related functions be assigned adequate importance in the document, and that NATO should strengthen allied guarantees for the member states admitted after the Cold War (including Poland), e.g. in the form of contingency plan updating, expansion of NATO assets on the territory of these

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<sup>15</sup> For more see "NATO – trudny rok pięknego jubileuszu," *Rocznik Strategiczny 2009/2010*, pp. 167, 177–178.

<sup>16</sup> "Adam Rotfeld w 'grupie mędrców' NATO," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 3 August 2009.

<sup>17</sup> With this in mind, A.D. Rotfeld and Polish government representatives held consultations about the Group of Experts with governments of countries in the region, including the Visegrad countries, what was praised there. Cf. *Spotkanie ministrów obrony w Budapeszcie*, [www.mon.gov.pl/artukul/7971](http://www.mon.gov.pl/artukul/7971).



countries, and reform of exercise and training programmes. Polish diplomats ratcheted up appeals for such strengthening in the autumn of 2009, largely in reaction to the joint Belarusian-Russian war games West 2009, held in September, where the script provided e.g. for fight against a minority rebellion in Belarus, backed from the outside.<sup>18</sup>

The questions related to NATO's enlargement, including a possible membership of Georgia and Ukraine, were relegated to the back seat in 2009, but Poland sought to keep the Alliance interested in cooperation with those countries (especially with Ukraine) and in a continued open-door approach. Serving this purpose was the 13 May session of the NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group on Defence Reform, held in Warsaw.<sup>19</sup> In another manifestation of these endeavours, even if formally placed outside the Alliance's structures, Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine signed a letter of intent on the formation of a joint brigade, headquartered in Lublin, to be deployed in peacekeeping missions under the auspices of NATO, the UN or the European Union.<sup>20</sup>

On the operational level, as in previous years, the thrust of Poland's cooperation within NATO was on the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. Given the weight of the operation for Poland and for the whole Alliance, and also with a view to adjusting the Polish contingent's formula and composition to changes in the allied strategy in Afghanistan, Poland opted twice in the course of 2009 to increase its military contribution to the ISAF. During the April summit, the announcement was made of adding 400 troops to the contingent to reach a total of 2,000 (this was attained in July 2009), and in December it was followed up with the pledge of sending 600 more troops (by April 2010).<sup>21</sup> Poland also participated in the KFOR mission in Kosovo, although in the second half of the

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<sup>18</sup> For example, Minister Sikorski sent a letter to the NATO secretary general, demanding NATO's increased preparedness to defend Poland and Baltic countries. "Sikorski chce od NATO planu i instalacji," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 13 November 2009.

<sup>19</sup> It was the first such meeting held by a member state rather than the NATO Headquarters (or Ukraine). "Ukraina bliżej NATO," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 21, 2009. Also, as of 1 August 2009, Polish diplomat Marcin Kozieł took over as head of NATO Liaison Office in Kiev. *Pan Marcin Kozieł nowym Szefem Biura Łącznikowego w Kijowie*, [www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/7579](http://www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/7579).

<sup>20</sup> *List intencyjny w sprawie LITPOLUKRBRIG podpisany*, [www.wp.mil.pl/pl/artykul/8211](http://www.wp.mil.pl/pl/artykul/8211).

<sup>21</sup> Additionally, in both cases, Poland opted to keep a strategic reserve on standby for rapid deployment, initially 200 troops and from late December, 400 troops. Cf. "Wzmocnienie w Ghazni," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 14, 2009; B. Klich, "Inwestycja w bezpieczeństwo," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 1, 2010; *Informacja rządu RP na temat Polskiego Kontyngentu Wojskowego w Afganistanie*, a government memo presented at the Sejm, 18 December 2009 (Sejm ref. no. 2599). Polish engagement with ISAF is presented in greater detail by B. Górka-Winter, in another article in the present Yearbook.

year the Polish contingent was scaled down by 50 personnel (to some 230), following the Alliance's decision on phasing out from that country (to a total of 10,000 at the end of the year) in response to stabilisation advances there, and growing requirements of the Afghanistan operation.<sup>22</sup> Throughout the year, some 15 Polish military instructors served with NATO's training mission in Iraq (NTM-I), and in the first quarter of the year the Polish submarine *Kondor* was deployed with the seaborne anti-terrorist mission Active Endeavour.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, Poland refrained from sending its vessels to NATO's anti-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa (Allied Protector, Ocean Shield).

Poland's involvement in NATO transformation processes, including efforts to have NATO assets deployed in Poland, brought tangible results in 2009. The biggest success came on 27 July when a Heavy Airlift Wing, being developed by Poland with nine other allies and two Partnership for Peace countries (as part of the Strategic Airlift Capability), reached initial operational capability.<sup>24</sup> Another important development was the Alliance's consent—obtained, after a great deal of lobbying, at the defence ministers meeting in Brussels in June—to station the headquarters of the 3<sup>rd</sup> NATO Signal Battalion in Bydgoszcz.<sup>25</sup> At another defence ministers meeting, held in Bratislava on 23 October, Poland and eight other member states signed a letter of intent about the HIP Helicopter Initiative, seeking to improve the effectiveness of the Alliance's transport helicopters through cooperation in training, technical backup and financing.<sup>26</sup> As in previous years, this country contributed to Alliance transformation via participation in the NATO Response Force: in the first half of 2009 this contribution was larger than previously, because for the first time Poland took over command of the

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<sup>22</sup> Poland also backed the July 2009 plan for NATO force reduction in Kosovo (the Balkan security environment permitting) to 2,500 troops by 2011. "NATO powoli wychodzi z Kosowa," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 12 June 2009; "Cięcie kontyngentu," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 27 (2009).

<sup>23</sup> M. Kowalska-Sendek, "Najmniejszy kontyngent," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 13, 2009; "Wsparcie w szkoleniu," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 51/52, 2009; *6 tysięcy mil pod wodą. Zakończenie działań PKW Kondor*, www.kondor.mw.mil.pl.

<sup>24</sup> *First C-17 Plane Welcomed at PAPA Airbase*, www.nato.int. The first SAC mission for the Polish armed forces was conducted on 23 November. B. Politowski, "Polacy w wielkich maszynach," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 51/52, 2009.

<sup>25</sup> "NATO będzie się łączyć w Bydgoszczy," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 13 June 2009; B. Winid, "Skok w przyszłość," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 28, 2009. During the same meeting, the allies agreed to increase the pool of NATO senior officer positions assigned to Poland (including Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, DSACT, at Norfolk, USA). "W Polsce więcej NATO," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 25, 2009.

<sup>26</sup> *Allies Sign Declaration of Intent for HIP Helicopter Initiative*, www.nato.int.

international chemical defence battalion within NRF's 12<sup>th</sup> rotation.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, Poland failed in its efforts to host an air control centre (also in Bydgoszcz) and an AWACS reconnaissance pilot training centre (at Powidz airbase outside Poznań).<sup>28</sup> Also, on 2 April, Poland abandoned participation in another NATO transformation project, Allied Ground Surveillance (due to financial considerations, and following a decision on programme revision).<sup>29</sup>

As for the other segment of Polish security policy's transatlantic dimension, namely the bilateral relations with the United States, the most important subject was missile defence, just as in the previous year. Coming as an important element of these relations was also U.S. support for the modernisation of the Polish armed forces and strengthening of their current operational capabilities, especially in Afghanistan.

When faced with a change in the U.S. administration's approach to the missile defence programme, under the Obama presidency, the Polish government took a wait-and-see attitude. In early 2009, Polish leaders declared that they would refrain from pressing the U.S. which, in turn, said it would decide about the programme's future only after its thorough review. The U.S. also committed itself to inform Poland (and other partners) about the course and results of the review. Simultaneously, Poland sought U.S. confirmation of the will to implement other agreements concerning security cooperation, including the Declaration on strategic cooperation (signed together with the agreement on deployment in Poland of elements of the missile defence system). That document provided for the restoration of a bilateral strategic dialogue, suspended in 2007, and for the deployment in Poland of a Patriot missile battery. These questions were many times discussed by senior representatives of Polish and U.S. governments, and according to Polish politicians the U.S. made assurances of respecting the previous agreements, whatever decisions would be taken on the missile defence programme.<sup>30</sup> As a condition for implementation of what Poland

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<sup>27</sup> The lead (framework) nation provides battalion command and some 50% of its 950-strong personnel. R. Przeciszewski, "Batalion na gwizdek," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 26, 2009. Poland backed the UK proposal (submitted in the first quarter of 2009) to detach some 1,500 troops within NRF to form a Solidarity Force to pursue Article 5 tasks, and also called for an appropriate reorganisation of the Response Force's training system. Cf. *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Obrony Narodowej (nr 52) i Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych (nr 105) Sejmu RP*, no. 2208, 2009, 6<sup>th</sup> term, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 16–17.

<sup>29</sup> G. Hołdanowicz, "Nieprimaaprilisowe pożegnanie z AGS," *Raport*, no. 5, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> [30] Such assurances were offered e.g. by U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton (in a conversation with Minister Sikorski in Washington on 24 February) and Defense Secretary

saw as the most important decision—Patriot battery deployment in Poland (from 2009 on a temporary basis, and from 2012 as a permanent arrangement)—the U.S. wanted a SOFA bilateral agreement to be signed, regulating the status of its armed forces on Polish territory. But negotiations on the agreement dragged on, due to differences about Polish jurisdiction over U.S. military personnel stationed in Poland, and about tax relief for U.S. servicemen and private contractors, and also because of lingering uncertainty in two-way political contacts in connection with an unknown future of the missile defence programme.<sup>31</sup>

Following the review, whose results were published in the U.S. on 17 September, a new concept, known as the phased adaptive approach, was announced to replace the previous project. That meant abandoning the idea of building an interceptor missile base in Poland as stipulated in the Polish-U.S. agreement of 2008.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, the U.S. government declared the will to continue cooperating with Poland in the field of missile defence and incorporate Poland into the creation of a new system—although at later stages of its implementation (elements of the system would be deployed in Poland around 2018).

The U.S. decision was received by Polish authorities and political elites with disappointment which, on the part of President Kaczyński and the right-wing opposition, was accompanied by concern about, and distrust in, U.S. intentions.<sup>33</sup> The offer of participation in the new system was initially received with reservations, for reasons which included a general character of the U.S. proposal and lack of clarity about the new system's technicalities (some of its major components are still at the stage of design or testing).<sup>34</sup> But at the end of the day, following consultations with Assistant Secretary of Defence Alexander

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Robert Gates (during a meeting with Minister Klich in Kraków on 20 February). "Dostaniemy patrioty...; Sikorski: Patrioty niezależnie od tarczy," *Rzeczpospolita*, 25 February 2009. At the same time, Polish leaders, including Minister Sikorski, said the ratification process for the August 2008 agreement would be suspended until the new U.S. administration specified its position on missile defense. "Oto NATO Sikorskiego....," *op. cit.*

<sup>31</sup> Cf. "Rakietowe dylematy," an interview with Stanisław J. Komorowski, undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Defense, *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 22, 2009.

<sup>32</sup> For more see "Ruchoma tarcza," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18 September 2009.

<sup>33</sup> Adding insult to injury was the way the U.S. president's decision was taken (without prior consultation with partners) plus an unfortunate choice of the announcement date (17 September). The U.S. government's indiscretions largely came as a result of pressure from U.S. media, rushing to publish leaked findings of the review. Cf. M. Madej, "Obama's Missile Defense Rethink: The Polish Reaction," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, 30 September 2009, [www.thebulletin.org](http://www.thebulletin.org).

<sup>34</sup> For more see C. Harvey, "Obama Shift Gears on Missile Defense," *Arms Control Today*, October 2009, [www.armscontrol.org/act/2009\\_10/missiledefense](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_10/missiledefense).

Vershbow during his visit to Warsaw on 15–16 October (when the High Level Defence Group was inaugurated, as part of a drive to restore the Polish-U.S. strategic dialogue), Poland declared the will to continue participating in the project, which Prime Minister Tusk officially communicated to U.S. Vice President Biden during the latter's visit to Warsaw on 21 October.<sup>35</sup> The SOFA talks ended with the signing of the relevant document in Warsaw on 11 December. That opened the way for deploying a Patriot battery in Poland, although at a later time (2010) than initially assumed. Not all technical details related to the battery's deployment were clarified by the end of the year (e.g. degree of its combat readiness and venue).

The U.S. support for modernisation of the Polish armed forces and development of their operational capabilities when on foreign missions took primarily the form of material and organisational assistance to the Polish contingent in Afghanistan and an enhancement of the Polish air force's strategic airlift capability. In the former dimension, the year 2009 saw major results indeed: in addition to air and reconnaissance support, Polish units received U.S. military equipment (patrol vehicles, combat engineering equipment) and were granted an extension for another year of a free-of-charge lease of 30 mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles.<sup>36</sup> Less successful were Polish endeavours towards expansion of the Polish air force's transport capability, which was to be achieved thanks to a U.S. gift of five C 130 Hercules aircraft, withdrawn from US. Air Forces. Following organisational failures on the U.S. part, including very long revitalisation of the machines, only one of them was turned over to Poland in the course of 2009 (in March), with other deliveries postponed until 2010 and 2011. That was only partially offset by the U.S. decision to lend Poland an added C-130 aircraft, for eleven months starting from November.<sup>37</sup> During the NATO defence ministers meeting held Kraków in February, a bilateral agreement on cooperation between special operation commands was signed, which should be seen as a success of Polish-U.S. cooperation.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> "Poland to Accept U.S. Offer on Shield," *New York Times*, 21 October 2009.

<sup>36</sup> *Spotkanie ministrów obrony państw NATO*, 10–11 June 2009), [www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/7275](http://www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/7275).

<sup>37</sup> *Herkules wylądował*, [www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/6763](http://www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/6763); *Kolejny C-130E dla Sił Powietrznych*, [www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/8103](http://www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/8103).

<sup>38</sup> "Umowa o siłach specjalnych," *Dziennik Polski*, 20 February 2009, [www.dziennik.krakow.pl](http://www.dziennik.krakow.pl).

## **The European Union and Other Structures for International Cooperation**

Poland's involvement in security policy cooperation within the EU in 2009 was relatively strong, with much attention devoted to the future of the European Security and Defence Policy (or the Common Security and Defence Policy, as it is known after entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009). The importance of these endeavours, seeking to invigorate this policy and streamline EU activities in the sphere of security, is by no means diminished by the fact that the Polish government wanted the biggest results to be produced during Poland's presidency of the Union in 2011. The aim was to sound out EU partners on the strategic lines of CSDP development, its future functions and tasks, and also to identify Poland's potential allies in respect of Polish plans related to this cooperation. That would make it possible for the Polish presidency to focus on implementation of the already agreed arrangements, rather than just formulating a reform programme for the Common Security and Defence Policy.

The most significant Polish proposal in this respect in 2009 was the so-called Chobielin initiative, a non-paper presented by Minister Sikorski at an informal meeting which his French counterpart Bernard Kouchner, held on 18 July in Chobielin, outside Bydgoszcz. Its underlying assumption was the need to streamline the institutional framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy—towards e.g. a decision-making autonomy of the EU (which would require achieving a genuine autonomy in terms of planning and operational command capabilities)—to be coupled with a simultaneous deepening of the EU's capacity to cooperate with partners such as NATO, the UN and other interested organisations. The initiative included proposals to create the position of a deputy for military affairs and defence to the high representative for the CFSP (to ensure that CSDP-related questions are duly factored in the EU's foreign policy); to introduce a host of changes in this policy's instruments, including the formation of an European Stabilisation Force (comprising Battle Groups as the nucleus of the future European standing army, police/gendarmerie force and border police); to develop an integrated system of logistic support for CSDP missions; to intensify joint manoeuvres and training; to exchange military personnel among EU member states; and also to replace the Berlin Plus formula (as the foundation of cooperation with NATO) with an arrangement better suited to the present conditions. But most importantly, in what differed from Poland's previous position, it was proposed to create soon an operational command for

EU missions, independent of NATO, to be possibly followed in future by the emergence of integrated European command structures.<sup>39</sup>

Just a preliminary and general initiative, it nevertheless met with interest on the part of several EU member states.<sup>40</sup> The most sympathetic response came from France, which had failed in its attempt to introduce a similar programme in 2008.<sup>41</sup> In the EU forum, discussion was initiated on individual elements of the initiative although, understandably, no concrete decisions were yet reached as of the end of 2009.

In the context of this proposal about the future shape of Common Security and Defence Policy, Poland's contribution to the development of EU military capabilities (and especially the Battle Group system) assumed a still greater importance than before. In the latter half of 2009, intense preparations were going on in Poland for the first ever arrangement whereby a Battle Group comprising Polish units (alongside German, Slovak, Lithuanian and Latvian forces) was to be put on standby for deployment, from January 2010, as part of the Battle Group rotation system. As the Group's lead nation, Poland was required to provide half the total personnel (some 1,000 troops), take operational command, and run a series of training sessions and exercises to check the Group's standby readiness.<sup>42</sup> In addition to that, Poland continued its efforts to form another such unit, referred to as the Weimar Battle Group, comprising troops from Poland, France and Germany. In that unit, too, Poland was to be the lead nation, as agreed by the Weimar Triangle's chiefs-of-staff at a meeting in Warsaw on 28 January 2009.<sup>43</sup> But no progress was achieved towards the formation, by 2015, of a Visegrad Battle Group (possibly with a contribution

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. M. Pielach, "Nawróceni na Europę," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 21, 2009. "Warsaw Wants More EU Defense Policy, Sikorski Tells Kouchner," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 21 July 2009, [http://wyborcza.pl/1,98817,6842930,Warsaw\\_Wants\\_More\\_EU\\_Defense\\_Policy\\_Sikorski\\_Tells.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,98817,6842930,Warsaw_Wants_More_EU_Defense_Policy_Sikorski_Tells.html).

<sup>40</sup> Given Poland's previous image as a country wary of the EU's rising autonomy and ambitions in the field of security and defense, the initiative came to many as a surprise. The revision of the Polish position on Common Security and Defense Policy was also interpreted as a reaction to the weakening ties with the U.S. (due to factors which included a contemplated modification of plans to deploy missile defense assets in Poland). "Warsaw Wants More EU Defense Policy...", *op. cit.*

<sup>41</sup> Minister Kouchner backed the initiative right in the course of the Chobielin meeting. "Kouchner z wizytą u Sikorskiego w Chobielinie," *Gazeta Prawna*, 19 July 2009, [www.gazetaprawna.pl](http://www.gazetaprawna.pl).

<sup>42</sup> The certification exercise for the Polish-led Battle Group was conducted between 16 and 20 November in Poznań, Międzyrzecz and Wędrzyn. *Grupa bojowa UE gotowa do objęcia dyżuru*, [www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/8223](http://www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/8223).

<sup>43</sup> *Polska państwem ramowym Weimarskiej Grupy Bojowej UE*, [www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/6433](http://www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/6433).

from Ukraine).<sup>44</sup> The process continued of getting a full-fledged member status (framework state) in Eurocorps—formally outside the EU structures, this unit is put at the EU's disposal for missions under Common Security and Defence Policy—and Poland regarded that as a contribution to the development of European military capabilities.<sup>45</sup>

Poland also contributed to stabilisation missions under Common Security and Defence Policy. In the first quarter, an almost 400-strong unit (the largest Polish contingent in EU operations) was deployed in EUFOR mission in Chad which, however, was completed in March.<sup>46</sup> Poland was present in EUMM monitoring mission in Georgia (26 personnel), EULEX operation in Kosovo (some 120 Polish police officers and civilian experts), advisory and training missions in Afghanistan (EUPOL) and in Althea operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Also, Polish officers were dispatched to the command of Atalanta anti-piracy mission off the Somali coast.<sup>47</sup>

An important element of Polish contribution to the EU's security dimension was participation in the activities of the European Defence Agency. But in the course of 2009 no major research project or arms industry cooperation project was initiated with Polish participation.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> "Integracja wyszehradzka," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 18/19, 2009. The pace of Group formation was seemingly influenced by an escalating discussion about the battle group system which—in the light of previous experience—provoked increasing doubts in the EU, and in Poland too, about its effectiveness in the present form. Cf. "Europe's Rapid Response Force: Use Them or Lose Them?," *IJSS Strategic Comments*, no. 7, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Poland increased its representation in Eurocorps Command (e.g. General Grzegorz Buszka, starting from 21 September, served as Deputy Chief of Staff Support at Eurocorps HQ, in his capacity as Senior National Representative). Also, the 17<sup>th</sup> mechanised division, based in Międzyrzecz, was detached to cooperate with Eurocorps. "Sojusz z tradycjami," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 47, 2009; *Eurocorps Magazine*, no. 107, 2009/2010, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> Following a reduction to 315 troops, the Polish contingent stayed in the area of deployment, incorporated into the UN peace mission MINURCAT which replaced the EU mission. *PKW Czad w niebieskich beretach*, [www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/6744](http://www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/6744).

<sup>47</sup> "XI zmiana rozpoczyna misję," *Polska Zbrojna*, 23 July 2009, [www.polska-zbrojna.pl](http://www.polska-zbrojna.pl). Poland backed the proposal by Javier Solana (the high representative for CFSP until December 2009) to transform the status of Althea mission from a military operation into a training and advisory mission. *Spotkanie Ministrów Obrony Państw UE*, [www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/6717](http://www.mon.gov.pl/pl/artykul/6717). But in the end, the mission's mandate was prolonged unchanged until November 2010.

<sup>48</sup> Still, Poland was required to tighten up contacts with another European structure, the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR), where the OCCAR ESSOR communications project (one of the EU-sponsored projects of utmost importance for Poland) was jointly implemented. In this context, it was even suggested that Poland should join OCCAR. For more see *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych*, no. 119, 2009, no. 2622/VI kadencja.



Poland's efforts to strengthen the Common Security and Defence Policy and upgrade Poland's position within its framework were supplemented by a 2008 strategic partnership with France, a country with similarly strong interest in development of the EU's military capabilities. In 2009, the two parties succeeded in invigorating this cooperation, with an impulse provided by the previously mentioned meeting in Chobielin. The process was crowned on 5 November when Prime Minister Tusk and French President Nicolas Sarkozy signed in Paris the Declaration of the Franco-Polish security and defence summit. The document referred to joint plans and actions under the EU's security policy (expanding on Chobielin-initiative proposals) and also to bilateral cooperation, especially in the military field and defence industry.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, Poland's contribution to the UN activities for international peace and security shrank considerably in the course of 2009. Following the adoption of a new strategy for Polish military presence abroad, which placed emphasis on NATO and EU stabilisation operations, Polish contingents in UN peace-keeping missions were gradually scaled down. In the first half of the year, there was a temporary increase in Polish contribution to this kind of operations, but that only came as a result of replacement of the EU's force in Chad (EUFOR) by the UN mission MINURCAT.<sup>50</sup> In later months, Poland pulled out of UNIFIL mission in Lebanon (in December, some 490 servicemen), UNDOF mission in the Golan Heights (October–November, 340-strong personnel) and MINURCAT mission in Chad (December, some 300 troops).<sup>51</sup> As a result, as of the end of the year, there were only 36 Poles served in UN operations.<sup>52</sup> This sharp curtailment

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<sup>49</sup> Within the first group, the document called for the EU's increased financial solidarity in respect of CSDP operations; support for European Defense Agency programmes and for European technology and industry development; creation and use of shared assets within the EU; joint procurement of equipment and materials; and field exercises to increase interoperability of EU member states' armed forces. The parties also announced that they would widen cooperation between their military academies and special forces, and promote partnerships in defense industries (especially in shipbuilding). *Deklaracja francusko-polskiego szczytu w sprawie bezpieczeństwa i obrony, Paryż, 5 listopada 2009 r.*, [www.ukie.gov.pl](http://www.ukie.gov.pl).

<sup>50</sup> The reasons why Poland kept its contingent in Chad after completion of EUFOR mission included a response to UN appeals for such help, but also financial considerations (the UN would reimburse Poland for a large portion of the costs involved in the operation and withdrawal of Polish troops).

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Monthly Summary of Contributors of Military and Civilian Police Personnel 2006–2009*, [www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/06-08.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/06-08.shtml).

<sup>52</sup> Around twenty of them were in groups finalising the pullout of Polish contingents from Chad, Lebanon and the Golan Heights, which meant they would return to Poland early in 2010. The remaining Polish military and police experts were assigned to missions in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), Liberia (UNMIL), Somalia (UNMIS), Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and Kosovo (UNMIK). Cf. *UN Mission's Summary Detailed by Country*, 31 December 2009, [www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2009/dec09\\_3.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2009/dec09_3.pdf).

of contributions to UN missions met with criticism from some Polish politicians and experts, wary that Poland thus abandoned the most important channel of its contribution to the global push for peace and security, and that the country wasted away at least part of its legacy of longstanding activity in the UN forum towards this end.<sup>53</sup>

The Polish activities within the OSCE's in 2009 were also limited. Notwithstanding its concern over the confidence building measures and arms control mechanisms developed within the OSCE (and especially the adverse consequences of having suspended the operation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, in response to the Russian stand), Poland did not come up with new initiatives in this field (partly, because of lack of effective instruments). But full support was provided for the launch, at an informal OSCE ministerial meeting in Greece on 27–28 June, of the Korfu process which serves to discuss reform of the European security system, including Russian proposals put forward within the European Security Dialogue. In the debate, Poland pronounced itself in favour of streamlining the existing institutions active in the security sphere—including the strengthening of the OSCE's conflict-prevention capability and continuation of its function as a forum to discuss regional security—rather than looking for new arrangements to replace these institutions.<sup>54</sup>

Poland was commendably active in the field of arms control and disarmament, which was helped by a changing international climate around these issues, largely in connection with President Obama's denuclearisation initiatives. The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI, also known as the Kraków Initiative) was given special attention: a meeting of the PSI Regional Operational Experts Group was held in Sopot on 22–24 June, and Polish representatives were present at Deep Sabre naval manoeuvres in Singapore (27–30 October).<sup>55</sup> Traditionally, Poland sponsored the UN General Assembly's annual resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It also joined the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which oversees implementation of the Convention, for a two-year

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<sup>53</sup> UN missions' training benefits were also pointed out, as was the chance to combine service on these missions with Polish image building in particular regions (especially in the Middle East). For more see A. Goławski, "Hurraewakuacja," *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 9, 2009.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *Address by H.E. Grażyna Bernatowicz, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, XVII OSCE Ministerial Council, Athens, 1 December 2009*, [www.osce.org/documents/cio/2009/12/41758\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2009/12/41758_en.pdf).

<sup>55</sup> See <http://cns.miiis.edu/inventory/pdfs/psi.pdf>.

term (from May 2009).<sup>56</sup> In respect of the regimes for disarmament and conventional arms control, Poland upheld its refusal to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), which went into force on 1 August 2009. But on 6 February the Council of Ministers adopted a memorandum on the degree of Poland's readiness to embrace the Ottawa Convention Banning Landmines, thus opening the way for preparations to ratify the document, which is expected to take place in 2012.

### Appraisal

Poland policy in the field of security was pursued in 2009 in a fairly consistent manner and generally in accordance with the declared priorities and plans. But this internal coherence (compared to 2008) was as much the result of government action as of the necessity to defend some of previous years' achievements—mainly in response to changes in the external situation and in positions espoused by partners, especially the U.S. And that meant that consistent Polish activities did not necessarily have to be effective, and the policy pursued was often oriented more to keeping what was previously achieved rather than making new advances.

The scoresheet of Polish policy towards NATO is generally positive. While it is true that efforts to have Minister Sikorski elected the organisation's secretary general failed, Poland did manage to strengthen its position within the Alliance. The number of NATO positions assigned to Poland was increased, and decisions were taken to deploy new Alliance assets on Polish territory. In an achievement of still bigger proportions, Poland built a relatively strong position in the debate on NATO's future strategic concept—in part, thanks to the appointment of A.D. Rotfeld to the group of experts working on recommendations about that document. The activities by the Polish expert within the group and by Polish diplomats in NATO forum were instrumental in bringing issues of key importance for Poland (including reassurances) to the agenda of allied discussion, which was taking a direction sought by the Polish authorities. Another right move was to back the Alliance on restoration of relations with Russia. As a result, Poland shed the image of an inflexible extremist and was able to join the mainstream of NATO's internal debates, thus widening its room for manoeuvre within the organisation. The decision to strengthen the Polish contingent with the ISAF force in Afghanistan (so much important for NATO) was also correct, both in the context of the mission's chances of success and Poland's position within the

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<sup>56</sup> See [www.mfa.gov.pl/Polityka,RP,w,dziedzinie,nieprolifracji,i,rozbrojenia,BMR,30111.html](http://www.mfa.gov.pl/Polityka,RP,w,dziedzinie,nieprolifracji,i,rozbrojenia,BMR,30111.html).

Alliance. But here, an open question emerges as to how the move—increasing the strength of the Polish contingent and, consequently, the financial and physical inputs to the Afghan mission—has influenced (and will influence in future) the pursuit of other goals of Polish security policy, especially the modernisation and professionalisation of the Polish armed forces. And Poland, in a way, suffered a defeat when NATO's discussion on enlargement—especially to the East, so much advocated by Poland—all but petered out. But it should be admitted that the change largely reflected an evolution of the situation within the Alliance and in the potential candidate countries, very much beyond the reach of Polish efforts.

The assessment of Polish activities in the EU forum, in security's political and military dimension, is a bit less unequivocal. On the one hand, Polish moves were largely confined to the continuation of previous measures (participation in missions and European Defence Agency programmes, battle group formation). But on the other, Poland came up with quite daring proposals on the future shape of EU cooperation in the sphere of security and defence. And although these initiatives—mostly received with interest in the EU, but failing to elicit enthusiasm—did not lead to binding decisions, they did signal a positive change in the Polish attitude towards the Common Security and Defence Policy, in addition to helping stimulate an internal debate in the EU about the bloc's future role in the security dimension. Another success, which came in part as a result of previous proposals on the future of the security and defence policy, was the tightening of contacts with France, a declared and influential proponent of developing the EU's security and defence capabilities. We will learn the true value of this rapprochement when we see if it proves durable and leads to effective collaboration on the bilateral level and within the EU in later years. Still, the year 2009 saw Poland's demonstrating the will to commit itself more strongly to development of the EU's security capabilities, and that was surely noticed.

But the main thrust of Polish security policy activities was in relations with the U.S., where only part of the intense efforts proved effective. That largely came as a result of changes within the United States itself, which on the one hand forced the Polish government to seek U.S. confirmation of previous commitments and try arousing U.S. interest in a continued development of bilateral cooperation, and which, on the other hand, indicated that Poland's capacity to influence the U.S. position was limited. Importantly, the negative implications of a possible abandonment of previous Polish-American agreements (hinging on the U.S. decision about continuation of the missile defence programme) would not be confined to Poland's relations with that

country alone. As it was, the Polish authorities, assigning high priority to the development of cooperation with the U.S., had been subordinating some of their moves in other spheres to that goal, e.g. by considering the expected impact on relations with the U.S. before taking decisions (such as on Kosovo's independence). If Poland were to question the outcome of cooperation with the United States, following the change in the U.S. stance on missile defence (and a general decline in U.S. interest in Central Europe, including Poland), that, to some extent, would cast doubt upon the earlier Polish choices and the hierarchy of Polish security policy priorities and goals. At the end of the day, the U.S. let the Polish authorities "save face" and control the damage done—even despite the fact that the modification of the missile defence programme meant that Poland was no longer so important for its success, which translated into a decreasing leverage of cooperation with Poland in a broader context of security issues. But little seems to suggest that such U.S. behaviour was primarily influenced by the Polish diplomatic effort—all the more so as the protracted SOFA negotiations (quite complex but with potential for swift completion, given both parties' determination) indicated that prospects for development of cooperation with the U.S. were fairly limited (for reasons which included the American partner's diminishing interest) and that the scope of this cooperation would not go further than what was achieved previously (at least in immediate future). Also, Poland's consent to take part in the modified missile defence project—given (in October) despite a highly general nature of U.S. proposals, a relatively long time before any concrete measures were to be taken, a limited scope of additional U.S. incentives, and the second-rate position which Poland was assigned as a U.S. partner under that programme (reflecting the logic of the new system which focused on the threat of an Iranian attack with shorter range missiles)—seems more like justifying the 2008 decision and defending the agreements then reached, than indicating any potential for intensification and development of Polish-U.S. security cooperation. It is very likely, then, that after the 2008 events the importance of bilateral security collaboration with the US will diminish, which may prove a welcome development in the longer run, by directing the Polish activities more into what are its durable priorities, namely NATO and the EU.

The appraisal of Polish security policy in 2009 is also affected by the withdrawal from UN peace-keeping missions, coming as the government's choice rather than a result of objective changes in the international arena. The move brought very limited financial benefits, and its contribution towards increased potential for engagement in NATO and EU missions was only minimal. In this way, Poland actually gave up contributing to international

stability in its universal dimension, and building its image and influence outside Europe (e.g., in the Middle East, a region so much attractive for the economy and business). In coming years, therefore, consideration should be given to renewed engagement in UN missions (even if it were only a partial comeback).

*Translated by Zbigniew Szymański*

## **II.**

# **Poland's Policy Regarding Selected Countries and Regions**





## Poland's Policy towards the United States

### Determinants

Poland's policy towards the United States on the threshold of 2009 was determined predominately by the change of administration in the U.S. and the re-evaluations of U.S. policy which came in its wake. The difficult situation inherited from the George W. Bush's team, with the disappointing progress of the Afghan campaign, the challenges arising from Iran's nuclear programme, and the task of further reducing the American presence in Iraq, had the strongest bearing on the directions of President Barack Obama's international activity. Another priority of the new administration was to counteract the repercussions of the deep economic crisis, both in the domestic and in the international dimension. Given the scale of these challenges, the Obama administration announced that it proposed to accord priority to multilateral activities and to enlist cooperation of key allies (the European Union, the NATO members) and international partners (notably China and Russia). It also declared it would pursue an active policy on issues neglected during the G.W. Bush presidency (the Middle East conflict, the counteracting of climate change).

With the Obama administration focused on short-term internal and international challenges, Poland was likely to find the scope for promoting its interests in relations with the U.S. limited.<sup>1</sup> What's more, an expected tightening of U.S.-Europe cooperation (chiefly with West European states) and efforts to repair contacts with Russia in various contexts, such as nuclear arsenals reduction and control, preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons (the Iranian case), or stabilising the situation in Afghanistan, could diminish the significance of Central Europe as a direction of U.S. foreign policy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For long-term determinants of Poland's policy towards the U.S. see B. Wiśniewski, "Poland's Policy Regarding the United States," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2009*, pp. 96–70.

<sup>2</sup> M. Zaborowski, "Obama a sprawa polska," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 21 October 2008; O. Osica, "Czy Polsce będzie lepiej," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 16 November 2008.

All this explained Polish public opinion's discernible reserve on the subject of the prospects of Polish-American relations. In the declining phase of the G.W. Bush presidency a critical view of the U.S.'s Polish policy prevailed.<sup>3</sup> Unlike in Western Europe, in Poland no "Obama effect"—that is, an unprecedented popularity of the new U.S. president—occurred. In December 2008 a change for better in the U.S.'s foreign policy was expected by 31% of the Poles, to 68% of the French, 67% of the Spaniards, 64% of the Germans and 53% of the British. At the same time, a conviction that the new U.S. president would conduct American foreign policy in a way inferior to that of his predecessor was particularly strong among the Poles (27% of respondents, to between barely 1% and 3% in the abovementioned states).<sup>4</sup>

The agenda of Polish-U.S cooperation was dominated by political-military security. The future of Poland's participation in the Missile Defence (MD) system on the strength of the August 2008 agreement<sup>5</sup> had yet to be resolved. While declaring his general support for the idea of missile defence, President Obama did not conceal his disapproval of the Bush administration's handling of this project. The plans to build a European component of the MD (a missile interceptor base in Poland, a radar facility in the Czech Republic) were to be re-assessed for their effectiveness in neutralising the Iranian threat and for their cost effectiveness—a particularly weighty consideration in view of the U.S. recession.<sup>6</sup> Voices were also coming from the future U.S. president's entourage that in the process of planning the shield the implications of the same for relations with Russia needed to be taken into account to a greater degree. A majority of the Poles, while opposed to participation in the shield project (39% for, 47% against), believed nevertheless it would come through (58%, to 23% of responses sceptical about the prospects of the base's being located in Poland).<sup>7</sup>

Waiting to be implemented was the Declaration on Strategic Cooperation, adopted contemporaneously with the signing of the shield agreement. The

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<sup>3</sup> *Polacy o wpływie Stanów Zjednoczonych na świat. Komunikat z badań*, CBOS, September 2008.

<sup>4</sup> *Global Public Opinion in the Bush Years (2001–2008). The Pew Global Attitudes Project*, 18 December 2008, [www.pewglobal.org](http://www.pewglobal.org).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. B. Górka-Winter, "A Long Way to a Missile Defense Shield," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2009*, pp. 223–237.

<sup>6</sup> At the same time, Polish government officials announced that the bases in Poland and the Czech Republic were not coming under the said review, cf. an interview with Minister of National Defence Bogdan Klich "Opozycja szkodzi wojsku," *Rzeczpospolita*, 21 November 2008.

<sup>7</sup> *Opinie o tarczy antyrakietowej w Polsce. Komunikat z badań*, CBOS, December 2008.

Declaration opened up opportunities for the deepening and closer institutionalisation of bilateral security relations and it contained a reference to an expansion of air and missile defence cooperation between Poland and the U.S., through the establishment in Poland of a garrison (temporary, to start with, and permanent from 2012) to support the U.S. Army Patriot battery. Preliminary talks on this matter had commenced still in 2008, but their pace was determined by the progress of work on an agreement on the status of U.S. forces stationed in Poland (Status of Forces Agreement, SOFA).

Following the completion of the Polish contingent's mission in Iraq, Afghanistan became the main area of Polish-U.S. military cooperation. At the end of October 2008 the Polish force (about 1600-strong at that time) took over responsibility for security in the Ghazni province in the ISAF' U.S.-led Region Command East area. Since June 2008 Polish specialists had participated in the work of the Ghazni Province Reconstruction Team (PRT), also led by Americans.

In 2008 Polish-U.S. trade reached a record level, but its significance for overall foreign economic contacts continued to be modest in the both states.<sup>8</sup> Late in 2008 the strengthening of the dollar relative to the zloty and the completion of F-16 aircraft deliveries augured a decline in imports from the U.S. (aircraft equipment accounting for over 25% of imports). The economic downturn in the U.S. was also bound to affect Polish exports to that market.

### **Objects and Assumptions**

The chief aim of Poland's policy towards the U.S. was to reap the benefits of effects of the closing period of cooperation with G.W. Bush's team. In an address to the Sejm Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski ranked the adoption of the Declaration on Strategic Cooperation among the foremost successes the government had achieved on the international scene since its inception and he emphasised the will to harness this document for intensifying cooperation—chiefly in the field of security—with the U.S. He also confirmed a special role of the American political-military presence in Europe, he signalled an intention to raise, in contacts with the U.S. administration, the matter of credibility of Article 5 of the Treaty of Washington, and he called for “strategic reassurance” to be provided to Central Europe by the U.S. through such arrangements as the deployment of military infrastructure in countries in the region. The deployment in Poland of a U.S. Patriot battery was also designed as

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. B. Wiśniewski, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

an element of “strategic reassurance.” The minister announced that the government would accord priority to agreeing the contents of the SOFA, which agreement would make possible the deployment of Patriots in Poland.<sup>9</sup>

The minister expressed interest in the resumption of cooperation with the U.S. under the Strategic Dialogue, which had been suspended in 2007 following the commencement of missile shield negotiations. The revised formula of the Dialogue provided for annual meetings of the both countries’ diplomacy chiefs, an arrangement which could be of significance for the Polish authorities as a matter of prestige. Yet the intensity of cooperation was to be determined by Strategic Cooperation Consultation Group [SCCG] meetings to be held twice a year (at the level of Vice-Ministers of Foreign Affairs). The SCCG was to set the pace of work for the four standing working groups (for anti-terrorist cooperation, non-proliferation, energy security, and economic cooperation). Meetings of the High Level Defence Group [HLDG] led by Vice-ministers of Defence were to complement the mechanisms of bilateral consultations.

Minister Sikorski declared that Poland was ready to finalise talks on a package of missile defence cooperation-related agreements. At the same time, Poland took steps to lower the profile of the shield issue in contacts with the new U.S. administration; it stayed the ratification procedure for the 2008 agreement, citing, as one of the reasons, the need to conclude the SOFA first. Above all, the Polish authorities expected to be kept informed about the direction of modifications, if any, to the shield project. President Kaczyński, for his part, when addressing the missile defence agreement expressed a conviction that “the arrangements agreed during President George W. Bush’s term in office ... will be implemented.”<sup>10</sup> Predictably—in view of their 2008 declarations—the president and his co-workers declared themselves in favour of greater activity on the shield issue than that planned by the government.<sup>11</sup>

Poland proposed to promote the Eastern Partnership [EP] in contacts with the Americans and to solicit the U.S.’s participation in the implementation of this project. The Eastern Partnership was presented as an initiative compatible with the American vision of the development of the post-Soviet area, and as a

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<sup>9</sup> “Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009 (presented at the sitting of the Sejm on 13 February 2009 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski),” above, p. 11; also R. Sikorski, “USA – Europa Środkowa: czas dokończyć dzieła!,” *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 6, 2009, p. 27.

<sup>10</sup> *Wystąpienie prezydenta RP przed korpusem dyplomatycznym*, 20 January 2009, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>11</sup> B. Wiśniewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 72–75.

manifestation of Poland's aspirations to playing a leading role in the shaping of the European Union's policy towards Eastern Europe and Transcaucasia. Poland pointed out that the United States could join a Group of Friends of Eastern Partnership, which would associate states interested in engaging in individual EP projects (efforts to establish the group commenced late in 2009). Presenting the advantages of cooperation within the Community of Democracies [CD] and of stepping up its activity, Minister Sikorski argued that, in regard to building and strengthening democratic institutions, "America has both opportunities and means to act in all regions of the world, [and Poland has—B.W.] relevant know-how, experienced people and suitable reputation."<sup>12</sup>

In his Sejm address Minister Sikorski pronounced Poland's absence from the Visa Waiver Programme (VWP) a grave failure of the Polish government. At the same time he gave to understand that the Polish authorities would no longer raise this issue in direct contacts with their U.S. partners and that they would count instead on the Obama administration's initiative in this area.<sup>13</sup>

### Political Relations

In 2009 the relations between Poland and the U.S. were dominated by the missile defence issue. During his first meeting with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (24–27 February, Washington) Minister Sikorski made some attempts to find out about the future of the August 2008 agreement, but his chief emphasis was on the implementation of the Declaration on Strategic Cooperation.<sup>14</sup>

The government's wait-and-see stance on the shield issue, in particular the staying of the agreement ratification procedure, came under criticism from President Kaczyński's closest co-workers. Grounds for this criticism was provided, for instance, by reports alleging that the U.S. administration had declared itself ready to abandon plans to build a European MD component in return for

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<sup>12</sup> R. Sikorski, *op. cit.*, p. 27. For more see A. Bieńczyk-Missala, "Stan i perspektywy Wspólnoty Demokracji," *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, no. 3, 2008, pp. 35–56. It is also worth noting that the hitherto unimpressive effects of the Community's activity have been attributed, among other factors, to concern that the U.S. could come to play the dominant role in the functioning of this organisation.

<sup>13</sup> *Informacja...*; R. Sikorski, "Good Luck, Mr. President," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 20 January 2009.

<sup>14</sup> *Sikorski: Patrioty niezależnie od tarczy*, 25 February 2009, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl). Other high points of Minister Sikorski's U.S. visit included a meeting with U.S. Congress members and participation in a Council on Foreign Relations conference on the future of NATO.

Russia's lending its support to efforts to curb Iran's nuclear aspirations.<sup>15</sup> That the president and the government differed in their approach to the shield issue was transparent also on the eve of the first meeting of the Polish and U.S. leaders, arranged on the occasion of a European Union—U.S. summit (5 April). President Kaczyński announced that he intended to make a push, in a face-to-face conversation, “to persuade Obama in favour of the missile shield” while President Tusk said he was not going to “egg on” the Americans on this business.<sup>16</sup>

The significance of the future of the European component of the missile defence system was highlighted by the signatories of an open letter to President Obama of July 2009.<sup>17</sup> The letter called on the U.S. authorities to elevate the rank of relations with Central and Eastern Europe and to take into account the region's needs, including the necessity to strengthen NATO's security guarantees—in particular in view of Russia's growing international assertiveness. The authors of the letter argued that the price to be paid for neglect in this area would be the growth of uncertainty in the states in the region, followed by their shift away from a pro-American (pro-Atlantic) orientation in their foreign policies. Accordingly, the authors of the letter recommended a list of measures to be taken to ensure “the survival of the close ties which for the recent two decades have linked the U.S. with Central and Eastern Europe.” A decision to proceed with the building of the missile shield in Poland and in the Czech Republic “as a gauge of America's credibility and its involvement in the region” was one of the recommended steps.

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<sup>15</sup> An offer to this effect was allegedly made in a letter from President Obama to the President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev, cf. P. Baker, “Obama Offered Deal to Russia in Secret Letter,” *The New York Times*, 2 March 2009. In the light of these reports the National Security Bureau Chief Aleksander Szczygło said that the ratification of the agreement with the U.S. would have eliminated room for “speculations and playing out this issue in Polish-U.S. and Polish-Russian relations and within NATO,” *Aleksander Szczygło o tarczy antyrakietowej*, 3 March 2009, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, a rather unconventional formula, of Obama meeting Kaczyński and Tusk at the same time, was adopted. It appears from a communication issued subsequently by the Prime Minister's Chancellery that the missile defence issue had not been addressed. *Zakończył się szczyt UE – USA*, 5 April 2009, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl). The Presidential Chancellery did not issue an official communication after the meeting.

<sup>17</sup> Among the 22 signatories there were Aleksander Kwaśniewski, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Adam D. Rotfeld and Lech Wałęsa. For the contents of the letter, including the full list of recommendations for the U.S.'s East- and Central European policy, see “Zostań z nami, Ameryko. List otwarty do prezydenta USA,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18 July 2009.

The Tusk government did not react to the letter, but President Kaczyński supported the theses laid down there. He expressed an opinion that “concessions ..., giving up—even if only in part” the shield project could “undermine America’s credibility as a global power and as an ally.”<sup>18</sup>

The U.S. authorities took no official position on the letter. In the U.S. expert community voices appeared, some from prominent members of former U.S. administrations, which, while well-disposed towards the idea underlying the letter, advocated moderation in the drawing of conclusions from the United States’ declining interest in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>19</sup> Polish experts, for their part, were critical both of the message carried by the letter—which, in their opinion, evidenced political immaturity of the states in the region, and of this ill-chosen form of communicating with the U.S. administration.<sup>20</sup>

The next event to have soured the climate of Polish-U.S. relation was a cavalier treatment by the U.S. authorities of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. The Polish authorities had signalled in contacts with the Obama administration the major rank of these celebrations, yet until last days of August it was not certain who would be representing the United States.<sup>21</sup> This was interpreted either as a delayed critical reaction to the thesis of the open letter, or as a signal that the U.S. was becoming insensitive to matters of importance to the states in the region.<sup>22</sup> The U.S. authorities’ dismissive attitude and the lack of progress on matters of importance to Poland (the implementation

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<sup>18</sup> The president said, among other things, that the achievements of the recent two decades were in danger of being forfeited were America “[to forget] in its policy its proven allies in East and Central Europe,” *Prezydent popiera apel polityków do Baracka Obamy*, 16 July 2009, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>19</sup> M. Bosacki, “Powinniście się cieszyć, że nie jesteście problemem,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 17 July 2009. Several months later Zbigniew Brzeziński also pronounced the letter to be “over-alarmist,” “Europa, Stany Zjednoczone i wybór Rosji,” *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny* no. 6, 2009, pp. 7–17.

<sup>20</sup> See R. Kuźniar, “Zawiedziona miłość,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 22 July 2009; Z. Lewicki, “Policzki wymierzone Amerykanom,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 2 September 2009.

<sup>21</sup> The presence at the commemorating festivities of a high-ranking U.S. administration official was publicly solicited by Minister Sikorski during his September 2009 visit to the U.S. There were speculations that the U.S. would be represented by Vice-president Joe Biden or Secretary of State Hilary Clinton. Ultimately, the U.S. delegation was headed by Jim Jones, President Obama’s National Security Advisor. On the occasion of the anniversary Obama sent a letter to the Polish authorities, see “Obama: wspominamy odwagę Polaków,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2 September 2009.

<sup>22</sup> J. Przybylski, “Do Gdańska dalej niż do Afryki?,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 26 August 2009; M. Bosacki, “USA–Polska. Koniec romansu,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 31 August 2009.

of the Declaration on Strategic Cooperation; the SOFA talks impasse in evidence since the summer of 2009) created an unfavourable context for the unveiling by the Americans of their decision on the future of the European missile shield component.

What's more, the Obama administration failed to ensure that this decision was announced in accordance with a procedure agreed with the Polish authorities. The pace of U.S. authorities' actions (President Barack Obama presented the findings of the MD programme review on 17 September 2009) was being set by press reports.<sup>23</sup> This was evidenced by Obama's sudden attempt to hold a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Tusk, and by an unannounced visit by senior Department of State and Pentagon officials, who came to Warsaw with the mission of making known to Poland the results of the review. The concurrence of the date of unveiling the decision with an anniversary of the USSR's aggression on Poland, though unintended by the U.S. authorities, produced a disastrous impression.

The Obama administration chose to change the architecture of the European shield component. The Bush administration's concept (focus on preparations for intercepting missiles fired in the direction of the U.S.) was found ill-suited to attaining defence capabilities compatible with the existing threat from Iran (focus on the development of short- and medium-range missile arsenal). The plan to build bases in Poland and in the Czech Republic was replaced with a concept of a system based on SM-3 missiles, which would protect chiefly the territories of the South-East European states and Turkey.

At the same time, the U.S. repeatedly declared that Poland would have the opportunity to participate, albeit at more distant stages, in the development of the system. American launchers were to arrive in Poland no earlier than in 2015—or even in 2018, depending on the pace of SM-3 technology development. Before that time, only the deployment in Poland of the logistic base of the system came into the picture. The Americans emphasised that elements of the new shield could be deployed in many countries in Europe.

The Polish authorities' initial reactions to the change of plans for the shield projected a concern (President Kaczyński's)<sup>24</sup> and a reserve (Prime Minister Tusk's).<sup>25</sup> At first, the substance of U.S. proposals concerning Poland's role in

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<sup>23</sup> The details of the American decision were first reported by *The Wall Street Journal* on 16 September, cf. P. Spiegel, *U.S. to Shelve Nuclear-Missile Shield*, [www.online.wsj.com](http://www.online.wsj.com).

<sup>24</sup> L. Kaczyński, "Decyzję Waszyngtonu przyjąłem z niepokojem," *Fakt*, 18 September 2009.

<sup>25</sup> *Rozmowa premiera z prezydentem USA*, 17 September 2009, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl).



the new edition of the system took a secondary place, presumably because the focus was (as evidenced by media comments) on the scrapping of the Bush administration's plans.<sup>26</sup> Even so, the tenor of statements by U.S. officials, who suggested that Poland should ratify the 2008 agreement<sup>27</sup> (as if oblivious to this agreement's having been tailored to a different shield concept), was obscuring both the essence of the system modification and the true motivations behind the offer to participate in the system, made to Poland at so early a stage. In many an opinion, this was the Obama administration's way of making up to Poland for the change rather than of highlighting a special relationship between the two countries.<sup>28</sup> It was pointed out, among other things, that in the new MD architecture Poland would hardly rank as a priority country, a conjecture allegedly borne out by the type of facilities likely to be deployed in Poland and by the remote prospect of participation in the system.<sup>29</sup>

Under the circumstances the U.S. administration launched an intensive information campaign, which culminated in a visit by U.S. Vice-president Joe Biden to Poland (21 October). This visit produced a double effect: it served to obliterate the impression that the U.S. was inattentive of its Central European allies and to obtain from the Polish authorities a declaration of interest in the new version of the shield. President Kaczyński said, after his talk with Biden on Polish-U.S. cooperation in missile defence and in NATO, that "[he has been] strengthened in the belief that our security is assured,"<sup>30</sup> and Prime Minister Tusk declared that Poland was ready to join the new MD system "on an appropriate scale."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See, for instance, P. Gillert, W. Lorenz, "Polska i Czechy bez tarczy," *Rzeczpospolita*; "Obama's Missile Offense," *The Wall Street Journal*. Voices supportive of the decision were also focused on the shelving of the controversial project promoted by the [Obama administration's] predecessors, see "Missile Sense," *The New York Times* (all articles of 18 September 2009).

<sup>27</sup> Department of Defence News Briefing with Secretary of Defence Robert Gates and Vice-Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General J. Cartwright, 17 September 2009, [www.defenselink.mil](http://www.defenselink.mil). See also R. Gates's article rationalising the American's "controlled" U-turn in the matter of the shield: "A Better Missile Defense for a Safer Europe," *The New York Times*, 20 September 2009.

<sup>28</sup> M. Madej, "Obama's Missile Defense Rethink: The Polish Reaction," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, 30 September 2009, [www.thebulletin.org](http://www.thebulletin.org).

<sup>29</sup> Ł. Kulesa, "Tarcza Obamy. Prawda czy zmyłka?," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 21 October 2009.

<sup>30</sup> *Prezydent: ta rozmowa napelniła mnie optymizmem*, 21 October 2009, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>31</sup> *Tusk i Biden o nowym systemie obrony przeciwrakietowej*, 21 October 2009, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl); P. Wroński, "Tarcza – wersja druga," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 22 October 2009.

Minister Sikorski's next visit to the U.S. (1–4 November) was an attempt at shifting the focuses in bilateral relations. Speaking at prestigious U.S. think-tanks, the Brookings Institution and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Sikorski covered extensively the Eastern Partnership initiative<sup>32</sup> and the Community of Democracies. Although he called for the U.S.'s "strategic reassurance" of Central Europe, he no longer raised the matter of implementation of the Declaration on Strategic Cooperation<sup>33</sup>—presumably, because about the same time an attempt to launch a new Strategic Dialogue formula had failed. In view of speculations about its reduced significance in relations with the U.S., Poland had counted particularly on this new step. However, the first round of the Dialogue was cancelled due to a sudden change in the agenda of Hillary Clinton, who had extended her Middle East visit. Neither did the Strategic Cooperation Consultative Group meet by the end of 2009.

Minister Sikorski's successive meeting with influential members of the U.S. Congress, including with the Congressional Poland Caucus, merited attention. The regularity of these contacts evidenced an increased interest in enlisting the Congress's support for the realisation of Poland's interests.

### **Military Cooperation**

**SOFA.** Talks on an agreement to govern the status and terms of stay in the territory of the Republic of Poland of U.S. military personnel, the accompanying civilian personnel and their families, and "contractors" had lasted fifteen months and ended in December 2009.<sup>34</sup> This work took so long for a number of reasons, not the least because of the parties' intention to have the agreement cover as large as possible a spectrum of incidents arising from the stay of U.S. forces in Poland, and because of differences of position surfacing in the course of negotiations. Of the latter, Poland's right to exercise criminal jurisdiction over

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<sup>32</sup> An interest in the Eastern Partnership idea was expressed, for instance, by P. Gordon, Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasian Affairs. Cf. his address to the PISM-CSIS conference held in Washington on 4 November 2009 (The United States and Central Europe: Diverging Or Converging Strategic Interests?), see "Europa Środkowa i Wschodnia: amerykański punkt widzenia," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 6, 2009, pp. 17–25.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. R. Sikorski, "USA – Europa Środkowa: czas dokończyć dzieła," *op. cit.* About the same time a conference "Economic Transformation and the Future of Capitalism: Lessons Learned from Poland's Success in Economically Turbulent Times" devoted to the achievements of Poland's post-1989 transition was held in the World Bank's headquarters.

<sup>34</sup> "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the United States of America on the Status of US Forces in the Territory of the Republic of Poland." The ratification procedure for the agreement was completed on 26 February 2010.

U.S. military personnel, and tax exemptions for the contractors were considered the most relevant. The Americans wanted Poland to waive primary jurisdiction over offences against the laws of Poland committed by U.S. military personnel other than in performance of official duties. Eventually, a solution more advantageous from the Polish perspective was adopted: the U.S. was to apply to the Polish authorities for waiver of primary criminal jurisdiction on a case-by-case basis. Polish officials emphasised in this context that “our national interests, which need not be proved” would constitute a “sufficient premise” for refusing such requests.<sup>35</sup>

The U.S. authorities wanted tax exemptions for all contractors performing services for them. Ultimately, it was agreed that contractor exemptions would be granted only to U.S. entities, exclusively on incomes earned by performing work or services for U.S. military forces. In no way did this arrangement limit Polish operators' opportunities for soliciting business from the Americans.

It is worth emphasising that the SOFA is not, in its own right, a legal basis for the presence of U.S. forces in Poland; it is merely a catalogue of principles applicable in each case of their stay in the territory of the Republic of Poland. Only “implementing agreements” would regulate in detail the different aspects of U.S. military personnel's stay in Poland, including the financial consequences (e.g. tax and customs duty exemptions, or the costs incurred in ensuring external security of U.S. military units, for which Poland agreed to be responsible).

It was under this procedure that the detailed terms of stationing the Patriot battery in Poland were agreed. This matter (alongside the new MD architecture, which at that time was the more important subject to the Americans) was discussed at the inaugural meeting of the High Level Defence Group (15–16 October). At that time a declaration was made that the missile battery would be deployed early in 2010, even though the details of its configuration were unclear.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Obrony Narodowej oraz Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych Sejmu RP*, 2010, no. 3319/VI kadencja.

<sup>36</sup> The lack of clarity was due to reports alleging that the missiles, being trainer ones, were to be “unarmed.” Poland announced that the Patriots would be incorporated into its missile defence system. It appears, however, that in view of a periodical nature of the U.S. unit's presence a steady increase in interoperability with Polish units would be the chief advantage resulting from it. See A. Słojewska, “Amerykańskie wyrzutnie w Polsce będą nieuzbrojone?,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 11 June 2009; “Patrioty już niedługo,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 16 October 2009; J. Przybylski, “Patrioty będą nieuzbrojone,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 3 December 2009.

**Afghanistan.** The Polish Military Contingent [PMC] taking part in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan has been provided with multi-dimensional support by U.S. forces. The Americans make available to the Polish side mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles, HMMWV [High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle] patrol vehicles, and engineering-sapper combat kits. The U.S. assigned medical transport helicopters for the Polish units' use; moreover, the PMC is supported by U.S. combat aircraft and helicopters.

Poland perceives its engagement in Afghanistan chiefly as a contribution to the North Atlantic Alliance's effort and an investment, as it were, in its position in NATO. Poland's engagement in the Afghan operation was increased in 2009. Being free from "caveats," i.e. restrictions on the use of the PMC in combat, it matched—although on an incomparably smaller scale—the U.S.'s plans. The December 2009 strategy of Polish military presence in Afghanistan assumed that more focus would be put on training the Afghan security forces and on ensuring civilians' security; that the Polish units' operational activity would be increased; and that spending on PRT would be increased—which means that it was closely aligned with President Obama's Afghan strategy.<sup>37</sup> Poland responded promptly to the appeal for the strengthening of military presence in Afghanistan; early in December, following the unveiling by Obama of the details of his strategy (which included sending 30 thousand more U.S. troops) the Polish authorities announced the decision to strengthen again the PMC. Therefore, it cannot be ruled out that the Polish presence in Afghanistan will contribute to the launching of new institutions of Polish-U.S. dialogue. Yet in the political dimension Poland's engagement in this operation is of a lesser significance to bilateral relations than, for instance, the decision to support the intervention in Iraq had been.

**Delivery of Hercules aircraft.** The efforts to acquire C-130 Hercules transport aircraft for the Polish Air Force date back to 2002–2003. The Americans had agreed to finance the refurbishing of five Hercules aircraft under a non-refundable loan from the U.S. government (under the Foreign Military Financing programme). The Polish side had undertaken to prepare infrastructure for the planes at an Air Force base at Powidz.<sup>38</sup> The commencement of deliveries of the Hercules aircraft fell behind schedule due to the Americans' having

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<sup>37</sup> For more see B. Górka-Winter, *Poland and ISAF: Mission (Still) Not Accomplished*, below, p. 262.

<sup>38</sup> The costs of this project (some PLN 750 million) will be partly financed under the NATO Security Investment Programme (NSIP). The Powidz base is to be equipped to service also AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) and in-flight refuelling planes.

underestimated the overall costs of the programme and because refurbishing the planes, which had already seen long service, took longer than initially expected. It should be added that the age of the aircraft (about 40 years) had been the fundamental reason for questioning their useful value for the Polish Air Force, despite the Americans' assurances that the planes would remain service worthy for another 20 years.<sup>39</sup>

The delivery to Poland of the first Hercules was completed in March 2009, more than six month after the due date. Failure to meet the schedule for arrival in Poland of the remaining aircraft (the last plane was due still in September 2009)<sup>40</sup> resulted in delay in putting the Herculeses to operational use. It was also unclear whether a time tentatively allowed by the Polish side for preparing the aircraft for service (about 6 months) would not be extended due to the necessity to make more repairs and because on the planes' arrival in Poland some equipment was found missing.<sup>41</sup> Eventually the first mission flown by a Polish Hercules to a region of military conflict took place in December 2009, to Afghanistan.

### Economic Relations

**Trade.** In 2009 trade totalled US\$4.3bn (down 34% from the preceding year). The first two quarters of 2009 saw a perceptible decrease in trade growth, primarily in the wake of the decline of Polish imports from the U.S. Polish exporters were affected by the economic slowdown in the U.S. (the U.S.'s GDP dropped by 5.4% in the fourth quarter of 2008 and by 6.4% in the first quarter of 2009) and the reduced domestic demand on the U.S. market (in the first half of the year exports dropped by 23% from the first half of 2008). With imports declining at a faster rate and exports relatively stable, a major reduction of Poland's trade resulted, to US\$265m against US\$1.5bn in 2008.

Poland exported to the U.S. furniture, jet engines and turbines, spirits, car parts and accessories (the total value of these exports dropped by 25% from 2008, the plight of the U.S. automotive industry being one of the reasons). Exports of highly processed goods, such as medical equipment, aircraft parts and telephones,

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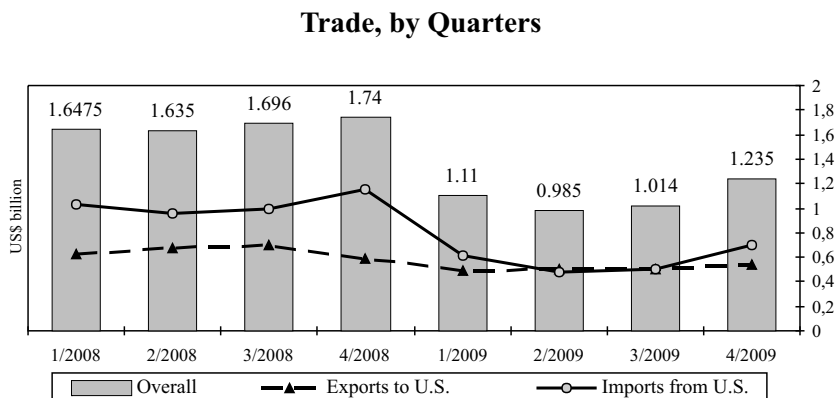
<sup>39</sup> Cf. *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Obrony Narodowej Sejmu RP*, 2009, no. 1803/VI kadencja.

<sup>40</sup> The Americans agreed, by way of compensation for the delay, to supply their own C-130 for a year on a gratuitous lease basis.

<sup>41</sup> Still in July it transpired that the plane carried no life-saving and life-sustaining equipment ("medical panel"); this reduced markedly its usefulness for humanitarian operations or for missions to evacuate wounded troops, cf. E. Żemła, Ł. Zalesiński, "Hercules nie dla rannych," *Rzeczpospolita*, 28 July 2009.

increased. A number of products, including naphtha oils and nitrogen fertilisers, disappeared from the list of largest revenue earners in exports to the U.S.

Figure 1



Source: prepared by the author based on U.S. Census Bureau data, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

In the by-product structure of imports from the U.S., aviation equipment continued to rank first even though the value of these imports plummeted by 73%, to about US\$300m. The growth of car imports from the U.S. proved to have been short-lived, chiefly due to the appreciation of the dollar. In 2009, following an over two-fold increase in 2007–2008, car imports shrunk three-fold in value terms. A similar pattern was observed in imports of American coal.

**Direct investment.** The cumulative value of direct investment in Poland by U.S.-registered businesses was US\$16.4bn, a 5% increase compared with the preceding year.<sup>42</sup> According to a report by the American Chamber of Commerce in Poland and the KPMG consultants, the position of U.S. investors in Poland is well established even though their activity is no longer marked by the expansiveness that was its hallmark in the early period of Poland's economic transition. The share of U.S. capital in foreign direct investment in Poland, which had stood at almost 14% in the mid-1990s, registered at the end of 2008 at 6.1%. Poland continues to be the region's leader in attracting U.S. investment.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Adjusted for projects realised by companies with U.S. capital operating in other European countries, this value will probably increase to over \$20bn.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *20 Years of American Investment in Poland: Report of the American Chamber of Commerce in Poland and KPMG*, [www.amcham.pl](http://www.amcham.pl). Poland attracted 57% of U.S. post-1989 investment in Central Europe.

Yet these are still marginal amounts in terms, for instance, of the share in total U.S. investment in Europe (about 0.8% in 2009).

Polish investors' engagement in the United States is negligible. According to the National Bank of Poland's data, at the end of 2008 the aggregate value of Polish investment in the U.S. was US\$162.2m and it accounted for less than 1% of total funds invested abroad by Polish businesses. The size of Polish direct investment is not shown the U.S. Department of Commerce's official statistics.

Late in March and early in April 2009 a Polish trade mission headed by Vice-minister of Economy Marcin Korolec was staying in Florida. The object of the mission, on which the minister was accompanied by representatives of Polish small and medium-sized enterprises, was to establish investment and trade cooperation with the Southern states of the U.S. In December 2009 Minister of the State Treasury Aleksander Grad went on a visit to the U.S. to present Poland's privatisation offer at meetings with U.S. entrepreneurs.

Leading U.S. fuel groups (such as ConocoPhillips and Marathon) showed interest in exploring for and production of shale gas in Poland. However, a number of issues had to be cleared first, such as doubts concerning geologic and technological possibilities for shale gas recovery and the actual size of shale gas reserves.<sup>44</sup>

**F-16 offset deal.** According to information from the Ministry of Economy, Lockheed Martin Corporation (LMC) was meeting the schedule set in the offset agreement, which provided for launching US\$5bn worth of projects by the end of 2009 (the second stage of agreement implementation). LMC is responsible for the fulfilment, by the end of 2013, of commitments slightly in excess of US\$6bn (only failing implementation of projects of this value will the State Treasury be able to claim the damages negotiated in the agreement); at the end of 2008 the aggregate value of projects qualified for the offset had been US\$9.7bn.

A similar assessment came in July 2009 from the Supreme Audit office [NIK];<sup>45</sup> however, the NIK criticised the efficiency of utilisation of the LMC agreement (the NIK's audit covered the first stage of agreement implementation, i.e. a period from 2003 to 2006, and a part of the second stage). The NIK report pointed out that many projects did not ensure the maximisation of benefits in

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<sup>44</sup> *Conoco Sees Promise in Polish Shale Gas-exec*, 9 September 2009, [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com); *Poland 'Bubbles Up' as Marathon Target for Next Shale-Gas Boom*, 9 December 2009, [www.bloomberg.com](http://www.bloomberg.com).

<sup>45</sup> *Informacja o wynikach kontroli realizacji zobowiązań offsetowych wynikających z kontraktu na zakup samolotów F-16*, July 2009, [www.nik.gov.pl](http://www.nik.gov.pl).

terms of the Polish economy's modernisation needs (only 25% of the projects underway in the first stage of implementation of the agreement had met such offset requirements, as transfer of modern technology and investment in Polish plants). The responsibility for this was attributed to central administrative authorities and the enterprises concerned, on the grounds that they had had small experience in applying the offset mechanism and that offset agreement had been prepared in a hurry. The NIK pointed to difficulties encountered in implementing direct offset projects, but it saw no threats to achieving an at least 50% share of direct offset by the end of the term of the agreement (2013). However, in the NIK's opinion the implementation of all projects covered by the agreement by the end of the agreement's life was doubtful, despite the adjustments made.

### Social and Cultural Relations

**Visas.** The inclusion of Poland in the Visa Waiver Programme [VWP] has become a more remote prospect after the resumption on 1 July 2009 of the more restrictive rules governing the eligibility for the programme. The 3% (rather than 10%) threshold of rejected visa applications was re-introduced after the United States had failed to deploy on time a system to register the biometric identifiers of persons leaving the U.S. Had the system been in place, the 10% threshold could have remained in effect. However, late in 2009 the system was only in a testing stage.<sup>46</sup> An amendment, proposed to the Congress to enable the deadline for the development of the system to be extended to June 2011, was still pending at the end of 2009.

Yet—whatever the U.S. authorities organisational efficiency, and notwithstanding changes, if any, in the relevant legislation—a low rate of non-immigration visa refusals (tourist, business, or tourist-and-business visas) would have remained the essential condition for adding Poland to the VWP.<sup>47</sup> While it is beyond dispute that progress had been made in 2003–2009 (the number of visa application rejections having dropped five-fold), the nominal decrease in visa refusals proved not large enough. In 2009 this positive trend appeared to be losing momentum, with the percentage of rejected visa applications registering

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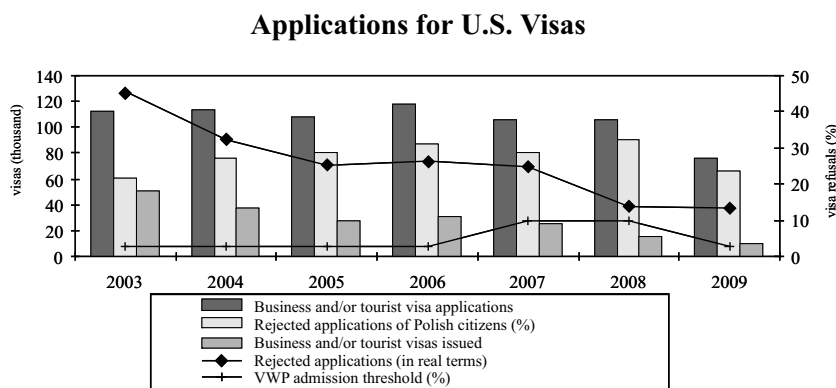
<sup>46</sup> Cf. W. Lorenz, "Latanie bez wiz pozostanie marzeniem," *Rzeczpospolita*, 26 May 2009; J. McKinley, J. Preston, "U.S. Can't Trace Foreign Visitors on Expired Visas," *The New York Times*, 11 October 2009; S. Hsu, "U.S. Readies Plan to ID Departing Visitors," *Washington Post*, 8 November 2009.

<sup>47</sup> Meeting this criterion, while not automatically causing inclusion in the programme, is considered a prerequisite for the commencement of inter-government talks on the remaining terms (chiefly pertaining to flight security) of participation in the programme.



at 13.5% (Figure 2).<sup>48</sup> It appears that even the perceptibly lower interest of Polish citizens in non-immigration visas failed to change the U.S. consular services' assessments of Poles-related immigration risk.

Figure 2.



Source: prepared by the author based on U.S. Department of State data, [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)).

**Expatriate Polish community (“Polonia”) in the U.S.** The United States has the world's largest community declaring Polish ancestry.<sup>49</sup> The Polish authorities want to have in the American Polonia an influential and effective partner in creating a positive image of Poland in the U.S. Refuting allegations of Polish anti-Semitism and highlighting Pole's contribution to the history of the United States are standing priorities of Polonian organisations. For instance, in 2009 Polonia-supported efforts to have a honorary citizenship of the United States awarded to General Kazimierz Pułaski ended in a success.<sup>50</sup>

In a letter to the leaders and participants of the October 2009 Polish American Congress Convention in Chicago organised on the occasion of the Congress's sixty-fifth anniversary, Minister Sikorski expressed the hope that Polonia would “influence in a decisive way the contents of the U.S.'s policy towards Poland.” President Kaczyński sent a similar message, stating that “Poland needs an active, dynamic, well-organised modern Polonia with a presence in all areas of public and civic life.” However, a Ministry of Foreign

<sup>48</sup> This index is established solely on the basis of the number of rejected applications for a given type of visa.

<sup>49</sup> During the 2000 United States Census almost 9 million people declared Polish ancestry (the seventh largest ethnic group in the U.S.), cf. *Census 2000 Briefs and Special Reports*, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). The next census will be held in 2010.

<sup>50</sup> Pułaski was the seventh person in the U.S. history thus honoured.

Affairs-prepared *Report on the Situation of Poles and the Polish Diaspora Abroad* noted that the social prestige of Americans of Polish descent was low despite their being one of the five most affluent ethnic groups in the U.S. and having, statistically, above-standard education. In the same report the [Polish American] Congress, recognised as the representative of the Polonian community, stated that “Polonia has a disproportionately low political clout.”<sup>51</sup>

The Polonian communities have failed to make full use of their potential as a lobbying force capable of influencing the United States’ domestic and foreign policy, which is the reason why the Polish authorities have not treated activities of the expatriate Polish communities as an important determinant of their policy towards the U.S. This is evidenced, for instance, by the lack of coordination of Polish diplomacy’s and Polonian communities’ efforts for the inclusion of Poland in the Visa Waiver programme. The Polish American Congress has openly challenged the decision to play down the visa issue in Polish-U.S. relations, arguing that it amounted to torpedoing many years’ efforts by the Polonian communities. It is to be doubted that such differences of priorities would have come to the surface, were the Polish authorities perceiving Polonia as a valuable partner and reckoning with its position in dealings with the U.S. authorities.

**Selected cultural events.** The 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and the U.S. was the leading theme of a number of cultural events. On the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the U.S. Embassy several towns and cities in Poland hosted an exhibition “We, the People... 90 Years of Diplomatic Relations between Poland and the U.S.” Another tribute to the anniversary was an “America, America” project under which the National Museum in Kraków organised a series of events popularising American culture, such as the “American Dream” exhibition devoted to popular culture in the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>52</sup>

In April, Columbus (Ohio) hosted a retrospective of Andrzej Wajda films (showing, among other films, *Ashes and Diamond*, *The Promised Land*, *The Man of Marble* and *Katyń*, a film which several months earlier had been released throughout the United States). The gala Fifth Festival of Polish Films in New York (May 2009), at which over 20 features (including *33 Scenes from Life*, a multiple prize-winner in Poland, and *The Homeless’ Playing Field*) and

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<sup>51</sup> *Raport o sytuacji Polonii i Polaków za granicą*, [www.msz.gov.pl/files/docs/polonia/Raport\\_PPG.pdf](http://www.msz.gov.pl/files/docs/polonia/Raport_PPG.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> The exhibitions website: [www.amerykanski-sen.pl](http://www.amerykanski-sen.pl).

documentaries were presented to U.S. audiences, was an attention-worthy event. The tenth Festival of Polish Films in Los Angeles (late April/early May 2009) was given a worthy setting with the inaugural gala held in Hollywood's prestigious Egyptian Theatre.

From May to November an exhibition of the Polish Poster School of 1945–1989 was open in New York's Museum of Modern Art. This relatively exclusive event presented works of outstanding Polish poster artists: Henryk Tomaszewski, Roman Cieślewicz, Jan Lenica, Franciszek Starowieyski. In December a photo exhibition: "The Polish People's Republic—So Far Away and So Close By..." showing political economic and cultural events of that period opened in the Woodrow Wilson Centre.

### Appraisal

In 2009 the effects of Poland's policy towards the United States were moderate. The agreement on the contents of the SOFA, opening a broad scope for political-military security cooperation, was an certainly a positive accent, this cooperation being relevant, for instance, in connection with the request for the U.S.'s "strategic assurance" of Central Europe.

Attempts to exploit the Declaration on Strategic Cooperation for the purpose of shaping more efficiently the agenda of bilateral relations were only moderately successful. No new institutions of the Polish-U.S. dialogue were launched; while this lowers Polish diplomacy's marks for efficiency, it should be remembered that Poland found itself acting in difficult circumstances. Central Europe definitely was not figuring among the new U.S. administration's priority foreign policy directions and, between reservations concerning the missile defence project and insecurity about its future, this most meaningful issue on the bilateral relations agenda was hardly a good basis on which to shape cooperation with the U.S. authorities.

As things were, the Tusk government took the right decision when it adopted a waiting stance on the future of the shield. In view of the Obama administration's scepticism about this matter, any more active push for the realisation of this project, such as setting in motion the ratification procedure for this agreement, could have led to misunderstandings at a sensitive time when cooperation with the new U.S. authorities was being established. Besides, Poland had no arguments with which to sway the outcome of the missile defence review, or to cause the agreement to be implemented in an unchanged form. Under the circumstances the demonstrable lack of coordination of the government's and the presidential centre's respective positions on the shield was

of secondary importance, even though differences on this issue could have been taken to reflect the lack of cohesion in Poland's policy and undermined the effectiveness of building contacts with the new administration.

The blame for the temporary souring of the climate of bilateral relations after 17 September 2009 lied with the Americans. That said, Poland's openness to the offer of participation in the modified shield architecture makes it difficult to judge whether the Polish authorities would be prepared to support U.S. political-military security undertakings also in the future and what impact the past MD system-related experience, notably the Polish authorities' negligible influence on the implementation of the project, is going to have on bilateral relations. It appears that the swift consent of the Polish authorities was prompted by a desire to capitalise on the American side's perceptible readiness to repair bilateral relations after the mismanaged unveiling of the MD concept modification. Poland reckoned that the U.S. government would become more open, in a short run, to its requests after the credibility of the "Obama shield," that major concern of the Americans, was established. Indeed, talks on the SOFA and on the deployment of the Patriot battery gained momentum.<sup>53</sup>

Yet it will be wise to perceive the post-September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009 stance on the shield through the prism of Poland's limited capabilities for creating, on its own, conditions in which its requests in dealings with the U.S. will be met—a position highlighted in 2009 this by the necessity to cooperate with the Obama administration as the latter was preoccupied with a record number of challenges. This phenomenon is not at all surprising, if only because of the disparity of the two states' potentials and of Central Europe's secondary (at best) role in the U.S.'s overall foreign policy strategy. It should be noted that in past years, in particular during the G.W. Bush presidency, decisions to participate in American political-military security projects had been Poland's trump card in its policy towards the United States. This way, Polish-U.S. relations had fallen into a "trap of short-termism," for (as evidenced by the shield case) the Americans' interest in these undertakings and the resulting scope for manoeuvre for Polish diplomacy were, first and foremost, a function of the U.S. security policy's current priorities determined by technological/financial considerations, or by changing perceptions of threat—in other words, by short-term factors. To treat support for projects such as the shield as the principal method of tightening the alliance with the U.S. is risky indeed, particularly as the United States is not guided in its relations with Central Europe by a clear-cut political strategy

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. P. Gordon, *op. cit.*, pp. 17–25.

capable of “cushioning” shocks caused by the scrapping or modification of a particular initiative. Such a scenario cannot be ruled out also in the case of the “Obama shield,” particularly as in years immediately ahead Poland's participation in this project will not be essential for its effectiveness.

Close security relations with the United States will certainly remain a priority of Poland's policy, first of all because of the significance of the U.S.'s political-military involvement in Europe. That said, ways to lighten the dominance of these issues in Polish-U.S. relations should be considered. By establishing the concurrence of its international activity with long-term priorities of the United States' foreign policy Poland will be in a position to maintain its status as a close partner of the U.S. also in situations where, for instance, it has chosen not to take part in another U.S. overseas operation.

The intention of introducing into the agenda of relations with the U.S. issues connected with two political projects, the Eastern Partnership and the Community of Democracies, could be taken to show that the Polish authorities propose to present in this way Poland's potential as the initiator of the EU's policy towards the post-Soviet area and as a state engaged in promoting democratic changes. While 2009 brought no major developments indicating that these subjects were gaining importance in bilateral relations, the U.S. authorities declared their interest in the both projects. After a period of promoting the both initiatives in various quarters, including among U.S. analysts and experts (in the case of the Community of Democracies, the aim was to give the CD a high profile before its tenth anniversary in 2010), the steadiness of the declarations received must be verified by evidence—such, for instance, as the appointment of appropriate working groups attached to the Strategic Cooperation Consultation Group due to be constituted in 2010. This way, these subjects would be better anchored in the Poland-U.S. dialogue.

*Translated by Elżbieta Gołębiowska*

## Poland's Policy towards Germany

### Determinants

Relations between Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany, underpinned as they are by membership in the European Union and NATO, constitute the most developed segment of Poland's foreign policy. They are characterised by high intensity, multifacetedness, and a well-developed institutional framework. In Poland's 2009 policy towards Germany a high profile was given to historical reflection. This was in connection with international celebrations marking great anniversaries: the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the victory of "Solidarity" in Poland—and, in a broader perspective, of the freedom breakthrough in Central Europe, including the fall of the Berlin Wall.

With positive experiences of cooperation in 2008 prospects for deepening the same were good. After a several-years break inter-government consultations with the participation of Chancellor Angela Merkel were held in Warsaw (December 9). The efficiency of Polish-German contacts in the EU was improving, a progress evidenced in particular by the forging of compromise on the climate package.<sup>1</sup> Poland's growing influence on the shaping of the EU's policy (including through the Visegrad Group) was a factor conducive to cooperation.<sup>2</sup> Also, the both states were entering a new year with their national procedures for the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon still pending. There were signs of an invigoration of the Weimar Triangle,<sup>3</sup> with a number of factors boding well for a more active use of this cooperation formula; these included an approximation of the three partners' positions on security policy with regard to the transatlantic relations and prospects for the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy.

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<sup>1</sup> For more see N. Kohtamäki, "Poland's Policy Regarding Germany," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2009*, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> See. B. Wojna, "Poland's Policy in the European Union," above, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> The most noticeable manifestation of this was a meeting of Minister of Foreign Affairs on 17 June 2008.

Also reflecting on mutual relations was the financial and economic crisis; while Poland's economic situation was relatively good, Germany had been badly hit, chiefly as a result of a steep drop in exports.

The change of government in Germany was a powerful factor.<sup>4</sup> Following elections to the Bundestag on 27 September, a coalition of Christian Democrats and Liberals took over government. In the new Cabinet sworn in on 28 October, headed by the incumbent Chancellor, Angela Merkel, the CDU was assigned 8 ministerial portfolios, the FDP obtained 5, and 3 ministries went to the CSU. FDP chief Guido Westerwelle was appointed vice-chancellor and a new minister of foreign affairs. During the electoral campaign this politician advocated the deepening of relations with Poland, and so did the Liberals in their electoral programme.<sup>5</sup> The programme targets, approved by the Christian Democrats, were reflected in the coalition agreement of 26 October 2009 in the form of a commitment to work towards deepening close friendship and collaboration with Poland and to exploit to the fullest the opportunities in the Weimar Triangle. Moreover, the coalition partners declared they would work to provide a new impetus for European integration through German-Polish collaboration.<sup>6</sup> These commitments opened up new prospects for building a Poland-championed common "partnership for Europe."

The office of president remained with the Christian Democrats after the Federal Assembly, voting on 23 May, re-elected Horst Köhler for the second five-year term as president.

In Poland the loss of power by the SPD, which had co-governed since 1998, gave rise, on the one hand, to hopes that Germany would modify its policy towards Russia and, on the other hand, to apprehensions that the influence of the Federation of Expellees [*Bund der Vertriebenen*] might increase. The latter aspect was gaining significance as plans to establish a "Visible Sign"—a centre commemorating the compulsory displacement of Germans—were taking on a concrete shape. Poland's position on this initiative had been invariably critical, while the German government, for its part, solicited the Eastern neighbours' approval for its historical policy in this area. An outline of a Polish-German compromise on this issue appeared during a visit by Bernd Neumann, Federal

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that there were also elections to the legislative assemblies (Landtage) in six German states, including Brandenburg and Saxony which neighbour with Poland.

<sup>5</sup> The FDP's 2009 electoral programme: *Die Mitte stärken. Deutschlandprogramm 2009*, [www.fdpbundespartei.de/files/653/Deutschlandprogramm09\\_Endfassung.PDF](http://www.fdpbundespartei.de/files/653/Deutschlandprogramm09_Endfassung.PDF).

<sup>6</sup> *Wachstum, Bildung, Zusammenhalt. Der Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und FDP*, [www.cdu.de/doc/pdfc/091026-koalitionsvertrag-cducsu-fdp.pdf](http://www.cdu.de/doc/pdfc/091026-koalitionsvertrag-cducsu-fdp.pdf).

Commissioner for Culture and Media, on 5 February 2008. Poland declined to involve in the establishment of the centre, it reserved the right to review critically the implementation of the entire project, and obtained an assurance that the project would not be prejudicial to relations between the two states. As a result, already on 19 March the German government authorised a concept of the centre's functioning as a foundation<sup>7</sup> and on 30 December 2008 a relevant legislation came into force,<sup>8</sup> giving the Federation of Expellees a seat on the board of the Foundation "Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation"—an arrangement which, given the conflict between the aspirations of that organisation and Poland's reservations, was bound to lead to political discord in Polish-German relations. Complicating the situation even more was the fact that, with an electoral campaign underway in Germany for the greater part of the year, the matter of compulsory migrations and their commemoration was unavoidably hyped. This was particularly manifest before the elections to the European Parliament, which were held in the both countries on 7 June. Under the circumstances the Polish authorities faced the challenge of responding adequately to developments in Germany.

### Aims

Already in 2008 the Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski stated, when presenting in the Sejm the new government's foreign policy priorities, that Poland expected from Germany a "partner-like dialogue of a strategic nature, patterned after German-French relations;" the dialogue, combined with the closest possible collaboration, was to help overcome historical encumbrances.<sup>9</sup> In the same year the minister outlined in Poznań the programme of a proposed

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<sup>7</sup> "Koncepcja rządu Republiki Federalnej Niemiec 'Widocznego znaku przeciw ucieczce i wypędzeniom' w Berlinie (translation)," *Rzeczpospolita*, 18 March 2008, [www.rp.pl/artukul/108627.html](http://www.rp.pl/artukul/108627.html).

<sup>8</sup> Law of 21 December 2008 on the Establishment of a Foundation "German Historical Museum" (Gesetz zur Errichtung einer Stiftung „Deutsches Historisches Museum," BGBl. I no. 64, p. 2891). A subsidiary Foundation "Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation" is to operate under its auspices. For more see R. Formuszewicz, "Przyszły status prawny Widocznego Znak. Rządowy projekt ustawy o utworzeniu Fundacji Niemieckie Muzeum Historyczne," *Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego*, no. 3, 2008 (with a translation of the draft law).

<sup>9</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2008 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski)," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2009*.



Polish-German partnership for Europe<sup>10</sup> and he subsequently put forward this offer in his address to the Polish-German Forum in Berlin.<sup>11</sup> On 13 February 2009, informing the Sejm about the tasks of Poland's foreign policy in the current year, the minister was already assessing cooperation with Germany as positive, on balance.<sup>12</sup> He assured that "good-neighbourly dialogue" had been resumed and contacts had become more intensive. He re-emphasised that cooperation with Germany was anchored in the European Union and NATO and he stressed the key (from the Polish perspective) character of Polish-German relations. He referred again to Weimar Triangle cooperation, which he saw as an opportunity for Poland to participate in the implementation of undertakings of importance to the entire European Union. The Weimar Triangle states, he argued, share the desire to build a strong European Union active in its relations with Europe's neighbours in the south and the European neighbours in the east.

Minister Sikorski relativised the problems present in bilateral relations, comparing them to the hiccups in German-French relations. He also pointed out that it was an error to attribute the difficulties to historical encumbrances alone; instead, he acknowledged that they were also caused by objective differences in the two countries' economic potentials, degrees of civilisational development, and in the dynamics of their internal processes. Such being the case, in shaping Poland's German policy reflection and the search for solutions, rather than "dressing up in a historical costume," were the proper model. The minister advocated according priority to "a common, Polish and German, sense of responsibility for the European Union" and he urged: "History is what we should remember; as for the future, we should co-create it with the national and Community interests in mind"—a statement meant to be construed, among other things, as the articulation of Poland's aspirations to co-design, alongside Germany and France, the European Union's strategy. President Lech Kaczyński, speaking at an annual meeting with the diplomatic corps, also pointed to the significance of good relations with the FRG and he expressed the belief that

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<sup>10</sup> "Polska – Niemcy. Partnerstwo dla Europy. Wystąpienie Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych RP Radosława Sikorskiego w Instytucie Zachodnim w Poznaniu, 26 czerwca 2008 r.," *Przegląd Zachodni*, no. 3, 2008, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> "Wystąpienie Ministra Radosława Sikorskiego na XIII Forum Polsko-Niemieckim, Berlin, 5 grudnia 2008 r.," [www.pol-niem.pl/index.php?page=1010300000](http://www.pol-niem.pl/index.php?page=1010300000).

<sup>12</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009 (presented at the sitting of the Sejm on 13 February 2009 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski)" above, p. 11.

“differences connected predominately with history (...) will be resolved, in the sense of arriving at a common position.”<sup>13</sup>

One aim of Poland’s policy, much highlighted in 2009 in the context of the anniversaries of importance both to Poland and Germany, was to disseminate the perspective from which Poland interpreted watershed events. Efforts to this end were to be a part of a broader context of shaping a common European historical narrative.<sup>14</sup> Poland was particularly anxious for the date of Germany’s aggression on Poland to be remembered as the beginning of the Second World War and for its own (and other states’ in the region) role in overcoming the long-term consequences of the aggressive policies of the two totalitarian systems to be widely known.

Yet another aim, one of a purely bilateral dimension, was to improve the situation of Poles in Germany. Minister Sikorski announced in the Sejm that the need to respect laws and to allow for the requirements of the Polish minority would be highlighted.

### Political Relations

In 2009 contacts between Polish and German politicians were regular and intensive. Particularly conducive to this state of things were anniversary celebrations. Meetings of the European Council and of the Council of the EU also offered opportunities for contacts.

President Kaczyński visited Germany in connection with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary NATO summit on 3–4 April. A working visit by the President of the FRG, Horst Köhler, on 13 July took on a symbolic dimension, being as it was his first foreign trip after reelection. The president repeated thus his cooperation-boosting gesture of 2004, when he had paid his first foreign visit to Poland. During his stay in Warsaw Köhler met with the president and the prime minister. Moreover, the two presidents had a telephone conversation on 17 June.<sup>15</sup>

Prime Minister Donald Tusk spoke at the Munich Conference on Security on 7 February 2009 and on this occasion he also talked with Chancellor Angela

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<sup>13</sup> “Wystąpienie przed korpusem dyplomatycznym, 20 stycznia 2009 r.,” [www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/wystapienia/art,1,wystapienie-przed-korpusem-dyplomatycznym.html](http://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/wystapienia/art,1,wystapienie-przed-korpusem-dyplomatycznym.html).

<sup>14</sup> “Wystąpienie Ministra Radosława Sikorskiego na XIII Forum Polsko-Niemieckim...,” *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> “Podsumowanie Działalności Międzynarodowej Prezydenta RP w 2009 roku,” [www.prezydent.pl/aktywnosc/opracowania-i-statystyki/polityka-miedzynarodowa/art,2,podsumowanie-dzialalnosci-miedzynarodowej-prezydenta-rp-w-2009-roku.html](http://www.prezydent.pl/aktywnosc/opracowania-i-statystyki/polityka-miedzynarodowa/art,2,podsumowanie-dzialalnosci-miedzynarodowej-prezydenta-rp-w-2009-roku.html).

Merkel. Another meeting of the two heads of government took place on 28 February in Hamburg, where they were guests of honour at a traditional annual meeting of business communities [*Matthiae dinner*]. The prime minister represented Poland at the celebrations of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Chancellor Merkel attended both the Kraków celebrations of an anniversary of the free election of 4 June [1989] and, on 1 September, celebrations at Westerplatte marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. She also attended a congress of the European People's Party held in Warsaw on 29–30 April.

In regular contacts of the ministers of foreign affairs, two events were particularly noteworthy. The first was a joint visit by Radosław Sikorski and Frank Walter Steinmeier, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the CDU/CSU-SPD government, to Kiev on 17 June. This trip was intended to show that an idea that the Weimer Triangle partners involve in the support Poland was extending to Ukraine's reform process and to bringing Ukraine closer to Europe<sup>16</sup> was being put into practice. The second event was a visit by Germany's new Minister of Foreign Affairs Guido Westerwelle on 31 October. The selection of Warsaw for the minister's first foreign visit was very well received in Poland. During this visit Westerwelle was also received by President Kaczyński. The media in Germany gave this visit quite an extensive coverage, emphasising its good climate. Thereafter, the ministers met in Berlin on 18 December.

Constant working contacts were maintained by the two governments' plenipotentiaries for cooperation. In Poland Władysław Bartoszewski is the Plenipotentiary of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers for International Dialogue. In Germany the office of Coordinator of German-Polish Inter-societal and Cross-Border Cooperation had been held from 2004 to the end of September 2009 by Gesine Schwan (SPD), and since 15 December 2009—by Minister of State Cornelia Pieper (FDP). The appointment of a person with a strong political mandate, knowledgeable about Polish affairs and well-versed in the Polish language was yet another—after the declarations set forth in the coalition agreement and after the Westerwelle visit—message that more importance was being attached to relations with Poland. The first visit by the new coordinator took place on 14 January 2010.

Working contacts between the different ministries were well developed. Cooperation with individual states [*Länder*] were also been expanding.

Military cooperation is brisk. In 2009 talks were held on a future shape of NATO and on the European Weimar Battle Group, which is scheduled to be fully

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<sup>16</sup> See "Wystąpienie Ministra Radosława Sikorskiego w Fundacji Batorego, Warszawa, 8 października 2009," [www.ms.gov.pl/Wystapienie,Ministra,Spraw,Zagranicznych,30699.html](http://www.ms.gov.pl/Wystapienie,Ministra,Spraw,Zagranicznych,30699.html).

operational by 2013. A concerted will to make the Weimar Triangle a platform for debates on the future of the Common Security and Defence Policy was meaningful in the context of preparations for Poland's Presidency.

In 2009 parliamentary contacts were connected, for the greater part, with the observance of anniversaries of importance to the both states. Parliamentarians also concerned themselves with current bilateral and European issues. Opportunities for cooperation offered by the enhanced positions of the national parliaments, and prospects for the enlargement of the parliamentary dimension of the Weimar Triangle, were the subjects of talks held by Sejm President Bronisław Komorowski and Bundestag President Norbert Lammert on 8 May in Berlin. During that visit Komorowski talked also with the German minister of foreign affairs. On 17 June the Presidiums of the Sejm and the Bundestag held a joint meeting on bilateral relations, energy policy, and historical issues. In March the Polish-German Parliamentary Group on a several days' visit to Germany met with its partner group in the Bundestag, the Chairmen of the Committee on the Affairs of the EU, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Committee on Cultural and Media Affairs, as well as with members of the Committee on the Environment and Nuclear Safety. A delegation of the Sejm's Foreign Affairs Committee held talks with the Bundestag's Committee on Foreign Affairs on 25 March in Berlin. The main subjects were the Eastern Partnership and energy policy.

Significantly, the climate of Polish-German cooperation in the EU improved perceptibly. In 2009 Poland and Germany consulted with each other—chiefly during the January gas crisis, but also on initiatives connected with the financial/economic crisis and on institutional changes in the EU following the Treaty of Lisbon. One evidence of a cooperative attitude of Polish and German politicians was the successful promotion of the candidacy of Jerzy Buzek, a former Polish prime minister, for the President of the European Parliament. When the German Christian Democratic parties issued, before the elections to the European Parliament, on 25 May, a joint proclamation which included demands in the matter of expellees,<sup>17</sup> the Polish government responded to it pragmatically. Prime Minister Tusk rejected in particular demands by the opposition Law and Justice [PiS] Party that the Civic Platform [PO] withdraw

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<sup>17</sup> "Für eine starke Stimme in Europa. Gemeinsamer Wahlaufuf von CDU und CSU zur Europawahl am 7. Juni 2009," [www.csu.de/dateien/partei/beschluesse/090525\\_wahlaufuf\\_cdu\\_csu.pdf](http://www.csu.de/dateien/partei/beschluesse/090525_wahlaufuf_cdu_csu.pdf). Point four the "For Europe and Its Citizens" proclamation pronounces the choice of place of residence under EU legislation the materialisation "of the right to Fatherland" also for the German expellees in Europe and it stipulates that "expulsions of whatever kind must be condemned internationally and the rights violated must be recognised."

from the European People's Party group in the European Parliament (of which the two German Christian Democratic parties are also members). It should be noted that fact that the Treaty of Lisbon ratification procedure was prolonged also in Germany was actually to the advantage of the bilateral relations,<sup>18</sup> dulling as it did the edge of German criticism of the position taken by president Kaczyński, who signed the ratification instrument only following the positive outcome of the second referendum in Ireland.

Polish and German diplomacies worked together in the area of policy towards East European and Caucasus states. This cooperation translated itself into Germany's backing the Polish-Swedish Eastern Partnership initiative<sup>19</sup> (a support highlighted by the presence of Chancellor Merkel at the inaugural summit in Prague on 7 May) and led to the joint Kiev visit by the ministers of foreign affairs. Cooperation with the eastern neighbours was the subject of numerous Polish-German working-level and expert-level contacts. The Eastern Partnership also featured prominently in parliamentary cooperation.<sup>20</sup>

In the wake of the Russia-Ukraine gas crisis Poland's insistence on intra-EU cooperation for the enhancement of energy security and the diversification of energy resources suppliers and supply routes received more understanding in Germany. Still, even with Russia's impaired image as a reliable supplier, there was no lessening of political support for the Nord Stream pipeline. This project is a permanent burden on mutual relations. In 2009 Nord Stream-related controversies translated themselves into different positions in the EU on priority energy infrastructure investment projects and their sources of funding, with Poland objecting to the use of the EIB's funds in support of the Nordstream AG consortium. Despite Poland's efforts the project proceeds: late in 2009 the consortium obtained from the Mining Authority for Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in Stralsund (on 21 December) and from the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Authority in Greifswald (on 28 December) permits necessary to carry out work in German territorial waters and in the German exclusive

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<sup>18</sup> The ratification was stayed by first by an appeal against it to the Federal Constitutional Court and, thereafter, by the requirement, arising under the Court's ruling, that additional regulations strengthening the position of the parliament be adopted. Germany completed the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon on 25 September 2009.

<sup>19</sup> For more on Germany's position see B. Wojna, M. Gniazdowski (eds.), *Eastern Partnership: The Opening Report*, PISM, Warsaw, April 2009, pp. 29–31.

<sup>20</sup> On 7 May the Chairs of the Sejm's and the Bundestag's Foreign Affairs Committees, Krzysztof Lisek and Rupert Polenz, published a joint article in *Frankfurter Rundschau* ("Östliche Partnerschaft der EU: Neues Kapitel der Zusammenarbeit") and in *Gazeta Wyborcza* ("Korzyść dla Rosji, korzyść dla nas").

economic zone in the Baltic Sea. This added urgency to the matter of ensuring unhampered access to the Szczecin and Świnoujście ports. Even earlier Poland had expressed concern that the laying of pipes at the bottom of the waterway to these Polish ports would make them less accessible for deep-draft ships and it had consistently demanded that the consortium be enjoined to bury this section of the installation. In 2009 this issue was discussed by representatives of the Polish Ministry of Infrastructure and German Federal Ministry for Transport, Construction and Urban Development and by the ministers of foreign affairs. To ensure the cohesion of the different ministries' activities, an inter-ministerial group for developing the Polish government's position on the Nord Stream project was established in April. During talks the German minister of foreign affairs accepted Poland's position that nothing except the depth of the Danish Straits may constrain the operations of the Świnoujście port.<sup>21</sup> By way of part-fulfilment of the Polish requirements, the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency issued its permit with a rider that commits the investor to meet, at a later date, additional requirements—including the sinking of the gas pipeline in the seabed—should the pipeline interfere with the freedom of navigation. The Maritime Authority in Szczecin and the Szczecin and Świnoujście Seaports Authority [*Zarząd Morskich Portów Szczecin i Świnoujście*] used such appeal remedies as were available under the German law.

In 2009 the situation of Polish expatriate community in Germany became a higher-profile issue than in previous years. In August organisations associating Poles in Germany called on Chancellor Merkel to void Regulation of 27 February 1940 on organisations of the Polish national group in the German Reich, which ordered the dissolution of all Polish minority organisations and the confiscation of their assets.<sup>22</sup> The Polish MFA gave no official support to this demand, sharing as it did the German government's opinion that the Regulation had been invalid at least since 1949 when all legislation contrary to the then adopted Constitution of the FRG had been voided collectively. Nevertheless, the Polish authorities took efforts to ensure for Poles in Germany benefits commensurate with those enjoyed by the German minority in Poland. In January 2009 working consultations were held in Berlin under the auspices of the two countries' MFAs, with the participation of representatives of all *Länder*. In May a delegation of Ministers for Education and Culture of the German federation states came to Poland. During this visit activities of the Polish side were

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<sup>21</sup> *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych (nr 144) 2010*, no. 3203/VI kadencja, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> *Reichsgesetzblatt*, no. 39, 1940, p. 444.

presented and its expectations of the German partners were identified. Moreover, after a four-year break the Polish-German Permanent Working Group for the Teaching of the Polish Language and Polish Language Studies in Germany resumed work. The matter of availability of instruction in the native language was discussed by the ministers of foreign affairs during their meetings in October and December; it was agreed that the 1991 Polish-German Treaty on Good Neighbourhood and Friendly Cooperation would be reviewed for observance of the rights of Poles in Germany and of the German minority in Poland.

### **Dispute over Appointments to the Foundation “Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation” Board**

The Polish authorities found themselves facing a grave challenge in connection with the process of appointing the board of a service documenting the compulsory migrations of Germans. Poland objected to the Federation of Expellees President, Erika Steinbach, whom the Federation proposed in February 2009 for one of the three seats allotted to it on the thirteen-member board of the Foundation “Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation.” The fact that it was the president of the Federation who was the target of criticism by no means implied that Poland had withdrawn its objections to the entire commemoration project.<sup>23</sup> Steinbach’s public utterances unfriendly to Poland, her having voted against the border treaty, and her objections to Poland’s membership in the EU were thrown at her. Differences were emphasised between the attitudes of Steinbach and of the Federal President who, although also born in the occupied Poland, had firmly refused to be included in the category of the “expellees.” Prime Minister Tusk was persuading German public opinion that to entrust so prominent a function to Steinbach would hurt Poles’ sensitivity about the truth about the Second World War. While asking for understanding of Polish arguments he reminded of his personal commitment to the improvement of Polish-German relations.<sup>24</sup> Władysław Bartoszewski, for his part, warned that the appointment of Steinbach, should it come to pass, would affect negatively the joint anniversary-year initiatives.

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<sup>23</sup> In Poland doubts were also voiced concerning the composition of the Foundation’s scientific advisory board. On 17 December the only Polish member, Professor Tomasz Szarota, withdrew from this body.

<sup>24</sup> “Tusk fordert Rückzug Steinbachs,” an interview published in *Financial Times Deutschland* on 6 February 2009 in connection with the prime minister’s Hamburg visit.

The SPD, a member of the governing coalition, shared the Polish arguments, while the Christian Democrats took Steinbach's side. As for Chancellor Merkel, she evaded taking a clear-cut position so as not to antagonise the conservative voters in an election year. Ultimately, yielding to pressures, Steinbach withdrew her candidacy on 4 March and one of the Federation's three seats was left demonstratively vacant. This solution was welcome in Poland as recognising Polish arguments, but the uncompromising stance of the Polish authorities came under sharp criticism from the *Landsmanschaft* communities, the media and a part of the German elites. This took the form of personal accusations against Minister Władysław Bartoszewski, who had assumed the main burden of presenting Polish objections to the German side. The absence of an official reaction by Polish politicians to an open letter the Bundestag President Norbert Lammert addressed to Bartoszewski in defence of Steinbach, an MP for the CDU, can be presumed to have been largely an attempt at quieting down emotions.<sup>25</sup>

Counting on a more sympathetic attitude of the Christian Democratic/Liberal government formed after the September elections to the Bundestag, the leadership of the Federation of Expellees continued to push for the appointment. In Poland the expectations were that the Liberals would be more inclined to make concessions to the Christian Democrats on this issue. In this context the Polish visit of the new German Minister of Foreign Affairs, FDP's Guido Westerwelle, proved to be all the more consequential. At a press conference in Warsaw he declared that he would object to appointments that were not conducive to reconciliation,<sup>26</sup> a position he subsequently maintained in defiance of pressure from Christian-Democratic (in particular CDU) politicians. This declaration by the minister opened the second stage of the appointment dispute, its high temperature reflected in a special debate in the Bundestag and in numerous media publications. The dispute being at this stage predominately an internal German one, Polish political elites attempted to distance themselves

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<sup>25</sup> An open letter from the Bundestag President and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Vice-chair to Secretary of State Władysław Bartoszewski, published in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and in *Gazeta Wyborcza* of 7 March 2009, [http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6352969,Przewodniczacy\\_Bundestagu\\_Norbert\\_Lammert\\_Cenie\\_Erike.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6352969,Przewodniczacy_Bundestagu_Norbert_Lammert_Cenie_Erike.html). Władysław Bartoszewski's reply was published by *Gazeta Wyborcza* of 11 March 2009, [http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6367328,Bartoszewski\\_Steinbach\\_nas\\_nie\\_pojedna.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6367328,Bartoszewski_Steinbach_nas_nie_pojedna.html). Bartoszewski accused Steinbach of forcibly promoting a false interpretation of history and he emphasised the role of the truth as a precondition to an honest dialogue.

<sup>26</sup> "Sikorski: nasze stosunki z Niemcami najlepsze w historii," PAP despatch, 31 October 2010.



from it. Pending a solution developed by politicians—which occurred in February 2010<sup>27</sup>—a potential for conflict persisted in Polish-German relations.

### Commemoration of Anniversaries of 1939 and 1989 Events

Activities serving to disseminate a Polish interpretation of the past in connection with the 2009 anniversaries of events that had shaped the relations of Poland and Germany were a prominent element of Poland's German policy. To this end, the message about events of significance to the both states was put in a broader European context. Minister Sikorski went as far as to propose that Poland and Germany should become "Europe's precursors of the process of healing Europe's historical memory," subject to a greater presence of Poland in the German memory landscape.<sup>28</sup> Speaking to *Die Zeit* Minister Sikorski appealed for the recognition of the new member states' historical experience: "Western Europe perceives the 'unification' with Eastern Europe in much the same way as you perceive the unification with the GDR: here come poor relations—and they must make themselves fit in. Yet I believe that our history is as important as yours. Indeed, you will do well to learn more about us and from us, for our struggle with the totalitarian system and our fight for freedom could prove more enlightening than your peaceful life under the United States' umbrella. For Europe to be able to unite mentally, the both narratives need to be merged."<sup>29</sup>

One important rationale behind the expansive anniversary celebration initiatives was that the knowledge of the history of Poland and of the determinants underlying the bilateral relations is by no means common in Germany. There is little awareness of the fate of Poles under the German occupation, not the least because this issue is treated marginally in school programmes and it attracts little media attention. Another rationale for stepping up the promotion of the Polish view of the democratic transformations in Central and Eastern Europe was that with the passage of time the symbolic character of the fall of the Berlin Wall had

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<sup>27</sup> With no prospects for a resolution to in her favour the President of the Federation made known, on 5 January 2010, conditions subject to which she was prepared to refrain from seeking a seat on the board. Following negotiations by the leaders of the coalition parliamentary caucuses, i.e. the Christian-Democrats and the Liberals, with the leaders of the Federation of Expellees the Federation obtained, on 11 February 2010, a promise that a majority of its demands would be met.

<sup>28</sup> "Wystąpienie Ministra Radosława Sikorskiego na XIII Forum Polsko-Niemieckim...", *op. cit.*

<sup>29</sup> "Ihr wisst so wenig von uns," interview with Minister Radosław Sikorski, *Die Zeit*, 19 March 2009, [www.zeit.de/2009/13/Sikorski?page=all](http://www.zeit.de/2009/13/Sikorski?page=all).

come to dominate and it was increasingly putting into shade the role Poland had played in overcoming the division of Europe. One important element of the Polish anniversary message was a reminder that at the time when the Wall was coming down Poland had already been much more advanced in its progress towards freedom.

The anniversary-commemorating projects were by no means meant to uniformise the historic memory. Prime Minister Tusk said so expressly during the international commemoration celebrations at Westerplatte: "Different readings of history are legitimate; everyone has their own memory, but the facts we interpret are the same. We want to remember these facts."<sup>30</sup> That the German perspective was being taken into account was pointedly illustrated, for example, by the Prime Minister's reference to Dresden as one of the most war-affected cities.

Chancellor Merkel was invited to Kraków for 4 June celebrations marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's first partly-free parliamentary elections. In her address she spoke of Germany's gratitude to Poland, Hungary and the former Czechoslovakia for their contribution to the reunification of Germany. Angela Merkel also attended, on 1 September 2009 at Westerplatte, the principal celebrations commemorating the outbreak of the Second World War. In her address she paid homage to the victims of the German aggression and occupation. She emphasised Germany's responsibility for the tragedy of the Poles and the Jews. She also made a reference to "expulsion," assuring that the acknowledgement of sufferings was not tantamount to reversing the responsibility for the war. She noted changes in relations between the two countries and she extended her thanks, saying: "It was you who stretched out your hand to us," thereby making possible these joint celebrations, which also mark joyful moments from twenty years ago: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the unification of Germany and Europe.<sup>31</sup> Paradoxically, it was not so much Chancellor Merkel's attendance as the arrival of and address by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin that accounted for the high interest the celebrations enjoyed in Germany.

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<sup>30</sup> "Przemówienie premiera Donalda Tuska wygłoszone na Westerplatte podczas międzynarodowych uroczystości z okazji rocznicy wybuchu drugiej wojny światowej, 1 września 2009 r.," [www.kprm.gov.pl/premier/przemowienia/id:1709](http://www.kprm.gov.pl/premier/przemowienia/id:1709).

<sup>31</sup> "Merkel: pochylam głowę przed ofiarami wojny (dokumentacja)," PAP despatch of 1 September 2009. See also *Rede Bundeskanzlerin Merkel bei der Gedenkveranstaltung zum 70. Jahrestag des Ausbruchs des Zweiten Weltkriegs in Danzig*, 01 September 2009, [www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Rede/2009/09/2009-09-01-bkin-danzig.html](http://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Rede/2009/09/2009-09-01-bkin-danzig.html).

Parliamentarians of the both states also joined in the commemorations. On 26 May an exhibition “A Peaceful Revolution—a Road to Freedom. The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the System Transformation in Poland” opened at the seat of the Bundestag. The unveiling—on 17 June in Berlin, in the presence of Chancellor Merkel—of a fragment of the Gdańsk Shipyard wall, which has been placed next to the Reichstag building, was a momentous event. This initiative to commemorate “Solidarity” in the capital of Germany had been proposed by President Kaczyński. Then, on 6 November, the Presidents of the Sejm and of the Bundestag opened in the Sejm an exhibition devoted to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Yet there was no joint initiative by the Polish and German MPs to mark 1 September; there was only an occasional speech delivered by the Senate President on 27 August in the House of Deputies in Berlin. On the other hand, the ministers of foreign affairs published on 1 September a joint communication “Let It Be No More.”<sup>32</sup> Within the framework of anniversary celebrations a special Polish-German Award was given to former presidents of the Republic of Poland and the FRG, Lech Wałęsa and Richard von Weizsäcker.<sup>33</sup>

Throughout the year Polish diplomatic missions and other institutions engaged in various activities aimed at bringing the Polish way of perceiving events from the common past closer to the German public. There were occasional exhibitions, concerts, film showings, conferences, seminars and panel discussions. Care was taken to give these projects a suitable rank through the participation in them of leading politicians from the both countries. The ministers of foreign affairs extended their patronage to a debate “20 Years of the Round Table in Poland and Germany—Democracy and Freedom for Europe” held in Berlin on 9 February. The Senate President Bogdan Borusewicz and the Bundestag’s Deputy President Wolfgang Thierse opened on 28 April in Berlin an exhibition “In the Enemy’s Lens. German Photo-reporters in the Occupied Warsaw, 1939–1945.” Also, Polish memorial sites in Germany were remembered: on 8 May in the Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum the Sejm President and the Bundestag President together laid wreaths in a cell devoted to General Stefan Grot-Rowecki; on 27 May Minister of Culture and National Heritage Bogdan Zdrojewski and Minister of State for Cultural Affairs Bernd

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<sup>32</sup> This statement was published by *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, [http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6987095,Aby\\_nigdy\\_wiecej\\_wspolne\\_oswiadczenie\\_Sikorskiego.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6987095,Aby_nigdy_wiecej_wspolne_oswiadczenie_Sikorskiego.html); [www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2009/090901-Steinmeier-Sikorski.html](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Infoservice/Presse/Interviews/2009/090901-Steinmeier-Sikorski.html).

<sup>33</sup> A standard Polish-German Award 2009 went to translators of literature, Małgorzata Łukasiewicz and Karol Dedecius.

Neumann opened an exhibition “Poles and Germans. 1.9.39. Despair and Hope” in the German Historical Museum.<sup>34</sup> The exhibition, besides covering extensively the drama of the occupation period, showed also roads to building understanding.<sup>35</sup>

Anniversary celebrations served also to promote Gdańsk as a symbol city, one where the Second World War had begun and where, following the birth of “Solidarity,” the process of overcoming the consequences of the war had been launched. Poland has sought to make the Second World War Museum in Gdańsk an important landmark of the European historical space.<sup>36</sup>

### **Economic Relations**

In 2009 the global financial-economic crisis was the most powerful determinant of Polish-German economic relations. The recession and decline in domestic demand in Poland’s most important economic partner country seriously affected trade. In 2009 exports to Germany stood at EUR25.117bn (26.1% of total exports) and imports from Germany registered at EUR23.532bn (22.4% of total imports).<sup>37</sup> Significantly, Poland’s exports to the EU countries (other than Cyprus) dropped by 17.1% from 2008, but to Germany—only by 13.8%. The depreciation of the zloty and German crisis-fighting measures contributed to curbing the downward trend. For instance, on the heels of the car scrapping scheme came an upsurge of demand for small-engine cars—and these were imported also from Poland. On the whole, the launch by the Germans of economy-boosting packages had a positive impact on the Polish economy (via the “spill-over” effect). Imports were a reverse case: the deepest slump was

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<sup>34</sup> On this occasion the ministers also signed a statement on the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity.

<sup>35</sup> See [www.dhm.de/ausstellungen/deutsche-polen/ausstellung.html](http://www.dhm.de/ausstellungen/deutsche-polen/ausstellung.html).

<sup>36</sup> The deed of construction commencement, put down on 1 September, reads: “It is our intention that the Museum of the Second World War, initiated by Poland—a country with a particularly painful experience of the sufferings inflicted by the two totalitarian regimes—should be a common achievement of many nations, that it should foster their understanding of each other’s past and presence, that it should contribute to bringing closer the historical memories of the societies which, as a result of the Second World War, had long remained separated at the two sides of the Iron Curtain. For many Europeans the real end of war, which had started here 70 years ago, came only with the toppling of the Wall in 1989,” [www.muzeum1939.pl/fotografie/3/39\\_223454.pdf](http://www.muzeum1939.pl/fotografie/3/39_223454.pdf).

<sup>37</sup> “Informacja o handlu zagranicznym Polski na koniec kwietnia 2010,” Ministerstwo Gospodarki, Departament Analiz i Prognoz, Warszawa, June 2010, [www.mg.gov.pl/files/upload/8437/calyp020zeszyt04.10.pdf](http://www.mg.gov.pl/files/upload/8437/calyp020zeszyt04.10.pdf).

registered in imports to Germany (and France)—by about 28%<sup>38</sup>, against a 25.6%.<sup>39</sup> slump in total imports. Yet, even with the 2009 drop in trade volumes, Germany ranks first among Poland's trade partners.

Notwithstanding the negative developments in 2009, Poland's significance for the German economy is rising steadily. Poland is one of Germany's foremost trade partners in Central and Eastern Europe, before the Czech Republic and Russia.<sup>40</sup> What's more, at this time of worldwide recession the steady growth of the Polish economy attracted much interest in Germany. Papers published from time to time material that showed Poland in a positive light far removed from the "polnische Wirtschaft" stereotype. Also, investor interest in Poland continued regardless of the unfavourable determinants. Although total foreign investment in Poland dropped 16.4% from a year earlier,<sup>41</sup> at about EUR1.6bn<sup>42</sup> in 2009 German investment in Poland was much the same as in 2008. Overall, Poland's investor appeal had increased following accession to the EU, driven by such factors as access to EU funds; the considerable population potential of this country as the largest of the new member states; a dynamic home market; the proximity of Germany and of other important export markets; a stable economy with growth prospects; human resources; the presence of local suppliers and partners; and the award to Poland of the hosting of Euro 2012. Much of German investment is clustered in the machine building, chemical and pharmaceutical industries, the banking/insurance sector, distribution, and in the energy sector. At the same time, the number of investment projects in high-technology manufacturing and services has been on the rise.<sup>43</sup> Polish investment in Germany has also shown an upward trend (PKN Orlen S.A., the Ciech Group and others).

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<sup>38</sup> "Rozwój wymiany towarowej Polski z zagranicą w latach 2005–2009," Ministerstwo Gospodarki, Departament Analiz i Prognoz, p. 13, [www.mg.gov.pl/files/upload/8437/Ocena%20na%20www.pdf](http://www.mg.gov.pl/files/upload/8437/Ocena%20na%20www.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> "Informacja o sytuacji w handlu zagranicznym w grudniu 2009 i w 2009 r. (na podstawie wstępnych danych NBP)," Ministerstwo Gospodarki, Departament Analiz i Prognoz, 22 February 2010, [www.mg.gov.pl/files/upload/8437/informacja%20za%20grudzien%202009.pdf](http://www.mg.gov.pl/files/upload/8437/informacja%20za%20grudzien%202009.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> "Informacja Ambasady Niemiec w Warszawie o polsko-niemieckich stosunkach gospodarczych," [www.warschau.diplo.de/Vertretung/warschau/pl/05/Bilaterale\\_\\_Wi\\_\\_Bez\\_\\_PL/bilat\\_\\_Wi-bez\\_\\_Seite.html](http://www.warschau.diplo.de/Vertretung/warschau/pl/05/Bilaterale__Wi__Bez__PL/bilat__Wi-bez__Seite.html).

<sup>41</sup> "Informacja o sytuacji w handlu zagranicznym..." *op. cit.*

<sup>42</sup> According to Germany Trade and Invest. data. See „German-Polish Economic Relations, materiał konferencyjny Ambasady Niemiec w Polsce z 31 maja 2010 r.," [www.paiz.gov.pl/files/?id\\_plik=12879](http://www.paiz.gov.pl/files/?id_plik=12879).

<sup>43</sup> "Informacja Ambasady Niemiec w Warszawie..." *op. cit.*

One of the repercussions of this economic crisis was an upsurge of protectionist tendencies in European Union countries. This problem surfaced also in Polish-German relations, in the Opel case. As the brand owner, General Motors, looked for an outside investor, the German authorities announced that support would be given to the buyer and they took a favourable view of an offer from the Magna-Sbierbank consortium. The German decisions were received, on the one hand, as yet another manifestation of a “strategic partnership” with Russia and, on the other hand, they gave rise to suspicions of protectionist designs to preserve Germany-based Opel facilities at the expense of those in other countries, including in Gliwice, Poland. Also, the question remained open of an extent of participation by the countries—hosts to Opel factories in the costs of bailing out the company. The European Commission undertook to review this issue in the light of EU regulations. However, the threat of a conflict of interests between Poland and Germany was eliminated by General Motors’ having scrapped in November the plans to make this sale.

In the face of difficulties of the German economy the government announced on 27 April that labour market restrictions applicable to employees from Poland would be extended until 2011. It should be noted in this context that despite the recession the Germans succeeded in 2009 in keeping a significant increase in unemployment at bay.

As yet another consequence of the economic crisis, the movement of persons between Poland and Germany was affected. At 26,07m<sup>44</sup> the number of arrivals to Poland was down by one-fourth compared to a year earlier, but Germans continued to be the most numerous visitor group. 4.56m arrivals were for tourist purposes; on the other hand, at 1.3m the number of tourist departures for Germany was 600 thousand less than in 2008.<sup>45</sup>

### **Social and Cultural Relations**

A wide network of social, cultural and scientific links is a hallmark of Polish-German relations. Many initiatives implemented in the social-cultural field were designed to bring the common past closer to publics in Poland and Germany in this year of great anniversaries and—in Germany—to accord

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<sup>44</sup> “Przyjazdy do Polski według kwartałów 2009 r.,” Instytut Turystyki, [www.intur.com.pl/warsztat.htm#kraje2009](http://www.intur.com.pl/warsztat.htm#kraje2009).

<sup>45</sup> “Zagraniczne wyjazdy polskich turystów wg odwiedzanych krajów,” Instytut Turystyki, [www.intur.com.pl/wyjazdy.htm#kraje](http://www.intur.com.pl/wyjazdy.htm#kraje). Travel connected with the seeking or undertaking of employment abroad not included.

priority to the spreading of knowledge about the neighbours.<sup>46</sup> In the future, this role is to be played by a common Polish-German history textbook,<sup>47</sup> among other means. To promote expert reflection on the common history, an international conference of historians on the causes of the Second World War, including the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact, was organised by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Germany and Russia (the venue was the Royal Castle in Warsaw).

The Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation was established in 2009 at the initiative of Władysław Bartoszewski, Prime Minister's plenipotentiary for international dialogue, with the mission of preserving the memory of a particularly tragic chapter of the second World War. The objects of the foundation are to raise funds for the maintenance of the remainders of the camp. The cost of necessary renovation work is estimated at PLN200m. On 17 December the federal government and individual federation states decided on a EUR60m funding for the Foundation, to be spread over the next five years.

The Episcopal Conferences of Poland and Germany actively participated in marking the anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. On 25 August an occasional declaration by Polish and German bishops was released simultaneously in Bonn and in Częstochowa, calling on “all those, who are anxious for a climate of good neighbourly relations to prevail in the common European house, to refrain from electively revisiting the past and to address more vigorously the building of a common future.”<sup>48</sup>

In Berlin's St. Hedwig's Cathedral Mass was said on 30 August to commemorate the outbreak of the war. Attending were the President of Germany Horst Köhler and the Polish Ambassador in Germany Marek Prawda.

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<sup>46</sup> The first convention of researchers of Poland, held in Darmstadt on 26–28 February, merits attention. The convention was attended by 230 participants.

<sup>47</sup> Engaged in the work on the textbook are: the Polish-German Textbooks Commission; the Polish Academy of Sciences' [PAN] Centre for Historical Research in Berlin; the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research; the Polish-German Institute in Darmstadt; the Coordinator of Polish-German Schools in Berlin.

<sup>48</sup> “Oświadczenie przewodniczących Konferencji Episkopatów Polski i Niemiec z okazji 70. rocznicy rozpoczęcia II wojny światowej,” [www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WE/kep/70\\_rocznica25082009.html](http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WE/kep/70_rocznica25082009.html).

A Polish public relations/information campaign in Berlin, which included the placing of occasional banners on the building of the Polish embassy and in the central railway station, elicited positive response.<sup>49</sup>

It should be noted, in the context of the anniversary celebrations and the disputes over Germany's historical policy, that about 39% of the Poles were of an opinion that the Second World War still influenced powerfully the bilateral relations; a similar-sized group of respondents believed this influence to be small and only 12% thought the war had no impact whatsoever on present-day relations. The distribution pattern of responses was similar to those in the polls conducted in 2005 and 2008.<sup>50</sup> There is a relatively widespread belief (64%) that wartime events affect negatively the present relations with the Germans.<sup>51</sup> Significantly, regardless of recognising Germany's responsibility for the outbreak of the war, the Poles appreciate that the scale of hardships the Germans suffered as a result was large (64%). There is noticeable evidence that the respondents make a distinction between a political system and ideology and ordinary people who bear the consequences of political actions.<sup>52</sup>

Opinion polls conducted in 2009, while showing that a majority of the Poles rated Polish-German relations as good or very good (57%), revealed a downward trend (in 2000 such ratings had been given by 81% of the respondents). More respondents thought these relations were rather bad (26% in 2009, against 6% in 2000). Also, Poles were more critical of Germany's European policy.<sup>53</sup> At the same time, more than four-fifth of the respondents (84%) were of an opinion that fully friendly and partner-like relations between Poland and Germany were possible, with barely 9% believing to the contrary.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The banners read: "A Happy New Year 2009 from Your Neighbours," "It All Began at the Round Table" (a photo was included); "It Began at High Noon" (with a theme from a "Solidarity" electoral poster by Tomasz Sarnmecki); "1989 Is Our Joint Success."

<sup>50</sup> A poll conducted in August 2009 by the Institute of Public Affairs, "70 lat później. Jak Polacy oceniają stosunki polsko-niemieckie i niemiecką politykę europejską, Komunikat z badań," [www.isp.org.pl/files/444800720974767001251713474.pdf](http://www.isp.org.pl/files/444800720974767001251713474.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> "II wojna w pamięci społeczeństwa polskiego. Badania ilościowe. Raport, lipiec 2009 r.," a poll conducted by Pentor Research International for the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk, the findings published on 20 August on the Museum's website, [www.muzeum1939.pl/?str=3&id=33](http://www.muzeum1939.pl/?str=3&id=33), p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, in particular pp. 87, 98–100.

<sup>53</sup> "70 lat później..." *op. cit.*

<sup>54</sup> *Stosunki polsko-rosyjskie i polsko-niemieckie z historią w tle. Komunikat z badań*, CBOS, September 2009 r., BS/124/2009, prepared by M. Strzeszewski, [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl).



## Appraisal

In 2009 Poland's policy towards Germany was dialogue-oriented and targeted at broadening the planes of cooperation in accordance with the policy line set in the preceding year.

Credit should be given to Poland for making efforts to ensure that contacts with Germany were vigorous and covering a broad range of bilateral and European issues. These activities should be seen predominately as a long-term project to develop optimum channels for consultation and cooperation with the Germans, its effectiveness to be fully appraised only in the future. For the time being, joint consultations have failed to significantly narrow down the scope of differences. The difference of views on the deployment in Poland of elements of a missile shield lost currency following the U.S.'s change of mind on this matter. Some of Poland's requests were modified. Problems of Poles in Germany appear to figure more prominently.

Now that North Stream is becoming more and more of a reality attention is centred on the working details of this project. Poland focused its efforts on ensuring that there are no constraints on the development of its own ports. The assurances received in Germany, that "the depth of the Danish Straits would be the only barrier to development," were reflected in the actions of German administration only to a limited extent. Accordingly, this matter requires further rallying of efforts by the Polish authorities.

Notwithstanding Poland's pragmatic approach to historical encumbrances, efforts to eliminate history-related tensions failed. Making the debate on the commemoration of expulsions personality-focused proved counterproductive. This approach, while putting the past conduct of the president of the Federation of Expellees in the centre of the debate, contributed only to a modest extent to disseminating the Polish point of view on the matters at issue. Yet Poland's position on the compulsory displacement of Germans after the Second World War is irreconcilable with the interpretation promoted by Federation of Expellees (which, after all is said and done, actually benefitted by the commotion over the Foundation "Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation"). The Steinbach affair probably affected the image of Poland in the German society, by undermining the positive impact of Poland's healthy economic situation and of its promotional efforts.

In contrast, the dissemination of the Polish interpretation of the breakthrough events, the round anniversaries of which occurred in 2009, produced positive results. Significantly, Poland revised its remembrance policy; it abandoned a reactive model in favour of bringing actively the Polish view of the common past to the attention of the German public. Contributing to greater effectiveness

of Polish efforts was the determination to have the same anchored in a broader context of developing, in the common European space, a culture of remembrance. The conservative selection of forms of message delivery during the official commemoration festivities can be seen as a flaw. On nearly all occasions Polish politicians referred to important events in the common past. The spreading of information about Polish history among the Germans, combined with the successful public relations campaign in Berlin, contributed to strengthening the social foundations of bilateral cooperation. The anniversary of 1 September 1939 as the date when the Second World War had begun was present in German media on an unprecedented scale. On this occasion the factors which determined Polish-Russian relations were brought closer to the public in Germany. Also, the connection between Poland's bid for freedom on the one hand and the fall of the Berlin Wall and the overcoming of the consequences of the division of Germany on the other hand is now widely recognised. As a symbolic appreciation of the contribution of "Solidarity," Lech Wałęsa was invited to Berlin for a gala commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Wall. Expectations of a greater awareness in Germany of the determinants of mutual relations appear warranted now; this would be an important achievement of Poland's policy. On the other hand, it would be premature to appraise the implementation of the long-term project to introduce Polish elements into a common European historical narrative which is in the process of being developed.

Tangible results of Polish-German cooperation can be noted in European policy, as evidenced by a joint visit by the Polish and German ministers of foreign affairs to Kiev. While this visit failed to produce intended effects in relations with Ukraine, it showed that Poland and Germany were capable of collaboration in dealings with eastern neighbours. Symbolic gestures by German officials, emphasising the importance of relations with Poland, augur well for the development of dialogue in years to come. Polish diplomacy faces the task of forging these gestures into concrete cooperation.

*Translated by Elżbieta Gołębiowska*

## **Polish Policy towards France**

### **Background**

Perceived in Poland as one of the key partners in the European Union, France is a country with vast economic potential, one which has long played a major role in EU policy-making, which has been maintaining special relations with Germany (Poland's top partner in Western Europe) and which counts among the biggest investors in this country. Also, France has been a magnet for Polish immigrants for the past two centuries, and its cultural achievements are appreciated in Poland as exceptional contributions to the world heritage.

Despite the considerable differences in both countries' approaches to the world order, occasioned by the Iraq conflict, and despite their dissimilar positions towards the efforts taken to introduce a constitutional document for Europe, the recent years have seen a perceptible improvement in mutual relations. This not only reflects the overcoming of the two most contentious issues (or finding them irrelevant from the present point of view), but is also indicative of the greater concern for Central Europe, as shown by President Nicolas Sarkozy. His assumption of the presidential office in May 2007 marked an improvement in the climate of relations with Poland, and opened up the way for dialogue on EU matters.

Both countries made attempts to undo the misunderstandings that emerged in the recent past. France in particular, remembering the destructive impact of some pronouncements by the former president, Jacques Chirac, sought to refrain from confrontational statements. And the Polish-French relations were considerably influenced by a rapprochement between France and the United States, a country seen in Poland as the most important partner in the field of security.

Furthermore, after the French presidential and parliamentary polls (April–June 2007) and the parliamentary elections in Poland (October 2007), the two countries were no longer embroiled in world-view disputes which made themselves felt as late as the beginning of 2007 (illustration of Bronisław

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Geremek<sup>1</sup>). For the first time since Poland's EU accession, the ruling parties in Poland and France are in the same political group in the European Parliament, which only strengthens their ties. And in neither country does the opposition question the need for the best possible relations between both partners.

One tangible effect of the post-2007 change in Polish-French relations is the bilateral Declaration on strategic partnership, signed on 28 May 2008.<sup>2</sup> But it should be remembered that France, as part of its strategy prior to the country's EU presidency, also signed similar declarations with other countries in Central Europe.

Against this relatively positive background of Polish-French relations, an exception was the row which emerged during the French presidency of the EU (second half of 2008) and which had to do with the signing by President Lech Kaczyński of the act ratifying the Lisbon Treaty.

Nicolas Sarkozy several times reproached the Polish leader for his failure to sign the document. He spoke about the moral obligation of signing the Treaty,<sup>3</sup> and on 16 December he added that "Poland has duties as well as rights in the EU."<sup>4</sup> Two days later, President Kaczyński replied that "it is not for the French president to reprimand the Polish president."<sup>5</sup>

In the context of what was previously noted, the following should be counted among the major determinants of Polish-French relations:

1. Both countries' membership of the European Union. The fundamental differences in visions of integration, so much pronounced during the debate on the EU Constitution, are now a thing of the past. The Jacques Chirac government, firmly backing the proposal for a preamble and a double-majority system (unacceptable to Poland), proved unable to enforce this view even in its

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<sup>1</sup> The French authorities backed Bronisław Geremek in his refusal to fill out a vetting declaration. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Philippe Douste-Blazy, speaking for Europe 1 Channel, called for exerting pressure on Poland and "explaining to the Poles that we do not want a law such as the de-communisation act which tramples on all democratic principles." See *Entretien du ministre des affaires étrangères M. Philippe Douste-Blazy avec „Europe 1” – extraits*, [www.pastel.diplomatie.gouv.fr](http://www.pastel.diplomatie.gouv.fr).

<sup>2</sup> *Deklaracja Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej i Prezydenta Republiki Francuskiej o polsko-francuskim partnerstwie strategicznym*, <http://m.prezydent.pl/archiwum/rok-2008/art,358,iiszczyt-polsko-francuski-pod-przewodnictwem-prezydentow-polski-i-francji.html>.

<sup>3</sup> *Sarkozy exhorte la Pologne à ratifier le Traité de Lisbonne*, [www.france24.com](http://www.france24.com).

<sup>4</sup> *Sarkozy: Wiele zrobiłem dla Polski*, PAP news agency report, 16 December 2008.

<sup>5</sup> *L. Kaczyński: prezydent Francji nie jest od napominania prezydenta Polski*, PAP news agency report, 18 December 2008.

own country, where the draft was rejected in a referendum of 29 May 2005. Less weighty differences of opinion emerged later, in the course of work on the Lisbon Treaty.

2. The process of both countries' getting closer together on defence and security, which included France's comeback to the military structure of the North Atlantic Alliance under the François Fillon government—in March 2009, after a 43-year break. The change in French policy towards NATO had the effect of facilitating the Polish-French dialogue, opening the way for cooperation within the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and providing the guarantee that France no longer regards this policy as weakening NATO's presence in Europe.

3. The deterioration of Polish-German relations in 2006–2007, which Poland sought to balance by expanding relations with other important European partners, both under the Jarosław Kaczyński government and the Donald Tusk government.<sup>6</sup>

4. Differences in both countries' potentials. A nuclear power and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, France sees no country in terms of traditional threats to its security, and since the 1960s it has been making provisions for defence by its own efforts. Poland, given its much lower defence potential and geopolitical determinants, is interested in as many security guarantees from its allies as possible. There is a similar disparity in the economic and cultural fields. With the GDP five times as high as Poland's, France is a G-8 member, an important eurozone member and one of the strongest economies in the world. Similarly, French culture is seen—also in Poland—as one of the most important components of the world cultural heritage. On the other hand, interest in Polish culture in France is only sporadic.

5. Different approaches to NATO-Russia relations. For France, the Russian Federation is primarily a partner in tackling global issues, such as the Afghanistan conflict, international terrorism, or nuclear non-proliferation. This is one of the reasons why successive French governments had reservations about

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<sup>6</sup> It may be noted that after World War II an intensification of France's relations with countries in Central and Eastern Europe was almost always possible only when the region's relations with Germany were in decline. And, conversely, any successive opening up to the East on the part of the Federal Republic of Germany, e.g. in the early 1970s and the 1990s, had the effect of thwarting all of France's attempts to increase its influence in the region (due to the glaring disproportions in the level of relations).

NATO enlargement (which was backed by Poland) and why they do not perceive Russia as a threat to the Alliance's Central European members.<sup>7</sup>

Summing up, at the threshold of 2009, the level of conflict in bilateral relations was the lowest since the beginning of Poland's systemic transformation. The tensions which marked President Chirac's second term and the attempts to offer patronising advice on Polish internal policy in 2005–2007 were a thing of the past, and no longer affected these relations, with both countries increasingly interested in intense cooperation within individual EU policies (Common Agricultural Policy, CPSD, etc.). Learning from the Chirac era experiences, both countries now show much greater care of bilateral relations, and of how these are nurtured, including appropriate rhetoric.

### Goals

The main objectives of Poland's policy towards France were set out by Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski in his annual foreign policy address to the Sejm on 13 February 2009. Individual segments of this policy were also commented in the forum of the Sejm's Foreign Affairs Committee by MoFA undersecretaries of state, Grażyna Bernatowicz (19 February) and Jacek Najder (2 April and 6 May), and the Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Defence, Stanisław Komorowski (6 May).

Minister Radosław Sikorski said that Poland is united with France, "as with Germany," by the "will to build a strong European Union, active in relations with neighbours of Europe in the South and European neighbours in the East."<sup>8</sup>

Given the important role played in 2009 by the Eastern Partnership programme, France was perceived in Poland as a country with which a consensus has to be developed on a two-dimensional nature of the European Neighbourhood Policy. As Minister Sikorski observed, in implementing the Eastern Partnership Poland can tap into "a number of proven mechanisms of cooperation with the Mediterranean countries." He also said the cooperation with France would continue to be grounded in the formula of the Weimar Triangle formula, a structure which Poland sees as "presenting an opportunity to participate in actions which are important for the entire European Union." And Stanisław

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<sup>7</sup> B. Górka-Winter, M. Madej (eds.), *NATO Member States and the New Strategic Concept: An Overview*, PISM, Warsaw, 2010, pp. 43–44, [http://www.pism.pl/files/?id\\_plik=3082](http://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=3082).

<sup>8</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009 (presented at the sitting of the Sejm on 13 February 2009 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski)", above, p. 11.

Komorowski, undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Defence, speaking on 6 May, commented prospects for the development of Polish-French relations after France's decision to come back to NATO's military structures. Addressing the Sejm's Foreign Affairs Committee, he expressed the hope that the effects of that decision would include "a better understanding across the Atlantic, and also a better cooperation in military affairs between the Alliance and the European Union, whether strategically or operationally."<sup>9</sup>

President Kaczyński, too, mentioned France during his annual meeting with the diplomatic corps on 2 February 2009, declaring that he was "personally very interested in the best possible relations with the French Republic and its President, Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy."<sup>10</sup>

The Polish policy towards the French Republic in 2009 could be summarised as follows:

1. Poland perceives France as one of the top partners internationally, and is interested in as good relations with the country as possible.

2. But admittedly, the relations with France are of lower weight than those with Germany and some non-EU countries, notably the United States and Russia.

3. France is seen in Poland through the prism of intra-EU relations and within the NATO framework. A matter of great importance for Poland in 2009 was to influence the European Neighbourhood Policy and reach a balance between its two dimensions: eastern and southern.

4. The Polish-French relations are free of difficult issues stemming from history, of the kind seen in Poland's relations with Russia and, to a smaller extent, with the Federal Republic of Germany.

5. Poland is interested in drawing foreign investment, and France is seen as one of the most important investors.

It should be added, though, that just as in preceding years, despite maintaining friendly relations with France, Poland did not develop a strategy to raise the bilateral relations into a higher level. In this respect, its French policy in 2009 could be characterised as conservative.

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<sup>9</sup> "Informacja Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych i Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej na temat szczytu NATO, jaki odbył się w dniach 3–4 kwietnia 2009 r.," *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Obrony Narodowej (nr 52) i Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych (nr 105) 2008*, no. 2208/VI term, pp. 4–5.

<sup>10</sup> *Wystąpienie przed korpusem dyplomatycznym*, 20 January 2009, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

## Political Relations

**Polish-French summit.** The most important event in bilateral relations in 2009 was the Polish-French summit of 5 November, attended by Prime Minister Donald Tusk and President Nicolas Sarkozy, with the accompanying intergovernmental consultations. It reflected France's interest in being present on the Polish presidency's agenda, which received a boost from both countries' getting closer together on security. The talks between the Polish prime minister and the French president were held simultaneously with ministerial negotiations.

Of four documents signed on 5 November 2009, the most important one was the Declaration of the Franco-Polish summit concerning security and defence.<sup>11</sup> In it, both countries announced the continuation of the French presidency's efforts (in the second half of 2008) to strengthen the European security and defence policy, which after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty was renamed the Common security and defence policy. Poland committed itself to develop during its 2011 presidency the process initiated by France, and France undertook to back Polish activity towards "enabling the EU and its member states to fully participate in European, transatlantic and global security."

Poland and France also said that the CSDP and their membership of NATO were complementary, and on two occasions their commitment was emphasised to the "obligation of mutual defence, deriving from the Washington Treaty" and from "Article 5 of the North Atlantic Pact, which reflects the essence of the Alliance's solidarity." The European security and defence capabilities should be developed, in both parties' opinion, through the European Defence Agency. Poland consented to a point which France found important: the development of EU defence capabilities by deploying a European naval force to counter smuggling, terrorism, proliferation, piracy and illegal immigration. The Declaration also dealt with the main points of both countries' military and political engagements. Poland and France committed themselves to cooperate towards preservation of NATO's "deterrence posture, including in the military dimension" and towards "maintenance and strengthening" NATO's open door policy.

On disarmament and non-proliferation, France and Poland said that "nuclear weapons, as tactical weapons, should be incorporated into the disarmament process," and then they appealed "to all countries to join negotiations on a treaty banning short- and medium-range surface-to-surface missiles." Such a document would be of major importance for Poland, given the Russian arsenals in

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<sup>11</sup> See [www.premier.gov.pl/files/news/download/Deklaracja\\_Francusko-Polskiego\\_Sczytu\\_w\\_sprawie\\_bezpieczenstwa\\_i\\_obrony.pdf](http://www.premier.gov.pl/files/news/download/Deklaracja_Francusko-Polskiego_Sczytu_w_sprawie_bezpieczenstwa_i_obrony.pdf).



Kaliningrad district. But the prospect of adopting the treaty is seen as highly unlikely.

Summing up, Poland's definite support for common security and defence policy has perceptibly contributed to the development of Polish-French cooperation, being a reflection of a new emphasis: Poland no longer regards the idea of Europe's increased defence autonomy as a factor which weakens NATO. And France, in two passages, clearly confirmed its commitment to the mechanisms of the Alliance. It should be noted that, just as membership of NATO has since the late-1990s been the principal pillar of Poland's security, so the idea of European defence has been a fixture in French policy since the 1950s. Therefore, the agreement on these two questions is of key importance for the development of Polish-French relations. This is also the reason why the Paris document is seen as reflecting changing attitudes towards European security in both countries.

Not without importance is also another document signed during the summit, the Polish-French Declaration on energy, the environment and climate change,<sup>12</sup> where the two countries announced measures to build in Poland a nuclear power plant, "in line with Poland's new energy policy to 2030," and cooperation in "training, research and development in the field of nuclear energy generation."<sup>13</sup> Prime Minister Tusk described the declaration as the "beginning of a nuclear programme" in Poland, although he also emphasised that France was not the only potential partner under that programme.<sup>14</sup>

In the parts of the declaration dealing with natural gas-related matters, Poland and France backed the establishment of EU mechanisms of energy solidarity "which will make it possible to restore natural gas shipments to every member state as soon as possible, should the internal market prove unable to ensure regular deliveries in the event of a crisis."

In the third document, a joint communiqué of ministries of agriculture, the two countries called for the prolongation of the direct payments system after the expiration of the EU's present financial framework in 2013.<sup>15</sup> And finally, the

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<sup>12</sup> *Wspólna deklaracja w sprawie energii, środowiska i klimatu*, 5 November 2009, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>14</sup> *Polska i Francja przyjęły deklarację o europejskiej obronie*, PAP news agency report, 5 November 2009.

<sup>15</sup> *Komunikat Ministerstwa Gospodarki Żywnościowej, Rolnictwa i Rybołówstwa Republiki Francuskiej oraz Ministerstwa Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 5 November 2009, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

two ministries issued a statement announcing Chopin Year celebrations in 2010 and cooperation in the field of national heritage and museums.<sup>16</sup>

**Visit by the French prime minister.** Two working visits were made to Poland in 2009 by the French Prime Minister, and one by Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner. Prime Minister Fillon attended in April the Warsaw congress of the European People's Party, which includes the parties forming parliamentary majorities in Poland and France. He met with President Kaczyński<sup>17</sup> and with Prime Minister Tusk. The second time Prime Minister Fillon stayed in Poland was on 1 September, to commemorate the anniversary of World War II. Initial plans were for a visit by the foreign minister, but France raised the status of its delegation after Polish criticism of the absence of any high representative from another important partner, the United States.

**Other state visits.** In July 2009, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bernard Kouchner, paid a visit during which he was entertained by Minister Radosław Sikorski in his private residence. It was an important visit in the lead-up to the Polish-French summit.

Minister Kouchner, who attended a gathering of Polish ambassadors at Ożarów Mazowiecki and spoke to them as the first ever foreign minister from abroad, received assurance that Poland is interested in the building of a common security and defence policy. Minister Sikorski presented him with proposals on concrete arrangement in the field.<sup>18</sup> The ministry did not disclose these proposals, but unofficial reports indicate that they included work on the establishment of a planning headquarters in Brussels, the formation of battle groups and the EU's rapid reaction force, preparations for common military procurement mechanisms and cooperation in officers' training (this being a matter of importance for Poland). At France's request, discussions of these subjects were transferred to the forum of the Weimar Triangle. They were conducted starting from September—in working groups at the level of corresponding departments of foreign and defence ministries—which invigorated the Triangle.

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<sup>16</sup> *Komunikat Ministerstwa Kultury i Komunikacji Republiki Francuskiej oraz Ministerstwa Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 5 November 2009, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>17</sup> *Spotkanie Prezydenta z Premierem Francji*, 30 April 2009, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>18</sup> *Polsko-francuski dialog w sprawie bezpieczeństwa w Europie*, PAP news agency report of 20 July 2009.

The common security and defence policy proved to be one of those areas where cooperation within the Triangle formula may bring far-reaching results.<sup>19</sup>

French secretaries of state for European affairs paid three visits to Poland. Bruno Le Maire stayed in Warsaw on 26 March and during the EPP-ED congress (29–30 April), and his successor, Pierre Lellouche, on 17–18 September. Bruno Le Maire was in Poland for the third time in September, in his new capacity as agriculture minister. A number of other ministerial visits were also held. The Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Bogdan Zdrojewski, was in Paris on 5 November, and the French Defence Minister, Hervé Morin, stayed in Kraków on 19–20 February 2009, during a high-level NATO meeting.

**Europe policy.** In the context of EU policy, in addition to the previously indicated common security and defence policy, the Polish-French relations focused on four developments: President Lech Kaczyński's refraining from ratification of the Lisbon Treaty (until 10 October 2009); the launch of the Eastern Partnership programme (May 2009); EU agriculture debate (including on the shape of the common agricultural policy after 2013); and the selection of the permanent president of the European Council and the EU high representative for foreign and security policy (December 2009).

Lisbon Treaty ratification played an incomparably smaller role in Polish-French relations during the French presidency in the latter half of 2008. After its presidency, France ceased to put pressure on Poland, recognising that the key events for Treaty adoption were the results of the repeat referendum in Ireland and the negative attitude of the Czech President, Václav Klaus. President Kaczyński said on 20 January that he would ratify the Treaty if it were backed in the Irish referendum, and the French General Secretary for Europe, Bruno Le Maire, speaking in a press interview on 6 May, was confident that problems with Polish ratification were exclusively a matter of "calendar."<sup>20</sup>

When voters in the Irish referendum backed the Treaty, President Kaczyński signed the ratification document. The French reaction took the form of a joint statement by Minister Kouchner and the Secretary General for European Affairs, Pierre Lellouche, who expressed satisfaction at the completion of the process.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The question of the common security and defence policy also put in sharp relief the circumstance that the weakness of Polish-French relations was the main factor behind the dysfunction of the Weimar Triangle. Once the Polish-French relations were fleshed out with tangible contents, that structure revived.

<sup>20</sup> *Bruno Le Maire*: „Je rejette l'idée d'une Europe à la carte,” [www.20minutes.fr](http://www.20minutes.fr).

<sup>21</sup> *Déclaration conjointe de MM. Bernard Kouchner, ministre des affaires étrangères et européennes, et Pierre Lellouche, secrétaire d'Etat aux affaires européennes, sur la signature*

France was initially seen as being the most skeptic of the EU's opening up to cooperation with partners in the East. But these fears later proved groundless. It was right in June 2008 that France backed the idea of **Eastern Partnership**.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, in public statements, Poland and France are not in conflict over the second dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, but there is indeed a difference in how the second-dimension objectives are perceived. For Poland, the Eastern Partnership is a structure conducive to the EU's future enlargement towards the East. Poland recognises the fact that enlargement is not among the Partnership's formal goals, but as Minister Radosław Sikorski wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* after the programme's launch, the prospect of EU accession for the six Eastern partners should "be kept open" and the EU's possible enlargement to the East would contribute to Russia's adopting a pro-Western transformation.<sup>23</sup>

For now, France takes a cautious approach towards the EU's expansion to the East, although it refrains from ruling out membership of any Partnership country so firmly as it does in respect of Turkey.

The Polish and French positions concur the most strongly on the **common agricultural policy** and the future of the European Union's agricultural sector. This is an area where EU member states are split along the lines reflecting different weights of farming in their respective national economies: some perceive this policy as anachronism, while others argue that a strong agricultural policy gives the EU self-sufficiency in terms of food supplies, and independence of farm imports.<sup>24</sup> There can be no doubt whatsoever that Poland and France are typical representatives of the latter camp, counting as its priorities the preservation of the CAP, with as little change as possible.

Much of the Polish-French discussions about the common agricultural policy in 2009 was about how to keep it least changed in the context of the EU's financial perspective for 2014–2020. In addition to issuing the previously discussed joint declarations of the ministers of agriculture in November 2009, Poland and France were among the signatories of the Paris Appeal for a common agricultural and food policy, underwritten by 22 member states, which called for

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*par le président polonais Lech Kaczyński de l'acte de ratification du traité de Lisbonne, Paris, le 10 octobre 2009, <http://discours.vie-publique.fr>.*

<sup>22</sup> B. Wojna, M. Gniazdowski (eds.), *Eastern Partnership: The Opening Report*, PISM, Warsaw, 2009, p. 26.

<sup>23</sup> R. Sikorski, "Extend a Hand to Eastern Europe," *Wall Street Journal*, 18 June 2009.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. J.-C. Bureau i L.-P. Mahé, *La réforme de la PAC au-delà de 2013*, [www.notre-europe.eu](http://www.notre-europe.eu).

agriculture to be regarded as a “strength of Europe and is political and economic development, especially in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy.”<sup>25</sup>

For Poland, which pronounces itself for the preservation of both pillars of common agricultural policy, the future of direct subsidies is a matter of utmost importance. The Polish view is that the present system of subsidies is based on “old CAP goals,” thus “favoring those countries, regions and farms which a dozen years previously had an intense production of cereals (high reference crop yields) and an intense livestock production.”<sup>26</sup> According to Poland and other new member states, a farm support pattern which differs among member states is a „threat to competition and cohesion of the single agricultural market.”<sup>27</sup> Obviously, this opinion falls on deaf ears in France which receives by far the largest portion of direct subsidies under the present rules.<sup>28</sup> And France was not among the countries which Agriculture Minister Marek Sawicki listed on 3 June 2009 as showing understanding for the demand to equalise the payments in 2014.<sup>29</sup>

Differences of opinion may also emerge in respect of another issue. As indicated by some press reports, France is ready to consent to the so-called nationalisation of direct subsidies to farmers, i.e. shifting some of the related burden to member states. This is unacceptable for Poland which built a coalition around that topic (which remains a matter of speculation), grouping a dozen EU member states.<sup>30</sup> France was not among them.

Questions related to the **filling of the EU's top positions** did not play any significant role in Polish-French relations, reflecting the considerable disproportion in both parties' weight in the EU. France backed Jerzy Buzek for the president of the European Parliament, but in respect of the selection of the permanent president of the European Council, the Polish voice might count only if France failed to reach an agreement with Germany.

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<sup>25</sup> *Appel de Paris pour une politique agricole et alimentaire commune*, <http://agriculture.gouv.fr>.

<sup>26</sup> *Polska wizja Wspólnej Polityki Rolnej po 2013 roku – założenia i wstępne propozycje*, <http://bip.minrol.gov.pl>, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Zob. D. Laborde, *Visión francesa de la PAC del futuro*, materiał z konferencji „La PAC más allá de 2013,” [www.consulfrance-barcelone.org/IMG/pdf/20091124\\_Francia\\_Futuro\\_de\\_la\\_PAC-2.pdf](http://www.consulfrance-barcelone.org/IMG/pdf/20091124_Francia_Futuro_de_la_PAC-2.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> *Sawicki: Polska chce wyrównania płatności już w roku 2014*, PAP news agency report, 3 June 2009.

<sup>30</sup> *Polska zbiera koalicję obrońców dopłat bezpośrednich*, PAP news agency report, 15 December 2009.

## **Prospects for Bilateral Relations in the Context of Europe Policies**

Despite the absence of any major conflicts, one should remember about differences in emphasis on various aspects of Poland's and France's Europe policies.

1. One area of dispute may be the filling of positions in the European External Action Service, whether at the headquarters or individual EU missions abroad. In this respect, there is a great disproportion between both countries: the French account for close to a sixth of the heads of EU missions to other states or international organisations, whereas no Pole has been appointed to any of the more than 130 positions (as of 1 January 2010).<sup>31</sup>

2. Heated discussion may also arise about details of the common security and defence policy. It is true that both countries have found much more common ground of late, but many detailed issues were left for solution in future.

3. Poland greatly values the concurrence of views with France on the common agricultural policy but, in the context of the emerging debate on that policy's future after 2013, one should not expect France to support the demands for a reform of the direct subsidies system and a radical increase in the flow of subsidies to the Polish farmers at the expense of French farmers.

4. Even though France's stance on cohesion policy is seen in Poland as largely concurring with the Polish vision, the French government has increasingly placed emphasis on the need to link assistance for individual EU regions to their respective environment policies. Poland, on the other hand, wants to keep as much as possible the present policy of support for the EU's lowest-income regions.

5. France cannot expect to receive Polish backing on tax system harmonisation or its vision of the EU's industrial policy. France is often criticised in Poland for being overly protectionist in the pursuit of this policy.

6. Wide differences of view may also emerge over the European Union's future enlargement.

## **Economic Relations**

Reflecting the crisis, the year 2009 saw decreases in French investments in Poland and two-way trade exchanges. During January–November 2009, Polish exports to France reached €6.05 billion, and imports €4.41 billion, which

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<sup>31</sup> Data compiled by PISM analysts.

compares with the corresponding figures for the preceding year's 12 month periods of €7.21 billion and €6.72 billion.<sup>32</sup> Adjusted for time differences, exports fell by nearly 8% and imports by more than 28%. But Poland registered a decline in trade with all of its major partners in 2009. The trade surplus with France in the 11 months of 2009 grew more than fourfold: from €487 million in 2008 to €1.64 billion in the 11 months of 2009.<sup>33</sup>

For Poland, France's share of its overall trade rose in exports (from 6.2% to 6.8%) and dropped in imports (from 4.7% to 4.6%). France was third on the list of importers to Poland in January-November 2009, having narrowly lost the preceding year's second position to Italy. On the list of Polish export markets, France kept its fifth position. For France, trade with Poland was of incomparably lesser weight, accounting for 2.5% of French exports in 2009 (14<sup>th</sup> position on the list of foreign partners) and 2.4% of imports to France (18<sup>th</sup> place, counting China and Taiwan separately).

France is the third largest foreign investor in Poland. According to available data for late 2008, the combined capital of companies with a French holding on the Polish market amounted to more than 23.13 billion zloty, or 15.85% of all foreign capital.<sup>34</sup> In early 2010, the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency (PAIiIZ) is servicing eleven French investment projects. In December, the Cabinet adopted a resolution channeling 2.4 million zloty to the French company Steria Polska which planned to establish its global IT project support centre in Katowice, invest 1.4 million zloty and create 250 jobs.<sup>35</sup> It was the most important event related to French investments in 2009.

A major development has been the opening up of the French labour market to Poles. As from 1 July 2008, Poles were allowed to take up employment in 80 out of the 152 trades and occupations, and from 1 May 2009 all the other ones were freed as well.

The business and economic affairs greatly influenced Poland's image in the French media. In its annual report, the Polish Embassy to France notes that the "unquestionably positive" image, as compared with previous years, was largely

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<sup>32</sup> Data of the Economy Ministry's Department for Analysis and Forecasting, based on Central Statistical Office (GUS) figures.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> Data of the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency, [www.paiz.gov.pl/polska\\_w\\_liczbach/inwestycje\\_zagraniczne](http://www.paiz.gov.pl/polska_w_liczbach/inwestycje_zagraniczne).

<sup>35</sup> "Programy wieloletnie dla nowych inwestycji," *Newsletter PAIiIZ*, 7 January 2010.

due to numerous comments about the condition of the Polish economy.<sup>36</sup> A number of times, the Polish economy was pointed out as an exception within the EU, scoring good results even despite the continent-wide crisis.<sup>37</sup>

### **Culture and Public Diplomacy**

The focus of Polish public and cultural diplomacy in France in 2009 was on the anniversaries of World War II (70<sup>th</sup>) and the Polish democratic transformation (20<sup>th</sup>). The most important events in this field included the following:<sup>38</sup>

- the French premiere of Andrzej Wajda's "Katyn" on 8 April 2009, accompanied by a debate in French media about the crime committed on Polish POW officers;

- the publication (without Polish contribution) of Yannick Haenel's novel „Jan Karski,” bringing the eponymous hero closer to the French public who knew little of him before (the book stayed long on the bestsellers list of Fnac bookstore chain and it received two literary awards);

- a three-day conference (17–19 September) at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) and in the Lyons forum, devoted to the Round Table negotiations in Poland; and the series "Struggle and suffering: Poland during World War II 1939–1945," at the Army Museum in Hôtel des Invalides, devoted, among other subjects, to the Polish defence war of 1939.

Andrzej Wajda, one of the best known Polish artists in France, was given warm reception and he attended the academic conference "Awakening history: Katyn—the reality on screen." The film's premiere was followed by largely favourable reviews, the only exception being Jean-Luc Douin's article in *Le Monde*, in which he criticised the film for focusing on Polish suffering while glossing over the Holocaust of the Jews.<sup>39</sup> That triggered in Poland a response from Adam Michnik, who threw back in the face of the French Left that they "for long years kept silent on the Soviet invasion of Poland and crimes of the

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<sup>36</sup> *Sprawozdanie z działalności Ambasady RP w Paryżu w zakresie dyplomacji publicznej i kulturalnej w 2009 r.* (typescript).

<sup>37</sup> "Au cœur d'une Europe en crise, la Pologne fait figure d'exception," 3 June 2009, [www.lemonde.fr](http://www.lemonde.fr).

<sup>38</sup> *Sprawozdanie z działalności w zakresie dyplomacji publicznej i kulturalnej Instytutu Polskiego w Paryżu w 2009 r.* (typescript, n.d.).

<sup>39</sup> „‘Katyn’: film poignant et douloureux pour Wajda,” 31 March 2009, [www.lemonde.fr](http://www.lemonde.fr).



Soviets, including Katyn '40.”<sup>40</sup> Douin's article also met with criticism in France: its charge was described as “absurd” by the researcher of Polish-Jewish relations, Jean-Charles Szurek, writing in *Libération*.<sup>41</sup>

Polish-Jewish relations were also taken up in a spectacular polemic within France, between Yannick Haenel and Claude Lanzmann, the author of the film „Shoah” and a person believed to be among fathers of the myth of Polish anti-Semitism, still strong in France. Lanzmann claimed that the novel about the Polish wartime courier falsifies history and contains elements of plagiarism, and Haenel accused Lanzmann of manipulating with Karski's pronouncements in “Shoah” and committing a “treason.”<sup>42</sup> Due to the popularity of the book about Karski and of the book's author himself, Claude Lanzmann for the first time faced so strong charges concerning his creative integrity.

Among the events not linked to the 1939 and 1980 anniversaries, mention should be made of the production of Karol Szymanowski's opera “King Roger,” directed by Krzysztof Warlikowski, at Opéra de la Bastille (with a conference and a Szymanowski exhibition); the Days of Grotowski at Centre Pompidou and La Bouffe du Nord theatre; Didier Galas's production at Centre Pompidou, based on Witold Gombrowicz's *Diaries*; and a festival of films directed by Zbigniew Rybczyński, which included his discussion with Umberto Eco.<sup>43</sup>

### Assessment

Poland and France managed to keep good bilateral relations in 2009. Given a large room for potential conflicts, both countries demonstrated the will to conduct a dialogue and avoid friction. But just as in previous years, the intensity of political contacts left much to be desired. While the relations with France are good on the general level (as can be seen, for example, in the summit's documents), problems emerge when Poland and France try to work out the details of cooperation.

In a positive tendency, Poland and France were getting closer together on security, but it must not be forgotten that the common security and defence policy—notwithstanding its being developed for more than a decade—is still in a nascent state, and the EU member states have yet to determine its final shape.

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<sup>40</sup> “Michnik broni ‘Katynia’ Wajdy przed francuskim ‘Le Monde’,” 14 April 2009, [www.wyborcza.pl](http://www.wyborcza.pl).

<sup>41</sup> “Antisémitisme, Andrzej Wajda?,” 20 April 2009, [www.liberation.fr](http://www.liberation.fr).

<sup>42</sup> “Francja: Autor ‘Jana Karskiego’ broni się i atakuje Lanzmanna,” 26 January 2010, [www.gazeta.pl](http://www.gazeta.pl).

<sup>43</sup> *Sprawozdanie z działalności w zakresie dyplomacji publicznej...*, *op. cit.*

The same is true of both countries' Europe policies and their economic contacts. There are no major differences about the vision of the European Union's institutional future but, as of now, the different impacts the two parties make on EU development render partner-like relations all but impossible. France's image in Poland got a boost from the opening up of its labour markets to Poles, even if no major flow of Polish workers followed, largely because of lack of familiarity with the French language.

But there is at least one major development in Polish-French relations which should receive unequivocally positive marks. The image of Poland in the French mass media began to change in 2009, a first step in a process which should lead to Poland's being treated in a partner-like manner by the French political class and decision-makers.

Polish internal conflicts or arguments with other partners were no longer the subject of articles in the French press in 2009. On the other hand, a kinder approach to Polish history could be seen, and Poland was most often presented as one of the few EU member states to avoid a major economic crisis.

A series of breakfasts which the Polish ambassador held with editors-in-chief of major French newspapers proved to be a very good move.<sup>44</sup> Given the strong position enjoyed in the French media by the editor-in-chief and the weight of his or her personal views, those meetings could have only produced positive results, including countering the myth about "Polish anti-Semitism" and "Polish Russo-phobia," once firmly entrenched in the French media and now slowly receding.

If the previously described state of affairs continues over a number of years, this will ramp up the importance and quality of Polish-French relations, and open the room for fleshing them out with concrete contents. A big role may be played by Poland's rising economic and, consequently, political position within the EU, as well as its ever greater experience with EU politics.

But there are also factors which definitely weaken the development of Polish-French relations.

For France, Poland is still a second-rate partner, and what counts is only the Polish support for CSDP development and the widest possible participation of French investors in Poland's infrastructure construction, including in nuclear power generation. In Poland, France is perceived in a similar way, in the context of foreign investments, the common agricultural policy, or coalition-building

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*.

within the EU—and relations with that country are viewed as less important than the relations with Germany, Russia and the United States. The Polish press, too, writes about France in the context of its internal conflicts, ignoring the country's role as one of the leading global powers.

In foreign and security policy, a contentious issue which stayed in 2009 and which looks like staying for a longer time is the way both countries view Russia. As already mentioned, the French public and political elites do not perceive Russia as a potential threat to security, while appreciating its growing economic weight. Such interpretation is hard to accept for Poland which—for reasons of its geographical position, irrespective of the state of relations with Russia—must take into consideration various scenarios of long-term trends in Russia-West relations.

There is an internal determinant weakening the Polish-French relations which may surface soon: it is the flagging political position of President Nicolas Sarkozy, who after the forthcoming presidential election in 2012 may be replaced by a politician from the opposition Socialist Party. That party's stance on foreign policy is conservative (e.g. it opposed France's comeback to NATO's structures) and, as of today, it does seem to care much about France's relations with Central Europe. It should be noted that none of the important Polish political groups maintains extended relations with the French Left.

It can be expected, though, that no matter the composition of their respective Cabinets, both countries will be seeking to develop contacts—reflecting their membership of the European Union and also their common interests.

*Translated by Zbigniew Szymański*

## Polish Policy towards Russia

### Background

The policy Poland pursued towards Russia in 2009 cannot be presented without invoking the dozen-plus years' history of tangled bilateral relations, overwhelmed as they were by conflicts of strategic nature.<sup>1</sup> The principal factor hampering the development of relations with Russia was the Polish authorities' distrust with Russian activities in the security area. Poland watched with concerned Russia's moves in CIS countries, fearing that neo-imperial tendencies, manifesting themselves with particular force during the Georgia war, could get the upper hand in Russia policy. An equally negative assessment was provoked by Russia's differentiated policy towards the EU and NATO, where it was developing relations with selected, influential members of these blocs, especially Germany, France and Italy. And Russia was critical of Poland's tightening strategic alliance with the US, as reflected in Polish support for US interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and readiness to have missile defence elements deployed on Polish territory.

The tense situation in contacts between Poland and Russia adversely affected their economic relations, which were dominated by controversies over transit and shipments of Russian energy commodities. Fearing an excessive energy-sector dependence on Russia, Poland hindered investments by Russian companies. And conversely, the Polish diversification plans and cooperation in this field with many countries in Eastern Europe were frowned upon by Russia which did not hesitate to take actions vitiating Poland's energy security.

Another major cause of Polish-Russian problems were differences in both countries' respective policies towards the CIS area. According to Russia, the states that emerged from the break-up of the Soviet Union are in the sphere of its privileged interests, and it aspires to have a say on the course of those states' foreign and internal policies. But Poland, similarly as the United States and

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. K. Pełczyńska-Nałęcz, "Dokąd sięgają granice Zachodu? Rosyjsko-polskie konflikty strategiczne 1990–2010," *Raport OSW*, 18 March 2010.

many EU member states, frequently opposed moves to restrict the sovereignty of post-Soviet backed; Poland backed their independence and encouraged them to such foreign and internal policy activity which would consolidate this independence. Poland's support for democracy in the post-Soviet area and for these countries' efforts to join the EU and NATO were seen by Russia as broadening the Western sphere of influence and, consequently, a threat to its own vital interests.

A major barrier to improvement in mutual relations was posed by history, most notably the Katyn massacre of Polish officers in 1940 at the hands of NKVD functionaries fulfilling orders from the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Russian authorities have yet to opt for throwing full light on that crime and rehabilitating its more than 20,000 Polish victims.

But it is worth noting that the tense relations between the two states have not triggered any worsening in how both societies see each other. Opinion poll findings show that over the past dozen or so years, more and more Poles view Russians with sympathy (up from 17% to 34%) and less and less with antipathy (down from 56% to 31%).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Russians increasingly view Poles in the positively light (51%), rather than negatively (26%).<sup>3</sup>

In early 2009, Poland policy towards Russia was influenced not only by more than a decade of tough mutual relations, but also by fairly recent events, often transcending the bilateral dimension. A very weighty factor proved to be the global financial crisis which in Russia, too, led to an economic recession in the latter half of 2008. Pressed by macroeconomic problems in the wake of declining oil prices and an outflow of international capital, the Russian government changed its foreign policy line: seeking to restore investors' trust, it began to normalise the tense political relations with EU member states, including Sweden, the United Kingdom and Poland.

And Poland's policy towards Russia was partly influenced by changes in the United States' foreign policy priorities. With Democrat Barack Obama moving into the White House, a major improvement in that country's relations with Russia was in the pipeline, meaning closer cooperation on global issues, such as fighting against terrorism or preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in exchange for the United States' respecting Russian interests in the post-Soviet area (within some limits).

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Stosunek Polaków do innych narodów. Komunikat z badań*, CBOS, Warszawa, January 2010, pp. 3–4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. "Rossiysko-polskie otnosheniya i katynski rasstrel," Press-wypusk, 8 April 2010, [www.levada.ru/press/2010040801.html](http://www.levada.ru/press/2010040801.html).

And finally, Poland's internal situation played a role, too: 2009 was the last year before the presidential election, which meant that a policy of rapprochement with Russia could become an important campaign argument for both major parties, the Civic Platform (PO) and the Law and Justice (PiS). Russia clearly favoured the governing side, which made it easier for the Civic Platform to score perceptible results right from the start, such as unblocking the embargo on Polish meat and plant products. And President Lech Kaczyński, hailing from the PiS, was markedly ignored by the Russian authorities, although not yet to such a degree as Ukraine's Viktor Yushchenko.

### Objectives and Premises

The principal goals of Poland's policy towards Russia have remained unchanged since the formation of the ruling coalition of the PO and the Polish Farmers' Party (PSL).<sup>4</sup> The most important of these has been to improve bilateral relations, by establishing a dialogue with "Russia as it is."<sup>5</sup> The new government worked from the assumption that ignoring the country's largest neighbour to the East does not serve Polish interests. A continuation of festering relations with Russia, the argument went, was spoiling Poland's international reputation and greatly restricted its room for manoeuvre in the EU forum. The government also disapproved of the approach taken by PiS politicians and President Lech Kaczyński, who believed that Russia's failure to cherish democratic values or discard imperial predilections ruled out any progress in individual fields of cooperation.

For the Tusk government, improvement in relations with Russia meant engaging in pragmatic cooperation on matters where both countries have close interests, and separating those matters from contentious issues. In the Government information on Polish foreign policy in 2009, presented to the Sejm, Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski actually proposed to establish new "rules of the game" with Russia.<sup>6</sup> This approach was favourable for both countries seeking to improve their respective international images,

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. B. Cichocki, "Poland's Policy Regarding Russia," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2009*, pp. 108–109.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. "Przedstawienie przez prezesa Rady Ministrów programu działania Rady Ministrów z wnioskiem o udzielenie jej wotum zaufania," [in:] *Sprawozdanie stenograficzne z 2. posiedzenia Sejmu w dniu 23 listopada 2007 r.*, p. 24, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>6</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009 (presented at the sitting of the Sejm on 13 February 2009 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski)," above, p. 11.

while at the same time allowing them to stick to the divergent positions on issues which separate them—seemingly, on a durable basis.

A major impediment, as indicated by Polish government representatives, was a limited room for building relations with Russia on the basis of common values. This meant that a possible Polish-Russian rapprochement stood no chances of morphing into a durable alliance, and it was rather contingent on how long both countries would have convergent interests on a given issue. The minimalist approach of the Polish government is well reflected in this excerpt from Minister Sikorski's address to the Sejm: "It is commonly believed, especially in Western Europe, that Europe needs Russia and this is true. We believe that Russia needs Europe even more." Poland was thus unwilling to revise the basic lines of its foreign policy and therefore, in accordance with Minister Sikorski's assurances, the "clear rules of cooperation" with Russia were to be established "without swaying the existing institutional architecture in the European and Euro-Atlantic area."<sup>7</sup>

Dialogue and improved relations with Russia were to bring Poland at least two political benefits internationally: making more credible the Polish interpretation of various historical events and reinforcing the conviction that Poland is capable of business-like cooperation with Russia. The government's focus on the former is mirrored in this pronouncement by Minister Sikorski: "The key feature of our activities in promoting Poland's position on historical matters is that we state our case in a way that is as objective, honest and balanced as possible, and most importantly—that we do it in the presence of Russian representatives, even if their own position is different and polemical."<sup>8</sup> And the latter of Polish policy goals is echoed in these words by the minister: "Hopefully, Russia will take part in some projects connected with the Eastern Partnership, e.g. on border infrastructure between Królewiec (Kaliningrad) district and Lithuania or Poland."<sup>9</sup>

Improvement in Polish-Russian political relations was also expected to bring about socio-economic benefits to both countries, as often indicated by Polish and Russia politicians. These included: signing a new agreement on Russian gas shipments, boosting trade and investments, and stimulating the region alongside

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

<sup>8</sup> "Informacja ministra spraw zagranicznych pana Radosława Sikorskiego w sprawie przyczyn braku reakcji rządu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej na próby rewizji przez rosyjskie instytucje publiczne historii dotyczącej przyczyn wybuchu drugiej wojny światowej," *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych*, no. 126, 2009, no. 2751/VI kadencja, 23 September 2009, p. 6, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>9</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009," *op. cit.*

the Polish-Russia border, whose backwardness partly stemmed from the absence of favourable legal regulations on border-crossing.

### Political Relations

**Political dialogue.** The year 2009 saw an intensification of Polish-Russian dialogue. Representatives of both governments held many meetings, the most important being Vladimir Putin's working visit to Poland on 1 September 2009, which included the Russian prime minister's participation in the international commemorations of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of World War II at Westerplatte. During the visit, ministry level officials signed three agreements regulating navigation and border-crossing in Vistula Lagoon, storage of spent nuclear fuel in Russia, and cultural cooperation.

Another important event was Minister Sikorski's visit to Moscow on 5–6 May 2009, during which the Committee for Polish-Russian Cooperation Strategy resumed proceedings after a several-year break. Co-chaired by ministers Sikorski and Lavrov, the Committee comprised vice-ministers from the ministries of the economy, infrastructure, internal affairs, the environment, culture, education, sports and tourism, in addition to MPs and local-government officials. Several other meetings by government representatives were also held, with vigorous activity demonstrated by Deputy Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak, who visited Russia several times for talks with Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko (4–5 June, 7 and 26 October) and Economic Development Minister Elvira Nabyulina (4–5 June, 18 September). And for the first time in three years, the Polish-Russian Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation met for a two-day session on 10–11 March 2009, led by ministers of infrastructure and transport, Cezary Grabarczyk and Igor Levitin.

Polish-Russian political dialogue was also resumed at the parliamentary and local-government levels. On the initiative of Polish Senate Speaker Bogdan Borusewicz and Russian Federation Council Chairman Sergei Mironov, the first Polish-Russian Forum of Regions was held on 18 September 2009, attended by many MPs, local-government officials, and both countries' ministers of regional development, Elżbieta Bieńkowska and Viktor Basargin. They discussed three broad groups of subjects: (1) cooperation in education, science, culture and sport; (2) opportunities for regions' economic development; and (3) cooperation in the implementation of inter-regional project under the EU's aegis.

**Historical issues.** With the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War II's outbreak falling in 2009, and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Katyn massacre coming a year later, the question of history rose to prominence in bilateral relations. The reactivation of



the Group for Difficult Issues, led by Poland's former foreign minister, Adam Daniel Rotfeld, and Rector of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Anatoli Torkunov, was aimed to back Polish-Russian dialogue and partially take the historical problématique out of current political discussions. A release published after the Group's first meeting on 28–29 May 2009 in Kraków contains recommendations for state authorities to set up a joint institution commemorating the Katyn victims, and a précis of a joint publication<sup>10</sup> about troublesome issues in Polish-Russian relations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup>

Vladimir Putin's Polish visit on 1 September 2009 was preceded by an intensification of the Russian media's historical campaign justifying the Soviet government's policy towards the Third Reich in the late 1930s, and criticising Great Britain, Poland and Baltic states for supporting Nazi Germany prior to the war. The campaign's most glaring example was the documentary *Secrets of confidential protocols*, broadcast by the state channel TV Rossiya on 20 August 2009. The Russian Federation's Foreign Intelligence Service, who was involved in the campaign along with journalists, posted on a website (on 17 August 2009) documents expected to support the theory that the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact was a justifiable attempt to prevent the German onslaught on Russia.<sup>12</sup> And on 1 September 2009, in Moscow, the retired intelligence general, Lev Sotskov, presented another collection of secret documents with which to claim that Poland purportedly held communications with the Third Reich about a joint attack on the Soviet Union.<sup>13</sup> The publication did not contain any basic information about the documents cited, and included a number of other instances of professional negligence, which radically diminished its credibility.

The propaganda campaign also involved senior representatives of the Russian authorities. A special August 2009 issue of *Vyestnik MGIMO*, a paper of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, carried an article by the head of the presidential administration, Sergei Naryshkin; and on 1 September 2009, Rossiyskaya Gazeta printed an extensive article by Minister Sergei Lavrov. Both opposed equating the Stalinist and Nazi systems, thus putting a relativistic spin on the question of responsibility for the outbreak of World War

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<sup>10</sup> *The publication Białe Plamy – Czarne Plamy. Sprawy trudne w polsko-rosyjskich stosunkach 1918–2008* will be brought out by the Polish Institution of International Affairs in autumn 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Posiedzenie Polsko-Rosyjskiej Grupy do Spraw Trudnych*, release of 1 June 2009, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Pribaltika i geopolitika (1935–1945). Sbornik dokumentov*, [www.svr.gov.ru/material/prib01.htm](http://www.svr.gov.ru/material/prib01.htm).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Sekrety polskoy politiki (1935–1945) iz arkhiva Sluzhby Vneshney Razvedki Rossii*, <http://vid-1.rian.ru/ig/poland-2009.pdf>.

II. Poland was indicated as an example of a country promoting an interpretation of World War II which is untrue and unfriendly to Russia.

The Polish authorities reacted with restraint to the Russian activities which in fact promoted the Soviet vision of history. Prior to Prime Minister Putin's visit to Poland, neither Prime Minister Tusk nor Foreign Minister Sikorski issued any statement on the subject. Only the Polish Ambassador, Jerzy Bahr, lodged a protest with publishers, in response to some distortions in Russia TV programmes.<sup>14</sup>

On the day of World War II commemorations, the Polish government pursued its tactic on quietly presenting the Polish standpoint in the presence of Russian politicians. Significantly, despite the wide differences on foreign policy between President Kaczyński and Prime Minister Tusk, their speeches at Westerplatte were mutually coherent and complementary. President Lech Kaczyński said that the Polish-German declaration of non-aggression could not be equated with the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact which divided Eastern Europe between the U.S.S.R. and the Third Reich. He also recalled the Katyn massacre and made a call for reconciliation in truth.<sup>15</sup> And Prime Minister Tusk paid his respects to the Russian soldiers delivering Europe from Nazism, while noting that those soldiers, dying for liberation, could not bring freedom because they themselves were not free.<sup>16</sup> Vladimir Putin, in his Westerplatte speech, made extensive references to his Letter to the Poles, published a day earlier, in which he wrote that “the Molotov Ribbentrop pact without any doubts can be condemned with full justification;” but previously he relativised the Soviet Union's co-responsibility for the outbreak of World War II, pointing to events such as the 1938 Munich Conference and the division of Czechoslovakia. Putin also expressed his sympathy for the Katyn tragedy, but he equated the tragic significance of those events with the vicissitudes of Red Army soldiers who died in Polish POW camps in 1910–1920 due to epidemics of contagious diseases.<sup>17</sup>

Promotion of Polish historical sensitivities in the Tusk government's dialogue with Russia was taking place not only at the highest official level but

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<sup>14</sup> “Informacja ministra spraw zagranicznych...,” *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> *Przemówienie Prezydenta na obchodach 70. rocznicy wybuchu II wojny światowej*, [www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/wystapienia/art,671,przemowienie-prezydenta-na-obchodach-70-rocznicy-wybuchu-ii-wojny-swiatowej.html](http://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/wystapienia/art,671,przemowienie-prezydenta-na-obchodach-70-rocznicy-wybuchu-ii-wojny-swiatowej.html).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Przemówienie premiera Donalda Tuska wygłoszone na Westerplatte podczas krajowych uroczystości z okazji 70. rocznicy wybuchu II Wojny Światowej*, [www.premier.gov.pl/premier/przemowienia/id:1707/](http://www.premier.gov.pl/premier/przemowienia/id:1707/).

<sup>17</sup> W. Putin, “Karty historii – powód do wzajemnych pretensji czy podstawa pojednania i partnerstwa?,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 31 August 2009.

also in academe. On 26–27 May 2009, a Polish-German-Russian academic conference on the causes of World War II was held at Warsaw's Royal Palace, with support from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And the Polish Institute of International Affairs published on 28 September 2009 a collective work, *Kryzys 1939 r. w interpretacjach polskich i rosyjskich historyków* [The 1939 crisis as interpreted by Polish and Russia historians].

In line with the Polish authorities' tactic of separating excluding historical disputes from current political talks with Russia, government representatives did not speak publicly in 2009 on the Katyn crime's legal classification.<sup>18</sup> The new position of the Polish government must have been noticed in Russia, whose reaction to the Polish Sejm's resolution of 23 September 2009, commemorating the Soviet Union's aggression against Poland of 17 September 1939, was confined to a brief comment by the foreign ministry's spokesman, rather than an "adequate" reaction of the State Duma, as had been the case previously.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, the Polish government backed a complaint against Russia brought in May 2009 to the European Court of Justice by the Katyn Families association,<sup>20</sup> and it also lent support to the Institute for National Remembrance, seeking access to the Soviet archives which were made confidential after the Russian Military Prosecution Service closed its Katyn investigation back in March 2005 (secrecy status was extended not only to 116 out of the 183 volumes of investigation files, but also the court's memorandum of explanation appended to the verdict discontinuing the case).<sup>21</sup>

**Military security.** The questions of military security played an important role in Polish-Russian relations in 2009. Responding to Poland's plans to deploy elements of US missile defense shield, President Dmitry Medvedev told the joint session of the Russian President, towards the end of 2008, that Iskander missile

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. "Informacja ministra spraw zagranicznych na temat polskiej polityki wschodniej i współpracy w ramach Partnerstwa Wschodniego," *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych* (125) 2009, nr 2747/VI kadencja, p. 25, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>19</sup> *Kommentarii Departamenta informacii i pekhati MID Rossii v svyazi s prinyatiem Seymom Polshi rezolyucii otnositelno sobytii 17 sentabrya 1939 g.*, 24 September 2009, [www.mid.ru/](http://www.mid.ru/).

<sup>20</sup> *Skargi katyńskie przed Europejskim Trybunałem Praw Człowieka w Strasburgu*, [http://ipn.gov.pl/portal/pl/755/12614/Skargi\\_katynskie\\_przed\\_Europejskim\\_Trybunałem\\_Praw\\_Człowieka\\_w\\_Strasburgu.html](http://ipn.gov.pl/portal/pl/755/12614/Skargi_katynskie_przed_Europejskim_Trybunałem_Praw_Człowieka_w_Strasburgu.html).

<sup>21</sup> *Informacja o czynnościach przeprowadzonych w toku śledztwa S 38/04/Zk oraz o stanie realizacji skierowanego do Federacji Rosyjskiej wniosku o udzielenie pomocy prawnej*, <http://ipn.gov.pl/portal/pl/754/12441/sledztwo.html>.

launches would be installed in Kaliningrad district.<sup>22</sup> The subject was raised by Prime Minister Tusk in a conversation with Vladimir Putin, held in Davos a day after the Russian Interfax agency's dispatch quoting an anonymous source at the Russian Military's General Staff as saying that Russia was suspending plans to deploy Iskander missiles along the border with Poland.<sup>23</sup> As Prime Minister Tusk told reporters after that conversation, he received an exhausting reply from his interlocutor and he did not believe Russia was interested in expanding its missile potential at Kaliningrad.<sup>24</sup>

The Russian announcements of new Iskander deployments should be interpreted as an attempt to press Poland into abandoning plans to deploy elements of US missile defence on its territory. The Russian agency's dispatch also aimed to create the impression that Russia was ready to restrict its armaments if the Obama administration opted to modify the United States' previous security policy. Consequently, the U.S. decision to withdraw from building missile defence elements in Poland was followed several days later by President Medvedev's announcement that Russia would not deploy Iskander missiles along the Polish border.<sup>25</sup> It should be expected, though, that in step with the progressing modernisation of its army, Russia will opt some time in the future to have these missiles in Kaliningrad.<sup>26</sup> Minister Sikorski's cautious reaction to the declaration of the Russian president is therefore fairly understandable.<sup>27</sup>

Another major element influencing the security aspect of relations with Russia were the joint Belarusian-Russian manoeuvres West 2009, held near the Polish border and combined with the Russian war games Ladoga 2009, involving more than 30,000 troops.<sup>28</sup> The culmination of the manoeuvres came in late September 2009, but Poland was notified by Belarus not earlier than the

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<sup>22</sup> *Poslanye Federalnomu Sobraniyu Rossiiskoy Federacii*, "Prezident Rossii," [www.kremlin.ru/transcripts/1968](http://www.kremlin.ru/transcripts/1968).

<sup>23</sup> W. Shishlin, "Pritormozit' 'Iskandery'," *Interfax*, 28 January 2009.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Tusk spotkał się z Putinem: Powiedzieliśmy sobie otwarcie – to był trudny rok*, 29 January 2009, [www.wiadomosci.gazeta.pl](http://www.wiadomosci.gazeta.pl).

<sup>25</sup> *Press-konferentsiya po itogam sammita „Gruppy dwadtsati”*, „Prezident Rossii,” [www.kremlin.ru/transcripts/5578](http://www.kremlin.ru/transcripts/5578).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. A. Wilk, P. Żochowski, "Rakiety Iskander – pozorne ustępstwa Rosji," *Tydzień na Wschodzie*, Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, 2009, no. 5 (80), 4 February 2009, [www.osw.waw.pl](http://www.osw.waw.pl).

<sup>27</sup> *Sikorski: To była wirtualna tarcza i wirtualne Iskandery*, 19 September 2009, [www.wiadomosci.gazeta.pl](http://www.wiadomosci.gazeta.pl).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. A. Wilk, "Rosja ćwiczy wojnę na zachodzie," *Tydzień na Wschodzie*, Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, 2009, no. 33 (108), 30 September 2009, [www.osw.waw.pl](http://www.osw.waw.pl).

beginning of August 2009. Based on a bilateral agreement on military contacts. Belarus invited representatives of the Polish armed forces to watch the final stage of the exercises. Incidentally, Poland has no such agreement with Russia which, additionally, in December 2007, imposed a moratorium on the implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE).

The Russian-Belarusian manoeuvres were the subject of critical comments made by Minister Sikorski at a joint conference of the Polish Institute of International Affairs and the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), held in Washington on 4 November 2009.<sup>29</sup> The minister was then misquoted by the Russian agency Interfax as purportedly saying: "We would like America to deploy troops on our territory as a shield against Russian aggression."<sup>30</sup> Causing temporary tensions in Polish-Russian relations and presenting Poland in negative light, the misstated dispatch met with firm reaction from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs which demanded an immediate correction and described the agency's activities as "intentional manipulation."<sup>31</sup> The Russian agency did follow up with an adequate correction and apology.

And at a meeting with members of the Sejm's Foreign Affairs Committee, Minister Sikorski confirmed press reports about not playing up a spy scandal involving two members of the Russian Embassy staff in Warsaw.<sup>32</sup> Both diplomats were expelled from Poland on the quiet towards the end of 2008.

**Cross-border cooperation.** Poland made a series of steps in 2009 to engage Russia still more in border-region cooperation with EU member states. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Poland and Lithuania requested the European Commission that the agreement on local border traffic cover the whole Kaliningrad district, not just a 30–50 km belt allowed under EU regulations.<sup>33</sup> A liberalised visa regime would also invigorate the north-eastern part of Poland,

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. the authorised text of Radosław Sikorski's address and an account of the discussion: "Konferencja: Stany Zjednoczone a Europa Środkowa," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 6, 2009, pp. 25–31.

<sup>30</sup> "Glava polskovo MIDa: Varshava khotela by razmestit u sebya voyska SShA, katoriye zashchitili by yeyo ot 'russkoj agresji'," *Interfaks*, 5 November 2009.

<sup>31</sup> *Oświadczenie w sprawie niezgodnych z prawdą doniesień agencji prasowej Interfax*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 6 November 2009, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. "Government Information..." *op. cit.* and also J. Jakimczyk, "Rosyjscy szpiegzy tropili w Polsce sekrety NATO," *Rzeczpospolita*, 29 July 2009.

<sup>33</sup> "Informacja ministra spraw zagranicznych na temat polskiej polityki wschodniej i współpracy w ramach Partnerstwa Wschodniego," *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych*, 125, 2009, nr 2747/VI Kadencja, p. 17, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

which is among the country's lowest-income areas. The main benefit would be development of small and medium-sized enterprises, and an opportunity to better use the EU funds allocated to border regions.<sup>34</sup>

One of the consequences of Russia's economic crisis was a change in its position on the Kaliningrad exclave's engagement with various EU projects. At the EU-Russia summit in Stockholm, on 18 November 2009, Russian Regional Development Minister Viktor Basargin and EU Commissioner for External Affairs Benita Ferrero-Waldner signed a join-financing agreement covering five cross-border programmes, with the biggest portion of EU resources going to the programme Poland-Lithuania-Russia/Kaliningrad.<sup>35</sup> This shift in attitude, though, did not change Russia's negative assessment of the Eastern Partnership. Despite Poland's frequently expressed readiness to cooperate, e.g. in respect of border infrastructure, the Russian authorities did not indicate willingness to participate in any project under the new EU programme.

### Economic Relations

**Trade.** The Polish-Russian trade exchanges could be described as pretty intensive. In value terms, Poland was for Russia the fifth largest trading partner among the EU member states in 2009, after Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and France, while Russia placed third among all of Poland's partners. Two-way shipments added up to US\$17.8 billion (or US\$16.7 billion, as indicated by Russian sources), with Poland running a trade deficit of nearly US\$8 billion. Russia accounted for close to two-thirds of Poland's overall trade deficit in 2009.<sup>36</sup>

Compared to 2008, the trade volume dropped 38.7%, largely as a result of the Russian economic crisis. Similar trends were seen in respect of Russia's other partners, with that country's overall trade falling by 36.2% in 2009. Poland's major exports to Russia in 2009 included: engineering industry products (22.7%), food and produce (21.3%), chemicals (17%), wood and paper (11%) and metallurgical industry products (5.4%). The worst hit were Polish exports of engineering industry products (down from 36% to 22.7%), primarily due to the

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. M.M. Salminen, A. Moshes, "Practise What You Preach. The Prospects for Visa Freedom in Russia-EU Relations," *FIIA Report*, no. 18, 2009, p. 21, and also *Program współpracy transgranicznej Litwa-Polska-Rosja 2007–2013 zatwierdzony przez Komisję Europejską 17 grudnia 2008 r.*, [www.ewt.gov.pl](http://www.ewt.gov.pl), pp. 11–15.

<sup>35</sup> *European Neighborhood Policy in Action: Launch of Cross-border Co-operation Programmes with Russia*, Press-Releases, no. IP/09/1727, 18 November 2009, [www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu).

<sup>36</sup> *Obroty handlu zagranicznego ogółem i według krajów I–XII 2009 r., wyniki wstępne z 11 lutego 2010 r.*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa, 2010.

economic recession and falling demand for electrical machines and equipment, whereas the biggest export growth was recorded in agriculture and food (from 9.8% to 21.3%), following the removal of the Russian embargo on food and farm produce from Poland. It may be noted that the main market for Polish shipments, territorially, was Moscow with environs (65%), followed by Królewiec/Kaliningrad (10%) and St. Petersburg (9%).<sup>37</sup>

As for the decline in Polish imports from Russia, it reflected the downward trends on global commodity markets and falling prices of oil and gas. But in mid-2009 the decline was checked, mainly because of the stabilisation of oil prices on international markets. Poland main imports from Russia in 2009 continued to be oil and natural gas (75%), followed by small amounts of metallurgical products (4%) and chemicals (3.7%).<sup>38</sup>

**Investments.** The cumulative value of Polish investments in Russia to the end of 2009 was US\$563.3 million, with the bulk (US\$496 million) contributed by direct investments. After a period of growth over 2003–2008, the year 2009 saw a reversal, with investments dropping 40% on an annual basis. The Polish companies invested mostly in manufacturing (44%, including wood processing and wood products—25%), real estate market (13%), chemicals (11%) and textiles (10%). Territorially, the biggest flow of Polish investments went to the north-western and central parts of Russia, and especially to the districts of Nizhny Novgorod, Moscow, Kaliningrad/Królewiec and Orel.<sup>39</sup>

No credible data is available on Russian investments in Poland in the period under review.<sup>40</sup> According to National Bank of Poland computations, the cumulative value of Russian investments to the end of 2008 reached US\$274, whereas Russian estimates put the figure at US\$1.85 billion.<sup>41</sup> Either way, this represents a low level of Russian capital's presence in Poland. A diminishing interest in the Polish market on the part of Russian investors was reflected in Lukoil petroleum company's decision of October 2009 to withdraw from plans to build a fuels terminal and some 300 petrol stations in Poland, and from seeking to

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<sup>37</sup> *Polsko-rosyjska współpraca gospodarcza w 2009 r.*, [www.moskwa.polemb.net/index.php?document=418](http://www.moskwa.polemb.net/index.php?document=418).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>39</sup> *Informator ekonomiczny o krajach świata. Rosja*, 10 March 2010, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>40</sup> This problem was also noted a year earlier. Cf. B. Cichocki, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>41</sup> *Polsko-rosyjska współpraca gospodarcza...*, *op. cit.*, p. 2. The wide discrepancy in computations of Russian investments in Poland may reflect the scarcity of information about all of Gazprom's stakes in Polish companies, held via other entities.

acquire a stake in Grupa Lotos. But as indicated by the CEO of the Russian company, the decision was taken in response to poor profitability of oil refineries throughout Europe, rather than a deterioration of the business climate in Poland.<sup>42</sup>

**Gas negotiations.** As a consequence of the Russian-Ukrainian gas crisis of January 2009, and the removal of the Russian-Ukrainian company RosUkrEnergo as a go-between in gas trade, shipments to Poland amounting to 2.3 billion cu. m. of gas (16% of the country's annual demand) were annulled. The Polish energy group PGNiG initially drew on reserves of stored gas but these proved to be almost completely exhausted towards the end of May 2009. In early June, Gazprom Export and PGNiG signed a short-term contract providing for deliveries of an added 1 bn cu.m. to the end of September. With the heating season approaching, it was clear that Poland would have to negotiate and sign—not later than the autumn—an annex to the so-called Yamal contract with Russia. These negotiations continued throughout 2009, but were not crowned with a relevant document.

### Social and Cultural Relations

**Cooperation in culture.** Hopes for progress in this field were aroused by a cooperation protocol for 2009–2012, signed by the two countries' ministries of culture on 1 September 2009.<sup>43</sup> In the document, both parties declared support for contacts and collaboration involving various artistic institutions, e.g., the National Theatre in Warsaw and the Russian State Academic Drama Theater named after A.S. Pushkin (Alexandrinsky Theater) of St. Petersburg; the Grand Theatre of National Opera in Warsaw, the State Academic Bolshoi Theatre of Russia in Moscow, and Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. The parties made commitments, such as holding a "Sputnik over Warsaw" Festival of Russian Films and a Vistula Festival of Polish Films in Moscow, and they declared assistance in sending and receiving Polish and Russia participants in international artistic competitions, presentations and festivals. Cooperation was also promised in organising anniversary celebrations of: the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversaries of Juliusz Słowacki and Nikolai Gogol, the Chopin Year, and the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of Anton Chekhov. Among the events actually held in

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<sup>42</sup> M. Duszczyk, "Łukoil nie sprzeda nam już taniej benzyny," *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, 14 October 2009.

<sup>43</sup> "Protokół o współpracy między Ministrem Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej a Ministerstwem Kultury Federacji Rosyjskiej na lata 2009–2012 podpisany w Sopocie dnia 1 września 2009 r.," *Dziennik Ustaw*, no. 4, 2010.



2009, mention is due to the Russian Song Festival in Zielona Góra (re-started after a break of a dozen or so years) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Festival of Russian Films “Sputnik over Poland” which draw audiences of more than 50,000 in Warsaw and 26 of the largest Polish cities.

**Polish-Russian Civic Forum.** Convened in Moscow on 13 May 2009, the Civic Forum came as an important element of social and cultural cooperation. The Forum, which resumed activities back in 2008 after a four-year break, was attended by renowned academics, artists and journalists, with film director Krzysztof Zanussi and former ambassador to Poland, Leonid Drachevski, acting as co-chairmen. The discussions were divided into four groups: political, cultural, journalistic and economic. Absent from the event was a member of the Polish delegation, Jan Malicki—head of Warsaw University’s Eastern Europe School for 20 years, and originator of a large-scale scholarship programme for students from the post-Soviet area—whose application for a Russian visa was denied. The Russian Consulate did not give reasons for the refusal, and Poland did not lodge any official protest.

### Assessment

Only some of the Polish government’s goals in policy towards Russia were actually attained in 2009. An unquestionable success was the improvement of political climate in mutual relations. As demonstrated by the celebrations to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of World War II, the Polish authorities can take up sensitive historical issues in talks with Russia while not giving up on their own interpretation. Nor did Polish government representatives respond to provocative pronouncements in Russian media by historians, pseudo-historians and journalists—but instead they calmly presented their own vision of the most recent history, a vision to which Vladimir Putin’s presence at Westerplatte imparted credibility before the international public opinion.

The thaw in relations with Russia made it easier for the Polish authorities to promote in the European Union forum the Eastern Partnership programme which, over Russian objections, was inaugurated in May 2009. The Russian criticism was restrained and it did not exert any major influence upon the position of EU member states—one of the reason being the fact that the initiators of the new programme could not be accused of anti-Russian prejudices.

But the progress reached in developing friendly political relations was not properly turned by the Polish government into economic advantage—and this, despite the favourable conditions such as gas oversupply in Europe, a growing production of shale gas in the United States, or the possibility that shale gas could

be produced in Poland, too. The government failed to negotiate a favourable trade agreement with Russia which would fill the gaps in gas supply, which was all the more possible given the renegotiation of contracts by many of Gazprom's western partners (reflecting lower gas consumption). In the absence of adequate information about talks with Russia, the Polish press carried a host of articles expressing concern about unfavourable arrangements accepted by Poland, such as continuation of the oil-indexed pricing formula (which is lucrative for Gazprom) and of the "take or pay" rule, or cancellation of the Russian company's debts to EuRoPol Gaz (which accrued after the former failed to pay gas transmission fees in 2005–2009), in return for a price rebate for new shipments to Poland.

The parliamentary opposition constantly criticised the Tusk government for all too readily abandoning Polish interests and shunning tough negotiations in the expectation of improved climate in Polish-Russian relations. At this writing, it would be very difficult to assess the validity of such accusations, for reasons which include a too short distance in time and lack of detailed knowledge about the negotiations. But the requirement of adequate protection of Polish interests was surely neglected when the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs refrained from reacting firmly to the refusal to grant Russian visa to the Polish expert on Russia, Jan Malicki, and especially when Poland accepted the Russian position on the contentious issue of Vistula Lagoon navigation, with a resulting agreement that proved unfavorable to this country. Improving the climate is no doubt an important consideration, but this should be accompanied by constant assertiveness on matters of principle.

*Translated by Zbigniew Szymański Elżbieta Gołębiowska*

## Poland's Policy towards Ukraine

### Determinants

2009 saw a perceptible shift of the Polish authorities' and elites' approach to Ukraine. Even though no spectacular events occurred to bring about, automatically and of necessity, a revision of Poland's policy towards its eastern neighbour (for in the relations of the two states the same issues as in previous years dominated) and no change of government took place either in Warsaw or in Kiev, disappointment with Ukraine and a crisis of confidence in its political elites were mounting.

After the 2004 "Orange Revolution" Polish elites, which had supported it, had hoped that a democratic government had come to power in Ukraine to modernise the state (at least partly) and to pave its way to NATO and European Union membership. They had also looked to President Viktor Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko to raise the standards of Ukraine's political culture—a culture conspicuous for close links between business and politics links, a low level of accountability for the state, a nihilistic attitude towards the law, and corruption permeating nearly all areas of social life. Yet subsequent developments were making it increasingly obvious that not only were President Yushchenko and prime Minister Tymoshenko incapable of dismantling the post-Soviet political-economic system and establishing rule of law, but—quite likely—they cherished no such aspirations at all, devoting most of their energies instead to internal vying for power. Their fights had opened the way for initiative to be grasped by those political forces which, perceived as *ancient regime*, had been removed from power in 2004, just as they enabled the formation, in the summer of 2006, of the Viktor Yanukovych government which, through its actions, destroyed the chances for expediting Ukraine's integration with NATO. After the December 2007 parliamentary elections another Tymoshenko government was formed—formally with a slight majority in the parliament, but to all practical purposes as a minority cabinet—yet it did not address the reform

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of the state either. What's more, it was paralysed by disputes with the president and his supporters among the parliament members and ministers. Aggravating this permanent political crisis was an imprecise delineation of the government's and the president's powers in the Ukrainian fundamental law which had been amended during the Orange Revolution to limit the presidential powers; the amendments took effect in 2006.

To make things worse, the Tymoshenko government had to tackle an economic crisis which, having descended on Ukraine in the autumn of 2008, affected it incomparably stronger than it did Poland. Suffice it to say that in 2009 Ukraine's GDP dropped by 15%<sup>1</sup> from 2008, with exports down 37.5% and imports down 45%;<sup>2</sup> that for many months banks were withholding payments on matured investments; and that unemployment rose from 6.5% to 9.4%, nearly by half.<sup>3</sup> The average pay in Ukraine, given in US dollars, plummeted by almost 60% from previous years' level in the wake of the devaluation of the hryvnia. For months concerns were rife in the media and among experts that a collapse of state finances was imminent, whereupon the state would have been rendered incapable of performing such fundamental functions as the payment of retirement and disability pensions. That this black scenario never materialised was due, in part, to Ukraine's having obtained from the International Monetary Fund an advantageous stabilisation loan in exchange for a range of commitments to discipline public finance—which the Tymoshenko government failed to meet. Nevertheless, the economic crisis, which markedly slowed down economic growth also in Poland, undermined trade between the two countries and effectively reduced Polish firms' business engagement in Ukraine.

Furthermore, the recession in Ukraine exposed the problems of the Ukrainian state and the consequences of feigning reforms, while the way the Ukrainian authorities were handling the recession seems to have finally dispelled Polish decision-makers' illusions about the prospects for reforms in that country. Ukrainian politicians showed themselves incapable even of a short-term tactical cooperation in the face of a real danger of many elementary functions of the state becoming paralysed. For instance, for the greater part of

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<sup>1</sup> Tentative calculations by the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine (*Derzhavnyi Komitet Statystyky Ukrainy, DSKU*), released on 26 February 2010, *Valovyi vnutrishnyi produkt Ukrainy za 2009 rik*, [www.ukrstat.gov.ua.operativ/operativ2010/vvp/rez/2009\\_r.htm](http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua.operativ/operativ2010/vvp/rez/2009_r.htm).

<sup>2</sup> DSKU, *Sotsialno-ekonomicheskoye stanovyshche Ukrainy za sichen 2010 roku*, [www.ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/soc\\_ek/publ\\_u.html](http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/soc_ek/publ_u.html).

<sup>3</sup> See DSKU release *Rynok pratsi, Sotsialno-ekonomichni rozvytok Ukrainy za 2009 rik*, [www.ukrstat.gov.ua.operativ/operativ2009/so\\_ek\\_r\\_u/soekru\\_u\\_12\\_2009\\_page\\_13.htm](http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua.operativ/operativ2009/so_ek_r_u/soekru_u_12_2009_page_13.htm).

the year several ministerial positions in the government were vacant: of the minister of foreign affairs (Volodymyr Ohryzko having been recalled by the Supreme Council in March and Petro Poroshenko taking the office only in October), minister of defence (the Council had recalled Yuri Yekhanurov in June and no successor was appointed till the end of the year), minister of finance (resigned in February, no successor appointed till the end of the year) and minister of transport (dismissed by the Council in June, no successor appointed till the end of the year). What's more, in this extremely difficult budgetary situation the Parliament passed a law—proposed by the Party of the Regions with the support of the Our Ukraine party and the Lytvyn Bloc—on the rise, by over a dozen percent, of the minimum pay and of standard welfare benefits.

The relations between Poland and Ukraine were also affected by the stepped-up activity of the critics of reconciliation between the two countries to be achieved—as they alleged—at the price of relegating to oblivion the Volhynia crime and of giving this issue a wide berth in inter-state relations. A number of incidents with a historical background, which occurred in 2009 and which were broadly commented by the media in Poland, seem to have added to the public's awareness of and sensitivity to the terrorist activity of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists and the OUN-perpetrated ethnic cleansing in Volhynia during the Second World War.

On the other hand, Poland's favourable image in Ukraine (in a poll conducted in the autumn of 2009 Ukrainians named Poland as the most Ukrainian-friendly state<sup>4</sup>) and the Poles' improving attitude towards the Ukrainians were having a positive impact on the development of relations between the two countries. Unlike in many years in the past, when dislike had been greater than liking, in two consecutive polls conducted by the CBOS opinion research centre in 2008 and in January 2010 there were more "like" than "dislike" answers (34% to 31% in 2008 and 34% to 29% in 2010).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> So declared 26% of Ukrainians, against 17% to have named Russia. In the western part of the country Poland was named by 29% of the respondents, while 9% indicated Russia; in the eastern part the two countries were indicated by 23% of the respondents each, see an IFAK Ukraine report *Rezultaty monitoringovego issledovaniya "5 faktov ob ukrainsach" Pyataya volna, 2009*, pp. 17–18, [www.ifak.co.ua/images/stories/pdf/meeting\\_with\\_joachim\\_wessling\\_21.10.pdf?PHPSESSID=d603cb4d4e8cf55b23513flb9004641d](http://www.ifak.co.ua/images/stories/pdf/meeting_with_joachim_wessling_21.10.pdf?PHPSESSID=d603cb4d4e8cf55b23513flb9004641d) and a PAP wire of 26 October 2009.

<sup>5</sup> See *Stosunek Polaków do innych narodów*, [www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2010/K\\_012\\_10.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2010/K_012_10.PDF).

## Aims

The overall aim of Poland's foreign policy towards Ukraine is to work towards Ukraine's becoming, in the long term, a stable and democratic state with a population enjoying a high living standard and with good relations with Poland.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, Poland supports the process of modernising the Ukrainian state, establishing the rule of law there, improving of the working of democratic mechanisms, and adjusting the local standards and values to those in effect in the EU countries. The target is for Ukraine to join the EU, or to be a close partner of the Community.

These steadfast assumptions were articulated, in part, in a Sejm address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski who presented on 13 February 2009 the directions of the Government of the Republic of Poland's foreign policy for the year. He stated on that occasion that Poland supported Ukraine's integration with Western world institutions, namely the EU and NATO, and that reforms, designed to modernise Ukraine would receive support as part of the implementation of the Eastern Partnership programme and, if successful, they would bring that country closer to meeting the Copenhagen criteria.<sup>7</sup> At the same time he pointed out that it was Ukraine itself that should have been most eager for integration with the Western structures and that this aim would demand from that country's elites "a sense of state-forming responsibility and determination in their pursuit of reforms."<sup>8</sup> In another statement on the aims of Poland's Eastern policy Sikorski said—and not for the first time<sup>9</sup>—that the Ukrainians were the Poles' "fraternal" nation, the both countries to be eventually linked by a strategic partnership.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> They were so described in 2009 by Minister Sikorski, see *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych* (no. 125), 2009, no. 2747/VI kadencja, [http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Biuletyn.nsf/0/A285D71A0A332908C125764900465805/\\$file/0274706.pdf](http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Biuletyn.nsf/0/A285D71A0A332908C125764900465805/$file/0274706.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> See "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009 (presented at the sitting of the Sejm on 13 February 2009 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski), above, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>9</sup> In his Sejm address of May 2008 Minister Sikorski referred to the Ukrainians as "East European brothers," see "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2008 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski)," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2009*, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> See *Biuletyn z posiedzenia...*, *op. cit.*, p. 5. It will be noted that, unlike previous ministers who had often referred in their Sejm addresses to a "strategic partnership" as an existing state of things, Sikorski rightly pointed out to there being no partnership in an institutional sense—just in the sense of "good will, liking and friendship." A reference to a strategic partnership is also found in *The Road Map for Cooperation between the Republic of Poland and Ukraine in 2009–2010* signed on 7 September 2009 by the Presidents Lech Kaczyński and Viktor Yushchenko, [www.prezydent.pl/download/gfx/prezydent/pl/defaultaktualnosci/9/809/1/20090907\\_mapa\\_drogowa.pdf](http://www.prezydent.pl/download/gfx/prezydent/pl/defaultaktualnosci/9/809/1/20090907_mapa_drogowa.pdf).

What emerged as a novelty, compared to preceding years, was a stronger emphasis on Ukraine's necessary modernisation as a target of Poland's policy (at least in the medium term) and the highlighting of EU mechanisms, the Eastern Policy in particular, as a means to realise these plans. Also, stronger criticism of Ukraine was noticeable.<sup>11</sup> No direct reference was made to Ukraine's membership in the EU and in NATO—just to its “integration with these structures.” On the other hand, President Lech Kaczyński spoke explicitly, in his annual address to the diplomats accredited to Poland, of the necessity for the European Union to grant Ukraine a “European perspective” and to be ready to accept that country as a member in “real” time.<sup>12</sup>

In a short-term perspective, the targets of Poland's Ukrainian policy seem to be best reflected in a Road Map for Cooperation between the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Ukraine in 2009 and 2010, signed by the Presidents Kaczyński and Yushchenko. This document covers a number of stipulations of varying degrees of relevance. Among other things, there was Poland's declaration of political assistance to Ukraine's plans for European integration, including in negotiations on an Association Agreement with the EU and in its push for the establishment of a deepened free trade zone and for the grant of a visa-free regime. The document also provided for assistance in the implementation of EU aid projects to Ukraine and for the sharing of the Republic of Poland's experience in adapting Ukrainian laws to *acquis communautaire*. There was a promise of an agreement to finance Ukrainian citizens' studies at the College of Europe at Natolin and of support to Ukraine's participation in the implementation of the European Security and Defence Policy and to the setting up of a Polish-Ukrainian-Baltic brigade.

The Road Map addressed also a range of strictly bilateral issues. These included declarations to resolve the problems of Polish entrepreneurs investing in Ukraine; to improve and further expand the existing transport and border infrastructure; to simplify procedures for the employment of Poles in Ukraine

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<sup>11</sup> This is implied both by the Minister's Sejm address and his other September 2009 addresses in which he noted that Ukraine was “a country with no minister of foreign affairs [and a] minister of finance and which for a year has adopted no key laws. Regrettably, our pro-Ukrainian leaning has been moderated by Ukraine's capability to respond to it. I suggest that we adopt the following operative principle: we shall respond with an Ukraine-friendly initiative each time Ukraine has done something for itself. This should be a mechanism to encourage the taking of actions capable of bringing it [Ukraine] closer to Euro-Atlantic institutions,” see *Biuletyn z posiedzenia...*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>12</sup> See *Wystąpienie przed korpusem dyplomatycznym*, 20 January 2009, [www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/wystapienia/art,1,wystapienie-przed-korpusem-dyplomatycznym.html](http://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/wystapienia/art,1,wystapienie-przed-korpusem-dyplomatycznym.html).

and of Ukrainians in Poland; to establish a Polish-Ukrainian university; to hold negotiations on the setting up of a government youth exchange programme.<sup>13</sup> Complementing these short-term targets was a promise by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the prompt opening of Polish consulates in Vinnytsia and Sebastopol.<sup>14</sup>

### Political Issues

In 2009 contacts of highest representatives of the both countries were regular, albeit less intensive than in previous years. President Kaczyński visited Ukraine on 28 February to attend, together with President Yushchenko, celebrations commemorating about a thousand Polish inhabitants of the village of Huta Pieniacka, who had been murdered by the UIA [Ukrainian Insurgent Army]. Viktor Yushchenko came to Poland three times: on 28 January he talked in Wrocław with Kaczyński and the Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek (who was then presiding over the European Council) about European security; on 1 July he attended celebrations commemorating the 440<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Union of Lublin—on which occasion the Ukrainian politician, President Kaczyński, the Presidents of Lithuania, Valdas Adamkus, of Latvia, Valdis Zatlers, of Estonia, Toomas Ilves, and the President of the Belarus Parliament Stanislav Shushkievich received *honoris causa* doctorates from the Catholic University of Lublin. Then, on 7–8 September Yushchenko paid a state visit in Warsaw and in Przemyśl; in the latter he met with members of the Ukrainian minority and took part in festivities marking the turning over to representatives of this minority of a Ukrainian Community House built early in the 2000s with the local Ukrainians' contributions.

Prime minister Tusk met with Prime Minister Tymoshenko on 9 July in Kiev and he participated in a meeting of the Polish-Ukrainian committee for the coordination of the both countries' preparations for EURO 2012 European Football Championship. Tymoshenko attended at Westerplatte celebrations marking the outbreak of the Second World War. Minister Sikorski visited Ukraine three times: on 17 June in Kiev he and the head of German diplomacy Frank-Walter Steinmeier were persuading Ukrainian politicians to work together. In July, on the occasion of the coming into force of a small-scale border traffic agreement between Poland and Ukraine, Sikorski and Minister of Internal Affairs Grzegorz Schetyna visited Lviv. Then, on 16 December, the Polish diplomacy chief met in

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<sup>13</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2008...", *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem.*



Kiev with Tymoshenko, Poroshenko and with Yanukovych who was at that time the opposition leader and the front-runner in the approaching presidential election. Sikorski having been accompanied on the visit to Kiev by several of his deputies, consultations were conducted in a broader circle of the both countries' diplomacy leaders. Arrangements agreed at that time included the reduction of the price of national visa for Ukrainians, from EUR70 to EUR35.

Yet all these visits failed to produce either spectacular declarations, or any considerable number of tangible and demonstrable effects for the two countries. Presidents Kaczyński's and Yushchenko's Huta Pieniacka visit was important because of its symbolism. On the other hand, the June visit by Sikorski and Steinmeier can be said to have been a failure. The both ministers had called jointly, already in April, for EU members' economic aid to Ukraine subject to an elementary consensus being reached in this state between the prime minister and the president. Yet on arriving in Kiev they found that Yushchenko kept putting off his meeting with them, so as to leave them no time to meet Tymoshenko; in the meantime, they were taken on a tour of museum collections in the Pecherska Lavra. This made Polish decision-makers (but probably them alone) convinced of the destructive impact of the Ukrainian political and economic crisis on the prospects for the modernisation of the state and for the development of mutual cooperation between Poland and Ukraine and Ukraine's coming closer to the EU and NATO.

This situation, and many other aspects of the Ukrainian reality, brought about a revision of Poland's strategy towards the eastern neighbour. In the face of explicit or implicit resentment of the Alliance by Ukrainian elites' (other than President Yushchenko and his closest followers) and by the general public (only in Western Ukraine are the numbers of opponents and proponents of this organisation relatively balanced) the Polish government gave up pushing for Ukraine's NATO membership. Poland's involvement in the process of Ukraine's European integration was modified, on the assumption that efforts to have "a European perspective" granted to this country, and promoting a far-ranging vision of Ukraine's integration with the EU, were bound to be counterproductive as long as evaluations of Ukraine's situation offered no new arguments capable of swaying the positions of EU members sceptical about these plans. On this reasoning, a decision was taken to focus on concrete matters: on giving Ukraine friendly support as it negotiated its Association Agreement and the establishment of a deepened free trade zone with the EU and as it solicited from the EU more aid to modernisation, and on promoting the Eastern Partnership.

Yet the Eastern Partnership has been frequently criticised in Ukraine: for the modesty of funding for the implementation of the aims of this project, and for the absence of an express promise of EU membership—or, indeed, even of the lifting of the visa requirement for the East European partners. The treatment of Ukraine on a par with states which have no European integration aspirations and are ruled in an authoritarian way, such as Azerbaijan or Belarus, has been resented. Indeed, this programme offers Ukraine few advantages over and above those set out in its bilateral agreements (those still in effect and those currently in the process of negotiation) with the European Union—but it evidences the entire EU's increased involvement in the east of Europe and it promises opportunities to obtain funds for modernising the country not only from the EU, but from third states and from the private sector as well. Whether these opportunities materialise and whether the programme does not become merely a facade will be known only in several years' time, for at this point the project is only at the launching stage. Still, given the absence of reforms in Ukraine, the Ukrainian authorities' and elites' expectations of greater benefits from the EU can already be said to have been quite unrealistic.

In parallel with promoting the Eastern Partnership, the Polish authorities made efforts to ensure that Polish politicians working for EU institutions had considerable influence on the shaping of relations with the Eastern European countries. In the new European Parliament, Paweł Kowal of the Law and Justice [PiS] opposition party became the Chairman of the EP EU-Ukraine delegation, replacing Marek Siwiec.

One effect of military cooperation between Poland and Ukraine was the signing, on 1 November in the NATO Headquarters in Brussels, of a letter of intent on the establishment of a Polish-Ukrainian Brigade. Scheduled to achieve combat readiness by 2013, the Brigade is to take part in missions organised by the UN, the EU and NATO in accordance with the UN Charter. The Command and Staff of the Brigade are to be located in Poland.<sup>15</sup>

### **Economic and Social Relations**

Two related factors had paramount impact on the economic relations of Poland and Ukraine in 2009: the recession, which had hit Ukraine, and the negligible economic growth in Poland. As a result, Poland's imports from Ukraine decreased by 49%, to EUR811m, and exports by 44%, to

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<sup>15</sup> See [www.wp.mil.pl/pl/artykul/8211](http://www.wp.mil.pl/pl/artykul/8211).

EUR2,461m.<sup>16</sup> Significantly, the downturn in trade with Ukraine was steeper than with Russia (exports down 34%, imports down 41%) and with Belarus (34% and 21%, respectively).<sup>17</sup> The crisis reduced further Ukraine's already small significance for the Polish economy, with exports to Ukraine accounting for 2.6% of total Poland's exports (against 3.7% in 2008) and imports—for 0.8% (against 1.1% in 2008).<sup>18</sup>

In 2009 Polish direct investment in Ukraine rose 25%, to US\$865m,<sup>19</sup> but many Polish businesses either withdrew from this market, or put off planned investment. Underlying these decisions were—besides the crisis and the related drastic weakening of the purchasing power of the hryvnia—disadvantageous investment conditions in this country, including its inefficient, frequently applicant-unfriendly and incompetent administration; persistent and growing corruption;<sup>20</sup> and the lack of sufficient legal security. One typical manifestation of the latter is “the theft of a business” (known in Ukraine under the name of “reyderstvo”)—the forcible takeover of an enterprise by a dishonest partner, which act of lawlessness is subsequently pronounced legal by a corrupt judge. What is more, in 2009 Polish firms commonly encountered problems as they claimed VAT refund from Ukrainian tax administration, a situation attributable to Ukraine's budgetary difficulties.

Throughout the year the economic relations of the two countries were devoid of spectacular events. Even talks on installing an automatic system to adjust wheel span to track gauge on the Warsaw-Kiev railway line (the system would have offered time savings on the border—no small consideration in the context of the approaching EURO 2012) failed to produce results. Neither were plans to build a standard-gauge railway line from Przemyśl to Lviv put in effect.

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<sup>16</sup> See *Informacja o handlu zagranicznym Polski na koniec stycznia 2010 r.*, Table 8, [www.mg.gov.pl/NR/rdonlyres/BE7F17AE-EE68-4306-9B26-B948DFE300A4/60421/calyzesz\\_yt0110.pdf](http://www.mg.gov.pl/NR/rdonlyres/BE7F17AE-EE68-4306-9B26-B948DFE300A4/60421/calyzesz_yt0110.pdf).

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

<sup>18</sup> See *Informacja o handlu...*, *op. cit.*, Table 9.

<sup>19</sup> At 1 January 2010. Release by the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine of 12 March 2010: Priami inozemni v Ukrainu s krayin JeS, [www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2009/zd/ives/ives\\_u/ives1209\\_u.htm](http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2009/zd/ives/ives_u/ives1209_u.htm).

<sup>20</sup> In Transparency International 2009 annual survey of perceptions of corruption, Ukraine ranked 146th out of the 180 states surveyed, its ranking having declined steadily in recent years. See *Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index 2009*, [http://transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2009/cpi\\_2009\\_table](http://transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009/cpi_2009_table).

The most tangible effect of cooperation between the two states, one with an impact on people-to-people contacts, was the coming into force, on 1 July, of the small-scale border traffic agreement between Poland and Ukraine. While in Lviv, Minister Sikorski issued first of the identifiers authorising travel by inhabitants of over a thousand border-area locations in Ukraine to border areas in Poland. However, no improvement of the situation on the Polish-Ukrainian border followed. It still takes hours of waiting to cross the border, a fact corroborated not only by journalists and frequent travellers between Poland and Ukraine, but also by members of the Bureau of the Ombudsman staff on an *incognito* mission. In a memo on the situation at the Hrebenne-Rava Russkaya border crossing (on the Warsaw-Lviv route) they stated expressly that a railway mafia was operating on the Ukrainian side, charging PLN200 for facilitating prompt passport and customs clearance.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, work on the construction of new, badly needed border crossings slowed down considerably due to Ukraine's financial difficulties.

In September 2009 Minister Sikorski set up two new consulates in Ukraine, in Vinnytsia and in Sebastopol.<sup>22</sup> The former, which became operative in February 2010, is concerned with the Vinnytsia, Khmilnyk and Zhytomyr districts—that is, with the area of the historical Podolia and the eastern part of Volhynia.<sup>23</sup> Late in 2009 preparations for opening the consulate in Sebastopol were less advanced.

Work continued on the establishment in Lublin of a Polish-Ukrainian university, a project announced in the Donald Tusk–Yulia Tymoshenko declaration of 28 March 2008. A Polish plan of December 2009 provided that the university was to have its registered seat in the both countries, with Poles and Ukrainians accounting for over 80% of the enrolment. Polish, Ukrainian and English were to be the languages of instruction. The university was to be authorised to run doctoral degree studies and the graduates were to receive Polish and Ukrainian diplomas. The university was to be financed, in equal shares, by the authorities of the two states.<sup>24</sup> During Minister Poroshenko's visit in Warsaw an agreement on educating Ukrainian citizens at the College Europe at Natolin was signed.

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<sup>21</sup> See M. Wojciechowski, "Granica z Ukrainą trudna do zdobycia," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 23 November 2009.

<sup>22</sup> See *Dziennik Urzędowy Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych*, no. 1, 2009.

<sup>23</sup> See *Dziennik Urzędowy Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych*, no. 6, 2009.

<sup>24</sup> See *Projekt umowy w sprawie powołania Polsko-Ukraińskiego Uniwersytetu Europejskiego*, [www.bip.nauka.gov.pl/bipmein/redir.jsp?place=galleryStats&id=7917](http://www.bip.nauka.gov.pl/bipmein/redir.jsp?place=galleryStats&id=7917).

Contrary to concerns, which were particularly widespread in Poland, the organisation of the EURO 2012 Championship sparked no conflict between Poland and Ukraine, though this might have happened had the UEFA withdrawn from some Ukrainian cities the authorisation to organise games. In November the UEFA resolved to maintain equal proportions of the games-hosting cities. Then, in December, the motto of the event was unveiled: in Polish, “We Make the Future Together” and in Ukrainian and in the other languages, “We Make History Together” (“future” having been substituted for “history” because, as the Polish organisers insisted, for the Poles the latter word was bound to engender strong associations with the past).<sup>25</sup>

The aid provided by many organisations in Poland to Ukraine in combating the flu epidemic also deserves to be noted, even if—for bureaucratic reasons—the aid did not always reach in time those who needed it.

### Historical Issues

In 2009 historical issues loomed larger in Polish-Ukrainian relations than in previous years. Polish researchers will certainly find helpful the now-available access to the files of Soviet special services held in Ukrainian archives. A decision to this effect was taken in January 2009 by President Yushchenko. Shortly thereafter the Ukrainian Security Service turned over to the IPN [Institute of National Remembrance] de-classified NKVD documents concerning Stalinist-era repressions against Poles—including against the population of a Polish autonomous region near Zhytomyr, known as Marchlewszczyzna, and against members, real or alleged, of the Polish Military Organisation.

In February the Presidents Yushchenko and Kaczyński attended celebrations marking the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Huta Pieniacka massacre.<sup>26</sup> Several months later Yushchenko appealed to the Poles to appreciate that in the Ukrainian consciousness the UIA held a place similar to that the AK [Home Army] had in the consciousness of the Poles, as independence fighters; he deplored that there had been fighting with Poles, called for mutual forgiveness, and avowed that anti-Polishness was not an inborn feature of the Ukrainians.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See S. Szczepiek, “Mamy dla was kwiaty,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 15 December 2009.

<sup>26</sup> On 28 February 1944 a SS detachment consisting of Ukrainians, believed to have been supported by a UIA group, murdered several hundred inhabitants of this Polish village.

<sup>27</sup> See an interview with V. Yushchenko, “Antypolskość nie jest cechą wrodzoną Ukraińców,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 8 September 2009.

A joint visit by Kaczyński and Yushchenko to a Ukrainians-inhabited village of Sahryń in the Lublin region, where the presidents were to unveil a memorial to the victims of the Home Army murdered in 1944 by a detachment of AK soldiers, did not come to pass. This would have been the second such celebration with the participation of the Polish president, after the one at Pavlokom where a similar crime had occurred. Presumably, the cancellation of this visit was connected with a number of incidents with a historical background, which had stirred or outraged public opinion in Poland. On 28 June the head of the Ukrainian Security Service, Valentyn Nalyvaychenko, had compared the police of the Second Republic of Poland to the Gestapo and the NKVD. A month later a proposed visit to Poland by a group of Ukrainian cyclists on a “Bandera ride” had sparked widespread comments and protests by numerous representatives of public opinion. Eventually the cyclists were refused entry by the Border Guard, on the pretext of having misstated the purpose of the visit when filling applications for visa with the Consulate in Lviv, a decision commented unfavourably in the western districts of Ukraine.<sup>28</sup> Matters related to different perceptions of the Volhynia massacre also stirred public opinion in the both countries. On 15 July, on the sixty-sixth anniversary of the date when the slaughtering of tens of thousands of Poles by the nationalist Ukrainian underground movement had reached its peak, the Sejm adopted a resolution “On the Tragic Fate of Poles in the Eastern Borderland,” paying homage to the victims of that operation. The resolution reminded that that ethnic cleansing, which had had attributes of genocide, had been perpetrated by the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA). The members of parliament paid homage to the murdered Polish citizens and they expressed gratitude to those Ukrainians, who had helped save their Polish neighbours at peril to their own lives.<sup>29</sup> It is worth noting in this context that the resolution had been originally scheduled for adoption in 2008, but it had not been passed due to unwillingness of largest parliamentary groups, a circumstance criticised by a part of the public, the Eastern Borderlander communities, and from the PSL [Polish Peasants Alliance] as the proposer of the resolution.

The resolution exposed the Sejm to a wave of criticism in the western part of Ukraine. On 18 August 2009 the Council of the Tarnopol District declared that “political circles in the Republic of Poland and the parliament of that country

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<sup>28</sup> See. T. Serwetnyk, “Rajd Bandery na sesji rady Lwowa,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 9 August 2009.

<sup>29</sup> See “Uchwała Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 15 lipca 2009 r. w sprawie tragicznego losu Polaków na Kresach Wschodnich,” *Monitor Polski*, no. 47, 2009.

opted for a dangerous course of inciting national enmity” and it censured the Sejm’s voice for “undermining the territorial integrity of Ukraine.”<sup>30</sup> On 15 September the Council of the Lviv District adopted a resolution in much the same vein.<sup>31</sup> Several Ukrainian intellectuals also criticised the Sejm for having adopted a resolution unhelpful to the historical dialogue and for having used the term “Eastern Borderland.”<sup>32</sup>

Last but not least, it should be mentioned that Father Tadeusz Isakowicz-Zaleski—who had been blaming the state authorities and the political elites for having refrained, for reasons of short-term expediency, so as to maintain good relations with Ukraine, from efforts to give the Volhynia massacre its due place in Polish martyrology and for having failed to react to the glorification by the Ukrainian authorities of persons responsible for this crime and for cooperation with the Nazis—organised on 1 July 2009 a protest against the award to Viktor Yushchenko of a *honoris causa* doctorate from the Catholic University of Lublin. Bellowing on a bullhorn about the glorification by the Ukrainian president of criminals and murderers, such as Roman Shukhevych, the UPA commander-in-chief who had been responsible for the Volhynia massacre, he gravely disturbed this ceremony and, at the same time, the celebration of the 440<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Union of Lublin. In August, an article appeared on a nationalist Ukrainian portal site, threatening death to Father Isakowicz-Zaleski.<sup>33</sup>

### Assessment

Basically, neither the aims of Poland’s Ukrainian policy, nor the manner of their implementation in 2009 by Polish state bodies, give rise to reservations. The political chaos in Ukraine, the absence of reforms, and the economic crisis amply justified a certain verbal reticence in campaigning for this country’s European road. Focusing on activities conducted *via* Brussels was a correct

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<sup>30</sup> See a PAP wire of 18 August 2009.

<sup>31</sup> See Decision no. 994 of the Council of the Lviv District of 15 September 2009: *Pro zvernennia z pryvodu ukhvaly Sejmu Respubliki Polshcha shchodo “trahichnoyi doli polakiv” na tak zvanykh skhidnykh kresach* and the Council’s appeal to the MFA of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Embassy in the Republic of Poland: *Zvernennia Lvivskoyi oblasnoyi rady do Ministerstva zakordonnykh sprav Ukrayiny ta Posolstva Ukrayiny w Respubliki Polshcha z pryvodu ukhvaly Sejmu Respubliki Polshcha shchodo “trahichnoyi doli polakiw” na tak zvanykh skhidnykh kresach*, of 15 September 2009, [www.oblrada.lviv.ua](http://www.oblrada.lviv.ua).

<sup>32</sup> See O. Reshetylova, I. Siundiukow, T. Kozyryeva, “Nebezpechna podachka ekstremistam. Chumu movchat’ sovisni polaky?,” *Den*, 1 August 2009.

<sup>33</sup> See S. Rudenko, *U swoyikh antyukrajinskykh provokatsyakh moskovska Lubyanka posluhovuyet sia polskymy debilamy*, [www.ukrnationalism.org.ua/publications/?n=1645](http://www.ukrnationalism.org.ua/publications/?n=1645).

move too, because this is the more effective approach. Poland itself lacks an adequate set of instruments with which to influence to an important degree the process of establishing in Ukraine the rule of law, the strengthening of democracy, and Ukraine's the drawing closer to the EU. That said, promoting the Eastern Partnership, that extremely relevant project, should be accompanied by a push to ensure Poland's strong influence on the contents of this undertaking and on overseeing the manner of its implementation. Care should also be taken to ensure Poland's strongest possible political presence in Ukraine and the closest possible contacts between politicians of the both countries, regardless of political conditions in Ukraine. Yet the decline, in evidence since 2008, in the intensity of these contacts, combined with the fact the reasons for the "Europeisation" of Poland's Ukrainian policy had not always been satisfactorily explained to the public in Poland laid the government open to criticism (probably exaggerated) by the opposition, for having abandoned the "Ukrainian cause."<sup>34</sup>

Within four months of the signing of the Road Map for Polish-Ukrainian relations some projects announced therein were carried out. The decision to open new consulates in Ukraine is certainly right, too—not only because they make obtaining visas or Pole's Cards easier, but also because they will contribute to better understanding by Polish state bodies of the social and economic situation in the Ukrainian regions. Last but not least, the symbolic aspect of these measures matters: Poland is now a country with the largest number of

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<sup>34</sup> See P. Kowal, "Obecny rząd grzebie idee Jerzego Giedroycia," *Polska. The Times*, 18 September 2009, [www.polskatimes.pl/opinie/163554,obecny-rzad-grzebie-idee-jerzego-giedroycia,id,t.html](http://www.polskatimes.pl/opinie/163554,obecny-rzad-grzebie-idee-jerzego-giedroycia,id,t.html), and *idem*, "Cienie Piastów," *Nowa Europa Wschodnia*, no. 6, 2009. This criticism was certainly made easier by an article by Minister Sikorski, "1 września – Lekcja historii," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 29 August 2009. The Polish diplomacy chief pronounced the fall of the Second Republic of Poland to have been "a civilisational defeat of the Jagiellonian statehood" and he contrasted "the Jagiellonian great-power aspirations," allegedly a "response to Poland's strategic and identity dilemmas," with the modern national state, and while so doing he treated the nation as a political community. He was severely criticised for this by a *Gazeta Wyborcza* contributor who gave it as his opinion that Sikorski "upsets the Polish foreign policy doctrine;" that "'the Jagiellonian great-power-ness' versus a national state modest in its aspirations alternative was illusive;" and that "by dragging out the bogey of a Jagiellonian great power, the spectre of which is allegedly haunting Poland, he attempts to set off the government camp against the policy of Lech Kaczyński and to fall in with Russia's and Germany's search for a new European *Realpolitik*. The president's anti-Russian and anti-German phobias and his unreasoning support for Georgia are being countered with modest pragmatism." See M. Czech, "Duch Jagiellonów nie błądzi po Polsce," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 7 September 2010. The Sejm Speaker Bronisław Komorowski also objected to contrasting "the Piast Poland" with "the Jagiellonian Poland," in an article „Pamiętajmy o Ukrainie i Białorusi, razem tworzyliśmy II Rzeczpospolitą,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 22 September 2009.



consulates in Ukraine, and they should be supporting Polish investors in Ukraine, facilitating cultural cooperation and helping prepare sound analyses concerning this country. What is puzzling is why none of the seven consulates of the Republic of Poland is active in Donbas, an industrial centre from which come a large proportion of the economic and political elites. A consulate located there could promote cooperation with Poland in this highly important region of the country. At present Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria have consulates in Donbas, but Poland elected to open a consulate barely 250 km from Kiev, in Vinnytsia, where it is likely to focus on issuing visas and on taking care of the local Poles.

Other necessary measures include: improving promptly transport connections with Ukraine (railway connections in particular), expanding border crossings, and strengthening the overall capabilities of the Polish institutions which support Polish entrepreneurs operating in Ukraine.

The historical controversies which, after lying relatively “dormant” for several years, re-surfaced in 2009, appear to confront Polish policy with yet another challenge. The Sejm resolution on the Volhynia massacre was appropriate and protests of public opinion against manifestations of nationalist phobias, or against the glorification in Western Ukraine of people involved in crime and terrorism, were understandable. At the same time, Polish reactions were meeting with the lack of understanding and with objections from a proportion of the inhabitants of Ukraine, even though, as a rule, the Ukrainians entertain European aspirations and are friendly towards Poland. It follows that efforts are needed to better explain to the Ukrainians the Polish historical perspective. Regrettably, by the end of 2009 the government appeared not to have appreciated the rank of this problem, and President Kaczyński—who, in other respects, had done much towards tightening relations with Ukraine and developing the historical dialogue—missed the opportunity for showing Ukraine a model approach to the settling of difficult past scores when he abstained from the celebrations commemorating the victims of the Sahryń crime. This was an error of judgment, not only because Yushchenko had been setting much store by this event, but—first and foremost—because the Home Army's Sahryń action had been a murder committed by Polish armed forces on Polish citizens of Ukrainian descent.

*Translated by Elżbieta Gołębiowska*

## Poland's Policy towards Belarus

### Determinants

In early years of Belarus's independence Poland's relations with that country were correct and they were developing fairly intensively. This process was stalled by the coming to power of Alaksandr Lukashenka in 1994. In consecutive years of the Lukashenka presidency, as the internal situation in Belarus was becoming more and more strained, a cooling of mutual relations followed. In 1996, when the European Union and the United States responded to an undemocratic constitutional referendum and to the dissolution of the parliament by the president by imposing, by way of sanctions, an entry ban for Belarusian officials, Poland followed the principle of isolating President Lukashenka and his immediate aides but it kept up contacts with lower-level officials, on the assumption through dialogue and liaison with the Belarusian *nomenklatura* could encourage positive changes in the political situation in that country. A turning point in Poland's policy came with the delegalisation, in 2005, of the Union of Poles in Belarus (ZPB); Poland's Belarus policy became much sterner and the contacts were frozen. Since then Belarusian issues have been of considerable interest to Polish politicians and media.

Since the end of 2007 a gradual rebuilding of Poland's relations with Belarus has been in evidence—a process aligned to the EU's policy towards that state. The invigoration of contacts between the EU and Belarus reflect a maturing belief by a majority of the EU member states that the policy of isolation has been non-productive, and a desire to overcome the stalemate in mutual relations. Moreover, this approach is a response to signals sent out Brussels-ward by the Belarusian regime which, pressured by Russia and by the economic crisis, has become motivated to end its international isolation and pick up its economic relations with the West. Support for democracy and civic society, once the paradigm of the EU's policy towards Belarus, has been in the recent two years merely one element of this policy. Underlying the resumption of cooperation was the belief that Moscow's monopoly on contacts with Minsk needed to be

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broken and Belarus's position vis-à-vis Russia needed strengthening. This conviction came to prevail despite the awareness that President Lukashenka's economic liberalisation measures and his policy, far from evidencing his readiness to bring in meaningful changes that could in fact undermine Belarus's existing regime, were only meant to persuade the West to end the isolation.<sup>1</sup>

In 2009 the thawing process in relations between the EU and Belarus continued. The ministers of foreign affairs of the EU member states twice decided to extend the suspension of sanctions against Belarus (the first time in October 2008). Eventually, the isolation of Belarus was lifted and after more than a decade President Lukashenka visited EU states—Italy in April and Lithuania in September. Visits to Minsk were paid in February by the EU High Commissioner for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, and in November by Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Belarus was officially included in the Eastern Partnership programme. President Lukashenka had been invited to the Prague summit on 7 May 2009 at which the Eastern Partnership project was to be launched, but this invitation had aroused so much controversy that he eventually chose to stay away and sent instead a delegation headed by Vice-premier Vladimir Semashko.

Apart from political constraints, Belarus proved to be the most active, alongside Ukraine, of all the states invited to the Eastern Partnership. At an Eastern Partnership summit in Brussels on 8 December 2009 Belarus—and Ukraine with Lithuania—were the only participants to submit to the European Commission ready projects (about 20, all in all) of cooperation in energy, energy security, transit, transport, border management, tourism and ecology.<sup>2</sup>

Significantly, in 2009 the International Monetary Fund, which had transferred to Belarus EUR3.5 billion in a stabilisation loan, became—for the first time—Belarus's most important lender, replacing Russia in this role.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> More in, among other sources: Ł. Adamski, "Poland's Policy Regarding Belarus," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2009*; A. Wierzbowska-Miazga, "Białoruś – Unia Europejska. Szansa na przełom," *Nowe Sprawy Polityczne*, no. 36/37, 2008/2009; K. Kłysiński, "Liberalizacja gospodarki Białorusi?," *ibidem*.

<sup>2</sup> Some of these initiatives concerned also cooperation with Poland; for more see M. Rachlej, „*Vostochnoye partnyorstvo*” dlya Minska obrelo treugolnyi kontur, [www.naviny.by/rubrics/politic/2009/12/30/ic\\_articles\\_112\\_166059](http://www.naviny.by/rubrics/politic/2009/12/30/ic_articles_112_166059).

<sup>3</sup> In 2009 Russia provided Belarus with US\$0.5bn of support loans.

## Aims

Since the break-up of the USSR Poland's strategic security interests have included neighbourhood with Belarus as an independent and democratic country with an efficient market economy. So defined, this state interest has determined the principal aims of Poland's policy towards Belarus for years. These aims were similarly defined also in 2009 and they were to be achieved predominantly through Belarus's cooperation with the EU, notably within the framework of the Eastern Partnership.

Addressing the first Poland–Belarus economic summit on 24 June in Warsaw, Prime Minister Donald Tusk pointed out that the activity of Polish diplomats in the European Union—efforts which had culminated in the Eastern Partnership programme (among other effects)—had been focused primarily on bringing closer the EU and Belarus, as well as Poland and Belarus. He said on the same occasion that the quality of relations between the two countries would depend largely on Minsk's meeting certain expectations of Warsaw; of these, the most important concerned the situation of Poles living in Belarus and the observance of their rights and, generally, of the standards of parliamentary democracy.<sup>4</sup>

The focuses were similar in Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski's address to the Sejm of 13 February 2009. The minister, too, highlighted chiefly the success that the launch of the Eastern Partnership had been. He emphasised that the Partnership was important in that it offered the states covered by this programme—including Belarus—an opportunity to win strong support for their modernisation reforms which could lead to the attainment of European standards in political and economic life. Minister Sikorski expressed a hope that Belarus would opt for this European perspective, thereby opening for itself the road to closer relations with the EU, including with Poland. He, too, added a caveat that the quality and extent of such a cooperation depended on the Belarusian authorities' readiness to liberalise the country's political system. He declared that Poland would support efforts aimed at building in Belarus a democratic society in which all citizens, including Poles associated in independent organisations, would be free to express, without constraints, their views, needs and aspirations.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Information from the Government Information Centre, 24 June 2009, [www.poprzedniastrona](http://www.poprzedniastrona).

<sup>5</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009 (presented at the sitting of the Sejm on 13 February 2009 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski)" above, p. 11.

The concrete assumptions underlying Poland's policy towards Belarus were presented on 8 January 2009 by Jan Borkowski, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as he answered a parliamentary question on behalf of the minister. First of all, Borkowski pointed to the need to regulate the status of the Union of Poles in Belarus. He also announced that efforts would be made to further the liberalisation of the political system in Belarus and that support would be extended to the Belarusian democratic opposition. At the same time he declared that Poland was ready for a dialogue with the Belarusian authorities and he assured that Poland would seek to win over the European Union for such a dialogue. However, the vice-minister emphasised that Poland expected the Belarusian authorities to proceed with democratisation measures. He said that the development of Polish-Belarusian economic relations depended on the improvement of the political situation in Belarus and he noted not only would presence on the Belarusian market be to Polish businesses' advantage but, when combined with other investment by EU countries, it would create a desirable—from the perspective of Poland's political interests—counterweight to Russia's economic expansion in that country.<sup>6</sup>

President Lech Kaczyński endorsed, on the whole, the main aims of the government's Belarus policy.<sup>7</sup> Differences between the government's and the president's visions of the policy towards Belarus concerned some specific underlying assumptions. The president was critical of the government's readiness to collaborate with the Belarusian authorities before significant changes occurred in that country, in particular prior to the settlement of the Union of Poles in Belarus issue.<sup>8</sup> Even so, in 2009 this difference was not the subject of a public dispute or debate.

Clearly, compared with preceding years the fundamental aims of Poland's policy towards Belarus, such as support for independence and for the liberalisation of public life in that country, remained unchanged although their hierarchy was somewhat modified. One distinguishing feature of the 2009 policy assumptions was that Polish-Belarusian relations were firmly placed in

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<sup>6</sup> "Sejm VI kadencji: Odpowiedź sekretarza stanu w MSZ – z upoważnienia prezesa Rady Ministrów – na interpelację nr 6515 w sprawie zawartej w exposé premiera Donalda Tuska z dnia 23 listopada 2007 r. zapowiedzi współkształtowania przez Polskę polityki wschodniej UE," <http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/IZ6.nsf/main/14092F3E>.

<sup>7</sup> "Wschodni partnerzy Polski," [www.prezydent.pl/para-prezydencka/prezydent/polityka-prezydenta/wschodni-partnerzy-polski/](http://www.prezydent.pl/para-prezydencka/prezydent/polityka-prezydenta/wschodni-partnerzy-polski/).

<sup>8</sup> "Prezydent o Katyniu, Białorusi i wyborach na Ukrainie," [www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wizyty-krajowe/art,702,prezydent-o-katyniu-bialorusi-i-wyborach-na-ukrainie.html](http://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wizyty-krajowe/art,702,prezydent-o-katyniu-bialorusi-i-wyborach-na-ukrainie.html).

the European context. This was the result of the launch of the Eastern Partnership initiative and of the Polish authorities' commitment to it. It will be noted that among the government's policy assumptions there appeared a stipulation seldom articulated before, for Polish firms' business involvement in Belarus. However, this new assumption was much enfeebled by being conditional upon prior attainment of strictly political aims. Although Poland chose to step up its contacts with Belarus regardless of the level of political change there, the establishment of full cooperation still depended on the democratisation of that country and in particular on the exercise by the Polish minority in Belarus of its rights and freedoms.

### **Political Relations**

A policy of warming up, symbolically inaugurated by Minister Sikorski's visit to Belarus on 12 September 2008, continued in 2009 relations between Poland and Belarus. The top-ranking event on the agenda of meetings was the first Poland-Belarus economic summit held on 23–24 June in Warsaw. This meeting was attended by Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Polish and Belarusian Vice-premiers Waldemar Pawlak and Andrei Kabiakou.<sup>9</sup>

A meeting of the heads of the Polish National Security Office, the Belarus Security Council, and the Ukrainian Security and Defence Council on 23 June 2009 in Kiev merits attention. On this occasion the ministers decided on the establishment of a mechanism of tripartite cooperation known as the Kiev Initiative. Its intended object was to develop methods of collaboration in the Eastern Partnership.<sup>10</sup> The first working meeting was held in Warsaw on 20 October. Regrettably, this initiative petered out for various reasons, including negligible involvement of the Belarusian side. Attempts to arrange another meeting failed.

Much like in preceding years, intra-EU activity on Belarusian issues was an important element of Poland's Belarus policy. Politicians—those active on the domestic political scene and those representing Poland in EU structures—have persisted in efforts to cause Schengen visas to be more available to Belarusians through the simplification of procedures and the reduction of fees. Moreover, in 2009 Poland was the promoter of a concept that provided for maintaining the broadest possible cooperation with Belarus while appraising critically the authoritarian regime in that country. Poland championed the inclusion of Belarus

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<sup>9</sup> PAP dispatch, 24 June 2009.

<sup>10</sup> PAP dispatch, 23 June 2009.

in the Eastern Partnership, inasmuch as practicable. It opted for extending the suspension of visa sanctions applicable to Belarusian officials. It supported the decision to invite representatives of the Belarusian authorities to the Prague summit inaugurating the Eastern Partnership, without precluding the possibility of extending invitation to President Lukashenka.

Poland's clearly projected will to engage in a dialogue with the authorities in Minsk aroused criticism from a part of the Belarusian opposition. Opposition representatives Alaksandr Kazulin and Anatoly Lebedko, while on a visit to European Parliament on the invitation of the Lithuanian MEPs, accused Poland of promoting a new policy open to dialogue with the Belarusian regime. They alleged that the Polish authorities were engaging in immoral bargaining with the regime on the Polish minority issue and they asked dramatically: "Has Poland forgotten about Solidarity?"<sup>11</sup> Alaksandr Kazulin spoke in a similar vein in an interview given subsequently to the Charter97 portal. He insisted that underlying the shift in the Polish authorities' position were interests of the Polish business community, which was eager for cooperation with Belarus.<sup>12</sup>

To emphasise that a dialogue with the authorities was not tantamount to abandoning the earlier policy of supporting the democratic communities, the Chief of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister Tomasz Arabski, while on a visit to Minsk on 20 July 2009, met not only with the Head of the Presidential Administration of Belarus Vladimir Makey, but also (at the Polish embassy) with a broad representation of the Belarusian opposition.<sup>13</sup>

The Union of Poles in Belarus looms as the chief problem in relations with Minsk, even though in 2009 no major conflicts occurred over it. The Union held its congress on 15 March in Grodno and re-elected Andželika Borys for the chairperson. Although earlier Belarusian law enforcement authorities had resorted to intimidation and repressions in an attempt to prevent the congress's meeting in a quorum, the debates themselves proceeded peacefully. Presumably, the Belarusian authorities allowed the congress to convene out of concern that too violent objections in this matter might influence negatively a decision on visa sanctions to be taken on the next day in Brussels. Some media alleged<sup>14</sup> that

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<sup>11</sup> PAP dispatch, 24 June 2009.

<sup>12</sup> A. Kazulin, "Sotrudnichestvo Lukashenko s tsivilizovannym mirom nevozmozhno," [www.charter97.org/ru/news/2009/3/24/16507/](http://www.charter97.org/ru/news/2009/3/24/16507/).

<sup>13</sup> "Kiraunik kancylaryi polskaha premiera sustreusja z Makiejem i apazycyjaj," [www.nn.by/index.php?c=ar&i=28150](http://www.nn.by/index.php?c=ar&i=28150).

<sup>14</sup> *Wprost*, no 11, 2009; *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 16 March 2009.

the Polish MFA had issued an ultimatum to the Belarusian authorities, warning a week before the congress that the inclusion of Belarus in the Eastern Partnership programme was directly conditional upon undisturbed progress of the meeting. Belarusian opposition activists, for their part, claimed that Poland had made its consent to inviting President Lukashenka to Prague conditional upon the progress of the congress,<sup>15</sup> an information disclaimed by Polish diplomacy. Speaking to journalists after the congress Senate President Bogdan Borusewicz expressed a belief that, in a way, it was a success of Polish diplomacy, among other agents, that this assembly had convened at all.<sup>16</sup> The fact that the Belarusian authorities eventually allowed the congress to be held was received very positively in Poland, as a message that the authorities in Minsk were anxious for the situation to normalise. Yet President Lukashenka rejected ZPB's proclamation with an invitation to talks and he pronounced the [Union's] pro-government leadership headed by Józef Łucznik the sole legitimate representation of the Poles in Belarus.

On 12 September the pro-regime Union of Poles held a congress in Grodno. Stanisław Siemaszko was elected the Union's new chairman. After the election he expressed a hope that relations would be established with the Polish authorities. At the same time he said that cooperation between the two organisations of Poles would be possible only upon the return of the Borys's supporters to the Union under his leadership.

The Polish Card, a document which confirms belonging to the Polish nation and confers upon citizens of other states a number of privileges (including visa facilitations and the right to enter into employment and undergo free education in Poland) remains a sensitive issue in Poland-Belarus relations. The Belarusian authorities have repeatedly stated that they regard the grant of a Polish Card to Belarusian citizens as an unfriendly act and as interference in the internal affairs of the country. In December the Card was the subject of a debate in the Belarusian parliament. In the course of the debate it was alleged that the issuance of Polish Cards by Polish consulates was against the law. Minister of Justice Viktor Halavanau, who took part in the debate, emphasised that the Polish Card infringed upon Belarus's state interests. He pointed out that it was improper for government officials and MFA and KGB officials to accept this document.<sup>17</sup> The *Sem Dnei* weekly ran, in its last 2009 issue, an article reiterating a simile

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<sup>15</sup> PAP dispatch, 10 March 2009.

<sup>16</sup> PAP dispatch, 15 March 2009.

<sup>17</sup> PAP dispatch, 17 December 2009.



between the concept of the Polish Charter and the German Volksliste and claimed that the Card was a manifestation of Polish imperial longings.<sup>18</sup> It is because of the hostile climate created around the Polish Card and, in many cases, because of direct pressure brought to bear on Poles by the Belarusian administration that, although Belarus is a country with the largest Polish minority, Belarusian citizens are only the second largest (after Ukraine) group of applicants for this document. In 2009 over 11.5 thousand applications were filed, of which the most (about 7 thousand) in Grodno.<sup>19</sup>

### **Economic Relations**

The invigoration of political relations between Poland and Belarus brought in its wake the both states' markedly greater interest in economic cooperation. This was demonstrated by Vice-premier Waldemar Pawlak's visit to Minsk in February 2009. The vice-premier was accompanied by vice-ministers of economy, of the treasury, and of agriculture and by a sizable delegation of business people representing industries of the greatest interest to Belarus as areas of foreign cooperation: fuel/energy and banking/insurance. During the visit an agreement was signed on cooperation between the two countries' stock exchanges, enabling the exchange of experiences in technology and of financial market information.<sup>20</sup>

Talks conducted during the Poland-Belarus economic summit mentioned earlier were concerned chiefly with opportunities for energy cooperation between the two countries, including the construction of the second leg of the Yamal gas pipeline and of an extension of the Friendship gas pipeline to Wilhelmshaven on the North Sea. As an accompanying event, there was the third Belarusian National Exhibition in which participated over a hundred Belarusian exporters operating in various industries (such as car, chemical, petrochemical and food) and in construction.<sup>21</sup>

On 1 September 2009, during a visit in Poland of a delegation of the Belarusian government headed by Prime Minister Sergei Sidorsky, a memorandum was signed on energy cooperation in the next five years. The contracting parties

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<sup>18</sup> PAP dispatch, 28 December 2009.

<sup>19</sup> PAP dispatch, 19 November 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Information from the Ministry of Economy, placed on the website of the Department of Trade and Investment Promotion of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Minsk, 27 February 2009, [www.minsk.trade.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/article/y,2009,a,2164,.html](http://www.minsk.trade.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/article/y,2009,a,2164,.html).

<sup>21</sup> PAP dispatch, 24 June 2009.

undertook to conduct an information policy designed to facilitate mutual investment in the electricity generation and transmission sector. This policy should consist, first and foremost, in ensuring access to legislation governing operations in this sector and in making available to entrepreneurs all information necessary to carry out investment projects. Also defined in the memorandum were the principles of cooperation between Poland and Belarus in electricity generation and transmission investment projects. Priority was accorded to investment in new capacity generation and in the modernisation and construction of new cross-border connectors.<sup>22</sup>

Among major economic meetings a meeting of the Polish-Belarusian Working Group on Trade and Investment was a noteworthy event. It was held on 14 October 2009 in Warsaw,<sup>23</sup> with the participation of vice-premiers Pawlak and Semashko.<sup>24</sup>

While economic contacts picked up perceptibly in 2009, effects are likely to appear only in years to come. In terms of concrete economic indices the economic links between Poland and Belarus were fairly weak. At US\$823m, Belarus's 2009 exports to Poland were less than 46% of the previous years' figure. Belarusian imports from Poland registered at US\$787m, i.e. 68% of those in 2008.<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that this by-value drop in value was attributable primarily to the weakening of the zloty.

It should also be noted that Polish data differ considerably from respective Belarusian figures. While evidencing the same trend—a marked decrease in trade in 2009<sup>26</sup>—they differ very importantly in balance of trade evaluations.

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<sup>22</sup> Information from the Ministry of Economy, 2 September 2009, [www.mg.gov.pl/Wiadomosci/Waldemar+Pawlak/Blizsza+wspolpraca+energetyczna+Polski+i+Bialorusi.htm](http://www.mg.gov.pl/Wiadomosci/Waldemar+Pawlak/Blizsza+wspolpraca+energetyczna+Polski+i+Bialorusi.htm).

<sup>23</sup> The group functions within the framework of the Joint Polish-Belarusian Commission for Economic Cooperation, officially established in 2004 but really in existence since 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Information from the Ministry of the Economy placed on the website of the Department of Trade and Investment Promotion of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Minsk, 14 October 2009, [www.minsk.trade.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/article/y,2009,a,5546,.html](http://www.minsk.trade.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/article/y,2009,a,5546,.html).

<sup>25</sup> Data quoted after the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, [http://belstat.gov.by/homep/ru/indicators/doclad/2010\\_1/9.pdf](http://belstat.gov.by/homep/ru/indicators/doclad/2010_1/9.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> According to the Central Statistical Office's [GUS] figures for January–November 2009, Polish exports to Belarus totalled EUR791m (78% of exports in the same period a year earlier) and imports—EUR523m (62% compared with the same period a year earlier); figures quoted after the Ministry of Economy, Analysis and Forecasting Department, "Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski za styczeń–listopad 2009 rok w mln euro," Warszawa, 2010, [www.mg.gov.pl/NR/rdonlyres/2556BC8A-2D6D-473D-AFF6-7E1A6ABE7798/59413/Segregator92.pdf](http://www.mg.gov.pl/NR/rdonlyres/2556BC8A-2D6D-473D-AFF6-7E1A6ABE7798/59413/Segregator92.pdf).

According to Belarusian data Poland's trade with Belarus had been in deficit year after year, the deficit standing at US\$36m in 2009. According to Polish data trade had been persistently in surplus, by EUR284.9m (US\$396m<sup>27</sup>) in 2009. As for the partners' significance in mutual trade, Poland ranks firmly among the top of Belarus's trade partners, while Belarus is placed only in the third ten of Poland's.

A similar disparity is manifest in investment. Belarusian foreign direct investment in Poland is negligible. The inflow of Belarusian capital till 2008 is estimated at between EUR1.5m and EUR2m<sup>28</sup> (about US\$1.8m–US\$2.4m<sup>29</sup>). The presence of Polish capital in Belarus is much more visible, even though Poland ranks only in the second ten of Belarus's foreign investors. The inflow of Polish capital in 1991–2008 is estimated at US\$250m–US\$270m, of which US\$200m in investment made till 2002. In 2008 the value of Poland's direct investment exceeded US\$21m. In the same year there were about 490 companies with Polish equity holdings operating in Belarus, of which 39 established in 2008.<sup>30</sup> It is estimated that in the next year their number increased by 45 new firms. A majority of these investors are small and medium-sized businesses, the timber industry and the distributive sector being best represented (accounting for 11% each). By investment value, the food producing sector ranks first, businesses in this industry accounting for almost one-third of total Polish outlays in Belarus—even though by numbers they account for merely 10% of Polish businesses present in that country.<sup>31</sup> Inco Food, a meatpacking company operating in the Brest economic zone, is the most important Polish investor in this industry. Furniture producers (16% of investment), notably Black Red White, and packaging producers (15%) also play an important role.

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<sup>27</sup> Figures by the Ministry of Economy, Analysis and Forecasting Department, "Rozwój wymiany towarowej Polski z zagranicą w latach 2005–2009," Warszawa 2010, <http://beta.mg.gov.pl/files/upload/8437/Ocena%20na%20www.pdf>. Euro-to-dollar conversions at the average 2009 exchange rate of 1 euro = 1.30 US dollar, based on the European Central Bank data, [www.ecb.int/stats/exchange/eurofxref/html/eurofxref-graph-usd.en.html](http://www.ecb.int/stats/exchange/eurofxref/html/eurofxref-graph-usd.en.html).

<sup>28</sup> Information from the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Minsk, Department of Trade and Investment Promotion, [www.minsk.trade.gov.pl/pl/Belarusian/article/detail,456,Wspolpraca\\_gospodarcza\\_z\\_Polska.html](http://www.minsk.trade.gov.pl/pl/Belarusian/article/detail,456,Wspolpraca_gospodarcza_z_Polska.html).

<sup>29</sup> An estimate conversion at the average euro-to-dollar exchange rate for a period from the introduction of the euro in 1999 to 2008, 1 euro = 1.2 US dollar, based on the European Central Bank's data, [www.ecb.int/stats/exchange/eurofxref/html/eurofxref-graph-usd.en.html](http://www.ecb.int/stats/exchange/eurofxref/html/eurofxref-graph-usd.en.html).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>31</sup> A. Woźniak, "Polskie firmy jadą teraz na Białoruś," *Rzeczpospolita*, 10 December 2009, [www.rp.pl/artykul/5,403946.html](http://www.rp.pl/artykul/5,403946.html).

The weight and value of Poland's involvement in Belarus could increase significantly in the wake of completion of large energy sector projects, those already in progress and those at the planning stage. The largest of these will be the construction, at Zelwa near Grodno, of a 1000 MW coal-fired power plant. This project, to be carried out by Kulczyk Holding in cooperation with Belarus's Belenergo, is tentatively budgeted at EUR1.5bn. A letter of intent on this matter was signed in 2008. At this writing the formal and administrative matters are completed. The power station is scheduled to come on stream in 2014.<sup>32</sup> The construction by Poland's Operator Logistyczny Paliw Płynnych (OLPP) of a pipeline from the Mozyr oil refinery in Belarus to the Małaszewicze petroleum products terminal, and the acquisition of the existing section of the pipeline, would have been important investment—but the decision to launch this project, though announced several times already, is still being blocked by Polish fuel groups, recently by Lotos in particular.<sup>33</sup> Other planned investment projects include the modernisation of the Roś-Białystok electricity transmission line (currently inactive) by PSE-Operator SA.<sup>34</sup> Elektrobudowa is interested in investing in the production of automatic control systems for the Belenergo group.<sup>35</sup> An application for a loan in support of this project was filed with the European Investment Bank. Belarus proposed that this investment be realised as an Eastern Partnership cooperation project.

### Social and Cultural Relations

In 2009, with the Schengen visa regime in effect, difficulties in people-to-people contacts between Poland and Belarus persisted. At EUR60, the price of a Schengen visa for Belarusians represents an equivalent of over 20% of

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<sup>32</sup> PAP dispatch, 15 January 2010.

<sup>33</sup> See M. Duszczyk, "Do Polski popłynie olej napędowy z Białorusi," *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, 21 October 2009, [www.naftobazy.pl/index.php?page\\_id=7&subpage\\_id=90&news\\_id=397](http://www.naftobazy.pl/index.php?page_id=7&subpage_id=90&news_id=397); "Plany polskiego NPZ 'Lotos' stawyat krest na planakh Belneftekhima," *Belarusyansky Partizan*, 18 December 2009, <http://Belarusianpartisan.org/bp-forte/?page=100&backPage=13>.

<sup>34</sup> "Sejm VI kadencji, "Odpowiedź podsekretarza stanu w Ministerstwie Gospodarki – z upoważnienia prezesa Rady Ministrów – na interpelację nr 6596 w sprawie deficytu energetycznego w woj. podlaskim," <http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/IZ6.nsf/main/4FE8D105>.

<sup>35</sup> Information placed on the website of the Department of Trade and Investment Promotion of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Minsk, <http://minsk.trade.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/article/y,2009,a,5188,.html>.

the average monthly pay.<sup>36</sup> Besides this prohibitive price, the visa issuing procedure itself, involving as it does the need to appear personally at the consulate two or three times, and the onerous queues discourage Belarusians from planning trips to Poland. Nevertheless, after the first year of Poland's presence in the Schengen zone when personal traffic across the border between Poland and Belarus had plummeted by 44%,<sup>37</sup> in 2009 the number of border crossings was rising slowly, even though it persisted well below that in 2007, the last year under the previous visa regime. In 2009 over 5.9 million people crossed the Polish-Belarusian border (11.9% more than in the same period a year earlier), of which over 5 million Belarusians.

In the last quarter of 2009 inhabitants of locations situated within a 50-kilometre distance from the border dominated in personal cross-border traffic (they accounted for nearly 82% of foreigners and the same percentage of Poles).<sup>38</sup> Shopping was the purpose of travel given most frequently by the foreigners (three-fourth of the foreigners). Belarusians' spending in Poland accounted for about 27.7% of the value of Polish fourth-quarter 2009 exports to Belarus. With Polish citizens, too, shopping was the main purpose of travel (about 55%). Spending by the Poles who had indicated Belarus as their country of destination accounted for about 2.8% of the value of the fourth-quarter 2009 imports from Belarus to Poland. These figures show how important cross-border traffic and trade are to the both sides, just as they illustrate the potential significance of finalising work on a local border traffic agreement for the situation on the border between Poland and Belarus.

Negotiations on a local border traffic agreement were concluded in 2009, but the agreement was not signed. The provisions of the agreement apply to the administrative communities [*gminas*] situated within a 30-kilometre distance from the border. Their inhabitants will be free to move within the neighbouring state's border zone without visas, travelling on special certificates. On the Belarusian side the zone will include two cities with populations of 300 thousand: Brest and

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<sup>36</sup> In December 2009 the average pay in Belarus was about 1.1 million Belarusian roubles, an equivalent of about EUR270—own estimate based on data of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, <http://belstat.gov.by/homep/ru/indicators/pressrel/soob.php>.

<sup>37</sup> Data on personal cross-border traffic quoted after the Border Guard of the Republic of Poland, [www.strazgraniczna.pl/wps/wcm/connect/bd884400419ca7d098f2fe0c105d939d/00\\_IV\\_2009.xls?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=bd884400419ca7d098f2fe0c105d939d&CACHEID=bd884400419ca7d098f2fe0c105d939d](http://www.strazgraniczna.pl/wps/wcm/connect/bd884400419ca7d098f2fe0c105d939d/00_IV_2009.xls?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=bd884400419ca7d098f2fe0c105d939d&CACHEID=bd884400419ca7d098f2fe0c105d939d).

<sup>38</sup> Central Statistical Office's study "Handel a ruch graniczny z Ukrainą i Białorusią IV kw. 2009 r.," quoted after [e-gospodarka.pl](http://e-gospodarka.pl), [www.egospodarka.pl/50193,Handel-a-ruch-graniczny-z-Ukraina-i-Bialorusia-IV-kw-2009,1,39,1.html](http://www.egospodarka.pl/50193,Handel-a-ruch-graniczny-z-Ukraina-i-Bialorusia-IV-kw-2009,1,39,1.html).

Grodno. Poland has been pushing for the modification of the EU local border traffic legislation, so that it should cover a zone up to 50 kilometres and all locations which are a part of a given administrative community and are situated more than 50 kilometres away from the border. Should this come to pass, the city of Białystok, which is the principal place of destination for Belarusians coming to Poland, would fall within the [local border traffic] zone.<sup>39</sup>

Belarus ranks second, after Ukraine, as a country of involvement for Polish non-governmental organisations. A majority of projects implemented in Belarus is concerned with education, broadly construed. These efforts have received substantial financial support from the MFA under the Polish Aid programme. With a PLN27m development aid allocation to Belarus, that country was in 2009 the second largest, after Afghanistan, beneficiary of the Polish Aid programme.<sup>40</sup> The bulk of this funding goes to Belarusian media broadcasting in Polish: the Belsat TV station and Radio Racja. Also, every year aid is provided to about 300 students under the Kalinowski scholarship programme. Owing to this support young people, who are hampered in completing their course of study in Belarus by persecution for their political activity, can undergo education in Poland. All in all, 35 Polish Aid programme-funded projects were underway in Belarus in 2009, administered by NGOs, academic organisations and administrative entities.

Traditionally, historical issues loom large in the relations with Belarus. Time and again, different visions of the history of Poland and Belarus sparked indignation in the both countries. In 2009, too, Belarusian media carried from time to time publications which Poles found outrageous—such as *Sovetskaya Belarus*' version of the history of Brest during the Second World War, in which no mention was made of 1939 events.<sup>41</sup> However, unlike in preceding years, the Belarusian media mounted no widespread anti-Polish propaganda campaign. Even the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Soviet aggression against Poland—which is seen in Belarus as the moment of unification of the Belarusian nation—occasioned no wide-ranging comments. What is more, the Belarusian authorities

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<sup>39</sup> IAR dispatch, 12 October 2009.

<sup>40</sup> Altogether, the 2009 allocation to development aid totalled PLN86m; figures after the MFA, Department of Development Cooperation, "Polska pomoc zagraniczna w 2009 r. na przykładzie wybranych Projektów," Warszawa, 2009, [www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/files/dokumenty\\_publicacje/PUBLIKACJE%202009/polska\\_pomoc\\_2009\\_projekty\\_MSZ.pdf](http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/files/dokumenty_publicacje/PUBLIKACJE%202009/polska_pomoc_2009_projekty_MSZ.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> "Polacy na Białorusi oburzeni fałszowaniem historii," IAR dispatch, 28 November 2009, <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1356,title,Polacy-na-Bialorusi-oburzeni-falszowaniem-historii,wid,11729594,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=19dad>.

scrapped plans to build in Brest a monument to the liberation by the Red Army.<sup>42</sup> In April Belarusian ONT TV broadcaster showed a documentary series “The Home Army: An Unknown History,” which presented in a fairly unbiased manner the Home Army’s struggle against the Germans and the Red Army and sought to answer the question why there had been Belarusians in the Home Army ranks.<sup>43</sup> In this year of a thaw in relations with the West, the Belarusian authorities were probably unwilling to provoke Poland’s sharp reactions, which would certainly have come in response to confrontational publications.

The most important event was the discovery, in the vaults of the Russian Orthodox cathedral in Hlybokaye [*Glubokoye*] in Belarus, of the remains of several dozen bodies—possibly of Poles murdered by the NKVD. This discovery received a broad media coverage in Poland. Assertions by the Belarusian side, that the uncovered remains were of people whose deaths had predated those of the NKVD victims—and who had not died by shooting either, were quoted in a climate of suspicion, amidst accusations of unwillingness to disclose the truth.<sup>44</sup> Yet the Council for the Protection of the Memory of Struggle and Martyrdom found a report by the Belarusian side, which rules out the possibility that resting in Hlybokaye were Polish victims of the NKVD, sound and reliable and for this reason it considers the matter closed.<sup>45</sup>

The manner in which the media in Poland presented the Hlybokaye discovery shows pointedly that not only in Belarus are historical issues in mutual relations viewed with mistrust and, as often as not, through stereotypes. Fortunately, cooperation in this area is often much better. In May Belarusians conducted in the Podlasie region, in cooperation with the Council for the Protection of the Memory of Struggle and Martyrdom, a search for the remains

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<sup>42</sup> A. Poczubut, “Łukaszenka nie chce drażnić Polski,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15 September 2009, [http://wyborcza.pl/1,75477,7037039,Lukaszenka\\_nie\\_chce\\_draznic\\_Polski.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,75477,7037039,Lukaszenka_nie_chce_draznic_Polski.html).

<sup>43</sup> A. Poczubut, “Białoruska telewizja pozytywnie o Armii Krajowej,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 8 April 2009 r., [http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6477209,Bialoruska\\_telewizja\\_pozytywnie\\_o\\_Armii\\_Krajowej.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6477209,Bialoruska_telewizja_pozytywnie_o_Armii_Krajowej.html).

<sup>44</sup> See, for instance: “Białoruś: to był mord na Polakach,” <http://fakty.interia.pl/historia/news/bialorus-tobyl-mord-na-polakach,1342990>; A. Poczubut, “Mord na Polakach. Nieznane groby NKWD,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 22 July 2009, [http://wyborcza.pl/1,75477,6846370,Mord\\_na\\_Polakach\\_Nieznane\\_groby\\_NKWD.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,75477,6846370,Mord_na_Polakach_Nieznane_groby_NKWD.html); A. Poczubut, “Białoruś gmatwa sprawę Głębokiego,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 29 July 2009, [http://wyborcza.pl/1,75477,6869393,Bialorus\\_gmatwa\\_sprawe\\_Glebokiego.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,75477,6869393,Bialorus_gmatwa_sprawe_Glebokiego.html); M. Wojciechowski, “Głębokie – test dla Łukaszenki,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 24 July 2009, [http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6854679,Glebokie\\_test\\_dla\\_Lukaszenki.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6854679,Glebokie_test_dla_Lukaszenki.html).

<sup>45</sup> Information obtained from the Council for the Protection of the Memory of Struggle and Martyrdom.

of Belarusian soldiers who had died in the 1941 fighting. The search completed, the remains were given buried in a solemn ceremony in Hajnówka's Red Army Cemetery, on a specially prepared cemetery lot.<sup>46</sup>

### Appraisal

The dialogue with the Belarusian authorities, that principal distinguishing feature of Poland's 2009 Belarus policy, still arouses controversy. While the effectiveness of the policy of opening can be assessed only in several years' time, it is already obvious that the isolation of Belarus produced no results advantageous from the perspective of Poland's interests. Indeed, it can be said to have obstructed—by sentencing that state to a steadily increasing dependence on Russia—the attainment of one of the most important aims of Poland's policy that neighbourhood with a sovereign Belarus is. As the Union had been looking for a way out of the stalemate with Minsk, the decision to put an end to the isolation of Belarus was ripening. At the same time, signals had been coming from President Lukashenko of the desire to warm up mutual relations. Under the circumstances, a shift in EU's policy was unavoidable. The policy of dialogue with the Belarusian authorities was first started by Germany and Lithuania—that foremost (alongside Poland) leader of Belarus's affairs in the Union. It is a good thing that Poland also came to the forefront of change. By insisting that the isolation should continue Poland would have forfeited both a chance for improving relations with its neighbour and a say on the shaping of the EU's policy towards Belarus.

The fact that, along with the launching of a political dialogue with the Belarusian authorities, much emphasis was put in 2009 on stepping up economic contacts with Belarus also deserves a positive assessment. The building of economic links, besides benefiting Polish businesses, could support the sovereignty of Belarus by creating—with due proportions—a counterbalance to Russian influences in the Belarusian economy and furthering thus the attainment of the principal aims of Poland's Belarus policy.

It is important that even though the two centres of executive power in Poland differ on the requirements and scope for cooperation with the Belarusian regime, these matters were never the subject of a public dispute or debate capable of undermining the message carried by the warming-up gestures. Indeed, the presidential centre, although generally ill-disposed towards a dialogue with the

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<sup>46</sup> Information obtained from the Council for the Protection of the Memory of Struggle and Martyrdom.



Belarusian regime, made the effort of devising its own formula for this cooperation, by establishing the Kiev Initiative.

In 2009, like in preceding years, the failure to achieve a compromise on the Union of Poles in Belarus stood out as the greatest failure of Poland's Belarus policy. The magnitude of this defeat is partly offset by the success in keeping the matter of ZPB's status on the level of EU-Belarus relations rather than Polish-Belarusian relations alone.

Efforts towards signing a local border traffic agreement, a treaty much awaited by communities on the both sides of the border, also failed. As unavailing was the push made in the Union for visa facilitations for Belarusians.

It is unfortunate that Polish diplomacy failed to persuade a majority of the Belarusian opposition—Poland's erstwhile main partner in its policy towards Belarus—that a dialogue with the authorities was no threat to them. Indeed, it does not mean either the end of efforts towards the democratisation of Belarus or a shift away from the policy of support for the democratic communities. That the two prongs of a policy towards Belarus are eminently reconcilable is evidenced by the case of Lithuania. Lithuania was one of the first EU countries to have broken the isolation of the Belarusian authorities. The prime ministers of Lithuania and Belarus had met still before the UE's decision to lift the embargo on contacts with senior Belarusian executives. Also, Lithuania had long sought to develop economic cooperation with Belarus—yet, paradoxically, it was Poland whom the Belarusian opposition activists invited to Brussels by Lithuanian MEPs accused of the betrayal of values and ideals in connection with stepped-up contacts with the authorities in Minsk.

It is unfortunate, too, that Lithuania rather than Poland leads—in collaboration with Belarus—on initiatives proposed under the Eastern Partnership. This means that Poland failed to take advantage, in its relations with Belarus, of the unquestionable success that getting the Eastern Partnership off the ground had been.

*Translated by Elżbieta Gołębiowska*

## Poland's Policy in the Visegrad Group

### Determinants

Two categories of factors influence the shape and the directions of Poland's Visegrad Group policy: long-term ones of a lasting nature, and medium- and short-term ones with a transient impact.<sup>1</sup> Together, they determined Poland's Central European policy in 2008–2009.

The foremost long-term factor is Poland's and its Visegrad Group partners' membership in the European Union. Since 2004 Poland's relations with the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary have constituted an element of Polish European policy which is, alongside the transatlantic links, is the chief instrument for the furtherance of interests in external relations. For this reason, the Visegrad cooperation and the advantages arising therefrom should be seen as factors with a significant impact on the effectiveness of Poland's European policy and Poland's position in the Union.

Closely connected with this is another factor: the pattern of political power in the European Union. On the heels of Poland's and the other Visegrad countries' accession to the [European] Union there appeared opinions that in the new circumstances the focus should be on forming *ad hoc* coalitions within the EU. The reason was that as the Visegrad Group states' perceptions of the European integration process were becoming increasingly disparate, the forging of regional consensus was more and more difficult. Ultimately, however, a belief prevailed that the Visegrad cooperation was a useful (even if not invariably effective) instrument for realising Poland's interests in the Union. It is this belief that has underlain the Polish political elites' readiness to persevere at tightening cooperation within the Visegrad Group regardless of whether at the moment the effectiveness of this cooperation is high, or low.

Processes underway within the European Union were influencing the shape of Poland's Visegrad Group policy also in the medium- and short-term

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<sup>1</sup> The border line separating the medium-term and short term factors being often elusive, in this study they are addressed jointly.

dimension. The foremost among them was the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon. Unlike Poland and the Czech Republic, which delayed this process,<sup>2</sup> Slovakia and Hungary ratified the Treaty promptly.<sup>3</sup> This reflected their different perceptions of the institutional reform of the Union.

Another factor was the global economic crisis, the first manifestations of which appeared in the second half of 2008. The consequences of the crisis affected all Visegrad Group countries but, having made themselves felt in different ways, they caused the individual countries to take diverse views of EU-adopted remedial measures.<sup>4</sup>

Poland's policy in the Visegrad space was also influenced by developments in the immediate neighbourhood of the Union. In August 2008 an armed conflict broke out between Russia and Georgia, and the beginning of the next year saw a Russia-Ukraine gas supply dispute, the adverse consequences of which were felt by practically all Central- and South-East European countries. Among those most painfully affected were Hungary and Slovakia, whose perceptions of energy security and the related issue of relations with Russia had differed from those of Poland and the Czech Republic. However, these developments prompted them to take a greater interest in regional cooperation.

The shape of the Visegrad cooperation was also influenced by the Polish-Swedish Eastern Partnership initiative, which by a decision of the European Council of 20 March 2009 obtained the status of a programme of cooperation between the EU and five states in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus.<sup>5</sup> The Visegrad Group countries, which since their accession to the EU had emphasised the necessity of intensifying relations with the EU's eastern neighbours, contributed importantly to the development of this initiative.<sup>6</sup>

The Czech Presidency of the EU Council in the first half of 2009, besides being one of the paramount factors influencing Poland's Visegrad Group policy, was an immensely important experience for the other members of the Visegrad

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<sup>2</sup> The president of the Republic of Poland signed the Instrument of Ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon on 10 November 2009. The President of the Czech Republic did so on 3 November 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Hungary ratified the Treaty of Lisbon as one of the first member states, on 6 February 2009. Slovakia did so on 24 June of the same year.

<sup>4</sup> Notably, the European Economic Recovery Plan adopted by the European Council on 12 December 2008, and decisions taken by the European Council on 11–12 March 2009. See M. Koczor, *Lisbon Strategy Implementation in 2009: An Analysis*, PISM, Warsaw, 2009, pp. 103–124.

<sup>5</sup> See "Presidency Conclusions–Brussels, 19/20 March 2009," pp. 11–12, 19–21, [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu).

<sup>6</sup> B. Wojna, M. Gniazdowski (eds.), *Eastern Partnership: The Opening Report*, PISM, Warsaw, 2009, pp. 5–12.

Group. The manner in which the Czechs acquitted themselves of the task added to some EU members' scepticism regarding the new member states' ability to hold the presidency of the EU. A mechanism proposed by the Czech authorities, of intra-Visegrad Group mutual consultations on proposed priorities of the presidency, was a meaningful experience. For Poland of particular importance was the fact that these priorities were largely in line with the aims of its own European policy. Consequently, the programme of the Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group (1 July 2008–30 June 2009) included a declaration to support the Czech Presidency.

Finally, the medium- or short-term factors influencing Poland's policy in the Group included the patterns of political power in individual Visegrad states. In this respect no major changes had occurred since 2006, when parliamentary elections were held in all members of the Group except Poland.<sup>7</sup> In the Czech Republic, the election resulted in the coming to power of a coalition of centre-right parties whose stance on such matters as European integration, transatlantic relations, energy security, or relations with Russia was quite similar to Poland's. In Slovakia and Hungary, new left-dominated governments took different positions on these issues, a fact which not without an impact on these countries' relations with Poland. As a result, the level of relations between Poland and the Czech Republic was much above that of Polish-Slovak and Polish-Hungarian relations (and it continued so following the change of government in the Czech Republic in May 2009).

### Aims

To define precisely the current aims of Poland's Visegrad Group policy on the basis of major programme documents concerned with Poland's foreign policy in 2008–2009 is quite a challenge. The reason is that regional issues figure modestly in these sources, in particular compared with similar documents from preceding years.<sup>8</sup> When presenting the programme of his government in a Sejm address on 23 November 2007, Prime Minister Donald Tusk declared

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<sup>7</sup> M. Gniazdowski, "Poland's Policy in the Visegrad Group," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2008, pp. 165–169.

<sup>8</sup> See "Government Information on the Polish Foreign Policy in 2005 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prof. Adam Daniel Rotfeld, at the session of the Sejm on 21st January 2005)," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2006; "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2007 (presented at the session of the Sejm on 11 May 2007 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Anna Fotyga)," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2008.

only the will to continue the Visegrad cooperation.<sup>9</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski addressed the same matter more extensively; he emphasised, in information from the government on Polish foreign policy tasks in 2008, that the Visegrad Group states, the Baltic countries, Bulgaria, Romania and Sweden remained Poland's closest partners, in particular "with respect to the eastern direction of the EU's foreign policy."<sup>10</sup> A year later, addressing the Sejm, Minister Sikorski highlighted the significance of the Czech Presidency of the EU for the Visegrad cooperation and he endorsed the priorities of that Presidency. On the same occasion he announced that close cooperation would be maintained with Hungary, which was due to hold the EU Presidency immediately before Poland. Referring to Poland's ongoing Presidency of the Visegrad Group he said that it was being taken advantage of to deepen cooperation in this particular forum.<sup>11</sup>

There appear to be two reasons for this succinct coverage of the aims of Poland's policy in the Visegrad space.

The more important of the two is that the principal aims and directions of this policy had already been defined earlier, in years immediately after the accession to the EU, and they remained unchanged following the coming to power in November 2007 of the Civic Platform—Polish Peasants' Party coalition. Their shape had been determined by the objective long-term factors referred to earlier, in particular by the fact that, its limitations notwithstanding, the Visegrad cooperation had proved to be the most effective regional platform for articulating Polish interests within and without the EU. From this arises the most important and relatively enduring aim of Poland's Visegrad policy: to shape cooperation within the Group in such a way as to maximise its contribution to the realisation of these interests. The principal aims of Poland's Visegrad Group policy being constant, they need neither re-stating nor (this even less) re-defining.

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<sup>9</sup> "Przedstawienie przez prezesa Rady Ministrów programu działania Rady Ministrów z wnioskiem o udzielenie jej wotum zaufania," 23 November 2007, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>10</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2008 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski)," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2009.

<sup>11</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009 (presented at the sitting of the Sejm on 13 February 2009 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski)," above, p. 11.

The other, much more prosaic, reason was that the formula of these policy documents had changed. They were now briefer than those presented by the Minister's predecessors.

Such being the case, a lower-ranking document—namely, the programme of Poland's Presidency of the Visegrad Group in the period from July 2008 to June 2009—appears to be the most dependable source. The aims and priorities laid down therein were divided into three groups corresponding to three major challenges that—in Poland's opinion—the Group confronted in the first half of 2008.

The first aim was to improve the mechanisms for quadripartite cooperation. To this end, the systemic nature of the cooperation was to be improved through “more effective time management” and more precise coordination of joint efforts, and through “the deepening of cooperation on sectoral policies.”<sup>12</sup>

Second, there was the need to enhance the cohesion of the Visegrad Group countries' activities within the EU. To this end, the mechanism for mutual political-level consultations was to be strengthened, as was the Visegrad states' impact on decision-making processes in the European institutions. The Donald Tusk government wanted to develop the greatest possible consensus on such issues as the ratification and, thereafter, the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon; the staffing of positions in EU institutions (including in a new European Commission); or the attainment of the Poland-supported priorities of the Czech Presidency.

Last but not least, there was the aim of strengthening cooperation with non-Visegrad Group states, including non-EU ones. This involved, firstly, improving the V4+ formula—which is, essentially, about perceiving the Visegrad Group as the foundation for a broader regional cooperation with other partners selected *ad hoc* according to needs of the moment—and, secondly, intensifying the Visegrad Group's involvement in the building and development of the eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy and in fostering relations between the EU and Ukraine.

The above aims can be seen as medium-term goals of Poland's Visegrad Group policy in 2008–2009. It should be noted that the order in which they were presented in the programme did not in fact correspond to their hierarchy of importance. Of the highest consequence (though actually put in the second and third place in the programme) were the goals the implementation of which was to contribute to the attainment of top-ranking objects of Poland's European

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<sup>12</sup> “Program przewodnictwa RP w Grupie Wyszehradzkiej, lipiec 2008 – czerwiec 2009, Departament Europy MSZ,” June 2008, pp. 1–2, [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu).

policy and Eastern policy. The necessity of improving intra-Group cooperation mechanisms should be seen as an ancillary goal, certainly secondary to the improvement (listed in the same sub-paragraph) of cooperation on sectoral policies.

During its Visegrad Group Presidency Poland found it necessary to modify, under the impact of developments, some of its priorities. This, however, did not affect either the previously declared aims or (this even less) its Visegrad-space policy aims, which remained unchanged (owing, for the most part, owing to their general nature). It is worth noting that the priorities of the next Presidency, the Hungarian one (1 July 2009–30 June 2010), although worded differently and addressing, in part, areas of no direct interest to Poland (Roma community problems), largely referred to the priorities of the Polish Presidency.<sup>13</sup>

This shows that, as the Visegrad states take turn in holding this function, they follow (to some extent at least) established patterns similar to those of the rotational EU presidencies. In the both cases the agenda of the presidency is a resultant of the orientation of the presidency-holding country and of current developments in the international environment. Also, it appears that the Visegrad Group members' expectations of the Group are, at least in part, analogous to their expectations of the Union. For all their differences, the both structures are meant to create for their members conditions for the realisation of their national interests superior to those available to the non-member countries.

In this sense, both the long-term aims of Poland's Visegrad-space policy and the medium-term goals (articulated in the programme of the latest Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group) are common to all Visegrad states. What stands out as the principal obstacle to their realisation are conflicting interests of both a subjective and objective nature.

### Multilateral Cooperation

Poland held the Presidency of the Visegrad Group at a time of very dynamic changes in the international environment. This affected adversely the attainment of Poland's pre-set targets, some of which needed to be modified in a relatively short time. Plans to improve the coordination of efforts for prompt ratification and implementation of the **Treaty of Lisbon** was a case in point. Long before the signing of the Treaty (13 December 2007) fundamental differences had surfaced in the different Visegrad Group members' perceptions of the entire

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<sup>13</sup> See "Program of the Hungarian Presidency in the Visegrad Group, July 2009–June 2010," [www.kulugyminiszterium.hu](http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu).

institutional reform process, of which the Treaty was to be the keystone. Poland and the Czech Republic had viewed with much reserve plans to deepen political integration, while Slovakia and Hungary had been among their staunch supporters.<sup>14</sup> In addition, both the Polish and the Czech political elites had been strongly divided over the Treaty of Lisbon, a rift that slowed down the ratification process in the both countries. In the both countries the governments and parliaments championed the ratification, while the presidents made the completion of the ratification process contingent upon the fulfilment by the EU of additional conditions. These differences rendered practically impossible the coordination of positions (and, even more, of activities designed to bring about the completion of the Treaty ratification process) within the Visegrad Group.

Other intra-Group divisions surfaced in the wake of the August 2008 conflict between Georgia and Russia. The appraisal of the conflict gave rise to controversy at a meeting of Visegrad Group Presidents at Piešťany (12–13 September 2008). The Czech President, Václav Klaus, argued that the responsibility for the conflict lay with Georgia, which had invaded South Ossetia thereby provoking a response by Russia. This position was endorsed by Slovak President Ivan Gašparovič and challenged by President Kaczyński, who pointed out on this occasion that the Caucasus conflict could seriously hamper the EU's efforts to diversify its energy supply sources. Hungarian President László Szolyom made no clear-cut position statement, but he insisted that the Visegrad Group countries should work towards the development of a common position by the European Union.<sup>15</sup>

This exchange reflected dissimilarities in the different countries' assessments of Russia's role in relations with its immediate neighbourhood. There is a caveat, though: unlike in Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, where the presidents and the governments were in accord on this issue, in the Czech Republic the president and the government (headed at that time by the leader of the Civic Democratic Party—ODS—Mirek Topolánek) held opposing views. Unlike the head of the state, government officials firmly condemned Russia's actions against Georgia and the prime minister went as far as to compare them to the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact forces in 1968.<sup>16</sup> Foreign policy

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<sup>14</sup> L. Jesień (ed.), "Current Status of Debate in European States on the Constitutional Treaty," *PISM Research Papers*, no. 5, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> R. Sadowski, "Grupa Wyszehradzka – spór o konflikt w Gruzji," 18 September 2008, [www.osw.waw.pl](http://www.osw.waw.pl).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. "Prohlášení vlády ČR k situaci v Gruzii ze dne 20. 8.," [www.vlada.cz](http://www.vlada.cz); M. Topolánek, "Gruzie patří do NATO, a jednou v něm bude," *MF Dnes*, 14 August 2008.



being in the Czech Republic (like in Poland) the responsibility of the government, that country's position on the Georgia-Russia conflict can be said to have concurred with that of Poland. The different stance of the Slovak and Hungarian authorities was largely dictated by concern that an express condemnation of Russia should lead to the weakening of relations with that state, which they treated as their chief partner in Eastern Europe.

The approach to **relations with Russia** was a major issue setting apart Polish and Czech foreign policies from those of the two other Visegrad Group states. Both Slovakia's Robert Fico government and Hungary's Ferenc Gyurcsany government treated Russia as a key partner with which to cooperate to ensure their countries' energy security. For this reason, not only did they avoid a confrontation with Moscow, but they also supported it on matters, on which Poland and the Czech Republic took a different position (including plans to deploy in Central Europe elements of the U.S. missile defence system).<sup>17</sup>

These states' non-committal stance on Russia's intervention in Georgia was just one manifestation of a policy, in which the approach to the EU's **energy security** figured as the paramount element. The Fico and Gyurcsany governments, while endorsing the creation of the foundations of a common energy policy, saw the diversification of transport routes as the way to increase energy security and, unlike the Tusk and Topolánek governments, they failed to acknowledge the need to diversify the sources of supply. This amounted, in practice, to recognising Russia as a dependable supplier of energy sources and seeking to benefit from Russian plans of expansion in EU markets (i.e. deriving profits from transit country status).<sup>18</sup>

**The Russia-Ukraine gas conflict** of January 2009 brought about a partial revision of this position in the both countries. As one of the repercussions of the conflict, the supply of Russian gas to Slovakia and Hungary was stopped entirely, with highly damaging effects for these countries' economies. Paradoxically, Russia's having forfeited its status as reliable supplier of energy sources helped overcome the conflict of interests in the Visegrad Group. Under the impact of

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<sup>17</sup> See I. Samson "The Visegrad Four: From Loose Geographic Group to Security Internationalization?," *International Issues and Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, no. 4, 2009, p. 15; *Minister Szekeres's Address at the Manfred Wörner Foundation*, 20 March 2009, [www.hm.gov.hu](http://www.hm.gov.hu).

<sup>18</sup> See K. Hirman, "The Energy Security of the SR in the Context of the EU and Relations with Russia," *International Issues and Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, no. 1, 2009, pp. 29–37; A. Deák, "Diversification in Hungarian Manner: The Gyurcsány Government's Energy Policy," *International Issues and Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, no. 3–4, 2006, pp. 44–55.

these developments the governments of Slovakia and Hungary became more receptive to Polish energy security arguments; of the two, it was the Hungarian government's stance that underwent the greater changes.

Prior to the gas conflict the Gyurcsány government had viewed with reserve the plans to build the Nabucco gas pipeline as an alternative to supplies from Russia. Under the impact of the gas crisis it revised its position and supported the plans to implement this project (in which Slovakia, too, declared itself willing to participate);<sup>19</sup> however, it did not withdraw its support for a Russia-promoted rival project, the South Stream gas pipeline, thus showing inconsistency in its approach to energy security.<sup>20</sup> Such were the limitations Poland faced as it encouraged its Visegrad Group partners to speak in a single voice on energy issues. Even the Czech Republic, sharing as it did Poland's position on energy security threats, was interested in participating in the Nord Stream gas pipeline which Poland criticised.<sup>21</sup>

Poland's efforts to enlist the Visegrad Group states' support for the Donald Tusk government-defined aims relating to the **energy-climate package**, a draft of which was unveiled by the European Commission in January 2009, fared differently. The aim was to have the final version of this document allow for differences in economic development in the "old" and "new" EU member states, as well as and for Poland's nearly total reliance on coal as a source of electricity.<sup>22</sup> For this aim to be achieved, it was necessary to form a coalition of states that subscribed, at least partly, to the Polish point of view. The Polish government succeeded in rallying for this cause the other Visegrad countries, which became the core of a broader coalition of new member states. At a meeting on 5 November 2008 in Warsaw the prime ministers of the Visegrad Group states, Baltic states, Bulgaria, and Romania supported a Polish request that the package allow for "the specific situations of the Member States and their

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<sup>19</sup> M. Bocian, M. Szpala, "Nowe koncepcje bezpieczeństwa energetycznego państw Europy Środkowej i Bałkanów," 28 January 2009, [www.osw.waw.pl](http://www.osw.waw.pl).

<sup>20</sup> Russia's efforts to win over Hungary and other states in the region for the South Stream gas pipeline project were targeted, among other things, at blocking Nabucco as a rival (from Russia's perspective) project. See M. Bocian, "Rosyjsko-węgierskie umowy gazowe," 18 March 2009, [www.osw.waw.pl](http://www.osw.waw.pl).

<sup>21</sup> "Gazelle," a project to lay across the territory of the Czech Republic a Saxony-Bavaria connector pipeline to carry Russian gas transported by North Stream. See "GAZELA," [www.net4gas.cz](http://www.net4gas.cz).

<sup>22</sup> A. Gradziuk, E. Wyciszkievicz, "International Dimension of Poland's Climate Policy," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2009*, p. 242.

level of economic development.”<sup>23</sup> Eventually, final negotiations on the package ended in a compromise reached at a European Council meeting of 11–12 December 2008. The substance of the arrangements adopted then recognised to a large extent the position developed with the participation of Poland's partners in the region.<sup>24</sup>

**The Czech Presidency of the EU Council** in the first half of 2009 carried much significance for the Visegrad cooperation. It was a foregone conclusion that the Czechs' performance would have a bearing on perceptions of the Group, which is regarded by the “old Europe” countries as a whole.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, the Czech Presidency was seen (including by the Czechs themselves) as an opportunity to push through in the EU at least some of the regional priorities. In March 2007 Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek declared that his government was desirous of developing the programme of the presidency jointly with the other Visegrad Group countries.<sup>26</sup> This announcement was followed by activities, of which consultations by the Visegrad Group states' permanent representatives to the EU in Brussels appear to have been the most fruitful. The principal purpose of these consultations was to identify areas in which the Czech Presidency could count on support from its regional partners. Likewise, meetings of representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Poland and the Czech Republic, held in 2008 pursuant to an agreement on cooperation between the MFAs of the both states, concluded late in 2007, served the search for common interests.<sup>27</sup>

The consultations, conducted on both these platforms, produced results which, while limited, were tangible (in particular from the Polish perspective). They led to identifying the EU's energy policy (in particular cooperation on the climate-energy package) and the eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy<sup>28</sup> as likely subjects of the Visegrad Group states' cooperation during the

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<sup>23</sup> “Grupa Wyszehradzka i państwa bałtyckie solidarne w sprawie pakietu klimatyczno-energetycznego,” 5 November 2008, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl); “Wspólne oświadczenie premierów Grupy Wyszehradzkiej,” 5 November 2008, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl).

<sup>24</sup> See “Presidency conclusions—Brussels, 11 and 12 December 2008, pp. 8–9,” [www.eu2008.fr](http://www.eu2008.fr).

<sup>25</sup> A. Fuksiewicz, A. Łada, *Czeska prezydencja w Radzie Unii Europejskiej – spojrzenie z Polski. Raport z badań Instytutu Spraw Publicznych*, Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa, 2009, p. 18.

<sup>26</sup> “Topolánek bude o radaru mluvit i se sousedy,” 30 March 2008, [www.lidovky.cz](http://www.lidovky.cz).

<sup>27</sup> M. Kořan, “Státy Visegrádské skupiny a Rakousko v české zahraniční politice,” in: M. Kořan et al., *Česká zahraniční politika v roce 2007: analýza ÚMV*, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, Praha, 2008, p. 143.

<sup>28</sup> A. Vondra, “Visegrad Group and the Czech EU–Presidency,” 5 June 2008, [www.alexandrondra.cz](http://www.alexandrondra.cz).

Czech Presidency. Actually, cooperation in creating a new shape of the EU's eastern policy proved to be the more effective of the two.

In a period immediately before the Czech Presidency the chief aim of the Visegrad Group countries was to bring about a balance between the Eastern and the Southern dimensions of the European Neighbourhood Policy, an effort additionally spurred in 2008 by France-promoted Union for the Mediterranean. Another aim was to assuage some "old" member states' apprehensions concerning the establishment of closer relations with the EU's eastern neighbours. As part of these efforts, Poland won the Visegrad Group states' support for an **Eastern Partnership** initiative designed to create a new framework for cooperation between the EU and five states in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus. Yet, while pursuing this project the Polish government failed to make use of all opportunities for working together with its regional partners, even though earlier the Visegrad Group states had cooperated closely and with good effects on the strengthening of the eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy [ENP].<sup>29</sup> In April 2008 it even seemed likely that the new initiative would be developed and presented in a V4 + Sweden format.<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, however, Poland resolved to propose the initiative only with Sweden, a decision received (in particular in the Czech Republic, which at the time was holding the Visegrad Presidency) as a message that Poland was putting alliances with "old" EU members above cooperation with the Visegrad Group states. Even so, both the Topolánek government and the governments of the other Visegrad states supported the Eastern Partnership on the grounds that it offered more opportunities for the realisation of common interests in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus that did the existing framework of the eastern dimension of the ENP.

The Russia-Ukraine gas conflict and a growing conviction that diversification—not limited to supply routes of energy resources, but extending also to suppliers—was imperative engendered a similarity of the Visegrad States' aims in this area. The South Caucasus states, at which the Eastern Partnership is targeted, can play an important role in this respect (in particular by participating in the Nabucco project). As regards Ukraine, whose reputation as a transit country was seriously damaged during the gas conflict, the Eastern Partnership is meant to induce it to put in order its non-transparent energy-sector

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<sup>29</sup> M. Kořan, "Višegradská spolupráce, Rakousko, Polsko a Slovensko v české zahraniční politice," in: M. Kořan *et al.*, *Česká zahraniční politika v roce 2008: analýza ÚMV*, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, Praha, 2009, pp. 103–104.

<sup>30</sup> "Joint Statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Visegrad Group Countries, Sweden and Ukraina, 23 April 2008, Czech Republic," [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu).

structures, increasing thereby the security of supply from Russia. So construed, the Eastern Partnership would serve to strengthen the external dimension of the EU's energy policy—yet its essential aim is to support political and economic transformation in the target states.

Relations between the EU and Russia in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus figured prominently in the debate on an ultimate shape of the Eastern Partnership. A majority of the member states took a position that the implementation of the programme should not lead to mutual rivalry, and even less to the isolation of Russia in the region. In the Visegrad Group this point was stressed in particular by Slovakia and Hungary. The governments of Poland and the Czech Republic, for their part, emphasised the undesirability of perceiving and appraising initiatives targeted at the eastern neighbours of the EU solely through the prism of Russian interests, on various grounds—including Russia's tendency to treat its immediate neighbourhood as its influence zone.<sup>31</sup> The both groups of states highlighted the necessity to develop contemporaneously the eastern dimension of the ENP and EU-Russia relations. For this reason Poland organised, in January 2009, consultations of the Visegrad Group states and Russia, with an agenda that included the Eastern Partnership.<sup>32</sup>

The implementation of the Polish-Swedish initiative played an important, positive role in the shaping of the final image of the Czech Presidency; indeed, it should be rated as that Presidency's greatest success in the sphere of the EU's external relations. Regrettably, the Prague summit of 7 May 2009, which inaugurated the Eastern Partnership, was the last project of the Topolánek government, which has been dismissed several weeks earlier. The fall of this government midway through the term of the [Czech] Presidency deprived it of the necessary political capital, just as it provided those politicians in Western Europe, who, like President Sarkozy, had questioned from the outset the Czech Republic's ability to preside over the European Union, with additional arguments. The critical appraisal of the Czech Presidency of the EU Council could be an encumbrance for the future Hungarian and Polish Presidencies.

Efforts to further the Eastern Partnership also played a very important role (largely due to a position adopted by the Polish government) in the consolidation of the Visegrad Group as a platform for the articulation of states' interests in the

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<sup>31</sup> See. D. Král, "Czechy i Partnerstwo Wschodnie – od produktu ubocznego do kochanego dziecka?," in: I. Albrycht (ed.), *Partnerstwo Wschodnie w kontekście Europejskiej Polityki Sąsiedztwa i agendy Grupy Wyszehradzkiej*, Instytut Kościuszki – Instytut Integracji Europejskiej, Kraków, 2009.

<sup>32</sup> B. Wojna, "Poland," in: B. Wojna, M. Gniazdowski (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 42.

EU. It transpired that, despite their differences, the [Visegrad Group] states were capable of establishing loyal cooperation in an area which could be regarded as their long-term political priority. If this tendency continues, this would be a proof that the Visegrad Group countries are equal not only to forging occasional coalitions (like on the climate-energy package), but also to forming lasting alliances for matters of strategic (from their perspective) importance to European policy.

Poland's involvement in Visegrad Group activities for the integration of the **Western Balkan** states with European and Atlantic structures must be seen as less creditable. This issue figures prominently in the policies of the other Visegrad Group states, its role being comparable to the importance Poland attaches to relations with the EU's eastern neighbourhood. Yet, unlike the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, which have long engaged actively in efforts to create a desirable (from the Polish perspective) eastern policy of the EU, Poland has accorded much less support to the attainment of their Balkan priorities. This is partly due to the Western Balkans' never having played a meaningful role in Poland's foreign policy,<sup>33</sup> the aims of which in respect of this region are defined in general terms and concerned chiefly with security and political and economic stability.<sup>34</sup>

Poland has invariably supported the European and Atlantic aspirations of the Balkan states, but its involvement in efforts to further the same has been much lesser than those of the other Visegrad states.<sup>35</sup> This situation has been changing slowly in recent years—for various reasons, including the weight of expert opinions which pronounce the Western Balkans a priority area also for the EU.<sup>36</sup> However, this change was not reflected either in the programme or in the activities of the Polish Visegrad Group Presidency, which was focused on promoting the Eastern Partnership. Still, Poland declared its readiness to support, during its Presidency of the EU, the European aspirations of the Western Balkan states.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> For more on this subject see T. Żornaczuk, Poland's Policy towards the Western Balkans, below, p. 224–238.

<sup>34</sup> See “Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2008...,” *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> For causes underlying this state of things see P. Świeboda, “Polski powrót na Bałkany – za i przeciw,” *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 2, 2008, pp. 20–24.

<sup>36</sup> See M. Gniazdowski, “Bałkany Zachodnie: sprawa środkowoeuropejskiej solidarności,” *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 2, 2008, pp. 10–15.

<sup>37</sup> See “The Visegrad Group Stands Ready to Promote the Integration of the Western Balkans,” 6 October 2009, [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu).

In the period under survey the necessity to contain the adverse consequences of the **global economic crisis** was a major challenge for the Visegrad Group countries. The crisis seriously restricted the Czech Presidency's scope for putting into practice plans to liberalise the mechanisms which regulate the working of the single market. Instead, the Czechs had to counter protectionist moods which had surfaced in some member states and which were epitomised by France's EUR6bn aid plan for the motor industry, making support for indigenous businesses contingent on their keeping production in France. At that time Poland and the other Visegrad Group countries supported the Czech Presidency. Before an informal European Council summit on 1 March 2009 the prime ministers of the Visegrad Group states, Baltic states, Bulgaria and Romania met—at the initiative of the Polish government—with the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso to discuss ways to fight the consequences of the crisis. The participants agreed that these methods should respect the rules applicable to the functioning of the EU's single market.<sup>38</sup>

Yet the Visegrad Group countries, having been affected by the economic crisis in different degrees, failed to show full solidarity in fighting its consequences. Hungary, which even earlier had been struggling with grave economic challenges, was in the gravest predicament. In March 2009 the Gyurcsány government proposed in the EU that a special fund be set for the Central and East European countries to ensure the stability of their public finances. The other Visegrad Group countries (including Poland) being in a better situation in this respect than Hungary, they did not support this proposal because they did not want the region to be treated as a whole for crisis impact assessment purposes. Consequently, the European Council decided that aid would be provided to member countries on a case-by-case basis.

Like in preceding years, cooperation of ministries was an important element of the Visegrad cooperation. It should be noted that **sectoral cooperation**, by producing tangible benefits (in particular in selected areas), contributes to the Visegrad Group's being perceived as a useful tool for realising, among other interests, those which are not always directly connected with big politics. During the Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group four rounds of consultations were held, resulting in the development of enabling mechanisms for the launch of

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<sup>38</sup> "Wspólne stanowisko państw Grupy Wyszehradzkiej, krajów bałtyckich, Bułgarii i Rumunii," 1 March 2009, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl).

Visegrad aid programmes in selected countries.<sup>39</sup> Also, during the Polish Presidency joint proposals for changes in the EU's cohesion policy after 2013 were developed and submitted to the European Commission.<sup>40</sup>

The free movement of persons figured importantly in sectoral cooperation. This matter was addressed both by non-governmental organisations and by experts from the Visegrad states' MFAs. In the course of consultations the principles of visa regime liberalisation in respect of the Eastern Partnership countries were agreed. Early in April the ministers of foreign affairs of the Visegrad Group states, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia and Italy sent to the European Commission a letter pointing to the need to liberalise the visa regime for the citizens of the Western Balkan states.<sup>41</sup>

The work of the **International Visegrad Fund** has influenced positively the way the cooperation between the Visegrad Group and other states is perceived by the public in the countries concerned. In the V4+ programme, which was adopted still during the Czech Presidency, Belarus, Serbia and Georgia were identified as the principal beneficiaries of the Fund. 2009 saw the launch, at Poland's initiative, of a scholarship programme for students from Belarus.<sup>42</sup> The positive appraisal of the Fund's performance directly influenced the decision to increase the Fund's budget by EUR1m (to EUR6m annually) as of 2010.<sup>43</sup>

### **Bilateral Relations**

**Political relations.** Of all Visegrad Group states, the Czech Republic is the one with which Poland has the most developed relations. This has much to do with the similarity of the programmes of the both states' ruling parties, in evidence since the Civic Democratic Party's (ODS) came to power in the Czech Republic in the autumn of 2006, has much significance in this respect.

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<sup>39</sup> "Sprawozdanie z realizacji polskiego przewodnictwa w Grupie Wyszehradzkiej, lipiec 2008–czerwiec 2009," [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>40</sup> "Spotkanie ministrów rozwoju regionalnego Grupy Wyszehradzkiej w Sopocie," *Biuletyn Informacyjny* (Ministry of Regional Development), no. 26, 2009.

<sup>41</sup> "Sprawozdanie..., *op. cit.*

<sup>42</sup> "Visegrad Fund 2010, Annual Report 2009/Guidelines 2010," [www.visegradfund.org](http://www.visegradfund.org).

<sup>43</sup> "Press Release of the Polish V4 Presidency after the Official Summit of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group Countries, Wieliczka, 3 June 2009," [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu).



Moreover, bolstering cooperation between the governments were good relations of the presidents of the both states, Lech Kaczyński and Václav Klaus.<sup>44</sup>

It will be seen from programme documents on Polish foreign policy that in 2008–2009 no specific aims or tasks were articulated with respect to the Czech Republic. Relations between the two countries were perceived through the prism of regional cooperation which, as a matter of assumption, was to serve the aims identified in the programme of the Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group.<sup>45</sup> Judging by these aims, it appears that with no country was Poland as strongly linked by the similarity of views on the key issues of European integration and security as with the Czech Republic. At the same time, this can hardly be attributed to Poland's influence on Czech foreign policy. Indeed, the convergence of positions resulted predominantly from an advantageous (from Poland's perspective) power pattern on the Czech political scene. The dismissal of the Topolánek government in March 2009 and the coming to power of an interim government formed by Jan Fischer did not affect this state of things in any meaningful way.

With the helm of government taken over by the Civic Democratic Party came a shift, advantageous for Poland, in Czech foreign policy. When the institutional reform process collapsed following the rejection by the Irish of the Treaty of Lisbon, Poland and the Czech Republic challenged a thesis, promoted by France and Germany, that the process of EU enlargement could not be continued under the Treaty of Nice. The support the Czechs gave to the Eastern Partnership initiative (despite Poland's having ignored, in fact, earlier Czech proposals for the build-up of the eastern dimension of the ENP) had positive influence on mutual relations. It should be noted in this context that, unlike the remaining Visegrad Group countries, the Czech Republic shared the Polish authorities' critical position on Russia's conduct in the post-Soviet area.

The convergence of Poland's and the Czech Republic's views on Russia was closely connected with the importance the governments of the both states attached to transatlantic relations and to cooperation with the United States. One consequence of this approach was the acceptance by Poland and the Czech Republic of a U.S. offer of participation in the building of a missile defence programme. Although the both governments kept each other informed of the progress of their negotiations with the U.S., they did not coordinate their

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<sup>44</sup> See K. Zuchowicz, "Ten traktat szkodzi wolności. Rozmowa z Vaclavem Klausem, prezydentem Republiki Czeskiej," *Rzeczpospolita*, 27 July 2008.

<sup>45</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2008...", *op. cit.*

activities relating to these talks, despite their declared will to tighten cooperation.<sup>46</sup> In 2009 the both states faced a new challenge, of the new U.S. administration's giving up the deployment in Central Europe of elements of the missile defence system. This affected negatively Poland's and the Czech Republic's strategic dialogue with the U.S. and, at the same time, weakened their position in the EU and vis-à-vis Russia.

Poland supported the priorities of the Czech Presidency of the EU Council and, while so doing, refrained from criticising certain moves of this Presidency which some other member states (notably France) used as a pretext to argue that the Czech Republic was incapable of presiding over the Union. Underlying this attitude of Poland's was the belief that, after all is said and done, the appraisal of the Czech presidency was bound to reflect on the perception of the Polish Presidency of the EU and, therefore, of the viability of Polish programme priorities.<sup>47</sup>

Trans-border cooperation was one example (unrelated directly to big politics) of good relations of Poland and the Czech Republic. This cooperation ranks among the best-developed in Europe. Its intensity is evidenced by the six Euroregions operating on the common border—more than on any other of Poland's borders with its neighbours. Credit for this is largely due to Poland, which had initiated the establishment of a majority of these regions.

Efforts to resolve the “Czech territorial debt” issue and to settle the status of Czech real properties in Warsaw were unsuccessful.<sup>48</sup> The condition of road infrastructure connecting the two countries continued to hamper the intensification of economic and people-to-people relations.

The period from 2008 to 2009 saw no significant changes in Poland's relations with Slovakia either. Differences persisted in the perception by the both countries' governments of European integration and transatlantic relations. During his first official visit to Slovakia (18 January 2008) Prime Minister Tusk received no understanding from Prime Minister Robert Fico for the plans to deploy in Poland elements of the U.S. anti-missile system.<sup>49</sup> Poland's push for Slovakia's more unequivocal support to activities designed to improve Ukraine's

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<sup>46</sup> “Polska i Czechy chcą koordynować działania podczas negocjacji w sprawie tarczy antyrakietowej,” 10 January 2008, [www.premier.gov.pl](http://www.premier.gov.pl).

<sup>47</sup> A. Fuksiewicz, A. Łada, *op. cit.*

<sup>48</sup> See M. Gniazdowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 186–187.

<sup>49</sup> “Prepis audiozáznamu spoločnej tlačovej konferencie oboch predsedov vlád SR a Poľskej republiky,” 18 January 2008, [www.government.gov.sk](http://www.government.gov.sk).

and Georgia's chances of membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation were unavailing too. The non-committal position of the Slovak government on this matter was largely attributable to its concern about the state of relations with Russia which, in its opinion, should be a strategic partner of NATO.<sup>50</sup>

The belief that good relations with Russia must be preserved was the paramount rationale underlying the Slovak authorities' position during the Georgia-Russia conflict, for provoking which they blamed Georgia. While this was, to some extent, a consequence of Slovakia's total dependence on Russian energy resources, there were deeper reasons too, namely the susceptibility of a part of the Slovak political (and opinion-forming) elite to arguments that special links exist between Slovakia and Russia and, therefore, the best possible relations must be maintained by the both countries regardless of all other circumstances and commitments. This belief goes hand in hand with a thick web of Slovak-Russian economic ties in which Russia is much the stronger partner. These factors, combined with the policy conducted by the coalition government of the SMER-SD party, Slovak National Party (SNS) and the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), were rendering difficult Polish-Slovak dialogue on matters concerning relations with Russia.

Despite these differences, pragmatism dominated in the relations of Poland and Slovakia, aided by intensive cooperation in areas invulnerable to current political expediencies. Trans-border cooperation was developing fast, with the both parties working together to improve road infrastructure in border areas. Contacts—more frequent in 2008–2009 than in preceding years—between the presidents, prime ministers, parliamentarians and ministers of foreign affairs bore witness to good mutual relations. Yet the level of relations with Slovakia was considerably below that of relations with the Czech Republic.

In recent years the traditionally friendly links between Poland and Hungary have not been reflected in political relations between the two states. Presumably, this is attributable—much like in the case of Polish-Slovak relations—to the two states' diverging positions on key issues of European integration, or to their different perceptions of relations between the EU and Russia, and of transatlantic relations and the role played in them by the U.S. Another factor

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<sup>50</sup> M. Gniazdowski, "Slovakia," in: B. Górka-Winter, M. Madej, *NATO Member States and the New Strategic Concept: An Overview*, PISM, Warsaw, 2010, pp. 94–97.

with an impact on this state of affairs was the complicated political situation in Hungary since the 2006 parliamentary election.<sup>51</sup>

Since the Law and Justice (PiS) party had come to power in Poland in the autumn of 2005, the ideological and programme diversity of the parties ruling in the both had the decisive influence on political relations between Poland and Hungary. It should be emphasised, however, that the Left, in power in Hungary since 2002, had always been sceptical about the tightening of relations with Poland and about the development of cooperation within the Visegrad Group. A warming of relations occurred following the coming to power in Poland of the Civic Platform—Polish Peasants' Party coalition, a development welcomed by politicians of Hungary's ruling centre-left coalition of the Socialist Party (MSZP) and Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ). One of the earliest manifestations of this warming was a meeting, the first since 2006, of the prime ministers of the both countries, Donald Tusk and Ferenc Gyurcsány, on 31 January in Warsaw.

From the Polish perspective, of particular importance was the support accorded by the Gyurcsány government to the Eastern Partnership initiative. This support was re-affirmed at successive meetings of Visegrad Group prime ministers on 26 September 2008, 5 November 2008 and 24 November 2008. This is not to say that Hungary's position on the Eastern Partnership was identical with Poland's. The Hungarians stressed emphatically that the implementation of the Eastern Partnership "must not create another division between the EU and Russia. Both the EU and NATO have a long-term interest in co-operating with Moscow."<sup>52</sup>

The approach to relations with Russia was one of the more important dissimilarities between the foreign policies of Hungary and Poland. For a long time the Gyurcsány government had treated Russia as a key partner with which to cooperate to ensure energy security for the country. After the Russia-Ukraine gas conflict the Hungarians revised partly their position on this matter, with the result that 2009 saw an approximation of the two countries' positions and a closer cooperation (the Hungarians showed an interest in the participation of PGNiG, a Polish company, in the implementation of the Nabucco project).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> J. Humberger, "The Future of the Visegrad Cooperation from the Hungarian Perspective," *International Issues and Slovak Foreign Policy Affaires*, no. 3–4, 2006, p. 94.

<sup>52</sup> "Hungary Will Pursue an Active Foreign Policy Characterised by Predictability and Continuity, with Initiatives of its Own in 2009 as Well—Foreign Minister Meets Heads of Diplomatic Missions," 30 September 2009, [www.kulugyminiszterium.hu](http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu).

<sup>53</sup> "PGNiG planuje przyłączyć się do projektu Nabucco," 27 September 2009, [www.wnp.pl](http://www.wnp.pl).

Also, the Hungarian government supported Poland's position on the EU's energy-climate package.

In July 2009 Hungary succeeded Poland to the annual Presidency of the Visegrad Group. The Hungarian Presidency was focused on promoting the Euroatlantic aspirations of the Western Balkan states, on the implementation of the Eastern Partnership, and on activities designed to bring Ukraine closer to the European and transatlantic structures. The priorities of the Hungarian Presidency, and the fact that it occurred at the time when Hungary was preparing for its Presidency of the EU, created favourable conditions for the intensification of Polish-Hungarian relations.

The Hungarian government took a critical view of the plans to deploy in Poland and the Czech Republic elements of the U.S. missile defence system and, like some West European governments, it saw this matter through the prism of Russian interests. The change of the U.S.'s position on the system was welcome in Hungary.

Affecting adversely relations between Poland and Hungary was the weakness of the Gyurcsány government. Having lost its parliamentary majority in the spring of 2008 after the Union of Free Democrats had left the coalition, and with its public support diminishing, this government had a limited capacity for adjusting its erstwhile foreign policy line, which was challenged more and more forcefully by the increasingly strong right-wing opposition. A new government formed by Gordon Bajnai (14 April 2009) showed itself incapable of regaining the public credibility the previous Cabinet had lost.

**Economic relations.** Among the Visegrad Group countries, the Czech Republic is Poland's main economic partner. After years of dynamically developing economic relations 2009 saw mutual trade contract, predominantly as a repercussion of the global economic crisis which affected, albeit in varying degrees, the economies of the both countries. In 2009 Poland was the only EU country to show economic growth, of 1.7%.<sup>54</sup> The Czech economy, closely linked to other economies and, therefore, more dependent on global market cycle turns, suffered a recession reflected in a drop in its GDP by 4.2%.<sup>55</sup>

As a result, in 2009 Polish-Czech trade dropped about 20% from a year earlier, to EUR9.602bn. At EUR5.625bn, Polish exports were down 15.6% and

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<sup>54</sup> "Produkt krajowy brutto w 2009 r.," [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl).

<sup>55</sup> "Česká republika: hlavní makroekonomické ukazatele," [www.cszo.cz](http://www.cszo.cz).

imports stood at EUR3.771bn (down 25.7%).<sup>56</sup> The year under survey again saw Poland's trade with the Czech Republic at a surplus, this time as high as EUR1.8545bn.<sup>57</sup> Despite the drop in mutual trade the two countries remained important trade partners. Like in preceding years, Poland ranked third (after Germany and Slovakia) as the Czech Republic's trade partner, accounting for 6.08% of its trade. In Poland's foreign trade the Czech Republic ranked fifth (after Germany, Italy, France and the U.K.) with a 4.66% share in total trade.<sup>58</sup>

2009 also brought a slowdown of Polish investment in the Czech market and an outflow of Czech investment from Poland (some of the outgoing capital eventually ended up in Romania). At the end of the third quarter of 2009 the value of Polish investment in the Czech Republic was in excess of EUR1.4bn, while Czech investment in Poland totalled EUR377m.<sup>59</sup> In 2009 there were 1097 commercial companies with a 25% or higher Polish shareholding and 565 wholly-Polish-owned companies operating on the Czech market. PKN Orlen, which in 2004 had acquired a majority interest in the Unipetrol fuel group, remained the largest Polish investor. Of the Czech investors in Poland, the most significant is the ČEZ energy group, which in 2006 had bought majority stakes in the Skawina power station and the Elcho combined heat and power station.

Trade with Slovakia also contracted in 2009, for the same reasons as with the Czech Republic. The Slovak economy, one of the more open in the EU, felt acutely the effects of the economic crisis—all the more so because on 1 January 2009 Slovakia had entered, as the first Visegrad Group country, the euro zone. Consequently, the value of Polish-Slovak trade dropped 24% from the preceding year, to EUR4.2478bn, with Polish exports of EUR2.1725 (down 23.8%) and imports of EUR2.0754 (down 26.8%). In the year under survey Poland's trade with Slovakia was again at a surplus, albeit lower than in 2008, of merely EUR97.2m.<sup>60</sup> With a 4% share in trade Poland ranked only ninth as Slovakia's trade partner (after Germany, the Czech Republic, Russia, South Korea, China, Hungary, France, and Italy).<sup>61</sup> Even lower was Slovakia's ranking in Poland's foreign trade; with a 3.08% share in total trade it was fourteenth (at September

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<sup>56</sup> "Współpraca gospodarcza: Czechy," 20 May 2010, [www.mg.gov.pl](http://www.mg.gov.pl).

<sup>57</sup> In 2008 Poland's trade with the Czech republic was EUR1.5572bn in surplus, *ibidem*.

<sup>58</sup> "Česká republika: hlavní makroekonomické ukazatele," *op. cit.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>60</sup> "Współpraca gospodarcza: Słowacja," 2 June 2010, [www.mg.gov.pl](http://www.mg.gov.pl).

<sup>61</sup> "Celkový dovoz a celkový vývoz podľa kontinentov a ekonomických zoskupení krajín v roku 2009," [www.portal.statistics.sk](http://www.portal.statistics.sk).

2009 figures).<sup>62</sup> According to the National Bank of Slovakia's preliminary data the aggregate end-of-2008 value of Polish investment in Slovakia stood merely at EUR78m.

Like with the other two Visegrad group states, trade with Hungary declined too. At EUR4.5511bn in 2009, it was down 20.7% from a year earlier. Poland's exports to Hungary stood at EUR2.5924bn (down 19.7%) and imports dropped by 22.5%, to EUR1.9587bn.<sup>63</sup> The Hungarian economy was hit the hardest by the crisis, as evidenced by a 6.3% drop in GDP. It should be noted, however, that this was largely due to the numerous problems it had been struggling even earlier. According to the Central Statistical Office's data, in 2009 Hungary was Poland's eleventh largest trade partner, accounting for 3.32% of total trade. The aggregate value of Polish investment in Hungary, given at end-2008 figures, was EUR204.3m.<sup>64</sup> Given that Hungary's and the Czech Republic's economic potentials are similar, the above data evidence huge disparities in Poland's economic relations with the two countries.

**Social and cultural relations.** In the wake of the Visegrad countries' accession to the EU the freedoms of movement, residence and employment for their citizens were vastly extended. Also, there have been more and more opportunities for getting to know each other better and for exchanging material and spiritual values. The removal of border control at the common borders following these countries' accession to the Schengen zone (late in 2007) created even better opportunities for expanding people-to-people and cultural contacts. These opportunities are yet to be fully used, for various reasons: biases and stereotypes, which still affect mutual relations, or—simply—no interest in immediate neighbours' culture. In this respect Poland is at a disadvantage, compared to its regional partners, because with its geographical situation (north of the remaining Visegrad countries) and the deficiencies of infrastructure (the road network and its condition) it has to put more effort in promoting its culture and tourist attractions.

As a result, in the social and cultural sphere there has long been an asymmetry between Poland and the other Visegrad Group countries. This "lopsidedness" is particularly manifest in relations with the Czech Republic. Polish culture is known and appreciated in that country (partly due to the presence in the Czech

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<sup>62</sup> "Syntetyczna informacja o eksporcie i imporcie Polski za styczeń – wrzesień 2009," [www.mg.gov.pl](http://www.mg.gov.pl).

<sup>63</sup> "Współpraca gospodarcza: Węgry," 2 June 2010, [www.mg.gov.pl](http://www.mg.gov.pl).

<sup>64</sup> "Syntetyczna informacja..., " *op. cit.*

capital of a Polish Institute), and yet its outreach is smaller than that of the Czech culture in Poland. This is partly explainable by a much greater (relative to the size of the country) numbers of Poles visiting the Czech Republic as tourists, than the other way round. Under the circumstances, the absence of a representation of the Polish Tourist Organisation (POT) in Prague becomes even more incomprehensible, in particular seeing that a counterpart organisation, Czechtourism, has long maintained an operation in Warsaw. It should be noted at this point that POT has no representation in any of the Visegrad Group countries.

The high level of Polish-Czech political and economic relations is yet to be reflected in equally intensive people-to-people contacts. This state of things is to be changed by a Polish-Czech Forum launched in 2009 under a memorandum signed on 14 November 2008 in Prague by the ministers of foreign affairs of the two countries. The Forum draws on pre-1989 cooperation of opposition groups, of which Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity the crowning effect. Its mission is to initiate and support joint projects undertaken by non-governmental organisations, local authorities, schools, academic institutions, and other entities to boost the expansion and deepening of mutual relations.

Had a similar platform been established to promote the development of Polish-Slovak relations, a number of controversies could have been avoided—such, for instance, as the ill-feeling (which still lingered in 2008) about the unveiling in Zakopane, two years earlier, of a monument to Józef Kuraś “Ogień” [“Fire”]. Representatives of the Slovak minority in Poland claim that “Fire” having persecuted Slovaks in the Spisz and Orawa areas, he did not deserve to be so commemorated.<sup>65</sup> It should also be noted that other historical issues have also played an important role in relations with Slovakia, to mention only Slovak troops’ participation in the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939. In this context an address by President Kaczyński during the Westerplatte festivities marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War (1 September 2009) is worth remembering. The president called the occupation of lands beyond the Olza River by Poland in 1938 “a sin,” a statement noted and very well-received in the Czech Republic.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> M. Butora *et al.*, “Zahraničná politika,” in: *Slovensko 2008: súhrnná správa o stave spoločnosti*, Inštitút pre verejné otázky, Bratislava, 2009, pp. 354–355.

<sup>66</sup> See. J. Bielecki, “Lech Kaczyński wykonał niezwykły gest,” 2 September 2009, [www.dziennik.pl](http://www.dziennik.pl).



Polish-Hungarian cultural and social relations, although not troubled by similar issues, were on a par with political relations. The Polish Institute in Budapest, which in 2009 celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, played an important role in promoting Polish culture in Hungary. A similar role is played in Slovakia by the Polish Institute in Bratislava.

The annual Economic Forum at Krynica, the Central and Eastern Europe's largest meeting of political and economic elites, was Poland's special instrument for influencing opinion-forming circles in the Visegrad countries.

### **Appraisal**

Its numerous limitations and low effectiveness notwithstanding, cooperation within the Visegrad Group is the most important element of the regional dimension of Poland's foreign policy. Its rationale is no longer questioned, although there are no illusions either (in particular in the expert community) that it is the most effective "booster" of Polish interests on the international scene. Once inflated expectations and groundless prejudices had been rejected, reasonably effective methods of employing the Visegrad cooperation in the furtherance of major goals of Poland's foreign policy could be developed. Since the accession to the EU a firm majority of these goals has been articulated in the European policy context, even though cooperation within the Group also serves autonomous regional and sectoral policy goals. This approach produced very good results in the period surveyed.

One example is the support the Visegrad group accorded to the Czech EU Presidency's efforts for the development of the eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy—specifically, for designing and implementing the Eastern Partnership project. On this matter the community of interests of the Visegrad Group countries proved to be a powerful drive behind the push to achieve the target. Where the community of interests was weaker, the results of common efforts were negligible. Such was the case, for instance, with the pursuit of aims relating to the Western Balkans. On this matter Poland was less strongly motivated than its partners and disinclined to provide them with due support.

The problem is that seldom is the community of interests as strong as in the case of the Eastern Partnership. More often, certain countries will see a given matter as their vital interest, while to others it is of a lesser importance—or of utter indifference. Supporting the Western Balkans' Euro-Atlantic aspirations appears to fall into the latter category. In this case, a mechanism to motivate mutual cooperation, or to increase its efficiency, needs to be developed. In this

respect Poland has a special responsibility for, as the largest Visegrad country, it should be attaching more significance to balancing the members interests as a way of making the group more effective.

Even with the Visegrad countries' numerous differences, the Group's effectiveness was relatively high in 2008–2009. In this period probably the greatest weakness of Poland's Visegrad Group policy was the inability to give adequate support to the Czech EU Presidency, which was criticised—often unreasonably—for efforts that, objectively, were in the interests of all members of the Group. It follows that the Visegrad Group countries should improve their mechanisms for mutual cooperation on preparing and discharging the Presidency of the EU and benefiting from the resulting experience. Poland should have a special stake in this—not only because it will take over the Presidency from Hungary in the second half of 2011, but because such mechanisms could be employed in broader cooperation within the EU.

Like in preceding years, relations with the Czech Republic—which continued to be Poland's key partner on such matters as European integration, transatlantic relations, energy security, and relations with Russia—played the most important role in the Visegrad space. Despite the economic crisis the both countries succeeded in maintaining a high level of economic relations, superior in many respects to economic cooperation with Slovakia and Hungary. The launch of the Polish-Czech Forum, which should set an example for similar initiatives with the remaining Visegrad states, provided the basis for deepening the social dimension of mutual relations.

In contacts with Slovakia and Hungary no progress was made beyond the schematic arrangements adopted in mutual relations after the accession of the entire Visegrad Group to the EU. The deepening of cooperation with these states, or giving it a new dynamic, proved impossible in view of these states' different positions on matters of key importance for Poland, such as the U.S. missile defence system, energy security, or relations with Russia. These differences notwithstanding, relations with the above countries were very intensive and highly pragmatic. The experience of the Russia-Ukraine gas conflict made the governments of Slovakia and Hungary more receptive to Polish arguments on energy security-related matters.

*Translated by Elżbieta Gołębiowska*

## Polish Policy towards the Middle East and North Africa

### Background

Following the systemic transformations in Poland, the country's relations with Middle Eastern and North African states<sup>1</sup> have undergone a metamorphosis. There was almost an abrupt weakening of the previously privileged relations with the Arab world, whereas the absence of diplomatic relations with Israel turned into a strong alliance. After Poland's engagement in the Iraq war in 2003 and the subsequent accession to the European Union, the country began exhibiting increased interest in the Greater Middle East, which was reflected in the government strategy on non-European developing nations, dated November 2004.<sup>2</sup>

The Middle East and North Africa are not among the Polish foreign policy priorities. Still, under Donald Tusk's premiership important changes could be noticed in the policy pursued towards the region. The influence exerted upon this policy by the strong historical relations with the Jewish diaspora and the state of Israel is now a bit weaker, while relations with selected Arab countries are on the rise, in line with the Polish state's strategic interests (diversification of energy supplies, expansion of economic cooperation, etc.) The biggest changes are in respect of members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, also known as Gulf Cooperation Council, and especially the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the state of Qatar and Kuwait.

In October 2008, the Polish Military Contingent (PMC) was withdrawn from Iraq. Speaking in November 2008<sup>3</sup> about that decision, Prime Minister Tusk said

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, the region of Middle East and North Africa is understood in its political sense, covering the member states of the Arab League and Israel.

<sup>2</sup> This document should now be viewed as partly outdated. For more on the Polish policy towards the Middle East and North Africa prior to 2008 see J. Bury, "Poland's Policy Regarding the States of the Middle East and North Africa," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2008*, pp. 250–267.

<sup>3</sup> *Informacja prezesa Rady Ministrów na temat stanu realizacji programu działania rządu w rok po jego powołaniu*, Minutes of the Sejm's 29th sitting, 20 October 2008, p. 160, [http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter6.nsf/0/535759F621D11EB3C1257508004B8E2A/\\$file/29\\_b\\_ksiazka.pdf](http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter6.nsf/0/535759F621D11EB3C1257508004B8E2A/$file/29_b_ksiazka.pdf).

the formula of Polish engagement was being exhausted for reasons which included Poland's unfulfilled expectations.<sup>4</sup> Along with the missile defence shield agreement, the troops' pullout from Iraq was listed by the prime minister among his government's security-related achievements in the first year in office. The withdrawal of the Polish force, right at the time when chances for any tangible benefit from the Iraq engagement proved to be close to nil, had the effect of unloading the political burden involved in participation in a mission which draws criticism in the Arab world.

The state of Israel remains Poland's priority partner in the Middle East, with bilateral relations gaining momentum back in 2008. President Lech Kaczyński and Prime Minister Donald Tusk paid a visit to that country to attend celebrations of its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, President Shimon Peres went to Poland for commemorations of the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and a Polish Season in Israel opened in 2008, continuing into mid-2009. Simultaneously, Poland sought to maintain good relations with the Palestinian Autonomy, which however, for objective reasons (lack of statehood), could not be developed in any significant way.

The relations with Middle Eastern and North African states in 2009 were impacted by the economic crisis which had begun in 2008 and which affected most countries in the region, by curtailing their trade exchanges. At the same time, though, it had the effect of strengthening the Polish position in contacts with Middle Eastern partners, given the Polish economy's exceptional stability during crisis time.

### Objectives

The Polish government's key goals in the Middle East include maintaining priority relations with Israel and good contacts with the Jewish diaspora in such a way as to simultaneously keep a good level of relations with Arab states and pursue Polish economic interests, including diversification of energy sources. This policy is largely handled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economics. Another task for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2009

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<sup>4</sup> The Polish participation in the war in Iraq was presented in a somewhat different light by Minister Radosław Sikorski in his 2009 foreign policy address. He described it as a well-fulfilled task, completed without harm to relations with Iraq or the United States, and he pointed to the upsides of Polish troops' presence in Iraq, such as modernisation and training of Polish army personnel. See *Minister of the Foreign Affairs, Mr Radosław Sikorski, on the goals of the Poland's foreign policy for 2009*, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/Minister,of,the,Foreign,Affairs,„Mr,Radoslaw,Sikorski,,on,the,goals,of,the,Poland%E2%80%99s,foreign,policy,for,2009,25449.html>.

was to promote Poland's political image through participation in UN peace missions in the region and engaging in cultural and social cooperation. The year 2009 was also to see a continuation work on Poland's long-term strategy towards Africa and the Middle East.

In address to the Sejm on foreign policy in 2009, Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski confirmed the non-priority status of Poland's relations with the Middle Eastern and North Africa. His pronouncements reflected a clear division of the region into the Levant and the Gulf states.<sup>5</sup> Minister Sikorski indicated, although only in an indirect way, that Poland's interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict was on the wane. He announced the pullout of Polish troops from some international peace missions (including the UNIFIL in Lebanon and the UNDOF in the Golan Heights), to be coupled with participation in such missions which "better reflect priorities of the Polish international policy," and he added that the decision was prompted by the need to seek crisis time economies. In the search for solution to the Middle Eastern conflict a special role is played by the United Nations, the minister said, and he did not mention the EU's contribution towards efforts to bring an end to the conflict. That provided a clear signal that for Polish foreign policy the main forum for the peace process debate in the next year would be the United Nations.<sup>6</sup> And his only mention of relations with Poland's major partner in the region, Israel, was in the context of promoting the image of the Polish state (in accordance with the Framework Strategy for the Promotion of Poland to 2015<sup>7</sup>) and successes of the Polish Season in Israel.

As for the Gulf region, Minister Sikorski described it as "the new, significant direction of the activities undertaken by the Polish government" in the context of the continued policy of energy supply diversification. Back in late 2008, Poland's position in the Gulf region consolidated enough, in the government's opinion, for Prime Minister Tusk to claim that "we are becoming a co-leader in this part of the world"<sup>8</sup> (after his visit to Qatar and Kuwait). The policy to diversify energy supplies was to be pursued mainly by the Ministry of

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

<sup>6</sup> Minister Sikorski delivered the address soon after the end of the Israeli operation in the Gaza Strip, which may have provided a direct impulse to mentioning the Middle Eastern conflict in his speech.

<sup>7</sup> At the end of the day, the document was not submitted to the Cabinet, but it was adopted, in a revised form, by Poland Promotion Council under the title *Kierunki promocji Polski do 2015 r.* [Lines of Poland's promotion to 2015].

<sup>8</sup> *Informacja prezesa Rady Ministrów...*, *op. cit.*

Economics (with the Ministry of State Treasury), in line with the strategic document, Poland's energy policy to 2030.<sup>9</sup> And the Middle East was assigned an important place in Economics Minister Waldemar Pawlak's vision of development of economic relations with Asian countries.<sup>10</sup> The long-term goal in that field is to make of Poland a hub for those countries' contacts with Central and Eastern Europe. In Mr Pawlak's words, there were two reasons behind Poland's interest in Middle Eastern states in 2009: potential access to new energy sources, and the surpluses of those state's sovereign wealth funds which could be invested in Poland.

The southern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, involving countries in North Africa and the Middle East, was to come under Poland's scrutiny in 2009, in view of a possible use of some of its institutional arrangements in the Polish-Swedish initiative, Eastern Partnership. Undersecretary of State at MoFA, Grażyna Bernatowicz, pointed in this context to the Union for the Mediterranean, formed in 2008. She said the initiative would be backed by Poland, but she also expressed Polish concerns about a lopsided allocation of resources between the southern and eastern dimensions of the European Neighbourhood Policy.<sup>11</sup> In actual practice, though, the Union for the Mediterranean suspended its activities in 2009, following Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip in late 2008 and early 2009.

### Political Relations

**Israel** is Poland's major partner in the Middle East, and bilateral relations in 2009 were more dynamic than in previous years. That came as an indirect result of the Israeli offensive in Gaza Strip, the international community's subsequent efforts to have the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks resumed, and also the EU-Israeli negotiations on raising the status of mutual relations, top-level visits and continuation of the Polish Season in Israel.

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix to Resolution 202/2009 of the Council of Ministers dated 10 November 2009, [www.mg.gov.pl/files/upload/8134/Polityka\\_energetyczna\\_ost.pdf](http://www.mg.gov.pl/files/upload/8134/Polityka_energetyczna_ost.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. an interview with Waldemar Pawlak in: "Poland: a Gateway to the East," *Polish Market Online*, 28 August 2009, [www.polishmarket.com.pl/document/:20958,Poland+a+gateway+to+the+East.en.html](http://www.polishmarket.com.pl/document/:20958,Poland+a+gateway+to+the+East.en.html); Polish version, [www.mg.gov.pl/Serwis+Prasowy/Wywiady/Waldemar+Pawlak/Poland+gateway+to+the+East.htm](http://www.mg.gov.pl/Serwis+Prasowy/Wywiady/Waldemar+Pawlak/Poland+gateway+to+the+East.htm).

<sup>11</sup> *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych (97) 2009*, no. 1905/VI kadencja, [http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Biuletyn.nsf/0/9BD135BB2919AF4AC125756F004F08F0/\\$file/0190506.pdf](http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Biuletyn.nsf/0/9BD135BB2919AF4AC125756F004F08F0/$file/0190506.pdf).

Poland's reaction to operation Cast Lead (carried out in the Gaza Strip between 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009) was swift and firm, while also revealing different concepts of how to conduct relations with Israel on the part of the cabinet and the president. On 29 December 2008, the MoFA issued a statement condemning Hamas' rocket attacks against Israel and simultaneously describing the Israeli operation as unwarranted.<sup>12</sup> As for the presidential chancellery, it appealed in its own statement for both sides to desist from acts of violence but it only condemned "manifestations of terrorism" and emphasised Israel's right to existence, indirectly referring to a defensive nature of Israeli armed operations.<sup>13</sup> Paradoxically, this dual approach seen in Polish reaction to the Gaza Strip conflict—neutral (in line with the EU position) and tilting towards Israel—made it possible, on the one hand, to deflect charges of partiality and disruption of a coherent EU approach and, on the other, to avoid tensions in relations with Israel. The difference of opinions between the president and the government was not merely tactical, it actually transpired from their different visions of relations with Israel.

The presidential approach was akin to the concept of the 2005–2007 cabinet led by the Law and Justice party, when strategic partnership with Israel was Poland's foreign policy goal. Witold Waszczykowski, deputy head of the National Security Bureau, openly took the Israeli side in January 2009, suggesting the adoption of a stronger position on the Gaza Strip operation.<sup>14</sup> The president himself argued in the media that Poland has "autonomous interests" in the Middle East because of the State of Israel and the Jewish diaspora.<sup>15</sup> While not mentioning arguments of the Palestinian side, the president emphasised his own position, different from that of the government and the EU. In the government's

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<sup>12</sup> "We condemn the Hamas attack of Israeli territory. At the same time, we do not find any justification for the scale of the military operation undertaken by Israel in response to the attack." See *Oświadczenie MSZ w związku z wydarzeniami na Bliskim Wschodzie*, 29 December 2008, [www.msz.gov.pl/Oswiadczenie,MSZ,w,zwiazku,z,wydarzeniami,na,Bliskim,Wschodzie,24155.html](http://www.msz.gov.pl/Oswiadczenie,MSZ,w,zwiazku,z,wydarzeniami,na,Bliskim,Wschodzie,24155.html).

<sup>13</sup> *Oświadczenie Prezydenta RP w sprawie wydarzeń w Strefie Gazy*, 5 January 2009, [www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/wystapienia/art,6,oswiadczenie-prezydenta-rp-w-sprawie-wydarzen-w-strefie-gazy.html](http://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/wystapienia/art,6,oswiadczenie-prezydenta-rp-w-sprawie-wydarzen-w-strefie-gazy.html).

<sup>14</sup> "Konflikt w Gazie dotyczy też Polski," *Dziennik*, 5 January 2009, [http://dziennik.pl/opinie/article292128/Konflikt\\_w\\_Gazie\\_dotyczy\\_tez\\_Polski.html](http://dziennik.pl/opinie/article292128/Konflikt_w_Gazie_dotyczy_tez_Polski.html).

<sup>15</sup> The president also said that "most of those killed [in Operation Cast Lead] are not civilians." The erroneous presentation of facts might be seen as an added indication of the president's exceptionally sympathetic attitude towards Israel. See *Lech Kaczyński w Radiu Zet*, 6 January 2009, [www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/wywiady-krajowe/art,2,lech-kaaczynski-w-radiu-zet.html](http://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta/wywiady-krajowe/art,2,lech-kaaczynski-w-radiu-zet.html).

opinion, the relations with Israel should be strong but, at the same time, should not adversely affect the relations with Arab states. That stance was also embraced by Bronisław Komorowski, the Sejm speaker and deputy chair of the Civic Platform party, who distanced himself from Waszczykowski's pronouncements, reasoning that Poland should keep considerable restraint in activities concerning non-priority regions.<sup>16</sup> And Minister Sikorski argued that, whiling sympathising with both peoples, Poland should remember "about our priorities and our capabilities."<sup>17</sup>

Right in April 2009, though, Poland opted to withdraw from the Review Conference of the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (so-called Durban II), as one of four EU member states. In explaining the move, the MoFA cited fears of the conference being used to make "unacceptable pronouncements" with anti-Semitic overtones.<sup>18</sup> The main political motive behind the decision was the intention to avoid tensions in the very good relations with the Jewish diaspora: Poland, together with Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, was in the group of EU member states for whom good relations with Israel were of priority importance.

As far as the Arab-Israeli conflict is concerned, Poland, just as the EU, is in favour of its comprehensive settlement—based on the relevant UN resolutions, the outcome of the Madrid conference (1991), the Oslo agreements (1993), the Middle Eastern Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative (2002)—and in favour of a sovereign Palestinian State being established alongside the State of Israel. Following Operation Cast Lead, Israel's continued blockade of the Gaza Strip and unwillingness towards peace talks with the Palestinians on the part of Israel's new right-wing government, the EU-Israeli relations have deteriorated. In June 2009, at the EU-Israel Association Council, the process of further deepening of mutual relations was suspended until the time when Israel meets the EU conditions: removal of the Gaza Strip blockade, freeze on the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements, and support for the idea of a sovereign Palestinian

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<sup>16</sup> "Niech Polska nie wsadza na ochotnika palca między drzwi," *Sygnaly Dnia* (Polskie Radio), 5 January 2009.

<sup>17</sup> "Sikorski: W sprawie energii i gazu Unia musi być solidarna," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 8 January 2009, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> *Decyzja o wycofaniu polskiego uczestnictwa w Konferencji Przeglądowej Światowej Konferencji ONZ przeciwko Rasizmowi, Dyskryminacji Rasowej, Ksenofobii oraz Związanej z Nimi Nietolerancji (Durban II)*, 20 April 2009, [www.msz.gov.pl/Decyzja,o,wycofaniu,polskiego,uczestnictwa,w,Konferencji,Przegladowej,Swiatowej,Konferencji,ONZ,przeciwko,Rasizmowi,Dyskryminacji,Rasowej,,Ksenofobii,oraz,Zwiazanej,z,Nimi,Nietolerancji,%28Durban,II%29,27024.html](http://www.msz.gov.pl/Decyzja,o,wycofaniu,polskiego,uczestnictwa,w,Konferencji,Przegladowej,Swiatowej,Konferencji,ONZ,przeciwko,Rasizmowi,Dyskryminacji,Rasowej,,Ksenofobii,oraz,Zwiazanej,z,Nimi,Nietolerancji,%28Durban,II%29,27024.html).



state. Poland once more found itself in a group of EU member states (with e.g. Germany, Italy and the Czech Republic) which strongly opposed that line and spoke against a *unctim* between the peace process and the EU-Israeli relations. Only with such approach could the status of EU-Israeli relations be raised irrespective of the course of Israel's activities towards Palestinians—but that approach proved to be shared by a minority in the EU.

There was also a discussion in the EU forum about a common position during the UN General Assembly vote on the report of the UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (Gladstone Report). But the Swedish presidency failed to push through a proposal for all EU member states to abstain. Persuaded by the U.S., Poland voted against accepting the report's findings—i.e. in Israel's favour.<sup>19</sup> In December 2009, the Swedish presidency moved for the EU to strengthen the negotiating position of the Palestinian side so that it could hold talks with Israel: a mention of East Jerusalem as the capital of the future Palestinian state was inserted in draft Council Conclusions. Poland, together with the previously named group of countries, spoke against the Swedish proposal. As a result the final text of the Conclusions was significantly modified, and it could no longer play the intended role for a resumption of peace talks.<sup>20</sup>

The most important events in Polish-Israeli relations in 2009 included two-way political consultations in Israel (3–4 August, with the Polish delegation led by the Undersecretary of State at MoFA, Jacek Najder), and an official visit to that country by Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski on 19 and 20 October.<sup>21</sup> Among the main topics of the minister's talks was a Polish proposal to raise the level of annual political consultations to that of prime ministers, which however met with reluctance on the Israeli part. That would mean recognition of Poland's importance in the external relations of Israel (which conducts similar intergovernmental dialogue with, e.g. Germany and

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<sup>19</sup> Voting result: 114 for (including five EU member states: Cyprus, Ireland, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia), 18 against (including seven EU member states: Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia), 44 abstained (including 12 EU member states). See Dok. GA/10883, [www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/ga10883.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/ga10883.doc.htm).

<sup>20</sup> *Press Release, 2985th Council meeting, Foreign affairs, Brussels, 8 December 2009*, <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st17/st17218.en09.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Other visits in 2009: 21 April—by Deputy Prime Minister Silvan Shalom to Poland (to attend the 18th March of the Living); 2–4 May—by Infrastructure Vice Minister Maciej Janowski to Israel; 10 May—by Senate Speaker Bogdan Borusewicz with a mission of EU national parliaments (as part of this mission, he also visited Egypt, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and Jordan); 17–19 November—by Deputy Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak to Israel; 8–10 December—by Sejm Speaker Bronisław Komorowski to Israel.

Italy) and would make it easier for Poland to pursue two of its foreign policy goals in relations with Israel, namely closer cooperation in the fields of military affairs and advanced technologies. It can be expected that Poland's position in the forums of the EU and the UN in 2009 will prod the Israelis to raise the level of the political consultations.

Restitution of Jewish property was not taken up in 2009 in talks with representatives of the Israeli government, although it was mentioned by members of the Jewish diaspora during unofficial meetings.

Poland maintains good relations with the **Palestinian Autonomy**, and the Polish position on the Arab-Israeli conflict meets with understanding on the part of the Palestinian authorities. These contacts, though, are by no means comparable with the intensity of relations with Israel. On the other hand, 2009 witnessed an invigoration of two-way contacts at an unprecedented scale.

Right after the beginning of the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip, in December 2008, the Ambassador of Palestinian Autonomy to Poland, Khaled Naef Ghazal Soufan, and ambassadors of Saudi Arabia and Egypt paid a visit to Undersecretary of State Najder, requesting help in persuading Israel to cease fire. The undersecretary then pointed to the divisions among Palestinian as an obstacle preventing an effective pressure on Israel.<sup>22</sup> After the Gaza conflict, at the Sharm El Sheikh summit of Gaza Strip donors in March 2009, Poland provided a €227,000 check made out to UNRWA, the biggest contribution to that agency at the time. In June, the Presidential Chancellery, teaming up with Caritas Polska charity, Casimir the Great University in Bydgoszcz and the Supreme Audit Chamber (NIK), arranged for 73 Palestinian children to have a therapeutic camp in Poland in the aftermath of the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip.

The most important bilateral event in 2009 was the official visit to Poland (8–9 February) by the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, who was accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Riyad al-Maliki. The parties then signed an Agreement on cooperation in development assistance, the first such document signed by the Polish MoFA with a foreign recipient of Polish aid. The Palestinian Autonomy counts among the priority beneficiaries of Polish development assistance (some 1.5 million zloty a year). Another top-level visit was held on 10 October 2009, when Minister Sikorski came to Ramallah. The fact that an important visit in the region began in the Palestinian territory, rather

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<sup>22</sup> Minutes (923/VII) of the 65th sitting of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Polish Senate, 26 May 2009.

than Israel, was received with satisfaction by the Palestinians. The minister met with the president and the prime minister, and both parties signed a Protocol on political consultations between ministries of foreign affairs.

In December 2009, Prime Minister Salam Fayyad held a telephone conversation with Minister Sikorski in the context of debate over the EU Council conclusions. With the EU's supporting the Fayyad plan on the establishment of the Palestinian state by the end of 2011, the Palestinian expectations of political and financial support from EU member states have been given a boost—and these expectations are also addressed towards Poland, given that under the original plan the unilateral announcement of the Palestinian state falls at the time of Polish presidency of the EU Council.

Another important event in bilateral relations was the first top-level visit in Warsaw by UNRWA Commissioner-General Karen AbuZayd, reflecting recognition for Poland's durable contribution to the operation of the agency.

**Egypt** remains Poland's main partner among the Arab state in the Levant, with mutual relations dominated by the economy, culture and science. These relations perceptibly picked up steam after President Hosni Mubarak's visit to Poland in March 2008. In the course of 2009, the most important event was Minister Sikorski's visit to Egypt (30 September), during which he met not only with the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, but also with Amre Moussa, Secretary General of the League of Arab States (which is headquartered in Cairo). The goal for the visit, arranged as part of the minister's tour of Africa, was to confirm Egypt's important position in Polish foreign policy.

Among political successes in relations with Egypt in 2009, mention should also be made of getting permission to open the border in Rafah for the passage of the previously mentioned group of 73 Palestinian children, despite an initial considerable resistance on the part of Egyptian authorities.

**Morocco.** Relations with that country received a boost in 2009, especially from the visit to Rabat by the Polish minister of foreign affairs (24–26 June) and from the celebrations of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on bilateral diplomatic relations. During a visit to Poland by the Minister of Foreign Trade, Abdellatif Maazouz, in July, the anniversary was commemorated with the Moroccan Days in Warsaw, and the Polish-Moroccan Economic Forum, where the Polish party was led by Deputy Prime Minister Pawlak.

## Military Relations

The most advanced level of military and armaments cooperation with countries in the Middle East and North Africa is with Israel. It has grown perceptibly in recent years, and the year 2009 saw two visits at the defence minister level—Bogdan Klich to Israel (31 May–2 June) and Ehud Barak to Poland (14–15 October) as well as several meetings by representatives of the general staffs, high commands and defence ministries. An important channel has been provided by the working group for defence and strategic dialogue, involving undersecretaries of state at the defence ministries who develop annual cooperation plans. In 2009, just as in previous years, the most important subjects discussed included the security situation in the Middle East and military cooperation.

Joint activities by both countries' armed forces included specialist training for Polish pilots and special services, and also an exchange of experiences in anti-aircraft and anti-missile defence. When need arises, Israel assists Polish military contingents in international missions by providing equipment and arms (e.g. equipment to eliminate new-type threats, such as improvised explosive devices). Arms industry cooperation has been growing intensely, too. Poland is seeking closer technology cooperation with Israel which would transcend market-type relationships between buyer and seller. In 2009, offset obligations linked to the purchase of the Israeli missile Spike continued to be executed, along with the transfer of technology to Mesko SA engineering complex. In the autumn of the year, tendering procedures opened for the delivery of two sets of medium-range unmanned aerial vehicles, with all three bidders coming from Israel (Aeronautics, Elbit Systems and Israel Aerospace Industries).

In a crucial decision taken in 2009, the Polish government opted to terminate the participation of Polish contingents in the UN missions, UNIFIL and UNDOF. Its February release on Polish foreign policy tasks in 2009 contained an announcement of abandoning "less difficult missions" in favour of increased engagement in "more difficult" ones (Afghanistan). The formal basis for the decision was provided by the Strategy for participation in international operations by the Polish Armed Forces,<sup>23</sup> adopted by the government in January 2009, which gives priority to NATO and EU operations. In addition to the need to increase the Polish presence in Afghanistan, the arguments given for the decision included crisis time retrenchment.

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<sup>23</sup> *Strategia udziału Sił Zbrojnych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w operacjach międzynarodowych, przedłożona przez ministra obrony narodowej, 13 January 2009, [www.kprm.gov.pl/rzad/decyzje\\_rzadu/id:951](http://www.kprm.gov.pl/rzad/decyzje_rzadu/id:951).*

A farewell ceremony for the withdrawal of some 500 Polish troops from the UN ceasefire mission in Lebanon (completed in December 2009) was preceded by a visit on 9 April by the Defence Minister Bogdan Klich, accompanied by Polish Chief-of-Staff, General Franciszek Gągor. The Lebanese government was presented with a draft of an intergovernmental agreement on bilateral military cooperation and a donation of military equipment.

The pullout of the Polish contingent from the UN peacekeeping mission in the Golan Heights, on 15 October 2009, did not involve any ceremonial settings. Syria sought to find out the motives behind that during political consultations in April 2009, attended by its Undersecretary of State at Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Ammoureh. Even the Israelis deplored the decision. It should be remembered that, unlike the UNIFIL, where the Polish present was relatively small, the Polish Military Contingent at the Golan Heights, of some 350 troops, accounted for a third of the whole UNDOF mission (where overall, close to 13,000 Polish men and officers served from 1974).

Poland does not participate in EU missions on Palestinian territory, despite promptings from e.g. the EU Police Mission on Palestinian territory (EUPOL COPPS). But in 2009 this country opened a training programme for Polish police and border officers, following a study visit to Warsaw by the Palestinian interior minister. The extent of the training programme, though, was limited and it covered only a handful of Palestinians.

A dozen Polish officers still stay in Iraq within the framework of NTM-I (NATO Training Mission—Iraq) to train local security forces. The Iraqi President Jalal Talabani was to come to Poland in November 2009, with his defence minister and others, but the visit was called off due to illness of the Polish head of state. With negotiations on a bilateral military cooperation agreement going on uncompleted since 2004, armaments industry contacts are confined to Iraqi operations by Bumar company. The company has been accused of acting against the law, which weighs upon Poland's relations with Iraq.

Military relations with other countries in the Middle East and North Africa are either occasional or rudimentary, even though some of these countries (e.g. Egypt) express readiness to cooperate in e.g. repair/modernisation of military Soviet-made equipment.

### **Economic Relations**

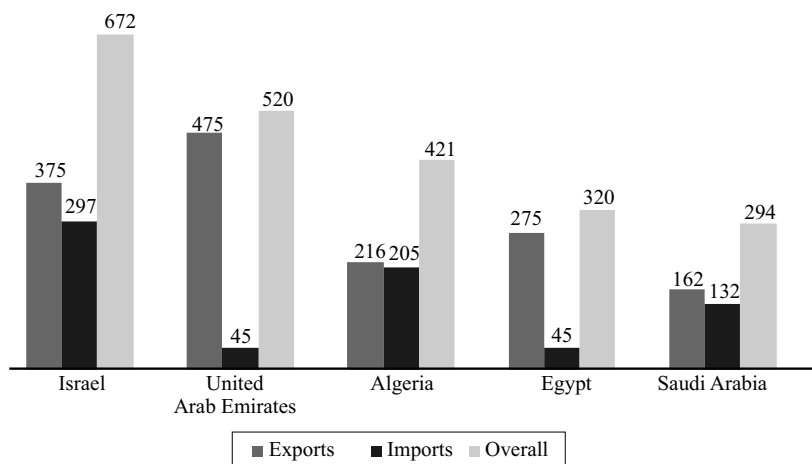
Both in Poland and in some countries of the Middle East and North Africa, interest in deeper economic cooperation has been on the rise over the past years. According to the Polish Economics Ministry, this cooperation is still

incommensurate with neither side's potential and expectations. The region's attractions obviously include oil and gas deposits, financial surpluses from the exploitation of these resources, and considerable market potential. The brightest prospects for cooperation can be seen in the sectors of fuels, energy and petrochemicals, investments in Poland, sale of equipment and materials for infrastructure expansion, food processing, defence sector, health services and higher education.

In 2009, the following were Poland's largest trade partners in the region: Israel, UAE, Algeria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia (Fig. 1).

Figure 1

**Poland's trade exchanges with countries in the Middle East and North Africa in 2009 (US\$ million)**

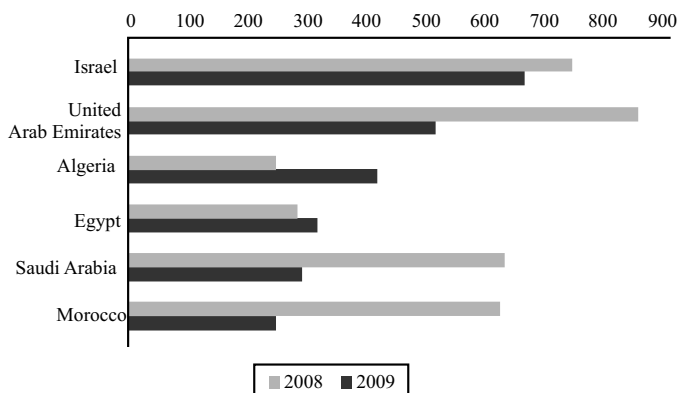


Source: Economics Ministry estimates.

The overall trade volumes dropped from the previous year, largely as a result of the economic crisis. While Israel invariably stays at the top of Poland's trading partners in the region, there have been wide fluctuations in economic contacts with individual Arab states. In 2008, for example, the top partner was the United Arab Emirates, followed by Israel, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Egypt (Fig. 2).

Figure 2

**Overall trade exchanges (exports + imports) with countries in the Middle Eastern and North Africa (US\$ million)**

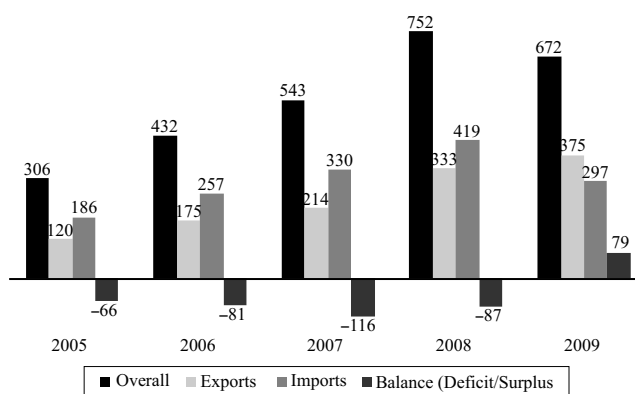


Source: Economics Ministry estimates.

The combined result for Poland's trade with the region of the Middle East and North Africa (excluding Iran and Turkey) was a surplus in excess of US\$2.2 billion, but its contribution to the country's overall trade volume is still marginal.<sup>24</sup>

Figure 3

**Poland's trade exchanges with Israel (US\$ million)**



Source: Economics Ministry estimates.

<sup>24</sup> Numerical data for this part provided by the Economics Ministry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Good economic relations with Israel come as a natural consequence of strong mutual political and social ties. In 2009 Israel topped the list of Poland's trade partners in the region, with overall two-way trade exchanges at US\$672 million (Fig. 3), representing 89% of the 2008 level (US\$752 million).

The top exports to Israel in 2009 included: means of transport (aircraft, cars –32%), mechanical and electrical equipment for sound recording and reception (17%), ready-made food (15.5%), products of the chemicals industry and related industries (10%), and metal products (9%). The imports list was led by: chemicals industry products (33%), mechanical and electrical equipment for sound recording and reception (17.5%), arms and munitions (9%) and plastic products (6.5%). Israeli direct investments in Poland approached US\$75 million in 2009, but Israeli capital presence in Poland runs at a much higher level—close to US\$2 billion—reflecting investments made in this country via companies headquartered in other European countries and the U.S.

An important segment of cooperation with Israel is technology. In 2009, Israel presented the Polish Economics Ministry with a draft agreement on bilateral cooperation in private-sector industrial research and development projects, which provides for cooperation involving technology-developing academic and research centres and the private sector which commercialises the findings of this research.

From the viewpoint of Polish foreign policy priorities (diversification of energy supplies and growth in exports and investments), especially important partners are member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (primarily the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar). A perceptible intensification of Polish policy towards this group of countries is reflected in the number of state visits—serving to keep up the political dialogue and support attainment of economic goals—which were held between November 2008 and the end of 2009.

– 2–5 November 2008: Treasury Minister Aleksander Grad in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar;

– 17–19 November 2008: Prime Minister Donald Tusk in Kuwait and Qatar;

– 28 February–6 March 2009: Sport and Tourism Minister Mirosław Drzewiecki in UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar;

– 15–16 March 2009: Treasury Minister Aleksander Grad in UAE;

– 18 May 2009: Treasury Minister Aleksander Grad in Qatar;

– 28–29 June 2009: Treasury Minister Aleksander Grad in Qatar;

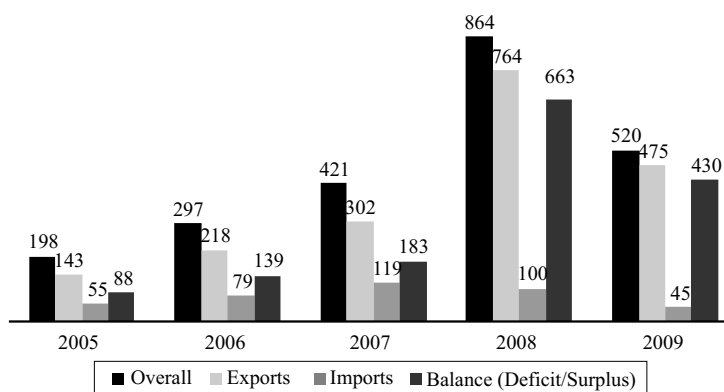


– 10–11 October 2009: Undersecretary of State at Economics Ministry Marcin Korolec in Saudi Arabia.

**The United Arab Emirates.** For a number of years now, the very good atmosphere for mutual contacts—reflecting the UAE authorities’ exceptionally friendly attitude towards Poland—has been conducive to the development of economic relations. The United Arab Emirates is undoubtedly Poland’s major economic partner among Arab states. Even with the trade volume falling from US\$864 million in 2008 to US\$520 million in 2009 (Fig. 4), Poland stays in the group of that country’s medium-level trading partners in the EU, such as Sweden and Austria. The fall in trade exchanges reflected a slowdown in infrastructure expansion in the UAE due to the economic crisis, which affected Polish exports to that market. Still, Poland registered a surplus in two-way trade of more than US\$600,000.

Figure 4

**Poland’s trade exchanges with the United Arab Emirates (US\$ million)**



Source: Economics Ministry estimates.

The United Arab Emirates is the largest market for Polish exports to the region, accounting for some 65% of the overall volume. The chief Polish exports are: mechanical and electric equipment (41.6%) vehicles (16.7%), and metal products (8.4%). Top on the list of imports are these groups: metal products (60.1%, mostly aluminium), plastics (16.2%) and mechanical and electrical equipment (6.3%). A characteristic feature of the United Arab Emirates is that it can serve as a launching pad for re-exports to other markets in the region, which provides an added stimulus to increase sales to that country. The Polish exporters with the strongest presences there include: Solaris Bus & Coach SA, Tele-Fonika Kable SA, Dębica SA, and Can-Pack SA. The highest-value

contract signed so far, in 2007, provided for the delivery to Dubai Municipality of 225 coaches, worth US\$120 million, by Solaris Bus & Coach. Polish investments in the United Arab Emirates amount to US\$130 million (including US\$100 million by Can-Pack), which is much more than the UAE investments in Poland and which should be seen as an unfavourable development.

In the course of 2009, both the UAE and Poland showed considerable interest in mutual cooperation. In February and March, Minister Mirosław Drzewiecki was in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar, presenting investment proposals connected with preparations for the Euro 2012 European Football Championship. Also in March, Minister Grad spoke in the UAR about an offer for privatisation of state-owned companies. He then met with the Minister for Economy, Sultan Bin Saeed Al Mansouri. On 29–30 October, at the invitation of Poland's National Chamber of Commerce, a 20-strong mission of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry stayed in Warsaw, received by Deputy Prime Minister Pawlak and Minister Grad. During the visit, a Poland–United Arab Emirates Economic Forum was held, and a cooperation agreement was signed between the National Chamber of Commerce and the UAE's Federation Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Simultaneously, the activities of the Polish Business Group—an UAE-based lobbying institution, established in 2006 to help Polish entrants in the local markets—were gathering momentum.

A visit to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia by Prime Minister Tusk, announced in the press in May 2009 and scheduled to take place in November 2009, did not materialise for what was officially described as organisational reasons and the prime minister's new responsibilities. It can be surmised, though, that the Prime Minister's Chancellery opted to postpone the visit in view of the public's disappointment with the effects produced by the search for economic partners in the Gulf (as exemplified by controversies over the sale of Gdynia and Szczecin shipyards). Thus, towards the end of 2009, misgivings emerged as to a possible slowdown in the exceptionally good relations with the United Arab Emirates and other countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, in response to public pressure on the Donald Tusk government.

Relations with **Qatar**, steadily deepening starting from 2004, reached a new stage with the opening of embassies in Doha and Warsaw in 2007. In the course of 2009, three top-level meetings were held: Prime Minister Tusk met with Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor Al-Thani on 29 January and on 8 August (at the World Economic Forum in Davos), and on 24 September President Kaczyński met with Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani

during the 64<sup>th</sup> UN session in New York. On 28 December 2009, the Convention between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the State of Qatar for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income went into force.<sup>25</sup>

Even though Qatar is not among Poland's largest trading partners, the year 2009 turned out to be particularly important for bilateral relations. This was because of the agreement on shipments of liquefied natural gas (LNG) which PGNiG SA and Qatargas Operating Company Ltd signed in Doha on 29 June, in the presence of Treasury Minister Grad. Planned to run for twenty years (from 2014) at an annual level of some 1 million LNG tons (1.5m cu.m.), the ex-ship deliveries will go through the gas terminal at Świnoujście port, their value linked to oil prices on international markets. After years' long debates in Poland on the construction of the terminal and shipments of LNG, it was only under the Qatargas agreement of 2009 that the first shipment was actually contracted.<sup>26</sup> This is the first long-term deal of this kind other than the contract with Gazprom, and it also provides for the financing of the LNG terminal in Świnoujście.<sup>27</sup>

The public's positive reaction to the Qatar agreement were overshadowed by controversies over the sale of Szczecin and Gdynia shipyards. The only investor ready to purchase their key assets (and thus ensure continued shipyard production) was Stichting Particulier Fonds Greenrights, managing Qatari funds. But after providing the bid bond, it later failed to make a final payment for the purchased stakes. The Polish government, aware of the negative impact which those developments had on Poles' perception of Qatar and the broader Middle East, urged the Qatari government to consider purchasing the shipyards. But the global shipbuilding prospects at the time were poor and the risks involved in shipyard purchase proved to be so high that the Qatar's sovereign wealth fund did not enter successive tendering rounds.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The convention was negotiated in 2004–2005, and signed on 18 November 2008. See *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych (120) 2009*, no. 2625/VI kadencja.

<sup>26</sup> In January 2005, the Marek Belka government opted to study the feasibility of constructing a seaport gas terminal, whose location was agreed upon in 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Statement by Undersecretary of State at Treasury Ministry Mikołaj Budzanowski, minutes of the 55<sup>th</sup> sitting, second day, 6<sup>th</sup> Sejm, 2 December 2009, <http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Debata6.nsf/main/76185F53>.

<sup>28</sup> A detailed account of the sale of Gdynia and Szczecin shipyards was presented by Minister Grad. See minutes of the 49<sup>th</sup> sitting, third day, 6<sup>th</sup> Sejm, 11 September 2009, <http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Debata6.nsf/main/5F20F6D3>.

From the perspective of energy sources' diversification (a priority goal for Poland), an important role is also played by relations with the North African countries of Algeria, Egypt and Libya. Potentially, Polish extractive companies may also find it viable to start operations in Tunisia and Morocco.

**Algeria.** This country was Poland's third largest trading partner in the region in 2009, with the overall trade volume at \$421 million. In Polish exports (US\$216 million in 2009), running at almost the same level for three years, food was the top item (30%) alongside industrial-production equipment and semi-manufactures. A growth in imports, from US\$11,000 in 2007 to US\$205 million in 2009, reflected the Lotos group and PKN Orlen's spot purchases of Algerian oil.

**Egypt.** The Egyptian Minister of Foreign Trade and Industry, Rachid Mohamed Rachid stayed in Poland in February 2009, and in July of that year Polish Deputy Prime Minister Pawlak went on an official visit to Egypt, where he attended the finals of the Imagine Cup 2009 competition. He then met with the Minister of Petroleum, Sameh Fahmy. The volume of Polish-Egyptian trade in 2009 amounted to US\$320 million (a fourth of the figure for the whole region), including US\$275 million worth of Polish exports. Top on the list of Polish shipments were machines and equipment, metal products and mineral products, and the chief imports included plant-based products and textiles. Poles are among the largest groups of foreign visitors to Egypt (more than 700,000 in 2009).<sup>29</sup>

The biggest potential for Polish investments in Egypt is held by PGNiG SA (including companies in the PGNiG group: Nafta Piła and Geofizyka Toruń), which back in 2007 outbid rivals for an extraction concession from Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation covering Baharija Block (some 4,500 sq. km, with a deposit of 22 million tons of crude oil). With the contract signed on 17 May 2009, seismic studies were performed and first drilling operations carried out.

**Libya.** PGNiG SA also secured a gas extraction concession for Murzuk field in Libya, under an agreement signed on 25 February 2008 between PGNiG SA's daughter, Polish Oil and Gas Company—Libya B.V. and the state-owned National Oil Corporation. The field's potential is estimated at some 150 mld cu. m., or thrice as much as all documented reserves of natural gas in Poland.<sup>30</sup> In

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<sup>29</sup> By way of comparison, 160,000 Poles travelled in the same period to Israel, and 30,000–40,000 to Morocco.

<sup>30</sup> "PGNiG w Libii może wydobyć więcej gazu niż w Polsce," *Gazeta Prawna*, 19 August 2009, [http://biznes.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/345995,pgnig\\_w\\_libii\\_moze\\_wydobyc\\_wiecej\\_gazu\\_niz\\_w\\_polsce.html](http://biznes.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/345995,pgnig_w_libii_moze_wydobyc_wiecej_gazu_niz_w_polsce.html).

the course of 2009, seismic photographs of the field were taken and drilling began. Poland also sought to intensify economic relations with Libya via Ukraine, whose trade exchanges with that market are thrice as high as Poland's.<sup>31</sup>

The year 2009 witnessed a new opening in relations with **Syria**. In March 2009, Syrian Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Dardari was in Poland, heading his country's first delegation at that level since 1989. During his talks with Deputy Prime Minister Pawlak and Prime Minister Tusk, the parties identified two fields with potential for cooperation: natural gas supplies and mining. A Polish-Syrian Business Forum, co-chaired by both deputy prime ministers, was held in Warsaw on 5 March, and in April political consultations were conducted. The next month, the Polish-Syrian Economic Forum continued in Damascus, attended by more than a hundred representatives of Syrian business.

In economic relations with the **Palestinian Autonomy**, the sector that comes to the fore is tourism, with Poles the third largest national group of visitors to the West Bank. With this in mind, the Palestinian minister for tourism proposed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in tourism, which was signed in 2009. Two-way trade is conducted in only symbolic quantities.

### Social and Cultural Relations

The lines of cultural and social relations with the Middle East, just as with other regions, are defined in the Framework Strategy for the Promotion of Poland to 2015, where the goal is to create a favorable image of Poland abroad.

The top cultural and social event in the whole region in 2009 was the Polish Season in Israel, described by the Polish Institute in Tel Aviv as a "milestone in Polish-Israel relations."<sup>32</sup> Beginning in April 2008 with a audiovisual presentation in Tel Aviv to commemorate Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it culminated in the final gala in Jerusalem, featuring a classical music concert and attended by Polish First Lady Maria Kaczyńska. In all, around a hundred artistic and educational events were held in Israel as part of the Season.<sup>33</sup>

Another highlight in educational cooperation with Israel in 2009 was the signing in Jerusalem of a youth exchange agreement for 2009–2011 between the Polish Ministry of Education and the Israeli Council for Youth Exchanges

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<sup>31</sup> *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych (94) 2009*, no. 1896/VI kadencja.

<sup>32</sup> See the website of Polish Institute in Tel Aviv, [www.polishinstitute.org.il/pl/about/about-us.html](http://www.polishinstitute.org.il/pl/about/about-us.html).

<sup>33</sup> The Polish Season in Israel, also referred to as the Polish Year, has a dedicated website with a complete list of the events, [www.poland-israel.org](http://www.poland-israel.org).

(24 May). And a successful investigation into the theft of a wall element at the site of Auschwitz concentration camp in December 2009 (which caused a great deal of stir among the Israel public) helped towards creating the image of Poland as a country effectively fighting anti-Semitism.

Due to the shortage of specialised entities, such as Polish Institutes, it falls on diplomatic missions to pursue public diplomacy, promote Poland and maintain cultural relations in Arab countries. The examples given below are but a sample of the activities taken in this field.

To commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations with Morocco and Tunisia, the Polish Embassy in Tunis organised a concert of Polish music by young Tunisian and Polish artists, and the Embassy in Rabat carried out the project “Colors of Tradition: Morocco—Poland,” under the honorary patronage of His Royal Majesty, King Mohammad VI, and President Lech Kaczyński (October–November), as well as arranging for a festival of Polish films (8–11 October) and a Polish-Moroccan piano concert (24 April).

Among the most important events organised by the Polish Embassy in Cairo in 2009 was a festival of films directed by Andrzej Wajda, held in June at Sakia el-Sawy culture centre. The Polish Embassy in Doha intensified its contacts with the Qatari Ministry of Culture, Arts and National Heritage, and it organised a concert of Chopin music at the National Theatre, under the aegis and with the help of Minister Hamad Al-Kuwari. The minister also assumed patronage over the Qatari celebrations of the Year of Chopin in 2010.

### **Appraisal**

The policy towards the Middle East, pursued since 2007 by the coalition government of the Civic Platform and the Polish Farmers’ Party, has been a pragmatic one. Poland manages to keep privileged relations with Israel while simultaneously increasing the Arab countries’ weight in its foreign policy. But the results scored by the two ministries assigned with this policy’s implementation, the Economics Ministry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are diametrically different.

The greatest success in 2009 was undoubtedly the LNG contract with Qatar, a milestone along Poland’s road towards wider diversification of its energy supplies. In this way, Poland reached one of its priority interests in the Middle East by means of intensification of economic relations. It is also praiseworthy that leaders of the United Arab Emirates (our largest trading partner in the Arab world) perceive Poland as a potential hub for cooperation with the whole of Central and Eastern Europe. On the other hand, despite the region’s

attractiveness, the levels of two-way trade exchanges and investment flows remain unsatisfactory.

As far as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is concerned, the Middle Eastern issues are clearly seen as being of secondary importance. The weight of the Arab-Israeli conflict has been diminishing, and the Polish position towards this problem still seeks to reconcile two contradictions, namely maintaining privileged relations with one party to the conflict, while simultaneously declaring that Poland does not side with either party. Consequently, the position is blurred, ineffectual and susceptible to external influences. This is reflected, for example, in the lack of precision in defining the relations with Israel.<sup>34</sup> One of the MoFA's declared goals in 2009 was to create a new strategy towards countries in the region which would clearly define the foreign policy goals. Such strategy has yet to be formulated. And the diplomatic missions in the region feel the additional burden caused by the programme of Polish missions' rationalisation and by the tendency towards widening the responsibilities of individual ambassadors and consuls.

Failure to use the presence of Polish military contingents in UN missions for the promotion of Poland's political image deserves to be censured. While care was taken to ensure that the withdrawal of Polish troops from the UNIFIL mission in Lebanon did not produce adverse consequences for relations with that country, no senior Polish representative was on the spot when the Polish contingent pulled out from the UNDPF mission in the Golan Heights. Such a manner of completing a mission which since 1974 served to build Poland's positive image in the region and which represented a major manifestation of Poland's interest in the Middle East should be regarded as a grave error which can adversely influence the Polish image.

*Translated by Zbigniew Szymański*

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<sup>34</sup> These are described at MoFA as "priority" relations, while the term "strategic" is being avoided. The "strategic" designation, though, appears on the website of the Council of Ministers' Chancellery. See *Spotkanie prezesa Rady Ministrów z prezydentem Autonomii Palestyńskiej*, 9 February 2009, [www.kprm.gov.pl/centrum\\_prasowe/wydarzenia/id:582/](http://www.kprm.gov.pl/centrum_prasowe/wydarzenia/id:582/).

## Poland's Policy towards the Western Balkans

The Western Balkans<sup>1</sup> have never featured as a region of special importance in Poland's foreign policy. Upon achieving its post-1989 strategic aims, i.e. on joining NATO and the EU, Poland has focused on promoting democratic values in countries in Eastern Europe which—like the Western Balkan states—remain outside the European Union's structures.

### Determinants

The Western Balkan region not being in the immediate neighbourhood of Poland, the armed conflicts which had taken place in the territory of Yugoslavia early in the 1990s and the unstable political situation that came in their wake posed no direct threat to the security of the Polish state. Poland's historical and economic ties with the Balkan states are not as strong and long-established as, for instance, those of its Visegrad Group partners and, accordingly, it has been less active in its contacts with these partners.

Poland's Western Balkans policy has been determined predominantly by its membership in NATO and in the European Union. Security and a stable political and economic situation being the both structures' principal objectives in respect of the Western Balkans, they are reflected accordingly in Poland's policy towards the region. Moreover, the Western Balkans region, which shares with the EU its entire land border, has been a priority direction of EU enlargement. In this context it is important that enlargement of the Union has for years enjoyed public support in Poland. In 2009 it was approved by 70% of respondents, the highest score in all EU countries (against an EU average of 46%)<sup>2</sup> and Poles' support for the admission of the Western Balkan states to the Union is higher by over a dozen percent than the respective EU average.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo (within the meaning of Resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council) and Serbia.

<sup>2</sup> *Eurobaromètre Standard 72*, Automne 2009. Cf. *Standard Eurobarometer 71*, June–July 2009.

<sup>3</sup> *Standard Eurobarometer 69*, Spring 2008.



Membership in Central European structures, namely the Visegrad Group and the Regional Partnership,<sup>4</sup> is a factor of significance to Poland's Western Balkans policy. The Western Balkan countries figuring prominently in the foreign policies of Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic (and of Slovenia and Austria, which participate, together with the Visegrad Group countries, in the Regional Partnership), the development of cooperation with them is among the both groupings' programme priorities.

### Aims

The paramount aim of Poland's foreign policy, which is to ensure security of the state, is set in a broader context of European security. Essentially, Polish interests in the region are limited to improving security and stabilising the political and economic situation there through the integration of the Western Balkan countries with NATO and the EU. Poland has consistently supported NATO's and the EU's "open door" policy towards the Western Balkan states. This support for the Balkan states' integration aspirations, besides being security-related, is also linked to Poland's policy towards the East European and South Caucasus states. The sooner the Western Balkan states join the EU, the sooner will the EU step up its activity in areas falling within the scope of Poland's foreign policy interests. Yet Poland's support for the Western Balkan states has been largely confined to the declarative sphere and rarely has it been accompanied by concrete actions by the government.

In recent years the Western Balkans have come to be a priority region in the EU's foreign policy and at present the countries in that part of Europe are (alongside Iceland) the only candidates with a real prospect of membership. Presumably, it was in recognition of the growing importance of the region for the EU that in information from the government on Polish foreign policy tasks in 2007 the Balkans were addressed more extensively, for the first time.<sup>5</sup> Also, the then government, formed with the participation of the PiS [Law and Justice] party, declared the need for Poland's stronger North-South engagement,

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<sup>4</sup> The Visegrad Group states and Austria and Slovenia.

<sup>5</sup> "The government of Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński supports the European aspirations of the Western Balkan states—first and foremost those of Croatia. ... Poland, guided by the principle of solidarity I have referred to, supports invariably and steadfastly, in every exchange and every statement, supports a further enlargement of the European Union by the entire Balkans, Ukraine, Turkey and other states," "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2007 (presented at the session of the Sejm on 11 May 2007 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Anna Fotyga)," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2008*.

a position which brought about an observable increase in interest in the Balkans. In a public address on the challenges confronting the EU, Minister of Foreign Affairs Anna Fotyga referred to the Western Balkans firstly in the context of creating a stable and peaceful external environment of the EU.<sup>6</sup> These declarations, although not followed by an intensification of Poland's policy towards that region, were noted by foreign experts.<sup>7</sup>

After the change of government, even though Poland's support for the integration of the Balkans with NATO and the EU continued, information from the government on Poland's foreign policy in 2008 dealt with the Balkan issue in a single sentence—one conveying general support for a “peaceful transformation and integration” of the region.<sup>8</sup> Thereafter, in information for 2009, which was dominated by a policy resulting from the implementation of the Eastern Partnership project, there was no mention of the Western Balkans at all.<sup>9</sup> However, meeting Polish ambassadors in January 2008 Prime Minister Tusk brought to their notice Poland's express support for Croatia's accession efforts and he pointed out that Poland desired a “fair, reasonably clear European perspective for the other Western Balkan states.”<sup>10</sup>

### Political Relations

**Security.** Poland supports the Western Balkan states in their aspirations to NATO membership. At a NATO meeting in Bucharest in April 2008 Poland was unequivocally in favour of admitting to the Alliance all three Balkan candidates: Albania, Croatia and Macedonia. After Greece's negative stance on Macedonia's accession,<sup>11</sup> which resulted in Macedonia not receiving an invitation to join

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<sup>6</sup> “Wystąpienie Pani Minister A. Fotygi na konferencji w Natolinie (19 maja 2006 r.),” 23 May 2006, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>7</sup> T. Strážay, “Vyšehradská štvorka: revitalizácia po ‘únave z rozšírenia’,” in: *Ročenka zahraničnej politiky Slovenskej republiky 2007*, Bratislava, 2008, p. 59.

<sup>8</sup> “Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2008 (presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski),” *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2009*, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> “Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009 (presented at the sitting of the Sejm on 13 February 2009 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski),” above, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> “Dobre relacje zagraniczne Polski to priorytet rządu,” 30 January 2008, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl).

<sup>11</sup> Greece does not recognise the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia and it has been urging the latter to modify the name in a manner that would prevent its conflicting with the name of the ancient Macedonia, the greater part of which lies in the territory of contemporary Greece.

NATO, Poland has steadfastly expressed support for Macedonia's membership in the Alliance. From the perspective of Poland's interests the withholding of invitation to Macedonia was undesirable because for the first time ever a country, which had fulfilled the requirements, was refused membership due to a veto by one of the members and a dangerous precedent was thus set in NATO's "open door" policy.

Traditionally, Poland has engaged strongly in peacekeeping missions in the Western Balkans. Poles serve in civilian missions and in international military and police forces and the sizes of these contingents have been stable in recent years.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina 176 soldiers from Poland serve in EUFOR "Althea"<sup>12</sup> (this is the fourth largest among the 25 contingents), making up one-tenth of the mission's manpower. In April 2009 the Polish government decided on the withdrawal early in 2010 of a sizable part of this contingent, with barely about 25 Polish troops scheduled to stay on.<sup>13</sup> This decision was dictated both by the EU's strategy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina, which provided for a further reduction of the EUFOR "Althea" force, and by Poland's policy of streamlining its peacekeeping mission contingents. (Ultimately, in the absence of an EU-wide agreement on the reduction of the mission's force, the size of the Polish contingent was not reduced after all). In addition, three Polish police officers serve in Bosnia and Herzegovina as experts in the EU police mission.

In Kosovo 110 Polish police officers make up one of the EULEX's four main international police contingents. In addition, 230 Polish troops serve in the NATO-led KFOR mission.<sup>14</sup> Following a decision, taken by the NATO ministers of defence in June 2009 in Brussels to gradually reduce the mission's force<sup>15</sup> the Polish contingent was slightly scaled back from the 280 troops serving in KFOR in mid-2009.

**Enlargement of the EU.** Poland champions the continuation of the process of EU enlargement by willing states that will have fulfilled all of the EU criteria. It supports the aspirations of Croatia and Macedonia as accession candidates to

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<sup>12</sup> The Polish contingent in EUFOR "Althea" has numbered about 200 since the launch of this operation (data as at November 2009); under a decision of the President of the Republic of Poland it may number 250 troops.

<sup>13</sup> The Manoeuvre Company was to be withdrawn from the Polish Military Contingent in Bosnia and Herzegovina early in 2010. The two Operations-and-Liaison Teams were to remain in place.

<sup>14</sup> As at November 2009.

<sup>15</sup> "NATO Defence Ministers Announce Gradual Reduction of Troops in Kosovo," 11 June 2009, [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int).

the EU. For this reason, both the prolonged Croatia-EU negotiations, which were blocked for over a year by Slovenia in connection with the Gulf of Piran maritime border dispute, and the delayed commencement of negotiations with Macedonia due—like in the case of that country’s NATO membership—to objections from Greece, are unwelcome from the perspective of Polish foreign policy assumptions. The Polish government has objected to the use accession negotiations as a platform for resolving bilateral conflicts. The blocking of negotiations by a single member state constitutes a precedent which could be used of in the future not only in dealing with the remaining Balkan states but also where East European states are concerned.

Poland wants accession negotiations with the remaining Western Balkan states to commence after these candidates have met the Copenhagen criteria. Like a majority of EU countries, including all new members—and unlike some West European states, such as Germany—Poland sees no need for slowing down the pace of EU enlargement in this region following Croatia’s accession.<sup>16</sup> At the same time it has emphasised that accession negotiations with Iceland should proceed according to the principles applicable to the other candidates. While supporting Iceland in its bid for EU membership Poland believes that favouring that country in the accession process could produce negative effects for the Western Balkan states.<sup>17</sup>

**Kosovo.** Poland’s policy on Kosovo’s independence was in line with the approach adopted by a majority of the EU members. While declaring that it desired the EU to develop a joint position on this issue,<sup>18</sup> Poland unmistakably subscribed to the concept of creating an independent state in that part of Serbia.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> “The Republic of Poland was also among the Member States which emphasised the necessity for the EU to keep the promises made to the Western Balkan states and to the Republic of Turkey,” “Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie lipiec–grudzień 2007 r. (podczas prezydencji portugalskiej), przekazany Marszałkowi Sejmu RP w dniu 26 lutego 2008 (druk nr 272),” p. 26, [www.senat.gov.pl/k7/dok/dr/050/071.pdf](http://www.senat.gov.pl/k7/dok/dr/050/071.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> “Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie styczeń–czerwiec 2009 roku (podczas Prezydencji czeskiej),” pp. 33–34, [http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druki6ka.nsf/wgdruku/2285/\\$file/2285.pdf](http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druki6ka.nsf/wgdruku/2285/$file/2285.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> This matter was raised by the Prime Minister’s Chief of Staff Sławomir Nowak in behind-the-scenes talks during the EU summit. See “Polska wstrzymieźliwa w sprawie Kosowa,” 14 December 2007, [www.wiadomosci.gazeta.pl](http://www.wiadomosci.gazeta.pl).

<sup>19</sup> During the December 2007 meeting of the European Council in Brussels Prime Minister Donald Tusk informed about the government’s support for Kosovo’s independence aspirations. What’s more, Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski announced, still before the declaration of independence by Kosovo, that Poland’s position on Kosovo was situated in the mainstream of the European position. For more see *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych*, no. 9, 2008, no. 160/VI kadencja.

The EU having failed to adopt a joint view on the Kosovo issues, Poland recognised (as the tenth EU member) Kosovo's independence on 26 February 2008,<sup>20</sup> less than a week and a half after its declaration by the parliament in Pristina. It would seem that this decision was dictated to some extent by the Kosovo policy of the U.S. with which Poland was negotiating at that time the terms of deployment of a missile shield in Poland.<sup>21</sup>

The Polish government argued that this supportive attitude towards Kosovo's independence was an outcome of a realistic assessment of the political situation in the Balkans and an "expression of solidarity with the members of the Euro-Atlantic community."<sup>22</sup> At the same time, it acknowledged that the independence of Kosovo would lead, in a long-term perspective, to improved security and stability in the region. It recalled on this occasion its support for the integration of the Western Balkan states with the EU,<sup>23</sup> emphasising that the Kosovo issue should be treated as *sui generis* and should not establish a precedent.<sup>24</sup>

The government raised again the matter of uniqueness of the Kosovo case in a statement, submitted a year later to the International Court of Justice following the UN General Assembly's request for an advisory opinion on the conformity of the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence with international law. In a written statement of April 2009 the government argued that the *sui generis* nature of this case was borne out by a number of premises: the established, long-standing practice of Kosovo's broad autonomy and self-government within Yugoslavia and its subsequent revocation in defiance of the Kosovo inhabitants' will; the systematic, large-scale violation of human rights by Serbia; and Serbia's having lost effective power and control of Kosovo. Immediately before the recognition of Kosovo's independence Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław

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<sup>20</sup> "Uchwała nr 38/2008 Rady Ministrów z 26 lutego 2008 r. w sprawie uznania przez Rzeczpospolitą Polską Republiki Kosowa," [www.premier.gov.pl/rzad/decyzje\\_rzadu/id:691](http://www.premier.gov.pl/rzad/decyzje_rzadu/id:691).

<sup>21</sup> Minister Sikorski emphasised that the government's decision had been motivated not only by the developments in the Balkans but also by Poland's relations with its European and transatlantic partners. See "Rząd uznał niepodległość Kosowa," 27 February 2008, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

<sup>22</sup> Answer by the Minister of Foreign Affairs provided on 28 March 2008 to Sejm Deputy Jarosław Matwiejuk's parliamentary question concerning the recognition of Kosovo's independence and Poland's policy towards the Western Balkans states (from the author's private archives).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>24</sup> "Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych na temat priorytetów polskiej polityki zagranicznej. Senat Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej: Wspólne posiedzenie Komisji Spraw Unii Europejskiej oraz Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych Senatu w dniu 27 lutego 2008 r.," [www.senat.gov.pl/k7/kom/kszz/2008/009sz.pdf](http://www.senat.gov.pl/k7/kom/kszz/2008/009sz.pdf).

Sikorski disclosed that Vice-premier Waldemar Pawlak had suggested sending to Serbia a political mission with a view to keeping up a “European perspective” for Belgrade.<sup>25</sup> This idea was never put into practice, yet it is worth noting that a long-standing belief is that Serbia’s membership in the EU has would be of considerable significance for stability in the entire region.<sup>26</sup>

Even though Poland recognised Kosovo’s independence, it established no diplomatic relations with it. Poland’s decision to recognise the independence of Kosovo did not lead to a noticeable deterioration of relations with Serbia. Serbia did not downgrade its embassy in Warsaw (at that time the Serbian diplomatic mission in Poland was headed by a chargé d’affaires) and the Polish ambassador remained in Belgrade. Overall Polish-Serbian relations were also influenced by the fact that the government’s Kosovo policy differed from the position of President Lech Kaczyński, who was of the opinion that Poland should refrain from recognising Kosovo’s independence. The president believed that the decision to support the unilateral declaration of Kosovo’s independence could have negative consequences for the territorial integrity of Georgia, to supporting which he had committed himself strongly.<sup>27</sup> Lech Kaczyński repeatedly emphasised—including whilst on visit to Belgrade in May 2009—that his position on the recognition of Kosovo differed from that of the government.<sup>28</sup>

**Regional cooperation relations.** When announcing the decision to recognise Kosovo’s independence Poland took a position that it was advisable to encourage Serbia on its course towards the EU, and it expressed its support for the pro-democracy forces in that state. Yet it was not on all occasions that it made use of all opportunities for providing this political support. In April 2008 it was absent from among the signatories of a France-proposed declaration on the facilitation of the issuance of free visas to Serbian citizens. The declaration was

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<sup>25</sup> “Rząd uznał niepodległość Kosowa,” *op. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> See, for instance, the stenographic record of a hearing of Andrzej Jasionowski, candidate for Ambassador to Serbia, in *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych*, no. 103, 2009, no. 2107/VI kadencja. Earlier the inter-dependence between the political situation in Serbia and the stabilisation of the entire region was highlighted by PiS’s Paweł Kowal, then Secretary of State in the MFA. *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych*, no. 72, 2007, no. 1686/V kadencja.

<sup>27</sup> The presidential press spokesman Michał Kamiński emphasised that Lech Kaczyński recommended “prudence” on the Kosovo issue, the matter of that territory’s independence “having serious implications for other parts of the world.” He pointed out that this issue could be taken advantage of with respect to Georgia or Ukraine. For more see “Tusk: we wtorek rząd uzna niepodległość Kosowa,” 22 February 2008, [www.wprost.pl](http://www.wprost.pl).

<sup>28</sup> “Prezydent z jednodniową wizytą w Serbii,” 13 May 2009, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

signed by 17 Schengen states.<sup>29</sup> Thereafter the Ministry of Foreign Affairs argued that Poland was already providing considerable facilitations for Serbian citizens under the existing legislation.<sup>30</sup> Poland endorsed the French initiative only later, in the May 2008 joint declaration of the Regional Partnership states.<sup>31</sup>

This is just one example evidencing that the functioning of the Central European regional structures has been the factor spurring Poland into a somewhat greater activity on Western Balkans affairs. This holds true equally for the Regional Partnership and the Visegrad Group. In Poland experts associated with the MFA have for years argued for the division of areas of responsibility, with the Regional Partnership to address Western Balkan issues and the Visegrad Group to concern itself with Eastern Europe.<sup>32</sup> However, given the Balkan's dominant role in the policies of Poland's Visegrad Group partners, no such separation has been established. Some analysts believe that the removal of Balkan affairs from the Visegrad agenda would weaken the Group and would not be to Poland's advantage.<sup>33</sup>

The Western Balkans issue appeared among the priorities of the Polish presidency of the Visegrad Group (July 2008–June 2009),<sup>34</sup> but it received less attention than in preceding years. Ranked last, as the fifth aim (the other four being concerned primarily with the European Neighbourhood Policy dimension), it was confined to a generally-worded support for the promotion of reforms in the countries in the region on their course towards the EU and NATO. In fact the Polish presidency of the Visegrad Group was focused chiefly on promoting the Eastern Partnership.

One manifestation of the Polish Visegrad Group presidency's activity on Balkan matters was a meeting arranged between the four states' MFA political directors and

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<sup>29</sup> For more see "Visas: communiqué conjoint de 17 pays européens," 6 May 2008, [www.ambafrance-srb.org](http://www.ambafrance-srb.org).

<sup>30</sup> Answer to Question no. 1912 on waiving visa fees for the citizens of Serbia, provided by Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acting by the authority of the Minister, 23 July 2008, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>31</sup> "Deklarácia Regionálneho partnerstva k uľahčeniu vízového režimu s krajinami západného Balkánu," 6 May 2008, [www.foreign.gov.sk](http://www.foreign.gov.sk).

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, J. Gajewski, "Poland's Regional Policy," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2006, p. 187.

<sup>33</sup> Cf., for instance, M. Gniazdowski, "Bałkany Zachodnie: sprawa środkowoeuropejskiej solidarności," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 2, 2008, pp. 74–78.

<sup>34</sup> "Programme of the Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group (July 2008–June 2009)," [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu).

a representative of the British Foreign Office, Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities, and the EU's special representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovak diplomat Miroslav Lajčák. The purpose of the meeting, which was held in October 2008 in Sarajevo, was to promote the EU's more active approach to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The meeting caused Bosnian political elites to take an interest in the experiences of the Visegrad Group and, indirectly, it assisted Lajčák in his efforts for stabilisation and reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>35</sup> This initiative was assessed by the EU partners as a model implementation of EU members' activities. During the Sarajevo meeting attention was drawn, among other things, to the need for the EU to increase the number of scholarships for students from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Visegrad states offer to students from that country, and from other Western Balkan countries, a scholarship programme of the International Visegrad Fund. Lately the programme has been open also to students from Kosovo, the absence of the Visegrad states' common position on Kosovo notwithstanding.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the implementation of concrete scholarship projects in Serbia—which shares with Belarus and Georgia the status of the Fund's priority country—has been under discussion.<sup>37</sup>

Poland, like the other Visegrad Group states, supported the candidacy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2010–2011. Poland, which had initially competed with B&H in the East European regional group for this position, eventually decided that presence in the Security Council was not among its priorities. Accordingly, it supported Bosnia and Herzegovina and Minister Sikorski notified this decision to the Bosnian diplomacy chief Sven Alkalaj at a meeting in New York on 25 September 2008. At the same time, Bosnia and Herzegovina assured Poland of its support should Poland choose to stand for this position in the future.<sup>38</sup>

In October 2009, during Hungary's presidency of the Visegrad Group, the Visegrad ministers of foreign affairs met in Budapest to address Western Balkan matters. Poland was represented by an undersecretary of state. In a joint declaration

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<sup>35</sup> Non Paper on the Visegrad Group's support for an initiative of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the U.K and the Czech Republic for the EU's more active approach to Bosnia and Herzegovina (from the author's private archives).

<sup>36</sup> M. Bútorá, V. Bilčík, T. Strážay, V. Tarasovič, "Zahraničná Politika," *Newsletter*, no. 4, 2008.

<sup>37</sup> The scholarship programme was also discussed during a meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs of the Visegrad states, Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Sweden and Slovenia in Warsaw on 24 November. See "Spotkania Ministrów Spraw Zagranicznych państw Grupy Wyszehradzkiej oraz Bułgarii, Estonii, Litwy, Łotwy, Rumunii, Szwecji i Słowenii," 24 November 2008, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>38</sup> "Poparcie dla Bośni i Hercegowiny," 9 October 2008, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).



the ministers declared their readiness to promote European integration of the Western Balkan states during the consecutive Presidencies of the EU Council.<sup>39</sup>

**Bilateral relations.** Poland's relations with all Western Balkan states are correct, but no express will to deepen bilateral cooperation is in evidence. Poland's diplomatic activity in the region has been modest. In the period from the forming of the Donald Tusk government in the autumn of 2007 till the end of 2009 the Polish prime minister did not meet, under bilateral cooperation agenda, with the head of government of any of the states in the region.<sup>40</sup>

Besides the already mentioned New York meeting with the Bosnian minister, in the recent two years Minister Sikorski talked three times with Balkan diplomacy chiefs. The Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs Gordon Jandrovcic paid an official visit in Poland on 26 October 2008. Working visits were paid in Warsaw by Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs Vuk Jeremić on 2 July 2009 and by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia Antonio Milošoski on 18 November 2009. Moreover, in November 2009 Polish-Bosnian consultations were held at the level of vice-ministers of foreign affairs. So far, Minister Sikorski paid no visit in any of the Western Balkan states.

A somewhat higher activity towards the region was displayed in the same period by President Kaczyński, who visited the Western Balkans twice as part of bilateral cooperation activities, meeting in January 2008 in Zagreb with the President of Croatia Stjepan Mesić, and in May 2009 in Belgrade—with the President of Serbia Boris Tadic. Earlier, in December 2007, he met with the Chairman of the Presidium of Bosnia and Herzegovina Željko Komšić on an official visit in Warsaw. Moreover, in January 2010 the president attended a swearing-in ceremony of Croatia's new president Ivo Josipovic. He also held a number of courtesy meetings and meetings arising from the agenda of regional bilateral cooperation.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> "The Visegrad Group Stands Ready to Promote the Integration of the Western Balkans," 6 October 2009, [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu).

<sup>40</sup> In December 2007 the prime minister met with the Chairman of the Presidium of Bosnia and Herzegovina Željko Komšić, who was on an official visit in Warsaw.

<sup>41</sup> In May 2008 President of the Republic of Poland Lech Kaczyński, while attending the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the presidents of Central European states, met with the presidents of Albania and Macedonia and with the chairman of the Presidium of Bosnia and Herzegovina. See "Udział Prezydenta RP w XV Spotkaniu Prezydentów Państw Europy Środkowej," 1 May 2008, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl). In November 2008, during official celebrations of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's regained independence, President Kaczyński met in Warsaw with the chairman of the Presidium of Bosnia and Herzegovina and with the presidents of Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia. See "Polska popiera poszerzenie UE," 10 November 2008, and "Spotkanie z Prezydentem Serbii," 12 November 2008, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

Poland provides support to the Western Balkans under foreign development aid, but the allocations for the region are very modest: PLN1.42m (or 0.14% of total foreign development aid) in 2007; PLN2m in 2007; and PLN1m in 2009. Only activities arising from Regional Partnership commitments were somewhat more significant.<sup>42</sup> Under the arrangements agreed in 2005 [at the Western Balkans Conference] in Budapest Poland coordinates activities in the area of sharing experience in the employment of the EU's pre-accession aid funds. Under this initiative since 2006 the Office of the Committee for European Integration (UKIE) has carried out several projects a year—study visits, internships, workshops, and training events conducted by experts from Poland.<sup>43</sup> The aid recipients comprised all Western Balkan countries except Kosovo.

In 2009 Poland's activities under the Budapest Process were scaled back following cuts in funding for these purposes. The budget of the much-streamlined UKIE included no allocations for these projects at all and, at the same time, the allocation for the Western Balkans in the development aid budget administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was trimmed down. Accordingly, in 2009 only two projects targeted at five states in the region (Croatia excluded) were carried out under this initiative. What's more, so far the 2010 allocation to development aid for the Western Balkan countries stands at a mere PLN0.2m to be used by the Polish embassies in the region for the implementation of local projects. Unless more funds are allocated to 2010 aid to the Western Balkans the discharge of commitments under the Budapest Agreements could prove impossible. Yet there is much argument in favour of the continuation of these activities. Poland has a reputation in the Balkans as a state to have employed EU funds in a model way. Also, it has valuable experience in fighting organised crime which—alongside corruption and the ineffective administration and judiciary—poses in all countries in the region a major obstacle on their road to the EU.

Of all the Western Balkan countries, Croatia is the one with which Poland has the best-developed working contacts. This is due to Croatia's being the most advanced in the process of integration with the EU. In February 2008 Željko Kuprešak, Croatian Secretary of State for European Integration, came to Warsaw

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<sup>42</sup> For more see [www.polskapomoc.gov.pl](http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl).

<sup>43</sup> More in "Informacja na temat działań Polski w związku z inicjatywą Partnerstwa Regionalnego na rzecz wspierania procesu integracji państw regionu Bałkanów Zachodnich z Unią Europejską," [www.ukie.gov.pl/www/dpr.nsf](http://www.ukie.gov.pl/www/dpr.nsf).

on a working visit.<sup>44</sup> In July 2008 a secretary of state in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration paid a visit in Croatia, accompanied by Police and Border Guard commanders. They declared their will to share their experience in getting their services ready for protecting the external border of the Union. Also, they received with interest a Croatian proposal to set up mixed (with the participation of Polish police) holiday season patrols on the Adriatic coast<sup>45</sup> to facilitate contact with Polish tourists. Yet this idea was not put into practice in 2009, even though the other Visegrad states assign their police personnel to such patrols. In February 2009 a delegation of the Croatian Ministry of Internal Affairs visited Warsaw.<sup>46</sup> Working contacts were also developed between the Ministries of Justice.

### Economic Relations

Poland's modest economic cooperation with the Western Balkan countries is a derivative of its political involvement in the region. Trade between Poland and the states in that part of Europe is small enough (accounting for no more than one percent of total trade) to be excluded from annual foreign trade reports published by the Polish Ministry of Economy. Croatia accounts for one-half of Poland's trade with the Western Balkan countries. Poland's trade with each of the countries in the region is in surplus.

Table 1

#### Poland's Trade with Western Balkan Countries

	2007		2008		2009 <sup>a</sup>		2009 Share in total	
	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	exports	imports
Country	in million euros						in %	
Total	101,838.7	120,464.7	116,243.8	142,447.9	88,702.8	96,204.9	100	100
Albania	11.69	1.14	14.44	1.68	17.96	1.13	0.025	0.005
Bosnia and Herzegovina	65.98	36.85	77.16	34.92	78.43	33.02	0.09	0.03

<sup>44</sup> Embassy of the Republic of Croatia in Warsaw, "Press Release 53/08," 27 February 2008, <http://pl.mfa.hr>.

<sup>45</sup> See "Polsko-chorwacka współpraca policyjna," 23 July 2008, [www.mswia.gov.pl](http://www.mswia.gov.pl).

<sup>46</sup> See "Wizyta delegacji Chorwacji," 18 February 2009, [www.mswia.gov.pl](http://www.mswia.gov.pl).

Croatia	348.93	92.62	361.04	116.42	268.46	112.56	0.30	0.12
Montenegro	16.63	0.20	9.80 <sup>b</sup>	0.28 <sup>b</sup>	8.48	0.51	0.01	0.00
Macedonia	92.94	8.67	151.12	11.28	35.18	9.87	0.04	0.01
Kosovo	5.35	0.00	12.37	0.01	15.24	0.01	0.02	0.00
Serbia	163.26	99.83	218.13	100.07	135.36	44.40	0.15	0.05

<sup>a</sup> Data for a period from January to November 2009

<sup>b</sup> Data for a period from January to November 2008

*Source:* based on Ministry of Economy data—[www.mg.gov.pl](http://www.mg.gov.pl).

### Social and Cultural Relations

The culture of the Balkan peoples enjoys a degree of popularity in Poland even though, basically, it does not reach the mass audience. In April 2008 a two-week festival “Balkan Express” (the second and, so far, the last edition) was held in Warsaw, with various events promoting the culture of the Balkan nations. This project, mounted by several NGOs, enjoyed the patronage of the Polish minister of culture and national heritage. In the summer of 2009 a presentation of Kosovo films (first-even in Poland) was organised as part of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the Toruń International Film Festival TOFIFEST. Each year several films produced in Western Balkan countries are shown during the Warsaw international Film Festival.

Doubtless, Kosovo’s secession—viewed with mixed feelings by the Poles—brought about an increased interest in Balkan affairs. Public interest in Poland was focused in particular on the observance of the rights of Christians in Kosovo and on the protection of their places of worship.

Representatives of the half-million-strong Russian Orthodox Church in Poland joined actively the protest campaign against Kosovo’s secession from Serbia. The Church presented its position in information campaigns on its website and on regional radio and TV.<sup>47</sup> In the first half of 2008 concerts and religious services for peace were organised (most of them in Białystok), their leading theme being that Kosovo should remain in Serbia. This political involvement constituted a precedent in the activities of the Russian Orthodox Church in Poland.

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<sup>47</sup> This was particularly noticeable immediately before the declaration of independence by Kosovo and in months thereafter. In this period it on some days several articles on Kosovo-related matters would appear on the website [www.kosovo.cerkiew.pl](http://www.kosovo.cerkiew.pl).

The Croatian Adriatic coast is much frequented by Polish tourists. Croatia ranks second (after Germany) as the Poles' preferred country to go to in the summer. In the summers of 2008 and 2009 it hosted about 250 thousand Poles. In 2007 and 2008 Croats were the single largest group (35 thousand a year<sup>48</sup>) of Western Balkan tourists visiting Poland—but this was attributable chiefly to the Schengen entry visa regime applicable till December 2009 to inhabitants of the other countries in the region. Moreover, in May 2009 the PLL Lot Airlines resumed, after fifteen years, scheduled direct flights between Warsaw and Belgrade.

### Assessment

In 2009, like in the preceding year, Poland failed to develop a policy towards the Western Balkans. In the recent two years this policy has not differed fundamentally from that pursued in previous years. If Poland was somewhat more active in this area than heretofore, this was due to the EU's and NATO's policies and to the necessity to take a position on current political developments in that part of Europe. However, this activity did not reflect a strategic strengthening of Poland's interest in the region.

Poland's modest involvement in the Western Balkans is largely attributable to the fact that Poland's foreign policy, oriented as it is towards the external environment of the EU, has been focused on affairs of Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, which are both covered by the Eastern Partnership. Promoting the Eastern Partnership project became a priority for Poland and it will remain so also in years to come—including during the Polish Presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011. On some occasions this eastwards orientation went hand in hand with a small flexibility of politicians (not only those active at home, but of MEPs as well) as they sought to link certain integration successes in the Western Balkans with a matching opening to the Eastern Neighbourhood countries. This undermined Poland's opportunities for co-creating the EU's Western Balkans policy.

The Western Balkans are not among the priorities of the programme of Polish Presidency of the EU Council. As Poland takes over the presidency from Hungary, which will have paid more attention to that region than Poland does, it can be expected to inherit the Western Balkans issue. Although this region will remain a priority for the EU in years immediately ahead, Poland's reluctance to increase its involvement there can be explained by the time-honoured principle of avoiding overstretch and by the desire to nurture its "Eastern specialisation."

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<sup>48</sup> Based on studies prepared for the Polish Tourist Organisation, [www.pot.gov.pl](http://www.pot.gov.pl).

While previous Presidencies' experiences could imply that a niche strategy like that is effective, the member states might have greater expectations of Poland as the largest Central European state. A more ambitious Western Balkans policy and the implementation in that region of a clear-cut strategy do not necessarily mean that the effectiveness of Poland's policy towards the Eastern Partnership countries would suffer; indeed, this could enhance Poland's position in the EU, including with respect to the Eastern Neighbourhood.

In the second decade of this century the Western Balkans will be central to the EU's foreign policy. Owing to the progress of integration at least some of the Balkan states will join the Union in this period. For this reason Poland, aspiring as it does to an important role in Europe—in particular in Central Europe—should have its own Western Balkans policy to shore up its own position following enlargement of the EU by states in the region. Also, engagement in favour of early integration of the Western Balkans with the EU could help further Poland's foreign policy priorities. It is not to be expected that an eastward enlargement of the EU will occur prior to the accession of the Balkan states. If the process of the Western Balkans' integration with the EU fails, or becomes unduly complicated, this will add to the member states' unwillingness to engage with the Eastern Partnership countries in any form of cooperation that could lead in the future to their accession to the EU.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, Poland's increased activity in the region would strengthen Poland's credibility as a promoter of the open nature of European integration. A more demonstrable support for reforms in the Balkan countries could make it easier to solicit—in the future, in an enlarged EU—the votes of the countries in the region for joint activities in the east and to counterbalance their interest in cooperation with the Mediterranean European Neighbourhood Policy countries. Last but not least, Poland's higher-profile political presence in the Western Balkans could bring about the intensification of economic contacts with the countries in the region.

*Translated by Elżbieta Gołębiowska*

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<sup>49</sup> M. Gniazdowski, *op. cit.*

### **III.**

## **Selected Problems of Poland's Foreign Policy**





## Poland's Development Cooperation in 2004–2009

### Introduction

Development cooperation<sup>1</sup> is an increasingly important dimension of international relations. For many countries it is also a vital instrument of foreign policy and external relations. Also in Poland the prospect of accession to the European Union and the growing importance of development cooperation had provided a powerful boost to the building of a new system of development aid. In October 2003 the Council of Ministers adopted a Strategy for Poland's Development Cooperation, a fundamental document that identified the objectives and principles and the organisation of Polish aid.<sup>2</sup> In 2004 aid and development cooperation were recognised in another strategic document as an important task in Poland's relations with the developing countries.<sup>3</sup> In the same

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<sup>1</sup> In this field several notions are used interchangeably, albeit not always correctly. "Development aid" is concerned with the provision by states and international organisations of aid—in money, in kind and in consulting—to less developed countries in support of their economic development and welfare. The term "development aid" has been increasingly supplanted by the notions of "development cooperation," which imply more active involvement of the aid recipient country and the peer status of the partners in this area rather than unilateral and asymmetric from-donor-to-recipient-country flows. Also, development cooperation includes a comprehensive network of links and interactions among actors in international relations in the area of global development and combating poverty and economic disparities. Then, "foreign aid," while also concerned with unilateral activity of a state or of an international organisation, is a broader concept than development aid, comprising as it does other forms of support (e.g. military aid, support to democratisation processes). "Development policy" means the state's comprehensive policy on development issues and it encompasses, alongside the provision of development aid, other elements with an impact on the social-economic situation of countries in the South and on relations between developed and developing countries (e.g. the state's position on climate change, international trade, or its participation in the shaping of global principles and objectives of development cooperation). For more on terminological differences see P. Bagiński, K. Czaplicka, J. Szczyciński, *Międzynarodowa współpraca na rzecz rozwoju. Ewolucja, stan obecny i perspektywy*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa, 2009, pp. 12–14.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the strategy see P. Bagiński, "Strategia polskiej współpracy na rzecz rozwoju," *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej* 2004, pp. 127–132.

<sup>3</sup> *Strategia RP w odniesieniu do pozaeuropejskich krajów rozwijających się*, Warszawa, November 2004, p. 13, [www.msz.gov.pl/files/Akty%20prawne/inne/Strategia%20RP%20wobec%20krajow%20rozw.pdf](http://www.msz.gov.pl/files/Akty%20prawne/inne/Strategia%20RP%20wobec%20krajow%20rozw.pdf).

year the first annual operational plan setting out, in detail, the directions and terms of the provision of aid by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MFA] was designed.<sup>4</sup> In the second half of 2005 a Development Cooperation Department (DCD) was established in the MFA to handle the implementation of the Polish aid programme. Since 2004 the value of Poland's official development assistance (ODA)<sup>5</sup> has been rising dynamically.

### Determinants

Poland, which after 1989 had been a major recipient of foreign aid, turned after 2004 into an aid donor. This required reconciling its domestic capabilities and limitations with international commitments in the area of international development cooperation. The internal determinants of Polish aid include, among other things, its modest financial capabilities, the lack of a meaningful experience in this area, and the need to keep in view at all times the fundamental foreign policy priorities (e.g. security policy or the Eastern policy). At the same time, historical experiences justified the belief that Poland could play an important role in the international development cooperation system. The strong points worth mentioning in this context include the absence of a colonial past (a factor of importance to perceptions of Poland in the countries in the Global South), the "Solidarity" ethos, the peaceful political changeover and the successful economic transition, and the effective employment by Poland of foreign aid received earlier. Also, the public in Polish has been demonstrably in favour of the provision of development aid. In 2009 as many as 83% of opinion survey respondents said that it was proper for Poland to support the development of lesser-developed countries (an increase from 64% in 2004) while only 12% of the public expressed an opposite opinion.<sup>6</sup> This is important insofar as the experience of the OECD countries shows that "the awareness of and support for development aid are crucial to its success."<sup>7</sup> Regrettably, complicating this

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<sup>4</sup> *Ramowy plan działań pomocowych MSZ na rok 2004*. For more see *Polska współpraca na rzecz rozwoju. Raport roczny 2004*, Warszawa, 2005, [www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/files/dokumenty\\_publicacje/Raport\\_roczny\\_2004.pdf](http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/files/dokumenty_publicacje/Raport_roczny_2004.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> According to a definition adopted by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Official Development Assistance means donations and loans (with an at least 25% grant element) provided to developing countries by official institutions of the donor states or by international organisations with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of the developing countries as the main objective.

<sup>6</sup> *Polacy o pomocy rozwojowej. Wyniki badania TNS OBOP dla Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych*, Warszawa, December 2009, [www.polskapomoc.gov.pl](http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 8.

advantageous situation is the public's still-low understanding of global development problems and the fact that in many cases the support expressed is merely declarative and superficial.<sup>8</sup> The public's interest in development issues being low, these matters are seldom addressed by the media and they rank low in political parties' activities. This adds to their marginalisation both in public debate and in the policy of the state.<sup>9</sup>

International determinants have had a much stronger impact on the way Poland's development policy has been shaping up. Following Poland's accession in 1996 to the OECD, the club of the world's richest countries and to the European Union in 2004, certain national regulations and concrete measures in this respect were necessarily adopted. Membership in the European Union was of particular importance in this context, the EU having recognised, since the coming in force in 1993 of the Maastricht Treaty, development policy as one of its principal common external policies (alongside the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the trade policy). What's more, in recent years Poland signed a number of other important international documents laying down the fundamental objectives and standards of development cooperation. The most important of these include:

- United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000) identifying eight millennium development goals as the basis of contemporary efforts to eradicate poverty worldwide;
- Monterrey Consensus (2002) on financing for development;
- Johannesburg Political Declaration and Action Plan (2002) laying down the principles and aims of sustainable development;
- Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) which lays down guidelines on improving the effectiveness and coherence of development aid;
- European Consensus on Development (2005), the first—and, so far, the most important—official document describing comprehensively the shared vision, goals, principles and directions of aid delivery by the European Union (it is binding both on the European Commission and on the member states); and

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<sup>8</sup> *Polacy o pomocy rozwojowej...*, *op. cit.*; see also a discussion of this aspect in: J. Szczyciński, J. Witkowski, "Świadomie i nieświadomie – Polacy o rozwoju globalnym," *GDRG Policy Papers*, no 1, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Of the main political parties, only the Democratic Left Alliance [SLD] has addressed development issues in its programme, calling for Poland's higher activity in this area, see *Uchwała nr 4 IV Kongresu SLD – główne zadania polskiej polityki zagranicznej*, Warszawa, 1 June 2008.

- Accra Agenda for Action of 2008, complementing and enlarging the principles of the Paris Declaration.

The above instruments lay down a fundamental catalogue of principles to which Poland's development cooperation should conform. Under the key commitments Poland should:

- recognise the eradication of poverty as the principal cooperation goal in the context of implementation of the millennium development goals;

- allocate to development aid 0.17% of GDP as of 2010, and 0.33% of GDP as of 2015;<sup>10</sup>

- channel no less than one-half of additional aid resources generated after 2005 to African countries;

- accord priority to the poorest countries on the list of the least developed countries and the lowest-income countries;

- observe, among other things, the five fundamental principles for making development cooperation more effective: ownership of development concepts by developing countries; alignment of aid to the recipient countries' development strategies; improved coordination and harmonisation of aid delivery; results-oriented management; and mutual accountability of aid donors and aid recipients for achieved results;

- ensure the coherence of development cooperation with other state policies (e.g. agricultural, immigration, trade) to enhance the effectiveness of aid;

- untie aid;<sup>11</sup>

- streamline the list of priority countries and sectors, to those promising the relatively highest impact of aid.

Even though the adopted commitments are of a nature of political declarations, expectations are that states will abide by them out of concern for their international image and credibility.

Alongside the objective (internal and external) determinants, subjective motivations for helping other countries play an important role in the shaping of development policy. These can be divided into three groups: legal considerations

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<sup>10</sup> It will be noted that similar commitments were made by all countries which acceded to the EU after 2004 and that the amounts concerned are lower by more than one-half than those required of the older EU members (0.51% of GDP in 2010 and 0.7% in 2015). This commitment is covered in the European Consensus, but it was formally made by Poland already at the May 2005 meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council.

<sup>11</sup> According to various studies this form of aid reduces the real value of aid by between 15% and 30%; the OECD calls on its members to discontinue development aid in this form altogether.

(necessity to meet international commitments); moral considerations; and pragmatic considerations (direct and indirect political gains, economic or image benefits).

The moral argument carries particular weight with the Polish society. As many as 55% of the Poles believe that this country should support less developed countries as a matter of moral duty, and 45% believe it should be helping other countries because earlier rich countries were helping Poland.<sup>12</sup> Some politicians, too, invoked moral considerations. For instance, President Lech Kaczyński said in his U.N. address in 2008: "... we see this clearly today—there is a need for joint action by all countries, the richer and the poorer, those in the East and in the West, but in the present-day world where the division into the East and the West no longer has the significance it had previously the greatest need is for solidarity between the North and the South, for aid to those ... in need of it."<sup>13</sup>

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlights in particular the pragmatic motivation (alongside the legal one). The capability to provide aid is seen as an evidence of Poland's post-1989 economic and political success and civilisational advancement. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski pointed out in 2009 that "our successful transition ... has promoted us from an aid recipient to the group of donor states" and that aid undertakings, besides providing support to developing countries, "contribute at the same time to strengthening Poland's position on the international scene and facilitate the development of economic contacts with the aid recipients."<sup>14</sup> In his February 2009 address to the Sejm Minister Sikorski identified development aid as one of the five foreign policy priorities: "Poland as an attractive brand; a success country which loves freedom and knows how to share it." He declared that development aid was "an important tool with which to obliterate disparities and assuage conflicts throughout the world," just as Poland's capacity to deliver aid was a confirmation of this country's "increasingly high status," a manifestation of sharing successful "experiences of transition to democracy and a market economy," and a way to build Poland's image as a "committed stakeholder in the strengthening of global stability."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Polacy o pomocy rozwojowej...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> *Wystąpienie prezydenta RP na 63. sesji Zgromadzenia Ogólnego Narodów Zjednoczonych*, 23 September 2008, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl). In the same vein President Kaczyński encouraged the government of the Republic of Poland to „aid those who are much worse off than we are,” *Wystąpienie przed korpusem dyplomatycznym*, 20 January 2009, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl).

<sup>14</sup> *Polska współpraca na rzecz rozwoju. Raport roczny 2007*, Warszawa, 2008, p. 5, [www.polskapomoc.gov.pl](http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl).

<sup>15</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009 (presented at the sitting of the Sejm on 13 February 2009 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski)," above, p. 11.

## Aid Objectives and Priorities

The fundamental document setting forth the objectives, directions and principles of provision by Poland of development aid is the 2003 Strategy of Poland's Development Cooperation. Complementing this document (with respect to the resources available to the MFA) are the MFA's annual operational plans known since 2008 under the title of "Programme of Poland's Development Aid Delivered through the MFA of the Republic of Poland." According to the Strategy "the fundamental objective of Poland's development cooperation is to contribute to the attainment of sustainable development, including the reduction of poverty, in the countries which are recipients of Poland's aid."<sup>16</sup> The Strategy reaffirms the compatibility of Poland's development aid with the U.N. millennium development goals, with the assumptions underlying the EU development policy, and with the major principles of international development cooperation (including accountability and partnership).

Somehow in opposition to these representations, the Strategy provides that "cooperation for development as an integral part of Poland's foreign policy and external relations serves to attain the essential objectives of Poland's foreign policy: to ensure the security and stability of the state and its citizens, to protect the state's interests, and to further economic cooperation with countries in all continents."<sup>17</sup> The ambivalence discernible in these provisions, between the pursuit of the development goals and the securing of national interests, was resolved in subsequent years in favour of the latter. Development aid came to be perceived, first and foremost, as a tool for the attainment of the Poland's interests and only in the second place as serving the needs of the developing countries.<sup>18</sup> This is further borne out by the identification of the geographic and sectoral directions of bilateral aid provision.

The priority recipients of Poland's aid were first identified in the MFA's operational plan for 2004. They comprised: Afghanistan, Angola, Georgia, Iraq, Moldova and Vietnam. Thereafter, countries east of Poland come to figure more and more prominently on this list (in 2006 Ukraine and Belarus were added) at

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<sup>16</sup> *Strategia polskiej współpracy na rzecz rozwoju*, Warszawa, October 2003, p. 5, [www.msz.gov.pl/Strategia,polskiej,wspolpracy,na,rzecz,rozwoju,1769.html](http://www.msz.gov.pl/Strategia,polskiej,wspolpracy,na,rzecz,rozwoju,1769.html).

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

<sup>18</sup> On the one hand, the most developed countries have been using development policy, more or less overtly, with a view to furthering their own interests but, on the other hand, there has been more and more pressure for development aid to serve primarily the aid recipients rather than the donors. For instance, a law adopted in the UK in 2002 expressly prohibits the use of development aid for purposes other than the reduction of poverty in poor countries.

the expense of those in other parts of the world (Vietnam was removed in 2007, Iraq in 2008 and Tanzania, put on the list two years earlier, in 2009).<sup>19</sup> As a result, in 2009 the seven priority recipient countries included only one country in Africa (Angola), two Asian countries (Afghanistan and Palestinian Authority, added in 2005) and four European (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Georgia); of these, two countries (Afghanistan and Angola) belonging to the least developed countries category, four belonging to the lower-middle income group (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and the Palestinian Authority added in 2005) and one in the upper-middle income group (Belarus).<sup>20</sup> This means that, in practice, Poland's bilateral aid conforms only to a modest extent to the international commitment to accord priority treatment to the poorest countries and those in Africa. For instance, the least developed and lowest-income countries received 8% of Poland's bilateral aid in 2007 (US\$12.32m) and 21% in 2008 (US\$18.03m); African countries accounted for less than 3% in 2007 (US\$4.64m) and close to 15% in 2008 (US\$12.54m).<sup>21</sup> For comparison, the average shares of these two groups of countries in total bilateral aid provided by the Members of the OECD Development Aid Committee were, respectively, 36% and 33% in 2007 and 34% and 31% in 2008.<sup>22</sup>

Of the 2009 bilateral aid, largest funds delivered through the MFA were set aside for aid to Afghanistan (PLN40 m), Belarus (PLN23.5m), Ukraine (14.5m), Georgia (PLN8.5m) and Moldova (PLN2.5m). With assistance to Afghanistan vastly increased (from PLN8m in 2008) the disparities in aid to the poorest and middle-income countries were levelled out. Even so, the case of Afghanistan (just like earlier of Iraq) shows that national motivations and political interests rather than the developing countries' needs are the paramount consideration behind the grant of the priority country status. This is borne out further by

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<sup>19</sup> The tendency to focus on the neighbouring countries was already evident in the 2003 Strategy, with all the three criteria for priority countries selection favouring East European countries. The criteria were: developing countries "with which Poland maintains relations at a meaningful level" or "in the process of system transition," or "with clusters of population of Polish descent." See *Strategia polskiej współpracy na rzecz rozwoju*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> *DAC List of ODA Recipients. Effective for Reporting on 2008*, [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/62/48/41655745.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/62/48/41655745.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Calculations by the author based on OECD. Stat. Extracts, [http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=ODA\\_DONOR](http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=ODA_DONOR) and [http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=ODA\\_RECIP](http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=ODA_RECIP). It should be remembered that, statistics on Poland including tied financial aid (chiefly to Angola), results for the years in which a successive tranche of preferential loan facility was disbursed (e.g. in 2008) could be overstated.

<sup>22</sup> See [http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=ODA\\_DONOR](http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=ODA_DONOR).

statements by politicians and by programme documents which officially cite “Poland’s political and military involvement” in Afghanistan as the reason for the increase in spending on that country.<sup>23</sup>

The specific nature of Poland’s development aid is also reflected in the priority sectors to which support is channelled. Under the 2003 Strategy these sectors included: health care, education and science, access to potable water, environmental protection, strengthening of local structures; support to democratic institutions; enhancing the efficiency of public administration; development of trans-border cooperation; and sectoral restructuring.<sup>24</sup> From there, following years saw the focus shift to democratisation, human rights, system transition and good governance. The MFA’s 2008 report stated that “by assumption, Poland’s aid is meant to contribute not only to the economic and social advancement of the donor states but also to civil society building and to promoting democracy, free media and human rights.”<sup>25</sup> This selection of sectors reflected the preconceived belief that Poland’s system transition being Poland’s special area of expertise, this country had the required capabilities to provide similar support to other countries in transition.

Poland obviously set out to specialise in the provision of aid to East European countries and to sectors capable of supporting system and economic transition and, while so doing, it took efforts to have these directions taken increasingly into account in the European Union’s development cooperation. In this context, the unveiling of the Eastern Partnership initiative co-authored by Poland and Sweden (in which the development component figures prominently) and the launch of this programme by the EU in May 2009 can be seen as a success of Polish diplomacy in co-shaping the EU’s development cooperation. At the same time, it should be remembered that any further increase in Poland’s impact on the EU’s directions and priorities in the field of development will depend, first and foremost, on its increased participation in financing this activity.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Program polskiej pomocy zagranicznej udzielanej za pośrednictwem MSZ RP w roku 2009*, Warszawa 2009, p. 3, [www.msz.gov.pl/files/docs/konkursy/20090506EDUKACJA/Program%20polskiej%20pomocy%20zagranicznej%202009.pdf](http://www.msz.gov.pl/files/docs/konkursy/20090506EDUKACJA/Program%20polskiej%20pomocy%20zagranicznej%202009.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> *Strategia polskiej współpracy na rzecz rozwoju*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> *Polska współpraca na rzecz rozwoju. Raport roczny 2007*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>26</sup> In 2008 Poland’s contribution to the EU budget covered, in the part allocated to aid activities, 3.13% of the EU’s respective spending. Poland has not yet contributed to the separate European Development Fund (EDF) for African, Caribbean and Pacific states.

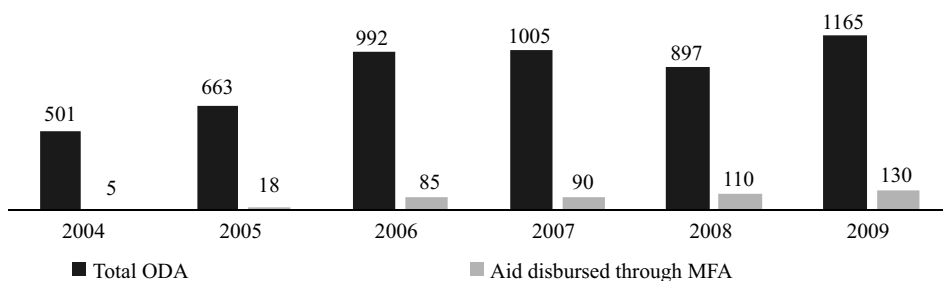


### Organisation of Polish Aid System

Poland's Official Development Assistance had been low till 2004, its dynamic growth commencing only after Poland's accession to the European Union. The overall value of Poland's development aid rose from some PLN60m (US\$14.4m) in 2002 and PLN120m (US\$31m) in 2003 to over PLN500m (US\$117m) in 2004 and to as much as PLN1bn (US\$362m) in 2007 (Figure 1). In 2008 it dropped, for the first time in several years, to PLN897m (US\$372m), bringing down the ratio of aid value to GDP to 0.08% (from 0.09% in 2007). In 2009 Poland's ODA remained stagnant at 0.08% of GDP (US\$342m). It should be noted at this point that the post-2004 discrete increase in development aid outlays was due predominately to a proportion of Poland's mandatory contribution to the EU budget being classified in this category of spending. More illustrative of the real increase in development assistance are aid funds administered by the MFA. The value of this aid in 2004–2009 rose from PLN5m in 2004 to PLN130m in 2009 (Figure 1). It is also worth noting that the share of MFA's funds in Poland's ODA has remained for several years at barely 10%.

Figure 1

#### Poland's Official Development Assistance in 2004–2009 (in PLN million)



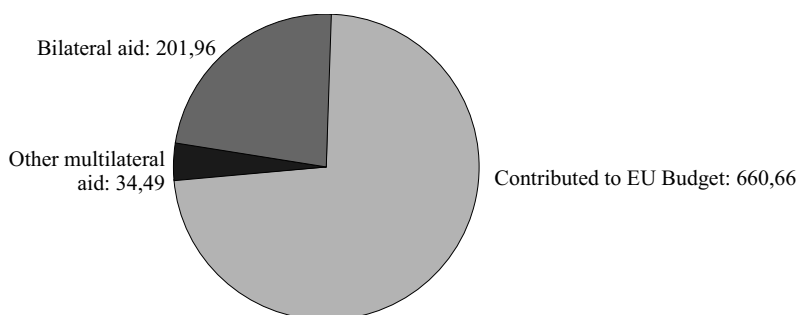
Source: Developed by the author based on: a report *Polska współpraca na rzecz rozwoju. Raport roczny 2008*, Warszawa, 2009; a MFA annual plan for 2009; and OECD data for 2009 showing the value of Poland's ODA as US\$342m (down from US\$372 a year earlier; however, at a 31 December 2009 exchange rate of PLN2.85 to a dollar this is an equivalent of about PLN974m).

Poland provides both bilateral and multilateral aid. At 79% of Poland's ODA in 2004, 77% in 2008 and 74% in 2009, the latter obviously preponderates. It consists of contributions to international organisations, funds and agencies specialised in the provision of aid. These resources are transferred chiefly by the Ministry of Finance; some are remitted by the MFA and, to a limited extent, also

by other Ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Health remits contributions to the World Health Organisation). Traditionally, the contribution to the EU budget accounts for the greater part of multilateral aid funds (for instance, in 2008 it accounted for three-fourths of total Poland's aid) and represents the largest single item of Poland's aid expenditure. This is a pattern characteristic of a majority of the new EU member states which have not yet developed sufficient capabilities for the provision of meaningful aid through bilateral channels. Unlike the new members, the "old" EU countries prefer to provide bilateral aid, as this gives them more control of the directions and ways of these funds' employment.<sup>27</sup>

Figure 2

**Structure of Poland's Official Development Assistance in 2008  
(in PLN million)**



Source: *Polska współpraca na rzecz rozwoju. Raport roczny 2008*, Warszawa, 2009 [www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/files/dokumenty\\_publicacje/RAPORT\\_ROCZNY\\_MSZ\\_2008\\_PL\\_maly.pdf](http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/files/dokumenty_publicacje/RAPORT_ROCZNY_MSZ_2008_PL_maly.pdf).

Bilateral aid is delivered in several basic forms: as development projects, financial projects (debt write-offs, subsidies, preferential lending), technical assistance (training, internships, scholarships), humanitarian and food projects and the provision of volunteer workers. In this aid the main role is played by four Ministries: of Foreign Affairs (aid implementation, including in the form of projects, and responsibility for overall aid coordination), of Finance (provision of financial aid), of Science and Higher Education (support provided under a programme of scholarships for undergraduate and doctoral students from developing countries), and of Internal Affairs and Administration (ensuring

<sup>27</sup> For instance, in 2008 bilateral aid accounted for 64% of Germany's foreign aid, 69% of Ireland's, 70% of Spain's and 71% of the total aid of the OECD Development Assistance Committee countries. See [http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=ODA\\_DONOR](http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=ODA_DONOR).

welfare and medical aid to refugees during the first 12 months of stay in Poland).<sup>28</sup>

Under the 2003 Strategy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays the leading part in the planning, implementation and coordination of Poland's development policy. It is responsible for: the provision of aid in the form of projects; the provision of humanitarian and food aid;<sup>29</sup> certain transfers to international organisations (in particular within the U.N. system); running the volunteer work abroad programme; information-promotional activities; development education and the evaluation of the overall programme. The MFA's development aid spending is determined annually and included in the special-purpose reserve established under the Budget Act, an arrangement which, on the one hand, makes these funds vulnerable to short-term budgetary constraints<sup>30</sup> and, on the other hand, causes additional administrative burdens (through the procedures for spending these funds).

The greater part of the MFA's aid budget is allocated to several hundred projects, which are implemented in cooperation with partners in the aid recipient countries by three categories of actor: 1) Polish non-governmental organisations; 2) administrative agencies of the government, local government agencies, scientific-research institutes and public higher education institutions; and 3) Polish diplomatic missions under the Small Grant Programme. In 2008, 380 projects were implemented on a call for proposal basis, alongside 143 conducted by Embassies;<sup>31</sup> in 2009 selected for implementation were 310 projects (out of about 700 applications) and over 100 projects proposed by diplomatic missions. Yet the large number of small projects meant a lower efficiency and impact of Poland's aid and, besides, it generated grave administrative burdens as a sizable

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<sup>28</sup> In 2008 the different Ministries' shares in aid spending were: MFA's PLN 90.5 million; MF's PLN 70 million (including draw-downs under the preferential loan facilities to China, Angola and Montenegro); Ministry of Science and Higher Education's PLN 53 million (free courses of study for 4486 undergraduate students and 478 doctoral students and interns); Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration's PLN 6.4 million, *Polska współpraca na rzecz rozwoju. Raport roczny 2008, op. cit.*, pp. 10–12.

<sup>29</sup> The value of humanitarian aid rose from PLN 3.24 million in 2006 to PLN 6.96 million in 2008, *ibidem*.

<sup>30</sup> For instance, in 2009 the MFA's funds for this activity in 2010 were cut down to PLN100m (from PLN150m). Thus a previous steadily rising trend of development funds administered by the MFA was arrested, even though 2010 is the year when Poland will be expected to establish the extent of fulfilment of its international commitments concerning financing of development aid.

<sup>31</sup> *Polska współpraca na rzecz rozwoju. Raport roczny 2008, op. cit.*, p. 50.

proportion of the Development Cooperation Department's staff were busy running the contests and, subsequently, overseeing and evaluating several hundred projects. For this reason in 2009 the MFA announced the consolidation of aid resources with a view to reducing the number but increasing the size of development projects.<sup>32</sup>

### Problems and Challenges

The Polish development aid system is still flawed with important weaknesses, despite the considerable efforts taken in recent years by the MFA to make it effective and modern. The non-governmental and expert communities identify, as the main neglected areas and problems: the absence of appropriate legislative regulations and institutional back-up; scantiness of the MFA human resources; lack of medium-term strategies for cooperation with the different priority countries and of an external evaluation system; exclusive focus on aid in the form of projects and negligible shares of modern forms of support (such as sectoral programmes and budgetary support); strong centralisation of the aid system; continued "tied aid" (e.g. export lending to China and Angola); non-cohesion between the development policy and the other national policies; or the overestimated statistics on aid value.<sup>33</sup> The problems in evidence can be classified into three basic categories: financial, organisational, and human resources.

Firstly, the resources Poland allocates to development aid are way below both its commitments and its capabilities and aspirations to a more significant international role. The reduction, in 2008, of the value of aid to 0.08% of GDP amounted in practice to foregoing the 2010 target of 0.17% of GDP, particularly as Poland, with its relative economic success in Europe, will not be in a position to plead the global economic crisis in justification of its negligence in the area of financing for development.

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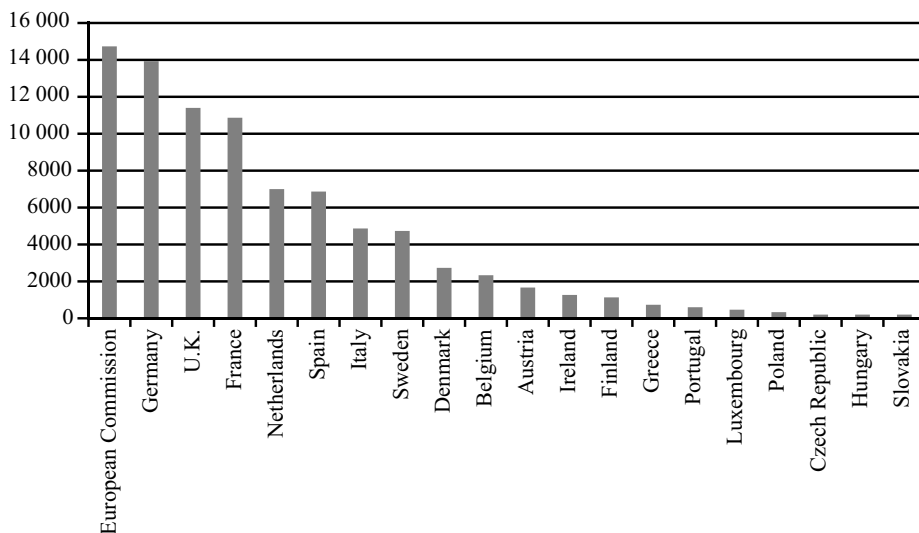
<sup>32</sup> Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Paweł Wojciechowski. Stenogram prac Sejmu, 6. kadencja, 51. posiedzenie, 3. dzień, <http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Debata6.nsf/main/415CC38C>. This arrangement was actually adopted in the MFA's programme of Polish aid for 2010.

<sup>33</sup> For more see M. Wojtalik, *Co trzeba zrobić w sprawie, którą popiera 84% Polaków. Polska współpraca na rzecz rozwoju*, [http://globalnepoludnie.pl/IMG/pdf/Co\\_trzeba\\_zrobic\\_w\\_sprawie\\_ktora\\_popiera\\_84proc\\_Polakow.pdf](http://globalnepoludnie.pl/IMG/pdf/Co_trzeba_zrobic_w_sprawie_ktora_popiera_84proc_Polakow.pdf), 2008, s. 4; *Polska pomoc zagraniczna 2008*, Warszawa 2009, [www.zagranica.org.pl/images/stories/PublikacjeGZ/monitoring/polskapomoc\\_zagraniczna\\_raport2008\\_net.pdf](http://www.zagranica.org.pl/images/stories/PublikacjeGZ/monitoring/polskapomoc_zagraniczna_raport2008_net.pdf); P. Bagiński, K. Czaplicka, J. Szczyciński, *op. cit.*, pp. 196–197.

Since 2004 Poland has steadily ranked sixteenth among the main EU aid donors; its aid transfers, while the largest of those of the new member states, have been the lowest compared with those of the “old” EU members, including small countries as Greece and Luxembourg (Figure 3). The relevant statistics appear even less advantageous after Poland's substantial economic and population potential is taken into account. By the ratio of ODA value to GDP, Poland with its 0.08% of GDP, ranked in 2009 second to last among the EU countries (together with Romania, Slovakia and Latvia), before Bulgaria (0.04%) but after Cyprus (0.17%), Slovenia (0.15%) and the Czech Republic (0.12%).<sup>34</sup> In aid-per-capita terms Poland's ranking is just as poor. In 2009 a statistical Pole contributed to development aid merely €6.35, to a Greek's over €37.71, Spaniard's €100.66, Dutch's €272.75 and a Luxembourgian's (the most generous donor's) as much as €576. Only two EU countries come across worse than Poland: Romania (€4.47) and Bulgaria (€1.53).<sup>35</sup> To realise the extent of Poland's underperformance it will suffice to remember that the aid budget of Spain, a country with a potential comparable in certain respects, is more than eighteen times larger.

Figure 3

**Main Official Development Assistance Donors in the EU in 2008  
(in million dollars)**



Source: Developed by the author based on OECD Stat. Extracts.

<sup>34</sup> *EU Donor Atlas 2010*, Selected Donors: Share of GNI, [http://fs2-2010.bbj.it/EUDA\\_02.aspx](http://fs2-2010.bbj.it/EUDA_02.aspx).

<sup>35</sup> *EU Donor Atlas 2010*, Selected Donors: ODA per capita, [http://fs2-2010.bbj.it/EUDA\\_02.aspx](http://fs2-2010.bbj.it/EUDA_02.aspx).

There is more to the problem of financing Poland's aid than the size of transfers alone. Management and manner of spending are as important. The legislative regulations in effect (notably the annual budgeting requirement and the provisions on public procurement and public finances) render impossible the implementation of long-term programmes, even though these are of paramount importance in development aid. What's more, as Poland does not employ modern forms of aid, such as sectoral or budgetary support, Polish aid is not being taken into account in the planning of the recipients' budgets. The upshot is that Poland's aid often has a symbolic dimension, is unpredictable in the long term and largely irrelevant to overcoming the recipient countries' development problems.

The second challenge confronting Poland's development cooperation is to make the organisation of the aid system more efficient. Although the 2003 Strategy pointed to the need to prepare forthwith appropriate development cooperation legislation to regulate comprehensively this aspect of the state's activity, and it even proposed certain institutional solutions (e.g. the establishment of an executive body to implement aid programmes and appoint a consultative Development Cooperation Council or a national coordinator for international development cooperation), these proposals have yet to be acted upon. The central role in development cooperation is played by the MFA's Development Cooperation Department established in 2005. However, in the absence of broader institutional and legislative reforms no aid system equipped with new instruments and efficient mechanisms has been put in place. As a result, one-year projects have been implemented for the lack of an alternative, there has been no coherence between development policy and other policies of the state (on agriculture, climate change, and the like) and, above all things, there has been no inter-ministerial coordination of aid.

Although the Strategy identified the Minister of Foreign Affairs as the agency in charge of the conduct of development policy and as the coordinator of the entirety of development cooperation activities of other Ministries and institutions, this coordinator role of the MFA's has proved to be severely restricted. In practice, each Ministry pursues its own independent plan and it is only after the fact, when reports for international organisations are drawn up, that a proportion of these expenditures is put down to development aid. What is lacking, first of all, is inter-ministerial cooperation at the stage of planning and preparing development aid activities. This is evidenced by disparities between the list of priority countries and the index of actual largest aid beneficiaries. For instance, in 2007 largest development aid (in the form of preferential lending) went to China (PLN 188 million) and Nicaragua (PLN 85 million) and a priority

country first appeared only in the third place (in that case, Belarus, with aid value of PLN 41.2 million); in 2008 China stood out again as the largest recipient of Poland's aid. It will be seen from the list of the ten largest recipients of Poland's aid in 2004–2008 (Table 1) that only three among them were priority countries, the chief being that largest development aid resources were remitted in the form of financial aid (preferential loans, debt cancellations) by the Ministry of Finance, in many cases in disregard of the MFA-set priorities.

Table 1

**Major recipients of Poland's bilateral assistance in 2004–2008  
(in million dollars)**

	<b>Recipient country</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>Total</b>
1.	Angola (2004)	0.06	0.18	92.35	0.49	6.87	99.95
2.	China	1.55	5.34	0.51	67.21	18.56	93.17
3.	Belarus (2006)	0	3.98	6.77	14.93	18.31	43.99
4.	Ukraine (2006)	0	6.16	7.09	12.58	13.95	39.78
5.	Nicaragua	0	0	0	30.57	0	30.57
6.	Serbia	8.14	18.7	0.18	-3.3	-2.6	21.12
7.	Montenegro	-	-	0.09	13.23	3	16.32
8.	Uzbekistan	0	5.96	4.52	4.6	-0.09	14.99
9.	Ethiopia	8.7	0.01	0.05	0.16	0.45	9.37
10.	Kazakhstan	1.32	1.38	1.06	2.51	0.54	6.81

*Source:* Developed by the author based on: [www.oecd.org/dac/stats/idsonline](http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/idsonline).

It is worth noting that when aid is provided through the MFA the compatibility between the priority countries and the actual aid recipients is much higher. In 2008 nearly 80% of the resources administered by the MFA (PLN64.5m out of PLN80m) went to several selected priority countries.<sup>36</sup>

The present organisational and financial problems could be resolved to a large extent if comprehensive legislation on development aid was adopted. Over one-third of the OECD Development Aid Committee member states (e.g.

<sup>36</sup> *Program polskiej pomocy zagranicznej udzielanej za pośrednictwem MSZ RP w roku 2008, op. cit.*

Belgium, Denmark, Spain) have such dedicated legislation.<sup>37</sup> In the remaining countries, like in Poland, development cooperation is based on strategic documents with a high political rank (strategies, declarations). For the countries which, like Poland, have short experience in development cooperation and which have yet to develop appropriate aid management mechanisms, having the aid system regulated by a special law is almost a must. Interestingly, some of these countries (including Slovenia, Slovakia and Romania) have already succeeded in adopting relevant legislation. In Poland, the necessity to adopt an appropriate law has been emphasised for years by experts and non-governmental organisations, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs has also raised this issue.<sup>38</sup>

One of the major issues to be addressed in a new law is improving the organisational structure of the development cooperation system. It is evident, from the difficulties involved in proper coordination of aid activities or in their insufficient funding, that the system does not work well. It is worth noting that, besides the model in place in Poland (and in some other countries, such as Ireland and the Netherlands), which makes development issues the province of a dedicated MFA department (the DCD) responsible for both the planning and the implementation of development policy, in the OECD countries at least three other solutions are known: 1) close integration of the development functions and the MFA within territorial departments (in Denmark and in Norway); 2) division of tasks between the MFA, which is in charge of planning and setting the directions of activities, and a separate (though reporting to the MFA) development agency responsible for the implementation of aid programmes (e.g. in Austria, France and the U.S.); and 3) transfer of all powers and responsibilities to a separate Ministry or agency in charge of the entirety of development policy (e.g. in the U.K., Germany, Canada).<sup>39</sup> In the case of Poland priorities are: to strengthen the institution responsible for the conduct of development policy (be it the MFA or a separate agency); to ensure stable funding for aid activities; and to improve the mechanisms for inter-ministerial coordination.

There is yet another problem relating to the organisation and management of development cooperation: the neglected strategic planning in this field. The development of Poland's new comprehensive strategy for development cooperation, a successor to the largely obsolete 2003 document, has been put off

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<sup>37</sup> *Effective Aid Management: Twelve Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews*, OECD, Paris, 2008, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> *Informacja rządu na temat polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2009 r.*, op. cit.

<sup>39</sup> *Managing Aid: Practices of DAC Member Countries*, OECD, Paris, 2009, pp. 29–34.



for years. Also, the MFA has yet to develop medium-term strategies for cooperation with priority countries. Unlike Poland, West European countries have such strategies for a majority of their partners: among the Central European countries, Hungary has already adopted eight such documents, the Czech Republic four, and Slovakia one. These documents, developed on the basis of national strategies for combating poverty, enable aid to be planned in a manner best suited to the recipients' needs in a three-to-five year perspective, with the result that the predictability, effectiveness and impact of aid is markedly improved. Designing and unveiling Poland's long-term vision of cooperation for development would make it possible to conduct of a cohesive development policy and to improve its efficiency.

The third challenge for Poland's cooperation for development is to strengthen human resources. In the MFA the number of staff dealing with development cooperation is by far too low, both relative to the workload and compared with other countries. The institutional reforms designed in the second half of 2009<sup>40</sup> and the increase in MFA's staff (following the merger with the Office of the Committee for European Integration [UKIE] offer a hope that much of this problem can be overcome.

Staffing problems concern also the diplomatic missions. The employment of a development policy specialist, or a local personnel specialist, would, besides enabling aid programmes to be managed more effectively, facilitate the coordination of aid with other donors, who often delegate much of the powers and responsibilities to the beneficiary country. In contrast, the Polish system of international aid management is strongly centralised, with Embassies having little influence on the planning and implementation of aid. Yet another limitation is a modest expert support base at home.

The review of problems and challenges confronting Poland's development aid in recent years shows that this area of foreign policy is underfinanced, poorly organised and—which is probably the gravest handicap of all—unappreciated. Even though state officials emphasise the importance of development aid, there is no real political will to improve the performance of the overall system. This has been noted by non-governmental organisations and by some politicians. In October 2009 the President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, warned that defaulting on development cooperation commitments “undermines our credibility” and “translates itself into Poland's position in other areas;” he also observed that what was needed,

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<sup>40</sup> In effect since 1 January 2010.

first of all, to take advantage of the opportunity offered to Poland in this respect by the Polish Presidency of the EU in 2011, was “political will to recognise development aid as Poland’s important priority.”<sup>41</sup>

### Appraisal

The balance sheet of the first five years of operation of Poland’s new aid system is ambivalent. On the one hand, the demonstrable progress made after 2004 should be appreciated. Poland began to transfer largest development aid contributions in its history and it set out to build a new system from the scratch. In the MFA, the Development Cooperation Department was created and it has successfully carried out annual aid programmes. In recent years several hundred development projects were implemented in tens of countries (the largest number in Belarus and Ukraine), bringing significant improvement to the direct recipients’ living conditions and standards.<sup>42</sup> Calls for proposals, organised by the Development Cooperation Department have encouraged the growth of Polish non-governmental organisations operating in developing countries. Credit is due to the MFA for having set up a volunteer work abroad programme and for its contribution to promoting education in development issues.<sup>43</sup> In accordance with EU recommendations Poland’s aid is targeted at a limited number of recipients and priority sectors. Poland’s influence on the establishment of the EU’s Eastern Partnership programme represents an input to supporting development cooperation with partners in the East. It is to be hoped that the activity displayed recently (such as the establishment, as of 2010, of a development cooperation division in the MFA, or the stepping up of work on a development cooperation law) signifies that the government has come to attach more significance to development cooperation as an important element of the state’s foreign policy.

On the other hand, the Polish development cooperation system has many weaknesses. In the recent five years no solid legislative, structural and financial foundations of this system have been built. No legislation has been adopted to regulate the states’ activity in this sphere and to facilitate the management of aid.

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<sup>41</sup> *Pomoc rozwojowa inwestycją w nasz dobrobyt. Rozmowa z Jerzym Buzkiem, przewodniczącym Parlamentu Europejskiego*, 15 October 2009, [www.rp.pl](http://www.rp.pl).

<sup>42</sup> Examples of projects are described in MFA annual reports on cooperation for development and on [www.polskapomoc.pl](http://www.polskapomoc.pl).

<sup>43</sup> The recent GENE report on Poland acknowledged the MFA’s commitment to the development of global education, of which development issues are a part. See *Edukacja globalna w Polsce. Europejski proces partnerskiego przeglądu edukacji globalnej. Krajowy raport na temat edukacji globalnej w Polsce*, Global Education Network Europe, Warszawa, 2009.

Work on a new strategy for cooperation for development which, together with appropriate strategies for the priority countries, would make aid more predictable, effective and tailored to the recipient countries' needs, is still pending. The existing institutional regulations cause many problems in the area of coordination and financing of aid activities. Between budgetary constraints and a low ranking of development cooperation on the list of priorities, Poland is likely to default on its international commitments concerning the size of aid in 2010 (0.17% of GDP). The absence of a long-term vision and appropriate strategic documents on cooperation for development show conclusively that Poland still lacks a clearly articulated development policy.

The specific nature of cooperation for development as the state's external activity with certain ideological and moral connotations requires combining skilfully the national capabilities and interests with developing countries' needs and with international standards for aid delivery. Yet Poland has been applying the contemporary principles and aims of development cooperation in a selective manner. This is evidenced both by the level of funding for this activity, which is twice lower than declared, and by Poland's circumventing in practice several important international principles (e.g. on the size of support for African countries and the least developed countries, on untying aid and coherence with other state policies, on the eradication of poverty as the main goal). Poland's focus on the East European countries and their problems of democratisation and system transition, while it conforms in its assumptions to EU directives, results in less support being given to the least developed countries, in particular in Africa, and in the marginalisation of development tasks. This means that Polish aid funds go not where they are needed the most, but where they can support the attainment of Poland's important interests.<sup>44</sup>

Poland's development cooperation is highly politicised. A review of MFA programme documents shows that this cooperation is perceived as a part of foreign policy and treated as an instrument to be used in support of other policies of the state (enhancement of security policy) or in dealings with partners in the East (Eastern policy element). While it is reasonable to treat development aid as a tool in external relations, the way Poland has been using this instrument gives

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<sup>44</sup> This observation is confirmed by a special OECD report on Poland's cooperation for development. Its authors, while noting Poland's comparative advantage in the East European countries and in the systemic transition-linked sectors, point out that, as a result, Polish aid "does not necessarily address poverty and the Millennium Development Goals directly." They note in this connection that "While foreign policy interests and economic and cultural links can be taken into account when selecting countries for Polish support, the main criteria should be poverty related. See *Special Review of Poland*, DAC OECD, 2010, pp. 7 and 22.

rise to doubts. Not only has the overpoliticisation of development assistance been criticised by non-governmental organisations and by other donors, but it could make aid beneficiaries suspicious of the donor's intentions. As a result, rather than build a positive "Poland" brand, such a policy could lead to the deterioration of this country's prestige and its international image. At the same time, the very modest development aid transfers expose the incommensurability of means and the ends sought. For instance, with barely somewhat over ten million dollars allocated to strengthening stability and democracy in Ukraine, this effort is bound to fail. The low share (25%, on average) of bilateral aid in total Official Development Assistance also projects a message that Poland does not treat development aid as an important foreign policy instrument. In view of these reservations it appears that development aid will serve this country's interests best when it is treated as an instrument of Poland's soft power and a way to build a positive image of Poland rather than a direct means of garnering political or economic benefits.

Upon joining the EU Poland set out to develop its own aid system, even though it was ill-equipped for this task in institutional, staff and financial terms. For many years Polish decision-makers, failing to accord due significance to this matter, have kept this activity limited to a necessary minimum. With development issues ranking low among political priorities there has been no political will to bring in necessary reforms. As a result, five years after accession to the EU Poland still does not make use of its development cooperation potential, lagging in this respect behind many other new EU members (e.g. Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia).

Given the growing importance of international cooperation in the EU and in international relations, Poland should complete as soon as possible the process of building an efficient aid system. A cohesive concept of Poland's development policy, aligned to the main objectives and principles of international cooperation for development, must be developed. Institutional reforms must be completed, human resources enhanced, and financial mechanisms upgraded so that dynamically growing development resources can be employed efficiently and effectively. Among other things, Poland should come up with a plan to meet its development cooperation funding commitment (0.33% of GDP in 2015), a realistic one enjoying broad public endorsement and across-all-parties support.<sup>45</sup> Also, Poland's geographic and sectoral specialisation in the area of cooperation for development needs to be defined precisely. In this context it would be

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 21.

worthwhile to consider increasing aid to the least developed countries (including in Africa) since, besides building-up Poland's image as a solidary and credible international relations actor, this aid would become an important dimension of Poland's presence in these countries.

The prospect of the Polish Presidency of the EU Council in 2011 and the bid for membership in the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD provide a timely opportunity for upgrading the state's development cooperation activity. A Poland intent on playing a more important role in the EU and in an increasingly global and inter-dependent world cannot afford further neglect in this area.

*Translated by Elżbieta Gołębiowska*

## **Poland and ISAF: Mission (Still) Not Accomplished**

### **Introduction**

The year 2009 saw a distinct change in the nature of Polish involvement in NATO's Afghanistan operation. On the internal front, this involvement was defined primarily by the concentration of the whole Polish contingent in a single province, Ghazni, effected back in 2008, which made it possible for the Polish force, for the first time since the mission's beginning, to actively pursue all the tasks listed in the mandate of the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF). In addition to combating the illegal armed opposition in Afghanistan, these tasks include assisting state institutions in efforts to strengthen their position throughout the country, contributing to Security Sector Reform (and especially, to the formation of the Afghan army and police) and also, in 2009, supporting the presidential and provincial-council election process.

With the new format of its Afghanistan presence, emphasising the country's greater say about this involvement, Poland got closer to reaching its own goals set for the mission. The most important of these is to steadfastly consolidate its political position within NATO, by earning a reputation for being a reliable ally, prepared to actively promote the Alliance's values. Over the past years, that goal assumed particular importance, as Poland intensified its activity in support of the idea of truly strengthening Article V of Washington Treaty (e.g. by installing NATO infrastructure on new member states' territories, and updating contingency plans). Another 2009 development was the launch of NATO's debate on a new strategic concept—and the Polish government expects that its vision of this document, including greater emphasis on allied solidarity and the Alliance's traditional tasks,<sup>1</sup> will stand greater chances of success thanks to Poland's engagement

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the Polish position see: M. Madej, "Poland's Priorities in the Debate on a New Strategic Concept for NATO," *PISM Strategic File*, no. 12, 2010; B. Górka-Winter, M. Madej, "NATO Member States and the New Strategic Concept: An Overview," *PISM Report*, March 2010, pp. 79–85.

in the Alliance's most important operation to-date. The Polish contribution to the coalition's Afghanistan effort has been, and continues to be, seen as an important element of cooperation with the United States and the Barack Obama administration which since the beginning has stressed the Afghanistan question's priority importance for US security in coming years.<sup>2</sup>

The intensity of Polish presence in the Afghan operation and the government-declared readiness to go on with it in the years to come, coupled with poor communications with the public, have combined to provoke a stormy debate about the rationale for having the Polish armed forces deployed on such a large scale in such a distant theatre. There can be no doubt that the debate also reflects a broader phenomenon of mounting criticism of the Afghan mission by societies in most of the Western states which sent their forces to the allied coalition. Eight years after the beginning of the Afghan operation, the absence of its perceptible positive results and the resulting need to have the ISAF strategy substantially modified (especially towards increasing the number of coalition troops) were the core issues around which the allied debates on Afghanistan (including in Poland) revolved in 2009.

### **Premises of Polish Engagement**

The challenges posed for the coalition forces by the dramatically deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan no doubt constituted a major external factor impacting Poland's participation in ISAF in 2009. In 2008, the illegal opposition forces (mostly the Taliban and groupings linked to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar) managed to perceptibly restrict the positive results scored by NATO and the international community, especially in southern provinces (Kandahar, Helmand) but also in northern regions which until then were seen as relatively stable. That was reflected in intensified attacks against the coalition troops, the local security forces, representatives of state administration and international aid agencies, as well as the civilian population. Nor was the situation improved by the weaknesses of the Afghan government, embroiled as it was in corruption scandals, or the poor progress in building the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)—the army and the police, of whom only the former proved capable to engage in combat on a larger scale, and even then to a limited degree. Afghanistan's instability was further deepened by the elections of the president and the provincial councils, scheduled for 20 August 2009.

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<sup>2</sup> For more on the subject see: B. Wiśniewski, "Poland's Policy towards the United States," above, p. 73–93.

In the absence of perceptible positive results of NATO forces' deployment in Afghanistan, and with rising numbers of the related civilian casualties, the ISAF presence has become increasingly unpopular among Afghan society and the methods used by ISAF to achieve its goals<sup>3</sup> have been contested with growing confidence, including in the form of mass protests. In these circumstances the United States, which for obvious reasons bears the brunt of the mission's human and material costs, was forced to work out a new engagement strategy. And the new U.S. President, Barack Obama, made Afghan stabilisation a priority for his administration. An outline of the new policy was revealed right in March 2009. Politically, it stressed the need to eliminate al-Qaeda and the Taliban,<sup>4</sup> and intensify cooperation with partners in the region (especially Pakistan) for resolution of the conflict. On the operational level, the document provided for a temporary increase in U.S. troops deployment in Afghanistan (especially in the run-up to the elections<sup>5</sup>), and it emphasised the country's reconstruction, with greater numbers of civilian experts to be engaged in reconstruction projects. The strategy was fleshed out in the fall of 2009, when the Commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, General Stanley A. McChrystal, presented proposals of concrete solutions. The importance of coalition operations in the next two years for Afghanistan's stability was stressed, and the priority was defined as focusing the coalition effort on the protection of civilian population, translating into lower numbers of air raids, more intense combat in those regions where the armed opposition is most active (hence the request for a further increase in NATO troops, including U.S. troops, by another 30,000, to be later followed by 10,000), ASNF growth to some 400,000 (including 240,000 troops and 160,000 police force), and a radical acceleration of its training programme, so that ASNF can assume responsibility for national security right in 2013.<sup>6</sup>

The new U.S. administration's plans towards Afghanistan greatly influenced the NATO debate on the subject. While being aware of the resistance that their demands would provoke among the allies, the Americans insisted on consent to

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<sup>3</sup> According to UN data for 2008, Afghan civilian casualties from hostilities topped 2,000, an increase of 40% on 2007.

<sup>4</sup> But some aides to President Obama spoke of possible talks with so-called moderates who fight alongside the Taliban for financial rather than ideological reasons.

<sup>5</sup> At the end of the day, the number of U.S. troops deployed with the ISAF doubled in the course of 2009.

<sup>6</sup> For the administration's plans see speeches by President Obama, 1 December 2009, and Defense Secretary Gates, of 2 December 2009, the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan and [www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1403](http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1403).



increase European contributions to ISAF and to overcome the caveats which bar some contingents from engaging in combat. The most profound articulation of this insistence came at the Alliance's jubilee summit in Strasbourg/Kehl in April 2009. Most countries, even despite verbal support for the new U.S. concept, initially declared only small additional inputs, mainly in the period preceding the presidential election. Only towards the close of 2009 did some allied opt to increase their presence.

The previously mentioned consolidation of the Polish Military Contingent within a single province<sup>7</sup> was among key external determinants of Poland's engagement in ISAF operation in 2009. From their arrival in Afghanistan in 2002, the Polish units there were thinly dispersed.<sup>8</sup> The scale and quality of Polish engagement changed noticeably after October 2008, when command in Ghazni was taken over from the U.S., with the Polish military assuming full responsibility for security in the province. Consequently, the list of military and civilian-reconstruction tasks for the Polish contingent greatly increased, all the more so as Poland committed itself to co-lead the U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Ghazni.<sup>9</sup>

Another important factors impacting the Polish contingent's operations in Ghazni was an unfavorable political climate in which it took over its duties in the province. The provincial authorities, and especially Governor Usman Usmani, initially showed much reserve towards the assumption of security responsibilities by the Polish command,<sup>10</sup> probably uncertain if Poland would be capable (financially

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<sup>7</sup> Ghazni is one of Afghanistan's largest provinces, with a population of an estimated 1.4 million, mostly comprising Pashtun tribes. Compared with other provinces, it is said to represent a middle level of instability, even though, according to its governor, speaking in September 2008, only four out of the 18 districts could be regarded as safe. See: [www.wojsko-polskie.pl/articles/view/12500/159/Wie%C5%9Bci%20z%20Afganistanu.html](http://www.wojsko-polskie.pl/articles/view/12500/159/Wie%C5%9Bci%20z%20Afganistanu.html).

<sup>8</sup> For more on the subject see M. Madej, M. Terlikowski, "The Political and Military Aspects of Poland's Security Policy in 2008," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2009*. For evolution of Polish engagement in the Afghanistan operation also see B. Winid, "Udział Polski w działaniach stabilizacyjnych w Afganistanie," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, no. 1, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> The United States proposed Poland to take over one of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams back in February 2007. But mainly for financial reasons, the Polish government did not opt to run a PTR on its own. See *Odpowiedź ministra obrony narodowej na interpelację nr 6828 w sprawie planów MON związanych z zapowiadany koordynowaniem przez polską jednostkę jednego z prowincjonalnych zespołów odbudowy w Afganistanie (PRT)*, 30 December 2008, <http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/IZ6.nsf/main/645C4939>.

<sup>10</sup> This is reported, for example, in a blog by *The Guardian's* journalist, Julian Borger, [www.guardian.co.uk/world/blog/2009/mar/06/polish-troops-afghanistan-ghazni](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/blog/2009/mar/06/polish-troops-afghanistan-ghazni).

and also operationally) to go one with projects at a level commensurate with the previous U.S. engagement.

### **Ghazni Operations by Polish Military Contingent**

With the concentration of all forces comprising the Polish Military Contingent in a single province, the concept of Polish engagement in ISAF changed diametrically. In previous years, when the Polish troops took part in stabilisation operations in different provinces, the political and social aspect of Polish presence in Afghanistan was marginal. Once responsibility for a single province was taken over, the PMC command could pursue all tasks defined in the ISAF mandate. In addition to the main duty of taking comprehensive measures towards stabilisation and security in Afghanistan, the mandate aims at:

- assisting the Afghan government in extending and maintaining its authority in all provinces of the country, e.g. by supporting the reconstruction of state administrative structures, promoting good governance, rebuilding the infrastructure, training, building a positive image of the government among the local population, etc.

- taking an active part in the Security Sector Reform, especially in forming and training the Afghan army and police, and also supporting the Afghan government's counter-narcotics effort;<sup>11</sup>

- contributing (mostly through the PRT) to the country's economic and social reconstruction;

- strengthening the positive image of ISAF and the international community (e.g. through humanitarian assistance).

After responsibility for the province was taken over from the U.S. commander of the 405<sup>th</sup> U.S. Army Battalion of some 800 troops, the Polish Military Contingent in Ghazni was three times replaced during 2009 (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> rotations).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> For more on the subject see B. Górka-Winter, „Operacja stabilizacyjna NATO w Afganistanie,” *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, no. 3, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Where not indicated otherwise, all details on the PMC's numbers and operations are cited from the Operational Command website [www.do.wp.mil.pl](http://www.do.wp.mil.pl). It should be added that several Polish officers also held posts at the ISAF headquarters in Kabul, and that in 2009 Poland played the main role in the command of the Kabul International Airport (KAIA), holding the posts of commander, chief of staff and logistics chief. The Polish KAIA Group of 70 personnel (including paratroopers, air force experts, air traffic controllers and support personnel: sappers, gendarmes, medical staff) was led by Colonel Lesław Dubaj (from March to July) and Colonel Wojciech Piśula (from July to October). During that time, the airport serviced 56,000 civilian and military air operations. The Group's tasks included air traffic control, ensuring security of air operations, etc.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Rotation of some 1,850 troops and civilian employees was deployed in late 2008 and early 2009, under the command of Colonel Rajmund Andrzejczak, who also led 5<sup>th</sup> Rotation and the newly formed Polish Task Force White Eagle, of some 2,000 personnel, deployed from April to October 2009. They were replaced by 2,000-strong 6<sup>th</sup> Rotation under Brigadier General Janusz Bronowicz. The Task Force White Eagle in Ghazni was stationed in two forward operating bases, Ghazni and Warrior, and two district centers, Four Corners and Giro. Two additional combat outposts, in Qarabagh and Ajiristan, were also manned.<sup>13</sup>

**Combat actions.** The objective for Task Force White Eagle, as resulting from the ISAF mandate, was to conduct stabilisation operations in the province. A major task was to ensure free passage on the province's 100 km-long section of the A1 motorway linking Kabul with Kandahar. Given the motorway's strategic importance, even a short period of traffic disruption would pose major problems for transport—military (including with ISAF supplies) and civilian. Problems with making the motorway passable were mainly caused by the Taliban (the areas along the route are inhabited by the Pashtun population, from whom most militants are recruited) and also by local criminal gangs. Improvised explosive devices (IED) were regularly planted on the highway and bridges were blown up, while open confrontation was avoided. The PMC command therefore followed the strategy of “drawing rebels away” from activity in the motorway by initiating combat operations in areas with increased rebel activity, mostly the districts of Giro, Qarabagh, Andar, Rashidan, and Zana Khan.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to the regular monitoring of the A1, the Polish force conducted periodic combat operations to eliminate anti-government armed groups, whose activity increased in the space of several months preceding the presidential election. One of the biggest operations of this kind was conducted, jointly with Afghan troops and with U.S. air support, from July through October 2009 in Ajiristan—a largely Pashtun-inhabited district in Ghazni's hard-to-access mountainous part, known for a high level of Taliban activity involving attacks against Afghan police officers and civilian population. In one such attack targeting a Polish-Afghan foot patrol, in Usman Kehl on 10 August, one Polish soldier was killed and several injured. During the operation, dozens were detained,

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<sup>13</sup> According to a paper from Defence Minister Bogdan Klich, the PMC's makeup in March 2009 was as follows: combat units 46.8%; staff officers 7.2%; logistics units 37.7%; other (CIMIC, PRT, liaison) 8.2%. See <http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/IZ6.nsf/main/3CAF2D46>.

<sup>14</sup> See an interview with Colonel Rajmund Andrzejczak, the commander of the PMC's 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Rotation in Afghanistan, “Wejść do głów,” *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 49, 2009.

including local Taliban commanders, hideouts were destroyed (including a command centre with a communications system), and arms caches (with e.g. missiles and anti-tank mines) were taken over. The most intense fighting was on 11–13 October. The district police chief was then arrested on suspicions of cooperation with the Taliban and preparation of the ambush in which Captain Daniel Ambroziński died back in August.

Task Force White Eagle also conducted a number of smaller operations in 2009, each one with the participation of Afghan National Army units stationed in Ghazni. These operations were largely carried out in the north-eastern part of the province, in the districts of: Qarabagh and Waghez (March, codenamed Thunder X), Giro (June, codenamed Eagle Plum), Rashidan (July, codenamed Clean Space), and Qarabagh (August, codenamed Good Choice). In each operation, dozens of terrorist suspects were either killed or detained and many arsenals were destroyed, as were combat outposts targeting Afghan army and coalition forces and also various kinds of training bases. Explosives from which to build IED were confiscated, including some 200 t. of such material in Operation Eagle Plum alone. Importantly, each operation consisted of two stages, kinetic (combat) and non-kinetic. Along with strictly military action, emphasis was placed on winning over the local political leaders and the people, mainly by means of humanitarian assistance, participation in reconstruction projects, etc.

In all these operations, Task Force White Eagle received strong support from U.S. forces stationed in neighbouring provinces in the RC-East region: the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (until June 2009) and, then, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, especially in terms of reconnaissance and air support (helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles), systems to remove road mines, medical support (Medevac), etc.

Despite greatly increased activities by illegal armed-opposition groups, the Task Force White Eagle operations make it possible to stabilise the situation in the province to a degree permitting the presidential and province-council elections to be held without any major disturbance. Coalition forces also successfully established their presence in most of the districts which previously had stayed almost totally beyond the control of ISAF and the Afghan security forces.

**Afghan army and police training.** One important task of the NATO force is to assist countries with advanced contribution to Afghan Security Sector Reform, meaning in practice the United States which bears the brunt of the reform effort to create and train the Afghan army and police. Within ISAF, these tasks are pursued through Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLT) and Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (POMLT). Three OMLTs and two POMLTs

are in operation in the Polish contingent: stationed in Ghazni are units of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the Afghan National Army's 203<sup>rd</sup> Corps (two infantry battalions and one support battalion, comprising among them some 1,000 troops) and around 700 policemen. In practice, the Afghan security forces cooperate with Polish advisers at very different levels, including logistic support for the newly formed units (premises/fortifications construction, base supplies), operational planning advise, joint briefings and patrols, and OMLT troops' participation in combat missions conducted by the Afghan army. The OMLT Teams' main job is support coordination (air, artillery, medical-evacuation) but where needed they must also be prepared to take over command during an operation.

Mentoring activity was intensified in 2009 (also by the Polish contingent), reflecting the allies' increasing awareness that the process—previously, a real struggle in conditions of widespread desertions from the armed forces, corruption and proclivity among the policy to cooperate with the Taliban and drug barons—is a *sine qua non* condition for a phasing-out of coalition forces from Afghanistan.

**Supporting provincial development.** In step with the planned takeover of responsibility for Ghazni stabilisation, starting from June 2008 Poland also joined the operations of the U.S.-led Provincial Reconstruction Team, and a Pole was named the Team's deputy commander. The major objective for the PRT is to provide comprehensive support for the legal authorities (governors, Province Councils), by building their positive image in individual provinces, and also to create conditions for economic development. Despite a relatively low level of the Polish PRT's budget in 2009,<sup>15</sup> and the small personnel numbers—there were only twenty Poles (including eight civilian specialists) among the Team's staff of some 100—many initiatives raising the standards of living in Ghazni were actually carried out.

The Team focused on several major projects: expanding and modernising the infrastructure (irrigation, roads, energy), building schools and medical centers and providing equipment for these, and various kinds of training. In the course of 2009, several contracts were signed for road construction in the

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<sup>15</sup> It amounted to some PLN 23 million, which nevertheless represented a more than sevenfold increase on 2008, when PRT projects were assigned a mere PLN 3.4 million. PRT financing comes under the development aid provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The total cost of the Polish mission in Afghanistan in 2009 stood at PLN 663 million. For more of the mission's financial details see a statement by Defense Minister Klich, <http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Debata6.nsf/main/580CDA8B>.

provincial capital,<sup>16</sup> and many public utilities were provided with solar-powered lamps and electricity generators. Supplies were also purchased for a number of court buildings and the Ghazni appellate court's library, a Ghazni hospital was renovated (and its maternity ward outfitted), whereas local schools and Ghazni University (established in May 2008) were endowed with teaching aids and educational supplies. The successive projects of the Polish team included: reconstructing the bazaar at a town of Gelan, making arrangements for public parks in central Ghazni city (there are plans for creating a special park for women, full with commercial infrastructure, law clinics, etc.), building playgrounds, and renovating cultural landmarks, among them the mausoleum of the medieval scholar Muhammad Al Biruni.<sup>17</sup>

A highly important part of the Polish team's operations is training, especially to raise law awareness and provide occupational skills to those groups which, due to social and cultural factors, have limited opportunities to earn wages. Courses were thus held for women, prisoners and refugees staying in Ghazni. Media staffs were also trained, and seminars on human rights were organised for clergy and for women.

### **Strategy for the Future**

Several years after Poland joined the ISAF mission, a number of factors, including the new U.S. strategy, a fairly strong current of opposition to the operation among Polish society, and the announcement of increasing the Polish contingent in 2010 (made in spite of this opposition), prompted the Polish government to present a vision of engagement over the next several years. A Defense Ministry document, Directions of Poland's further engagement in Afghanistan, contains a preferred scenario of Poland's continued presence in that country. It provides for the province's stabilisation and strengthening of local security forces, which will allow the Polish contingent's phase-out from Afghanistan around 2013.<sup>18</sup> Importantly, in the first stage of strategy implementation (in 2010), there should be greater operational capabilities so as to take full control of the province. Later on, the operation's nature is planned to

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<sup>16</sup> Three road construction projects, for a total length of 6,000 km, are currently underway in the province (including a section linking the provincial capital with a hospital). Poland was the first country in Afghanistan to embrace road infrastructure projects in cities.

<sup>17</sup> The importance of these projects is underscored by the fact that in 2013 Ghazni will host celebrations related to its being named a centre of Muslim culture.

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., <http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/IZ6.nsf/main/76649206>.

be changed into that of stabilisation/training (in the second stage, in 2011–2012) and then into training/advising (third stage, starting from 2013). By that time, responsibility for provincial security will have been gradually transferred to Afghan forces.

One of the most important instruments to implement this strategy, as indicated in the document, is a temporary increase of the PMC by another 600 theater troops with necessary equipment<sup>19</sup> right from 2010, and an increase in the operation budget to 1.3 billion zloty (including to 49 million zloty for PRT budget). This is expected to help achieve as big advantage as possible over the rebel groups, widen the PMC's engagement in training and assistance/reconstruction, and furnish the army and the police with the required equipment (the target number for ANA units in Ghazni is 5–6 battalions). It is further planned that, in step with an improving security situation in the province and change in the mission's character, the PMC would be scaled down to 1,800–2,000 troops, and the ratio of combat units to training units would change to the latter's advantage.

If fulfilled, these plans would put Poland in a small group of NATO member states which have consented to such a big (some 25%) strengthening of their respective contingents. Nor has Poland ever announced (since the mission's beginning) any restrictions on the way its contingent is deployed; it can therefore be assumed that in 2010, which is described as the key year for final suppression of the rebellion, the Polish troops would be intensely engaged in combat activity. Ghazni will then be a destination for militants from other regions of Afghanistan, in connection with the planned offensives in the south of the country, and from Pakistan, following the operations against the Taliban and al-Qaeda which began in the fall of 2009. Also, Afghanistan's presidential election is planned to be held in 2010.

### **Polish Engagement in Afghanistan Appraised**

The scale, quality and nature of Polish engagement in Afghanistan have for years been hotly debated. At a time when the Polish contingent was small in numbers and thinly spread, it was argued that Poland, despite the costs borne, did not reap political benefits from its Afghanistan presence (especially in the NATO forum), as symbolically reflected in the absence of the Polish flag on the

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<sup>19</sup> Polish Defence Minister Klich often vowed that the consequences of the financial crisis would not impact the planned arms purchases for the PMC in Afghanistan. For more on the subject of the "Afghan package" see [www.mon.gov.pl/arttykul/7737](http://www.mon.gov.pl/arttykul/7737).

ISAF placemat. From this point of view the decision to concentrate the contingent, even if it involved a major increase in responsibilities and costs, was instrumental in empowering the Polish effort and making it more noticeable among both the Afghan authorities and the NATO allies.<sup>20</sup> It also greatly helped Poland in perusing its own vision of Afghanistan presence, both in its military and civilian dimension. While the tasks for the international coalition are set out in the ISAF mandate, the allies have some leeway in selecting the methods and Means By Which They Pursue Their Goals. Against The Backdrop Of Other Contingents, a distinguishing mark of the Polish command is no doubt the ability to establish positive relations with the local administration and population (especially with the Hazara, but also with many Pashtun communities). Even though treated initially with a great deal of reserve by government representatives, the Polish command finally managed to win from them a sympathetic response and willingness to cooperate. Polish commanders were regularly invited for consultations at the governor's office and took part in meetings of the elders, or shuras (including, for example, a meeting of some 200 people, including tribal leaders, in a Pashtun inhabited district of Andar, in February 2009). Poland's friendly reception was also helped (despite major material and personnel constraints) by an intense activity of CIMIC and PRT teams who managed to carry out a host of major projects and supply humanitarian aid to many of the province's poorest districts. Another very important factor behind the PMC's favorable image was the fact that no civilian casualties were reported in connection with the Polish units' combat activities (unlike in previous years when Polish troops operated under direct U.S. command).<sup>21</sup>

Poland's engagement in stabilisation operations in the province also received high marks from some allies and senior NATO representatives.<sup>22</sup> During a March 17 meeting with Polish commanders in Ghazni, the outgoing NATO

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<sup>20</sup> Among critical opinions about the PMC's concentration in Ghazni and takeover of responsibility for the province, see a statement by Head of the National Security Bureau, Aleksander Szczygło, cited by *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 29 May 2009, [http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/Wiadomosci/1,80708,6665524,Szczygło\\_Przejecie\\_prowincji\\_Ghazni\\_było\\_błędem.html](http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/Wiadomosci/1,80708,6665524,Szczygło_Przejecie_prowincji_Ghazni_było_błędem.html). See also an interview with Witold Waszczykowski, Deputy Head of National Security Bureau, [www.tok.fm/TOKFM/10,94829,7341773,\\_Zmiana\\_charakteru\\_naszej\\_obecnosci\\_w\\_Afganistanie.html](http://www.tok.fm/TOKFM/10,94829,7341773,_Zmiana_charakteru_naszej_obecnosci_w_Afganistanie.html).

<sup>21</sup> A trial of seven Polish soldiers accused of shooting at civilians in Nangar Khel opened in February 2009. The tragic incident, which left six Afghans dead, occurred on 16 August 2007, when Polish troops operated under U.S. command in the province of Paktika.

<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, doubts were also expressed about the PMC's capacity to ensure provincial security on its own, without major U.S. support, given its small numbers and shortage of dequate equipment. See, e.g., [http://wyborcza.pl/1,84763,7053297,Nie\\_panujemy\\_nad\\_Ghazni\\_przeprosmy\\_sie\\_z\\_Amerykanami.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,84763,7053297,Nie_panujemy_nad_Ghazni_przeprosmy_sie_z_Amerykanami.html).



Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, spoke highly of the activities by the Polish contingent. Cooperation with the U.S. forces stationed in the region was also favorable: Colonel Rajmund Andrzejczak and Brigadier General Janusz Adamczak, deputy commander of Regional Command East (4<sup>th</sup> Rotation) were presented with Bronze Star Medals by General Jeffrey Schloesser. And U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, during his visit to Poland in October 2009, emphasised the PMC's successes in fighting the armed opposition in Afghanistan. The achievements of the contingent also contributed to a better perception of Poland by the Alliance's leadership and proved to be a major factor behind the assignment to Polish representatives of several prestige posts in recent years (e.g. heads of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Center and of the Logistics and Resources Division at NATO International Military Staff, NATO/Partnership for Peace liaison officer in South Caucasus, NATO Liaison Office in Ukraine). In June 2009, Poland was assigned (as the sixth member state of the Alliance) the position of four-star Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Transformation at NATO Transformation Command, in Norfolk. Poland is also represented in the Wise Men Group to draft the Alliance's new strategic concept—in the person of former foreign minister Adam D. Rotfeld. Another NATO decision taken in 2009 was to locate in Poland the permanent headquarters of a NATO communications battalion.

And yet Poland's contribution to the ISAF operation came under criticism back home in 2009, with widespread lack of understanding for so intense involvement. As many as 76% of those questioned in a poll were against Poland's engagement in Afghanistan—and the figure has not changed over the past several years.<sup>23</sup> This sentiment largely stems from the popular belief that the ISAF operation is yet another U.S.-led mission, much like the one in Iraq, which the Polish government underwrote for purely political reasons, in the expectation of stronger ties with the United States. Besides, just as in many western countries, the media message about Afghanistan is exceedingly one-sided, emphasising the ineffectiveness of the coalition's effort and even portraying the coalition as a factor destabilising the situation in the country (e.g. by playing up the losses among the civilian population). And the Afghanistan debate fairly frequently focuses on the costs borne by Poland and the financial

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<sup>23</sup> "Opinia publiczna wobec misji NATO w Afganistanie. Komunikat z badań, BS/127/2009, CBOS, Warszawa, wrzesień 2009 r.," [www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2009/K\\_127\\_09.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2009/K_127_09.PDF).

pressure from the Defence Ministry's drive to modernise and professionalise the Polish armed forces, launched in recent years.<sup>24</sup>

Nor is the popularity of the Afghanistan mission boosted by the domestic controversy around the Polish presence in that country. Some political parties, e.g. the Democratic Left Alliance, have actually called for the operation to be wrapped up as soon as possible.<sup>25</sup> Some experts point out that that the longstanding involvement in the Afghanistan mission has the effect of reducing the Alliance's capacity to guarantee security in the Treaty area, and also that the operation (as a result of many disputes surrounding it) leads to a durable weakening of NATO's political dimension. They also question the possibility that the skills acquired by Polish soldiers fighting the Afghan rebellion might be useful when and if Polish security is endangered. The Polish losses, especially in 2008–2009, also provoked discussions about the quality of the weaponry available to the PMC in Afghanistan. Some experts, including those in the military community, argued that the contingent's equipment and arms were insufficient and not adequate for the conditions in Ghazni (armoured personnel carriers, helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles).<sup>26</sup>

The strategy for continued participation in ISAF mission, adopted by the Polish government in December 2009, says that despite a domestic pressure for withdrawal, Poland's engagement in Afghanistan will not change and actually, at least in the next year, will increase. This decision will undoubtedly help reinforce Poland's credibility in the international arena, especially within NATO, but only if the goals set for the Polish Military Contingent (the seventh largest in ISAF at present) are successfully met. Conducive to this will be not only effective military operations (stabilisation and training of Afghan security forces) but also the ability to sustain a positive image among local communities, so as to lower their motivation to back rebels. Therefore, in the months to come, efforts should be focused on an intense training of the Afghanistan security forces and reconstruction. The latter, though, would require much greater

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<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., A. Bilski, "Jaka piękna katastrofa," *Rzeczpospolita*, 8 October 2009.

<sup>25</sup> See Uchwała Rady Krajowej SLD nr 23 w sprawie wycofania polskich wojsk z Afganistanu, 10 October 2009, [www.sld.org.pl/partia/rada\\_krajowa/uchwaly\\_2009.htm](http://www.sld.org.pl/partia/rada_krajowa/uchwaly_2009.htm).

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., an interview with General Waldemar Skrzypczak, former commander of Land Forces, who resigned after criticising the Defence Ministry's policy on procuring equipment for Afghanistan-deployed troops. See "Oskarżam za Afganistan," *Dziennik*, 17 August 2009, [http://dziennik.pl/polityka/article431924/General\\_Skrzypczak\\_Oskarzam\\_za\\_Afganistan.html](http://dziennik.pl/polityka/article431924/General_Skrzypczak_Oskarzam_za_Afganistan.html). Also see Minister Klich's reply to MP questions, <http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Debata6.nsf/main/3F08A047>.

contributions from institutions other than the Ministry of Defense, with a view to developing a civilian strategy (compatible with the military one) for Poland's engagement in Afghanistan—along the lines of similar Danish and Canadian documents. It should specify the political goals beyond the year 2013 (when the PMC's phase-out from Ghazni is planned to begin). In the short run, the strategy must take into account an increased diplomatic activity, especially in the NATO forum where Poland should seek to win over the allies the idea that the operation's costs be borne by all in the spirit of solidarity. Another important challenge is to increase Poland's visibility in the region, in countries such as Pakistan (e.g. by joining the Friends of Pakistan Group), Iran and India. As for the activities in the Ghazni province, the civilian PRT personnel must be increased, to include experts on agriculture, education, culture, etc.<sup>27</sup> The effectiveness of Polish initiatives would also improve with the passage of the development aid bill (drafted for a number of years now), which would pave the way for the implementation by Poland of long-term development programmes.<sup>28</sup>

The scale of Poland's engagement in the ISAF operation is important in that it may provide a useful political instrument to pursue state interests not only in the forum of NATO but also other international organisations involved in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The expertise of Polish military and civilian specialists, possessed of excellent knowledge of Afghan realities, should be skillfully promoted internationally and lead to their inclusion in the work of the UN and the EU, etc. The Afghanistan question may also find itself high on the agenda of the Polish presidency of the EU (in this context, consideration should be given to an increase in Poland's very limited presence in the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan).

When assessing prospects for Polish engagement in ISAF in the long term and the feasibility of the scenario of the PMC's phase-out from Afghanistan in 2013, one should remember that Poland has no direct influence on most of the factors on which full implementation of ISAF goals is contingent. Given the uncertainties about the effects of the planned 2010 offensives against illegal

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<sup>27</sup> Measures serving this goal have already been initiated. For example, a group of Polish civilian experts representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and other institutions was on a study visit to Afghanistan in 2009, and a weekly training course for military, administrative, NGO and other personnel interested in Afghanistan was held in October, organised by MoFA's Department for Regional Cooperation, teaming up with the PISM Diplomatic Academy.

<sup>28</sup> That would ensure continuous financing for larger-scale projects, thus increasing Poland's credibility as a donor country. For more on the subject see P. Kugiel, "Poland's Development Cooperation in 2004–2009," above p. 241.

armed opposition groups (including on the Pakistani side of the border), coupled with the Afghan state's weaknesses and donors' dwindling motivation to invest resources in its reconstruction, Poland should be prepared for the possibility that its presence in Afghanistan may have to be prolonged (even if not necessarily in the same form as today) beyond the year 2013.

*Translated by Zbigniew Szymański*

## **Poland's International Economic Relations**

Among all the European Union countries, Poland was relatively the least affected by the effects of the global financial crisis. It was the only European Union member not to have registered a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) drop in 2009, although its key macroeconomic indicators were markedly worse than in previous years.

In 2009 the development of Poland's international economic relations was strongly influenced by external factors, notably by the recession in its major economic partners in the EU and in the East European countries. Yet the negative impact of the downturn in external demand was alleviated as the depreciation of the zloty that improved the competitiveness of Polish exports. With its relatively good macroeconomic performance and its economic stability Poland was perceived by foreign investors as an attractive country, yet the financial crisis affected the value of inflow of foreign direct investment.

### **Macroeconomic Situation**

In 2009 Poland's nominal GDP amounted to PLN 1,344 billion and the GDP growth rate dropped from over 5% to 1.7%. After the significant economic slowdown in the second half of 2008 the crisis reached its peak in the first quarter of 2009, with a GDP growth rate of barely 0.7%. Thereafter the economic situation was improving gradually and in the fourth quarter GDP growth stood at 3.3% (Figure 1).

The Polish economy owed its resilience to repercussions of the economic crisis to a concurrence of several advantageous factors, such as its sound macroeconomic fundamentals, its stable (in capital terms) financial sector, and the strong depreciation of the zloty against foreign currencies during the first months of the crisis. Moreover, Polish economy was less dependent on the financial services sector, construction, or the automotive industry, which throughout the world were bearing the brunt of the crisis, therefore there were

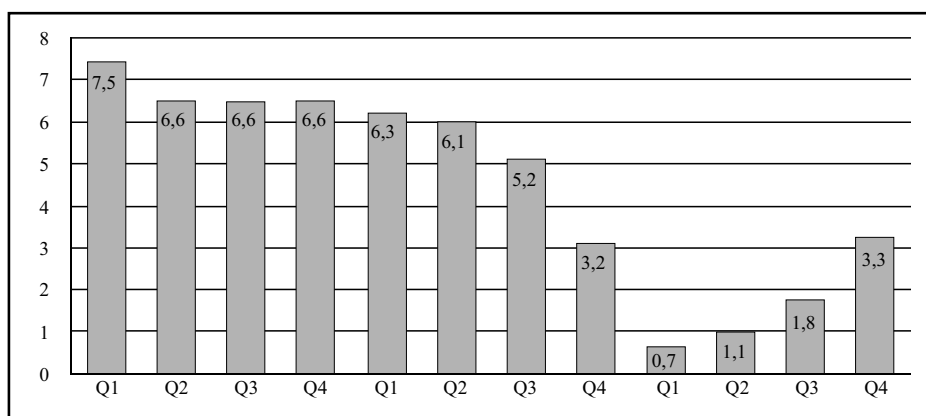
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markedly less bankruptcies in Poland than in other European Union countries.<sup>1</sup> Even so, the economic slowdown affected enterprises' financial situation and investment activity and—indirectly, via the labour market—the situation of households and the state of public finances. In Poland, like in other countries, the reduced availability and higher cost of credit following the adoption by banks of markedly stricter lending terms, and a higher risk premium included in market interest rates, were also factors underlying the sluggish economic activity.

Figure 1

**GDP Growth, 2007–2009  
(in%)**



Source: The Central Statistical Office, [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl).

The dynamic of GDP growth in 2009 was influenced the strongest by the domestic demand. Despite the growth of overall consumption (by 2.0%), including individual consumption (by 2.3%), the domestic demand, which had been rising for seven years, fell by 9% (against a 5.5% year-on-year growth in 2008). This was the result of a deep slump in gross accumulation (by 10.8%) at only a modest decrease in gross outlays on fixed assets (by 0.3%).<sup>2</sup> The rate of growth of individual consumption was determined by the reduced growth rate of households' real wages, the strained financial situation of enterprises, and more difficult access to credit. In arresting this downward trend a crucial role was played by the growth of personal incomes, chiefly in the wake of indexed

<sup>1</sup> *Economic Forecast—Spring 2010, European Economy 2/2010*, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, European Commission, Brussels, 2010, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> *Informacja o sytuacji społeczno-gospodarczej kraju: rok 2009*, Central Statistical Office, Warszawa, 28 January 2010, p. 3.

retirement and disability pension rises and an income tax rate reduction.<sup>3</sup> While the downward trend in foreign trade continued, a much deeper decrease in imports than in exports had a positive impact on Poland's economic growth performance.

Table 1

**Budget Deficit and Public Debt of the Central and Local Government  
Sector in 2006–2009**

Description	2006	2007	2008	2009
Gross Domestic Product, in PLN million	1 060 031	1 176 737	1 272 838	1 342 612
Deficit of the central and local government sector	38 476	22 105	46 889	95,730
as % of GDP	3.6	1.9	3.7	7.1
Debt of the central and local government sector	506 036	529 307	600 829	684 365
as % of GDP	47.7	45.0	47.2	51.0

Source: as in Figure 1.

Even though Poland's anti-crisis package was of a markedly smaller financial dimension than those adopted by many European countries, the repercussions of the financial crisis affected adversely public finances. Amid reports that the situation of the Polish economy was deteriorating under the impact of the global economic crisis the Parliament revised in July 2009 the 2009 Budget Act, scaling down the state budget income target from PLN303.035bn to PLN272.912bn and the expenditure target from PLN321.221bn to PLN300.098bn. The amended Budget Act authorised a deficit of PLN27.186bn, over PLN9bn above the originally set limit.<sup>4</sup> In fact, at PLN274.183bn the 2009 actual budget receipts fell 9.5% short of the Budget Act target. The budget situation was influenced the strongest by tax revenues, which at PLN36.555bn (14.5%) were below the Budget Act target—in particular by shortfalls, relative to forecasts, in CIT and

<sup>3</sup> *Analiza sytuacji gospodarczej Polski w 2009 r.*, Ministry of Economy, Analyses and Forecasting Department, Warszawa, February 2010, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ustawa budżetowa na 2009* [Budget Act 2009], Dz.U. 2009, no. 10, item 58, and *Ustawa o zmianie ustawy budżetowej na rok 2009* [2009 Budget Act Amendment Act], Dz.U 2009, no. 128, item 1057.

VAT receipts (27.1% and 16.1% respectively).<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that nominal payments from the EU to the state budget rose 118% on 2008 (PLN31.871bn). The 2009 foreign earnings totalled PLN256.5m, their main sources being: interest and fees on foreign loans and on special accounts, of PLN53.9bn; earnings from Treasury securities issued abroad, of PLN116.2m; and unplanned receipts of PLN46.7m from the sale of zero-coupon bonds.<sup>6</sup> With budget expenditure of PLN298.028bn, the 2009 budget deficit amounted to PLN23.845bn—and, with the deficit of the central and local government sector included, to PLN95.730m, or 7.1% of GDP, a record-high level in recent years. The plight of public finances drove up public debt to 51% of the GDP (Table 1). At 31 December 2009 foreign debt was PLN168.8bn (26.7% of total indebtedness) by the place of issuance criterion and PLN 242.6bn (38.4% of total indebtedness) by the residency criterion.<sup>7</sup>

The economic slowdown, the poor performance of industry and the deteriorating economic situation had an impact on the situation on the labour market. At the end of 2009 the rate of employment in the 15-years-old plus group dropped by 0.6%, relative to the end of 2008. At 15.855 million the number of employed persons was 120 thousand lower than in December 2008.<sup>8</sup> Employment cuts by enterprises were much deeper than by other national economy entities.<sup>9</sup> A particularly noticeable drop in employment occurred in the first half of 2009; on the other hand, in the second half of the year signs appeared suggesting that the undesirable downward trends in the labour market were decelerating. Manufacturing, with its 40% share in total employment, had the strongest impact on the drop in employment in the whole enterprise sector. In the group of industries with largest shares in total employment, the deepest employment cuts, relative to 2008, occurred in: clothing industry; automobile, trailer and semi-trailer industry (by 13.2%); other non-metal minerals processing (by 9.2%); furniture industry (by 6.8%); machinery and equipment industry (by 6.2%); and in the rubber and plastic products industry (by 5.1%). As a result, at the end of December 2009 the number of the unemployed registered in labour offices was 1.8927 million persons, 418.9 thousand more than in the same

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<sup>5</sup> *Sprawozdanie z wykonania budżetu państwa za rok 2009. Omówienie*, Warszawa, 2010, pp. 45–47.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 64–65.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 388.

<sup>8</sup> *Kwartalna informacja o aktywności ekonomicznej ludności*, Warszawa, 24 March 2010, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Informacja o sytuacji społeczno-gospodarczej..., op. cit.*, pp. 19–20.



period a year earlier. The rate of unemployment rose by 2.4 percent point, to 11.9% at December 2009 figures.<sup>10</sup>

In 2009 a total of 29,340 work permits were issued to foreigners, over 11 thousand more than in 2008, of which largest numbers to citizens of Ukraine (9504), China (4536), Vietnam (2577), Belarus (1669) and India (1164). Foreigners work chiefly in wholesaling and retailing (6921 permits), in manufacturing (4131) and in construction (3065).<sup>11</sup> With the free movement of persons within the EU eliminating the need to seek a work permit in Poland, the number of citizens of the EU states working in Poland is difficult to estimate.

The prices of consumer goods and services (CPI) in the 12 months of 2009 rose by 3.5% (against 3.3% in 2007). The annual growth rate of consumer prices was stable at about 3.5% through most of the year. In the first four months of 2009 the core CIP index was rising gradually, from 2.8% (year-on-year) in January to 4.0% (year-on-year) in April, to fall in the next months to within the 3.7%–3.4%. In October the CPI index reached its 2009 low of 3.1%, but it rose again in next months (Table 2).

In January the accelerating dynamics of food and soft drink prices (presumably resulting from a limited domestic supply of certain agricultural food products) and the steadily more costly imports (as a result of the depreciation of the zloty) were the major drivers of inflation. In following months inflation persisted at elevated levels under the combined impact of steep rises in prices of certain non-food products (cars, household appliances) following the depreciation of the zloty, substantial regulated price rises (including the prices of energy sources and dwelling maintenance services), and the prices of excise goods, such as tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, going up in the wake an excise rate rise. On the other hand, the economic slowdown in Poland and the global recession, which translated into a reduced demand and into the easing of inflationary pressure both on the domestic and on the global markets, were helping bring inflation pressure down.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the year exchange rate fluctuations had a significant impact on import prices and, consequently, on the level of inflation. In the first quarter of 2009 growing prices of raw materials, including oil, and a strong depreciation of the zloty brought about a marked increase in the prices of imported goods given in

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<sup>10</sup> *Bezrobocie rejestrowane I–IV kwartał 2009 r.*, Warszawa, 2010, pp. 13–14.

<sup>11</sup> *Cudzoziemcy pracujący w Polsce – dane zbiorcze 2008 r. i 2009 r.*, [www.mpips.gov.pl](http://www.mpips.gov.pl).

<sup>12</sup> *Raport o inflacji*, National Bank of Poland [NBP], the Monetary Policy Council, February 2010, pp. 19–20; October 2009, pp. 15–16; June 2009, pp. 11–12.

zlotys, by 10.5%, quarter-to-quarter (against 4.8% quarter-to-quarter in the last three months of 2008). In the second quarter of 2009, following an appreciation of the zloty, import prices dropped by 0.3%, quarter-to-quarter. The downturn in the zloty prices of imported goods became more pronounced in the third and fourth quarters of 2009 (6.5% and 2.5%, respectively, quarter-to-quarter), the appreciation of the zloty being one of the underlying factors. This downward trend of import prices was limited by a further increase in raw material prices, including oil, in the global markets. Annualised import prices rose by 12.4% and 13.0%, respectively, in the first and second quarter, against 4.1% in the fourth quarter of 2008. In the second half of the year the growth in import prices decelerated to 8.2% in the third quarter and 2.5% in the fourth quarter.<sup>13</sup>

Table 2

### Monthly Core Inflation Rates in 2009

Description	Core Inflation Rates			
	CPI	Excluding regulated prices	Excluding the most volatile prices	Excluding food and energy prices
	same month of previous year = 100			
December 2008	103.3	102.4	104.2	103.3
January	102.8	101.7	103.3	102.2
February	103.3	102.3	103.5	102.4
March	103.6	102.7	103.7	102.5
April	104.0	103.0	103.9	102.6
May	103.6	102.9	103.9	102.8
June	103.5	102.9	103.8	102.7
July	103.6	102.9	104.0	102.9
August	103.7	103.1	103.9	102.9
September	103.4	102.7	103.8	102.9
October	103.1	102.5	103.8	102.9
November	103.3	102.9	103.6	102.8
December	103.5	103.0	103.5	102.6

Source: NBP calculations based on GUS [Central Statistical Office] data, [www.nbp.gov.pl](http://www.nbp.gov.pl).

<sup>13</sup> NBP, *Raport o inflacji...*, op. cit., June 2010, p. 23

By product groups, the highest price growth was noted in alcoholic beverages and tobacco products (by 8.0%); transport services (by 7.2%); dwelling maintenance services (by 4.9%), hotel and restaurant services (by 4.1%), health care services (by 3.2%); educational services (by 2.8%), as well as food and non-alcoholic beverages (by 3.4%) and leisure services (by 1.2%). A decline was noted in the prices of clothing and footwear (by 6.1%) and of communications-related goods and services (by 1.6%).<sup>14</sup> Importantly, 2009 was yet another year of a decline in the prices of many goods in foreign trade, such as clothing and footwear, household appliances, means of transport, and audiovisual, photography and IT equipment.

Table 3

### Changes in NBP's Base Rates in 2009

In effect as of:	Reference rate	Lombard rate	Re-discount rate	Deposit rate
28 January	4.25	5.75	2.75	4.50
26 February	4.00	5.50	2.50	4.25
26 March	3.75	5.25	2.25	4.00
25 June	3.50	5.00	2.00	3.75

Source: The National Bank of Poland.

The Monetary Policy Council (MPC) had adopted for 2009 a strategy of direct inflation targeting at around 2.5%. Although inflation persisted above the target, the Monetary Policy Council continued throughout the first half of 2009 to ease the monetary policy launched late in 2008. The MPC was of an opinion that in view of the markedly deteriorated growth outlook and the expectations of a decrease in the inflationary pressure, for inflation to stabilise in the medium term at the NBP's target level a further monetary policy easing was necessary. The government's declared commitment to maintain discipline in the public finance sector was a factor helping to relax the monetary policy. Accordingly, the NBP cut its interest rates four times in this period, in January, February, March and June, by 150 basis points, all in all (Table 3). Additionally, in May 2009 the Council reduced the NBP required reserve ratio from 3.5% to 3.0%. In the second half of 2009, with the situation in the economy improving gradually and with uncertainty about the sustainability of the economic recovery persisting, the MPC kept interest rates unchanged on an assumption that the

<sup>14</sup> *Informacja o sytuacji społeczno-gospodarczej..., op. cit.*, pp. 31–34.

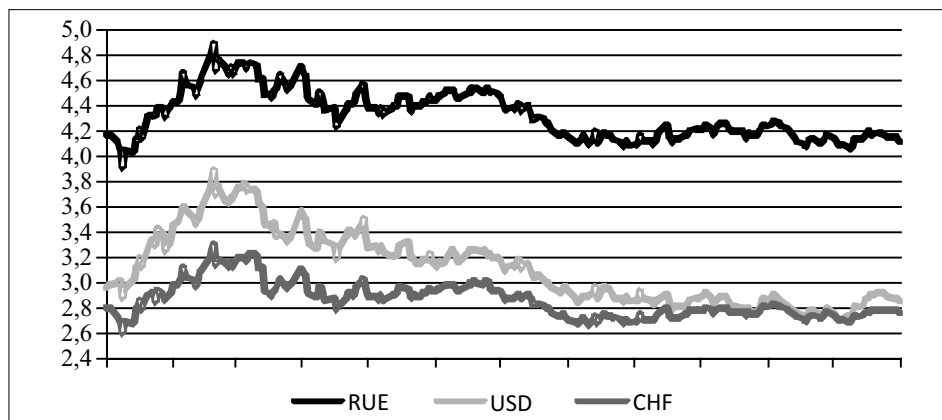
earlier easing of monetary policy, combined with a global recovery, would help bring the economy back around potential output growth.<sup>15</sup>

In the euro area, like in Poland, interest rates were reduced four times in the first half of the year. However, the European Central Bank Governing Council's decisions in favour of more radical interest rate cuts (in April 2009 the deposit rate was set at 0.25%) resulted in a continued high disparity of interest rates between Poland and the euro area (of 2.5 percent point with respect to the reference rate and 3.5 percent point to the deposit rate).

Similarly to Poland, in the eurozone interest rates were reduced four times, during the first half of the year. However, The European Central Bank cut rates substantially (in April 2009 the deposit rate was set at 0.25%), so interest rates disparity between Poland and eurozone was high (2.5 percentage points in case of reference rate and 3.5 percentage points in case of deposit rate).

Figure 2

**Changes in average exchange rates of the euro, the U.S. dollar  
and the Swiss franc in 2009  
(in zlotys)**



Source: As in Table 3.

The depreciation of the zloty at the peak of the turmoil in the international financial market contributed to the reduction of the trade deficit. Owing to this, net exports had a positive impact on economic growth performance. Had not it been for the depreciation of the zloty in the period between the third quarter of

<sup>15</sup> *Sprawozdanie z wykonania założeń polityki pieniężnej na rok 2009*, National Bank of Poland, the Monetary Policy Council, Warszawa, May 2010, pp. 11–14

2008 and the second quarter of 2009, net exports' contribution to GDP growth would have been negative, in the order of minus 2.5%, rather than positive at 3.2%. As the weakening of the Polish currency was driving up the prices of imported goods, these were to some extent replaced with domestic goods, with positive results for employment and the domestic demand.<sup>16</sup>

In 2009 the strongest fluctuations of the zloty's exchange rate against the major currencies occurred in the first half of the year. Between the beginning of the year and 18 February the exchange rate of the zloty dropped, respectively: against the euro from PLN4.17 to PLN4.90; against the U.S. dollar from PLN2.96 to PLN3.90; and against the Swiss franc from PLN2.80 to PLN3.32. After the exchange rates of the major currencies had peaked, the zloty showed a tendency to appreciate, albeit with a relatively high level of fluctuation. In the second half of the year the zloty's appreciation trend was arrested, but the Polish currency was stronger than in the first half of the year and its fluctuation range was narrower. At the end of the year the exchange rate of the zloty was, respectively: PLN4.10 to the euro; PLN2.85 to the U.S. dollar; and PLN2.76 to the Swiss Franc,<sup>17</sup> i.e. somewhat below the levels at the beginning of 2009 (Figure 3).

In the first two months of 2009 the exchange rate developments continued to be influenced predominantly by the still-strong turbulence in the global financial markets and by the resulting high risk aversion, which prompted investors to adopt a negative attitude towards the Central and East European currencies. Since February such external factors as decline of risk aversion together with stabilisation on international financial markets had improved the attitude of investors towards currencies of emerging market economies and led to appreciation of the zloty. The strengthening of the zloty in following months was additionally influenced by the positive macroeconomic indicators of the Polish economy, including the improved current account balance.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, Poland's April 2009 agreement with the International Monetary Fund on the opening of a US\$20.6bn Flexible Credit Line was an evidence for foreign investors that the macroeconomic condition of the Polish economy was better than those of the other countries in the region and it contributed to strengthening

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<sup>16</sup> *Economic Survey of Poland 2010*, OECD, Paris 2010, p. 27, [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/5/28/44904949.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/5/28/44904949.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Archiwum średnich kursów walut w 2009 r., [www.nbp.gov.pl](http://www.nbp.gov.pl).

<sup>18</sup> *Raport o inflacji...*, *op. cit.*, June 2009, pp. 49–50.

confidence in the zloty.<sup>19</sup> The appreciation of the zloty came to a halt amid news about an expected worsening of the state of public finance in Poland and negative data on the economies in the region, notably Latvia's and Estonia's, including the lowering of their credit ratings.<sup>20</sup>

The deterioration of overall economic situation and of the major macroeconomic indices made Poland's accession to the economic and currency union a more remote prospect. At the end of 2009 Poland met only one convergence criterion, of long-term interest rates (which, at 6.1%, were 0.1 percent point below the benchmark value), but it fell short of the fiscal criterion (in 2008 Poland was subjected to the Excessive Deficit Procedure after the deficit of central and local government institutions had exceeded 3.6% of GDP), the price stability criterion (inflation was 2.4 percent point above the benchmark), and the exchange rate criterion (Poland still does not participate in the ERM II mechanism).<sup>21</sup> Under the circumstances, the date of adoption of the euro by Poland, announced in 2008 as 1 January 2012, was no longer applicable and in 2009 the debate on this subject was postponed.

### Foreign Trade

In 2009 the repercussions of the global economic crisis affected also Poland's foreign trade. For the first time since 1999 the turnovers of foreign trade dropped from the previous year. The zloty's fluctuations against the dollar and the euro had a strong impact on exports and imports performance (Table 4). The nominal value of exports given in zlotys rose by 4.5%, but given in euros and dollars it dropped, respectively, by 15.5% and 20.4%. On the other hand, the nominal value of imports declined both given in zlotys and in foreign currencies (by 6.8% given in zlotys, 24.5% given in euros, and by 28.9% given in dollars). Of the world's 30 largest importers, only the Russian Federation sustained a decline in imports higher than Poland.<sup>22</sup> With the decline in imports considerably deeper than in exports, a trend observed in recent years, of the widening of foreign trade deficit, was reversed as the deficit registered in 2009 totalled EUR9.3bn (against EUR26.2bn in 2008).

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<sup>19</sup> *Economic Survey of Poland 2010...*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>20</sup> *Raport o inflacji...*, *op. cit.*, October, pp. 33–34; February 2010, p. 35.

<sup>21</sup> *Monitor Konwergencji Nominalnej*, no. 2, 2010, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> *World Trade Report 2010*, WTO, Geneva, 2010, p. 30.

Table 4

**Foreign Trade in 2009 (final results)**

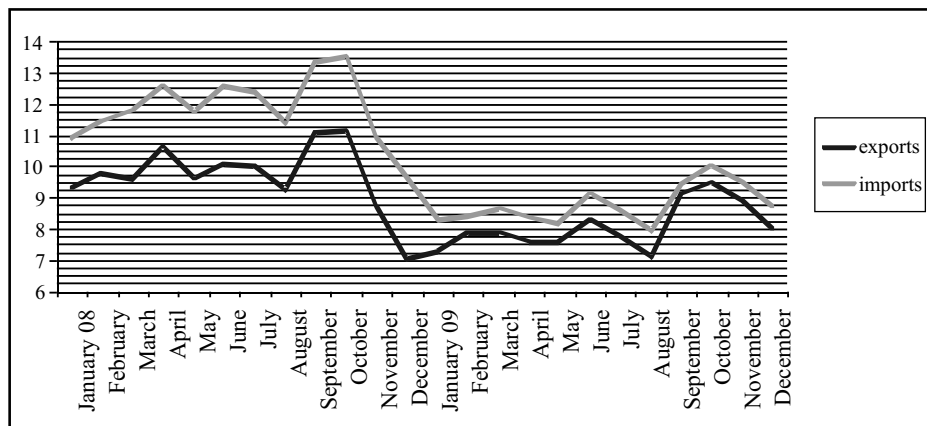
Description	January–December 2009						2008	2009
	PLN million	USD million	EUR million	January– December 2008 = 100			January– December	
				PLN	USD	EUR	Structure in %	
<b>Exports</b>	<b>423485.4</b>	<b>136720.3</b>	<b>98274.5</b>	<b>104.5</b>	<b>79.6</b>	<b>84.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Developed countries	362475.2	117043.9	84160.2	107.7	82.0	87.2	83.0	85.6
Of which the EU	337128.4	108843.6	78287.6	106.9	81.3	86.5	77.8	79.6
Of which eurozone	238163.0	76825.5	55286.9	109.5	83.3	88.7	53.6	56.2
Developing countries	29385.6	9471.7	6794.6	108.3	82.7	87.5	6.7	6.9
Central and East European countries <sup>a</sup>	31624.6	10204.7	7319.7	75.8	57.7	61.0	10.3	7.5
<b>Imports</b>	<b>463382.6</b>	<b>149569.8</b>	<b>107528.9</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>71.1</b>	<b>75.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Developed countries	320330.3	103275.2	74317.3	93.0	70.7	75.3	69.3	69.1
Of which the EU	286710.9	92463.5	66531.3	93.2	70.8	75.5	61.9	61.9
Of which eurozone	225943.7	72825.8	52416.9	92.7	70.5	75.1	49.0	48.8
Developing countries	96863.6	31284.6	22455.6	102.0	78.4	82.6	19.1	20.9
Central- and East European countries <sup>a</sup>	46188.7	15010.0	10756.0	80.1	61.2	65.0	11.6	10.0
<b>Balance</b>	<b>–39897.2</b>	<b>–12849.5</b>	<b>–9254.4</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Developed countries	42144.9	13768.7	9842.9	X	X	X	X	X
Of which EU	50417.5	16380.1	11756.3	X	X	X	X	X
Of which eurozone	12219.3	3999.7	2870.0	X	X	X	X	X
Developing countries	–67478.0	–21812.9	–15661.0	X	X	X	X	X
Central and East European countries	–14564.1	–4805.3	–3436.3	X	X	X	X	X

<sup>a</sup> Trade with the Central and East European countries covers Albania, Belarus, Croatia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.

Source: The Central Statistical Office, July 2010.

Figure 3

**Poland's Monthly Foreign Trade in 2008–2009**  
(in EUR million)



*Source:* The Ministry of Economy, based on Central Statistical Office data.

The paramount factor behind Poland's 2009 foreign trade performance was the global economic recession, (particularly in the European Union, but also in Eastern Europe) which had started in the second half of 2008. As the situation of Poland's main trade partners deteriorated, their domestic demand slumped dramatically, thus pulling down the demand for imported goods. This was reflected in the drop in Polish exports between October 2008 and January 2009. In successive months of 2009 performance figures remained persistently below those noted until the end of the third quarter of 2008, despite a gradual economic recovery in Europe (Figure 4).

As Polish export production being highly import-intensive, the slump in external demand for Polish goods resulted in a marked decline in Poland's imports. The depreciation of the zloty was instrumental in making imports contraction faster than exports, as it drove up the prices of imported goods. As a result, Polish producers were turning away from foreign-made semi-finished products or parts to their domestic substitutes. Also, stock utilisation improved and Polish-made consumer goods became more attractive, in price terms, than foreign products. With transaction prices rising in the wake of the depreciation of the zloty, export sales revenues registered only slightly below those in the first



half of 2008 despite a significant quantitative decrease in exports, in particular in export-oriented enterprises.<sup>23</sup>

Table 5

**Structure and Dynamics of Imports and Exports  
by Main Economic Categories**

Description	Exports (in %)			Imports (in %)		
	2008	2009		2008	2009	
	Share	Share	Change relative to 2008 (in EUR)	Share	Share	Change relative to 2008 (in EUR)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-15.5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-24.5</b>
<b>Consumer goods</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>-5.2</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>-17.6</b>
Food and beverages	7.9	8.5	-10.4	4.4	5.4	-8.5
Passenger cars	5.8	7.2	2.6	3.8	3.5	-33.4
Durable consumer goods	8.9	10.4	-3.1	2.2	2.4	-19.2
Non-durable consumer goods	11.2	12.7	-6.1	9.3	10.7	-14.6
<b>Capital goods</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>-15.0</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>-30.7</b>
Capital goods, except transport equipment	7.7	8.2	-11.3	13.8	13.7	-27.0
Transport equipment, industrial	4.9	4.7	-20.8	3.6	2.7	-44.7
<b>Intermediate goods</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>-24.4</b>	<b>48.8</b>	<b>49.4</b>	<b>-25.4</b>
Industrial supplies, primary	2.1	2.1	-18.0	2.9	2.5	-35.3

<sup>23</sup> Z. Wołodkiewicz-Donimirski, "Kondycja finansowa eksporterów," in: *Kryzys finansowy a handel zagraniczny*, Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, Warszawa, 2010, p. 42.

Industrial supplies, processed	27.7	24.4	–27.0	30.3	29.6	–28.0
Parts and accessories of capital goods	7.6	7.0	–24.1	9.1	10.5	–15.1
Parts and accessories of transport equipment	11.4	11.1	–19.3	6.5	6.8	–23.0
<b>Fuels</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>–38.8</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>–34.4</b>

Source: W. Mroczek, “Handel zagraniczny w 2009 r. – wyniki i tendencje. Skutki kryzysu,” in: J. Przystupa (ed.), *Gospodarka i handel zagraniczny Polski w 2009 roku. Raport roczny*. Warszawa 2010, pp. 24, 34.

The changing conditions of external demand and the zloty's lower exchange rate to the euro and the dollar influenced the commodity structure of Poland's 2009 exports. The decline in exports was by far the mildest in the consumer goods category (Table 5). A particularly good performance—considering the situation in the global market—was reported by the domestic producers of passenger cars, mostly due to favourable conditions in main foreign markets.<sup>24</sup> The fiscal stimulus packages introduced in the European Union (including in Germany, Europe's largest car market, and in Italy, the UK and France) included car scrapping incentives under which subsidies were available for new cars purchase in return for turning in old vehicles. The main beneficiaries of these schemes were the manufacturers of small and relatively inexpensive cars, chiefly in Poland and, to a lesser extent, in other states in the Central European region. As relevant to containing the drop in Poland's exports was the enlargement of the exports offer in the durable consumer goods group, by new models of car, computers (following expansion of production in Dell's Łódź facility) or new models of TV-sets (Poland is Europe's leading producer of these). Yet another factor helping reduce the scale of decline in exports was a shift of the demand in the EU “fifteen” towards cheaper products from Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, a deep slump was noted in capital and intermediate goods exports in the wake of a much-reduced external demand for these goods in the countries (post-Soviet in particular) in which the crisis caused the collapse of production.

<sup>24</sup> *Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zagranicznego 2010*, Warszawa, 2010, pp. 95–101.

<sup>25</sup> W. Mroczek, *op. cit.*, pp. 23–26.

Imports dropped the least in the consumer goods category, yet the drop was much steeper than in exports of consumer goods. With zloty prices of imported goods rising in the wake of depreciation of the Polish currency, the demand for foreign-made consumer goods—for cars and durable consumer goods in particular—went down. The resulting substitution of the demand for imported goods by domestic products had a positive impact on the situation of Polish producers. The relatively steep drop noted in imports of capital and intermediate goods (Table 5) could be surprising in the context of data on Poland's 2009 investment and industrial output: while investment was down by 0.3%, capital goods imports plummeted by 30.7%. This disproportional decline in capital goods imports could be attributable to the fact that a large proportion of items in this category had been imported to Poland for purposes of investment in the export-oriented sector, whose outlook was much worse in 2009 than in previous years.<sup>26</sup> For similar reasons, the drop in imports of intermediate goods was over twenty times larger than that in industrial production (down by 1.1%), although in this case imported goods were being replaced, for price reasons, by the reduction of stocks and by domestically-made industrial supplies, parts and accessories. As regards the nearly 35% drop in the value of fuel imports (at an only slightly reduced volume), this was due to the falling prices of raw materials in international markets, in particular of oil whose average yearly price was lower by 37% in 2009 than in 2008. This substantial decrease in prices improved Poland's foreign trade balance by close to USD7.5bn.<sup>27</sup>

As a result of the crisis Poland's goods trade (given in euros and in US dollars) with all main trade partners collapsed, the slump being much steeper in imports than in exports. The decrease in Poland's exports to the EU-15 was relatively the lowest, reflecting both the fact that, of all Poland's economic partners, this region suffered a relatively lowest drop in economic activity, and certain changes in the structure of countries' demand. A steeper drop occurred in goods trade with the EU-11 countries, notably with Poland's major trade partners in this group, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Despite worse than in 2008 results, the EU-26 markets' share in the geographic structure of Polish exports rose from 77.8% to 79.6%, with the share of imports unchanged at 61.9%. As a result of the 2009 changes Poland's surplus in trade the European Union countries rose from EUR2.2bn to EUR11.6bn (Table 4).

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 35.

<sup>27</sup> J. Chojna, "Ceny na rynku światowym," in: J. Przystupa (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 77–78.

Germany is Poland's foremost economic partner. In trade with this country an increase was registered in exports of, among other products, passenger cars, TV sets, and furniture and parts, and a decrease in exports of electrical transmission equipment, other non-precious metal products, internal combustion piston engines and parts thereof. In imports from Germany the value of such product categories as transport vehicles, internal combustion piston engines and their parts, processed petroleum, and bitumen oils went down. The increased share of the EU countries in total exports resulted also from the growth of the value (given in zlotys) of exports to Italy, the U.K., France, the Netherlands, and other. Exports to Italy rose by 20% (chiefly passenger cars) and to the U.K.—by 16.7% (chiefly machinery and automatic data processing equipment).<sup>28</sup> Poland's imports from the major European Union markets decreased (Table 6).

Table 6

### Foreign Trade with Major Partners, 2009

Country	January– December 2009						2008	2009
	PLN million	USD million	EUR million	January– December 2008 = 100			January– December	
				PLN	USD	EUR	Share, in %	
Exports								
1. Germany	110679.9	35679.6	25685.7	109.0	82.8	88.2	25.0	26.1
2. France	29384.2	9498.9	6826.2	116.7	89.0	94.7	6.2	6.9
3. Italy	29098.1	9340.7	6740.6	120.0	90.9	97.1	6.0	6.9
4. U.K.	27107.4	8771.6	6300.1	116.0	88.6	94.0	5.8	6.4
5. Czech Republic	24706.7	8005.7	5745.4	106.9	81.7	86.6	5.7	5.8
6. The Netherlands	17970.4	5799.0	4175.0	110.1	83.9	89.3	4.0	4.2
7. Russia	15530.7	5015.2	3595.5	73.7	56.2	59.4	5.2	3.7
8. Hungary	11427.3	3699.0	2654.8	101.6	77.2	82.2	2.8	2.7
9. Sweden	11335.4	3667.1	2636.4	88.1	67.1	71.4	3.2	2.7
10. Spain	11100.0	3590.1	2577.6	108.2	82.8	87.9	2.5	2.6
Imports								
1. Germany	103672.5	33418.5	24053.2	90.8	68.8	73.4	23.0	22.4
2. China	42970.9	13914.4	9983.3	107.2	82.8	87.1	8.1	9.3
3. Russia	39519.7	12834.4	9205.8	81.8	62.5	66.3	9.7	8.5

<sup>28</sup> *Informacja o sytuacji społeczno-gospodarczej kraju...*, op. cit., p. 71.

4. Italy	31687.4	10165.7	7336.8	98.0	74.3	79.2	6.5	6.8
5. France	21348.0	6892.8	4956.0	90.9	69.3	73.7	4.7	4.6
6. The Netherlands	16815.0	5434.9	3904.2	98.4	75.1	79.7	3.4	3.6
7. Czech Republic	16726.8	5399.6	3882.3	94.7	71.7	76.5	3.6	3.6
8. Republic of Korea	13958.5	4481.2	3228.7	112.8	86.9	91.4	2.5	3.0
9. U.K.	13686.8	4417.6	3177.5	97.1	74.0	78.6	2.8	3.0
10. Belgium	10756.8	3467.0	2495.5	91.2	69.0	73.6	2.4	2.3

Source: as in Table 4.

The deepest downturn occurred in Poland's trade with the Central and East European countries, with exports down by 39% and imports down by 35%. This slump was connected with a much steeper drop in economic activity in the region than in the EU. Particularly affected were Poland's main trade partners, Russia and Ukraine, which suffered a drop in GDP of, respectively, 7.9% and 15.1%.

Among the factors that led to the slump in imports to Russia were, besides the macroeconomic downturn, a strong depreciation of the rouble and a limited availability of credit for enterprises. In case of Poland's trade with Russia, the deepest fall was registered in automotive exports—overall by 77.7%, predominantly in such product groups as goods transport vehicles (by 95.2%); car bodies (by 87.3%); road tractors (by 95.3%); cars with engine capacity between 1500 and 3000 cu. cm. (by 74.5%) and between 1000 and 1500 cu. cm (by 41.4%). This was due both to the market situation and to Russia having increased its import duty rates. Moreover, a significant drop, by over 40%, was noted in exports of mechanical and electrical equipment, plastics and plastic products, and metal products. Against this background of downward trends, agricultural food products stood out as an exception; with deliveries up 8.9%, this group moved up from the fifth to the third place on the list of aggregated groups of Polish exports to the Russian market. The over-30-percent decline in imports from Russia was attributable to lower prices of oil and natural gas on global market, which are the main items in the commodity structure of Polish imports from Russia.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Federacja Rosyjska. Informacja o stosunkach gospodarczych z Polską*, [www.mg.gov.pl/Wspolpraca+z+zagranica/Wspolpraca+gospodarcza+Polski+z+krajami+wschodnimi+i+pozaeuropejskimi/Rosja.htm](http://www.mg.gov.pl/Wspolpraca+z+zagranica/Wspolpraca+gospodarcza+Polski+z+krajami+wschodnimi+i+pozaeuropejskimi/Rosja.htm) (aktualizacja 14.04.2010).

The downturn in trade with Ukraine was even deeper, hence this country's position among the largest customers for Polish exports dropped from 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>. Poland's 2009 trade with Ukraine totalled USD4.5bn, of which USD3.4bn was Polish exports (down by 46.8% on 2008) and USD1.1bn of imports (down by 51.4%). Like in the case of Russia, the slump was the deepest in exports of transport equipment, mechanical and electrical equipment, mineral products, furniture, and construction materials. In contrast, exports of agricultural food products rose. In imports from Ukraine a noticeable decrease was noted in metallurgical products and—although to a lesser extent—of mineral products (notably iron ores).<sup>30</sup>

Exports to non-European markets have been growing sluggishly and their share in overall exports standing just above 10%. So the concentration of Polish foreign trade on European markets means that for Poland the globalisation process means mainly the European integration. The weak presence of Polish products in distant markets and the inability to tap the opportunities offered by the buoyant development of markets in certain regions of the world are due to a number of factors, such as the relatively small size of Polish enterprises, their insufficient innovation capabilities, limited access to credit, inadequate management skills, or the lack of experience in doing business far from the home market.<sup>31</sup> Hence Polish exports to such countries as the United States, Japan or China have been several times lower than Poland's economic potential would imply.<sup>32</sup> Of the abovementioned markets, the greatest expectations are pinned to the development of exports to China and to the 2010 World EXPO exhibition in Shanghai as an opportunity for establishing cooperation.

Non-European countries, notably China, the Republic of Korea and Japan, account for 25% of Poland's total imports. Now that Polskie Górnictwo Naftowe i Gazownictwo [the oil and gas mining group] signed in June 2009 a contract with QatarGas for the delivery to Poland of liquefied natural gas (LNG), Qatar can be expected to figure more and more importantly in the geographic structure of Polish imports after 2014. Under this agreement, after the completion of the LNG terminal in Świnoujście in 2014 Poland will be receiving, for the next twenty years, 1 million tons (about 1.5bcm) a year of LNG worth about

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<sup>30</sup> *Informacja o stosunkach gospodarczych Polski z Ukrainą*, [www.mg.gov.pl/Wspolpraca+z+zagranica/Wspolpraca+gospodarcza+Polski+z+krajami+wschodnimi+i+pozaeuropejskimi/Ukraina.htm](http://www.mg.gov.pl/Wspolpraca+z+zagranica/Wspolpraca+gospodarcza+Polski+z+krajami+wschodnimi+i+pozaeuropejskimi/Ukraina.htm) (aktualizacja 26.05.2010).

<sup>31</sup> *OECD Economic Survey: Poland...*, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 105.

USD550m (depending on oil prices and a price formula).<sup>33</sup> The signing of this agreement, which is meant to increase Poland's energy security, was one of the landmark economic events in Poland in 2009.

### Foreign Direct Investment

At EUR8.251bn, the 2009 inflow of foreign direct investment to Poland was lower by 18.7% than in 2008 (EUR10.030bn) and by as much as 52.1% than in the record 2007. The contraction, for the second year in succession, of the value of foreign direct investment in Poland (Figure 4) was attributable to the global crisis which had started in 2008 and continued into 2009. The persisting instability in the international financial market was constraining access to borrowing and international companies' capabilities for financing investment projects. The slackening economic growth cut into profits of most of them, and assessments of the potential benefits of foreign expansion were downgraded amid the faltering global demand. Nevertheless, with reinvested profits accounting for more than a half (EUR4.273bn) of 2009 foreign direct investment, it seemed that the situation of foreign investors in Poland was obviously improving, mainly due to the relatively sound performance of exports, for which for a large proportion of these investors' output is earmarked. The rest of foreign investment consisted of equity purchases as well as additional capital contributions (EUR2.422bn) and lending by foreign investors (EUR1.556bn).<sup>34</sup>

At the end of 2009 the total value of Poland's foreign direct investment liabilities was over EUR127.3bn. According to the National Bank of Poland's year-end 2008 data (the detailed data on foreign direct investment in Poland were going to be published probably early in 2011) the investors from 25 European Union countries had an 85.6% share in FDI inflow to Poland. The highest FDI liabilities were to non-residents from the Netherlands (EUR22,048m), Germany (EUR18,145m), France (EUR12,463m), Luxembourg (EUR10,020m), the United States (EUR7,100m), Sweden (EUR5,276m), the U.K. (EUR4,409m), Italy (EUR4,309m), Austria (EUR4,117m), Belgium (EUR3,785m) and Spain (3,516m). The breakdown of FDI liabilities by types of activity of domestic companies was as follows: manufacturing—EUR35,929m; financial intermediation—EUR22,316m; real estate servicing, data processing, lease of machinery and other business-related services—EUR20,119m;

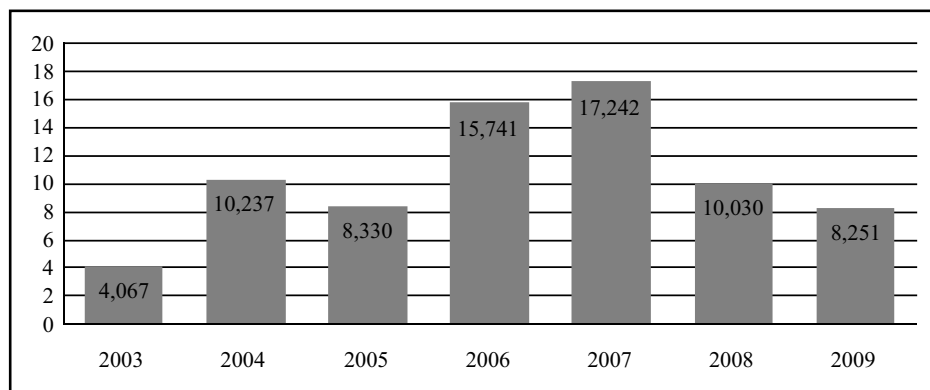
<sup>33</sup> *Umowa na dostawy gazu do Polski z Kataru podpisana*, 29 June 2009, [www.msp.gov.pl/portal.php?serwis=pl&dzial=29&id=6738&search=12870](http://www.msp.gov.pl/portal.php?serwis=pl&dzial=29&id=6738&search=12870).

<sup>34</sup> *Bilans płatniczy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej za IV kwartał 2009 roku*, Warszawa, 2010, pp. 35–36.

distribution and repair services—EUR19,074m; transport, warehousing and communications—EUR7,055m. The lowest liability levels were in electricity, gas and water generation and distribution—EUR4,153m; real estate—EUR2,530m; and construction—EUR2,494m. The remaining types of economic activity accounted for EUR2,039m.<sup>35</sup>

Figure 4

**Foreign Direct Investment Inflow to Poland in 2003–2009**  
(in EUR million)



Source: as in Table 3.

The Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency's (PAIiZ) annual award in the "Largest 2009 Investment" category went to Cargotec Poland. As part of a EUR64.4m investment project, Cargotec Poland Sp. z o.o. is going to build on a 41-hectare lot in the Stargard Szczeciński New Technology Industrial Park a handling machinery assembly plant. The Cargotec facility will produce mainly fork-lift trucks, gantry cranes, roller carriages and terminal tractors. This investor plans to create by the end of 2013 no less than 400 permanent jobs, of which 340 blue-collar and 60 managerial.<sup>36</sup>

In the largest job creator category the award went to IBM Polska Sp. z o.o. The IBM group, which has been active in Poland since 1991, signed in September 2009 with the Polish government an agreement to cooperate on the creation of a new IBM IT service delivery centre in Wrocław. IBM plans to

<sup>35</sup> *Zagraniczne inwestycje bezpośrednie w Polsce w 2008 roku*, Warszawa, January 2010, pp. 24–25.

<sup>36</sup> *Największe bezpośrednie inwestycje zagraniczne w Polsce w 2009 roku*, 14 December 2009, [www.paiz.gov.pl/20091214/najwiecej\\_inwestycje\\_w\\_2009](http://www.paiz.gov.pl/20091214/najwiecej_inwestycje_w_2009).



employ by 2013 up to 2 thousand IT specialists: graduates of technical and engineering higher education institutions, experienced IT specialists and project managers. To enlarge the recruitment process, enrich the teaching programme, and prepare students for the opportunities offered by the IT industry, IBM proposes to cooperate with higher education institutions in Wrocław, in the Lower Silesia region, and throughout Poland. Specialists will provide server, database, network and application administration services for IBM customers throughout Europe. This is the first so large an investment in the modern services sector. The new Centre will provide IT services for IBM Europe-based customers, thus joining the worldwide network of IBM's IT centres. The Centre is scheduled to commence operations in 2010.<sup>37</sup>

Disinvestment, i.e. the shedding of foreign assets by trans-national corporations, is one of the phenomena which in the recent two years had an impact on the level of foreign direct investment in Poland. These disposals were dictated by urgent need to raise capital and to adjust to the changed market conditions (reduced demand, mounting price competition). Foreign companies were looking more and more actively for ways to reduce costs, including through the consolidation of their geographically dispersed operations, spinning off (or divesting) assets which failed to generate expected profits or did not qualify as core activity (outsourcing), and through moving operations to countries with lower costs. In 2008–2009 many trans-national corporations decided to move some of their operations to Poland, in most cases from Western Europe. Among them there were: Acer, Cadbury, Toshiba (from the U.K.), Dell (from Ireland), GlaxoSmithKline (from France) and UniCredit (from Germany). At the same time, the process of moving operations out of Poland to other countries, mainly in the Central and East European region, was also gaining strength. Among the companies to have withdrawn from Poland were: Groupe Chantelle, BTX Group A/S (clothing industry), Coroplast Fritz Müller GmbH & Co. KG, IAC Group, Leoni AG, Sumitomo Electric Wiring Systems Europe Ltd., Takata Corporation (car industry) and Teva Group (the pharmaceutical industry).<sup>38</sup> Also FIAT, the car group, announced that it would transfer the production of the Panda model from Poland to Italy.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> IBM otwiera Zintegrowane Centrum Dostarczania Usług we Wrocławiu, 30 September 2009, [www.ibm.com/news/pl/pl/2009/09/30/v279444j79243a03.html](http://www.ibm.com/news/pl/pl/2009/09/30/v279444j79243a03.html).

<sup>38</sup> A. Grycuk, "Wpływ kryzysu finansowego na bezpośrednie inwestycje zagraniczne w Polsce," [in:] *Kryzys finansowy a handel zagraniczny...*, op. cit., pp. 83–85.

<sup>39</sup> A. Kublik, "Fiat chce przenieść nową Pandę z Polski do Włoch," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 23 December 2009.

At EUR2,071bn the 2009 value of Polish outward foreign direct investment was about on a par with that in 2008. At the end of 2009 Polish investors' FDI assets, including those of the Polish government and of the banking, non-government and non-bank sectors, totalled EUR18.187bn. The equity holdings in FDI-owned companies and the re-invested earnings attributable to their Polish direct investors amounted to EUR13.409bn and claims under loans made by Polish foreign direct investors to FDI-owned companies and liabilities under loans received from these companies was EUR4.778bn.<sup>40</sup>

At the end of 2008 the largest hosts for Polish foreign direct investment were: Switzerland (EUR3.482bn), Luxembourg (EUR3.360bn), the Netherlands (EUR1.355bn), and the Czech Republic (EUR972m, of which EUR530m in PKO Orlen's investment in Unipetrol).<sup>41</sup> A majority of FDI was in: the services sector, including financial intermediation; manufacturing; and in transport, warehousing and communications. One significant feature of Polish investment undertakings in certain countries in Western Europe is that often, while being of a nature of financial flows classified as the foreign direct investment, but they do not involve either takeovers of foreign companies or equity purchases, or the implementation of greenfield projects. The high outflow of capital to European and global financial centres, such as Luxembourg, Switzerland, the Netherlands or the U.K.—but also to “tax havens” (EUR497m of Polish FDI at the end of 2008)—means that Polish enterprises often transfer abroad their profits earned at home, because of more advantageous tax regimes.

### Assessment

Unlike the other EU countries, Poland steered clear of a recession. Admittedly, the principal macroeconomic indicators—the GDP growth rate, the level of inflation, the rate of unemployment and (or first and foremost) the budget deficit and the public debt—deteriorated, but even then they were very good compared with those in a majority of other countries. The worsening of the main macroeconomic indices has set back the prospect of arrival at the next phase of European integration that the adoption of the euro by Poland would have been. In September 2008 the attainment of this aim had been tentatively scheduled for 2012. Unsurprisingly, in 2009 the matter of Poland's accession to the European and Monetary Union needed to be postpone to unknown date in

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<sup>40</sup> *Międzynarodowa pozycja inwestycyjna*, [www.nbp.gov.pl/home.aspx?f=/statystyka/m\\_poz\\_inwest.html](http://www.nbp.gov.pl/home.aspx?f=/statystyka/m_poz_inwest.html).

<sup>41</sup> *Polskie inwestycje bezpośrednie za granicą*, Warszawa, December 2009, pp. 59–63.

the context of the failure to meet a majority of the convergence criteria, hence Poland is unlikely to adopt the Union currency within the next three to five years.

Deteriorating economic situation of Poland's main partners, in particular in the European Union and in Eastern Europe, had a powerful impact on the outlook for the development of Poland's foreign economic relations. This was felt particularly acutely in the first half of 2009 when the recession in Poland's major trade partners was the most severe. Even though in the second half of the year the European economies gradually resumed the economic growth, the past years' trend of two-digit growth of Poland's foreign trade proved unsustainable in view of manifestly lower demand levels in these countries. The downturn in Poland's exports was cushioned by the significant depreciation of the zloty against the euro and the U.S. dollar, which contributed to the increased competitiveness of Polish goods in foreign markets. This was the reason for the growth of Polish exporters' domestic currency revenues despite the decline in the euro- and dollar-denominated value of exports. Poland's foreign trade, exports in particular, is strongly focused on European markets. Despite a number of consultations the Polish government held in 2009 with representatives of non-European governments on the prospects for economic cooperation, tangible effects of these consultations are few. One positive exception in 2009 was the contract for the supply of liquefied natural gas from Qatar to Poland, signed by the Górnictwo Naftowe i Gazownictwo S.A. company after intense negotiations in which representatives of the Ministry of the Treasury participated. One new, promising area of international cooperation is nuclear energy. In January 2009 a decision was taken to launch a Polish nuclear energy development programme. Polish ministers discussed this subject with representatives of several countries (including France, the Republic of Korea and Finland) with a view to gaining an understanding of different experiences in nuclear energy projects and technologies suitable for Polish nuclear power stations.

The global financial and economic crisis was one of the factors behind the reduced, as compared with previous years, inflow of foreign direct investment to Poland. Nevertheless, trans-national corporations perceive Poland as an attractive place for investment, as evidenced by Poland having moved up in the FDI Confidence Index from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> place.<sup>42</sup> A majority of foreign direct investment goes into the services sector and, in the case of manufacturing,

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<sup>42</sup> See *Investing in a Rebound—The 2010 A.T. Kearney FDI Confidence Index*, Vienna, Virginia, U.S., 2010.

into production of medium-technology goods. There is still too little foreign investment in the production of high-technology goods.<sup>43</sup> Besides creating a FDI-friendly environment at home, active promotion of this country abroad is necessary. In this context the autumn 2009 campaign advertising Poland—a project of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the PAIiLz, the Polish Tourist Organisation and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage—is worth noting. In an “Autumn of Change” series devoted to Poland’s post-1989 transformation CNN was airing for three months spots promoting Poland and the major Polish cities as attractive to investors and tourists. The quality of the message being much higher than in similar campaigns in previous years, perhaps this and similar projects will contribute to Poland’s positive image in the world and translate into the size and quality of foreign direct investment in this country.

*Translated by Elżbieta Gołębiowska*

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<sup>43</sup> *OECD Economic Survey: Poland...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 106–107.

## **Poland and the United Nations Organisation**

The year 2009 saw a continuation of tensions—especially economic and social—between the globe’s North and South, with developing countries ratcheting up their demands on the developed world and the international financial institutions for a larger assistance with no conditionality attached.

Consolidation of the members states of the European Union was in progress: for the most part they were presenting a uniform position in the UN forum, often backed by a broader group of countries linked to the EU. But contrary to expectations, the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty (1 December 2009) did not add to the Union’s weight, with many ambiguities emerging about the implementations of the Treaty’s provisions within the UN framework.

Following the election of Barack Obama as U.S. president, there was a change in that country’s position towards the UN: the declaration of return to multilateralism, the appointment of Susan Rice, the president’s close aide, as U.S. ambassador to the UN (with the restoration of Cabinet-member status to that post), the payment of a large portion of U.S. debt to the UN and the slogan of a “world without nuclear weapons,” all this came to symbolise a new approach to the UN, now seen as an important channel through which to pursue of U.S. policy goals.

The dominant theme at the Security Council was traditionally Africa, and the disarmament discussion was also gathering momentum. The intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, resumed in February 2009, did not produce any breakthrough, but proposals emerged which made it possible to reconcile the conflicting interests of the EU member states most actively engaged in the discussion.

### **Peace and International Security**

**Armed conflicts and crisis situations.** As in previous years, the Security Council’s proceedings were dominated by an array of African issues, led by

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\* The author was Poland’s Permanent Representative to the UN in New York in November 2004 – March 2009.

Sudan and Darfur. Even with persisting divisions among Council members as to the causes and ways of resolving the Sudan crisis, some easing of rhetoric could be noticed, reflecting the awareness that the time of Sudan's election called for more coherent cooperation. Indicative of this tendency was the December discussion about the Report of the African Union High Level Panel on Darfur. The UN endorsed the operations of the African Union–United Nations Mission in Darfur, UNAMID, and the United Nations Mission in Sudan, UNMIS (their mandates were extended for one year by the Security Council) and the mediation mission of Djibril Bassolé, the Joint African Union–United Nations Chief Mediator for Darfur.

The subject of security and stabilisation in the Democratic Republic of Congo was taken up mostly in the context of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), the largest UN peace keeping operation. After an open political and military conflict in that country's eastern provinces was more or less taken under control in early 2009, the next months was the time of stabilisation activity. The operations by government troops were backed by the UN force, which provoked a wave of criticism of the UN in view of numerous accusations of crimes and human rights violations by the army. MONUC came under thorough review and was reconfigured by the Security Council, which in December 2009 extended its mandate to May 2010 with the intention of completing the review and possibly changing the form of UN presence in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A continuing lack of political stability and security in Somali adversely affected the situation throughout the Horn of Africa, and the realisation that the UN peacekeeping operation could not be deployed in that country in the period ahead finally prevailed in the Security Council. In those circumstances, the focus was on providing political support for the provisional federal government and the Djibouti process, reinforcing the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) and other stabilisation effort, where the most important part was the Security Council's upholding the sanctions against Somali and extending its authorisation for the international operation against Somali pirates. Given the destabilising impact of foreign forces' engagement in Somali, it was important that the Council adopted a resolution imposing sanctions against Eritrea, in December 2009. Along with the unavoidable operations against international terrorism in the region (e.g. in Yemen), the Council's decision may help develop a more comprehensive approach to problems in the Horn of Africa, including in Somali.

Among other African, and especially West African conflicts, the Security Council devoted most of its attention to Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea. As for the former country, the Council's growing impatience with delays in closing the political phase of the conflict led to the imposition of sanctions. In the latter case, the massacre by the army of political demonstrators in Conakry, Guinea's capital, on 28 September 2009, triggered another serious crisis in the forum of the Security Council towards the end of the year. In December 2009, an international fact-finding mission produced a report on those developments.

On the Middle East, the dominant topic in the activities of the Security Council, and also of the General Assembly, was Israel's conflict with Hamas of December 2008 and January 2009. In its Resolution 1860 of 7 January, the Council called on the sides to cease fire. The Council also discussed the paralysis of the peace process, chances for its resumption, and the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian and economic situation in the Palestinian Autonomy, especially in the Israeli-blocked Gaza Strip. Much emphasis was placed on the absence of Israel's response to the UN proposals to resume the suspended UN agency-run projects (and launch new ones) on reconstruction of infrastructure. Criticism of Council members was provoked by the policy to expand Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Unsuccessful attempts for a Council resolution condemning the Jewish settlements were taken by Libya, whose term as the Security Council's non-permanent member ended at the close of 2009. Council members also found it worrying that no intra-Palestinian agreement was reached regarding the holding of a presidential election in Palestine in 2010. An important part of the discussion dealt with the report of the UN fact finding mission on the Gaza conflict (Goldstone inquiry) and its recommendations. Attempts to draw up a resolution that would sum up the debate about the report ended in a failure, and also in a division among EU member states. The adopted text said the discussion would be continued in the General Assembly forum in 2010.

The debate about Lebanon dealt with the country's internal situation, with satisfaction expressed due the holding of a parliamentary election and formation of the government of national unity. Improvement was noted in Lebanon-Syria relations, including the establishment of diplomatic relations. Owing to the deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), tensions along the Lebanese-Israeli border stayed relatively harmless, compared to previous years.

The Iranian nuclear programme was taken up in the Security Council forum when discussing reports of the Committee monitoring sanctions against Iran, set up under Council Resolution 1737 (2006). Simultaneously, with new information

about the programme emerging in the second half of 2009 (construction of a new enrichment facility in Qom, announcement of plans for new nuclear installations, threat of Iran's withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its outright refusal to cooperate with the IAEA), the Western members of the P5+1 group (the U.S., the U.K., France and Germany) began speaking about a growing need for new sanctions.

The situation in Iraq was monitored by the Council on a regular basis. According to an assessment made by the special representative of the secretary-general and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Iraq had a chance of achieving full stability and moving to a phase of durable economic development, even despite the continuation of many political, security-related, and socio-economic challenges. Waiting for Iraq's internal settlements the Council, in August 2009, extended the UNAMI mandate for another year, and in December 2009 it prolonged the mandates of the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) and the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB).

The Western Balkans was the subject of the Security Council's debates held in connection with periodic reports of the Secretary-General. The reconfiguration of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was completed, as was the takeover of that mission's rule-of-law functions by the European Union's EULEX mission. That, in the assessment of the UN Secretariat, gave an impulse to strengthen cooperation among partners present in Kosovo (the EU, OSCE, NATO) and helped improve cohesion and effectiveness of their operations. But the regulation of Kosovo's status had to wait for the International Court of Justice to issue an advisory opinion on the legality of Kosovo's declaration of independence.

No progress was achieved in respect of Bosnia-Herzegovina's fulfilling the conditions for closure of the office of the High Representative of the Secretary-General and assumption of its responsibilities by the Special Representative of the European Union. In October 2009, Bosnia-Herzegovina was elected the Council's non-permanent member from Eastern Europe, despite a fairly critical assessment of its political developments by an overwhelming majority of Council members.

The conflict in Georgia/South Ossetia/Abkhazia was discussed by the Council while working on extending the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). A four-month extension from February 2009 was expected to help develop new rules for the UN mission's presence in Georgia. But no agreement was reached, one major obstacle coming from Russia's push for the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. After



a Russian veto to a draft resolution providing for a successive extension on technical grounds, the mission's mandate expired as of 15 June. The EU Monitoring Mission is currently the only institution engaged in the region.

In an attempt to draw the international community's attention to these developments, in September 2009 Georgia submitted a draft UN General Assembly Resolution on Internally Displaced People (IDPs), including in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The resolution was adopted—with many abstentions, and with all EU member states voting for it.

No breakthrough was reached in 2009 on the Cyprus conflict. The mandate of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was twice extended, reflecting the Council's support for efforts to achieve progress in negotiations between the two Cypriot communities.

The subject of Afghanistan—in addition to being traditionally taken up in the context of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (NAMA) and the ISAF—was discussed by the Council in connection with the 2009 presidential election and a deteriorating security situation (notably, the October 2009 terrorist attack in Kabul, which left five UN personnel dead and nine wounded). The hope was expressed that the election would initiate a broader process of confidence building, stabilisation and reform.

North Korea's nuclear programme came back to the agenda of the Council in mid-2009, in the aftermath of that country's nuclear and missile tests in May 2009. The North Korean moves met with a consistent and firm reaction from the Council, which in June 2009 passed a unanimous resolution imposing new sanctions on the country. The successive provocative tests with ballistic missiles, carried out in 2009, had the effect of consolidating the determined position of the permanent Council members, including China and Russia, on the need for full implementation of North Korean sanctions.

On periodic basis, the Security Council was monitoring the situation in the Asian countries hosting UN peacekeeping missions, Nepal and East Timor. A debate on developments in Myanmar was held in mid-year, following a visit to that country by the UN Secretary General in July 2009 and an August ruling sentencing Aung San Suu Kyi to another 18 months of house arrest.

**Peacekeeping operations.** The UN involvement in peacekeeping operations further grew in 2009, with more than 118,000 military personnel, police officers and civilian staff from 115 countries serving on 17 missions. That considerable burden for the Organisation and the problems facing some of the peacekeeping missions provoked an in-depth discussion on the subject. In this context,

mention should be made of the document *The New Horizon*, which provided a key point of reference for discussions on UN peacekeeping operations in 2009.

Much attention was devoted to cooperation between the UN and regional organisations, notably the African Union, the EU and NATO, especially in the context of peacekeeping missions in Sudan, Chad (United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, MINURCAT) and Afghanistan. Activities were continued seeking the development of African states' potential for peacekeeping operations.

With the number of peacekeeping fatalities reaching 116 in 2009, the security of UN peacekeeping personnel was an important issue. Much attention was also devoted to the protection of civilian population in the context of peace operations.

Close interdependence was emphasised between the post-conflict peace building process and an effective strategy to wind down peace operations. In this connection, states' interest was attracted by security sector reform, as an element of peace building in states playing host to peace operations.

**Disarmament and non-proliferation.** The change of the U.S. administration and President Obama's declarations opened up a new climate for discussions on disarmament and non-proliferation. Despite initial problems, the spring proceedings of the UN Disarmament Commission, headed by the Polish Permanent Representative to the UN, had a constructive character, and after years of blockade an agreement was reached at Geneva on the agenda of the Disarmament Conference.

The beginning of the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly was marked by intense activity of the new U.S. administration. Important events included the top-level session of the Security Council on disarmament, headed by President Obama, and the adoption of Council Resolution 1887, calling on all countries to act towards a world without nuclear weapons and emphasising the special importance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. During a parallel conference of signatories to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the U.S. would ratify that treaty.

The autumn session of the First Committee of the UN General Assembly did not produce any major change, but efforts were visible to keep up the positive atmosphere of the discussions. The framework was agreed for a process expected to produce concrete arrangements on light weapons and small arms by 2012. Discussion was also continued on an arms trade treaty, with the adopted resolution offering hopes for real progress.

## **Economic and Social Questions, Sustainable Development**

The economic crisis was the dominant theme of UN discussions, which dealt with ways of combating its adverse consequences (and in this context, the need for an overhaul of the international financial system) and a possible formation of new bodies to be affiliated to the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, with a view to preventing a repetition of the crisis in future. Prospects for completion of the Doha trade round were also discussed, as was an increase in development assistance to the lowest-income countries incapable of countering the crisis on their own. An important subject was the implementation of the 2000 Millennium Declaration, and especially the Millennium Development Goals, in the light of preparations for a review conference in September 2010. As part of preparations for the UN Conference in Nairobi (1–3 December 2009), cooperation among countries of the South was discussed in detail. Much attention was devoted to public health issues, the keynote topic of the summer session of the Economic and Social Council. Controversy was aroused by questions of population and development, discussed in connection with the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission for Population and Development. Considerable progress was achieved in the multi-year process of increasing the cohesion of the United Nations system.

With regard to sustainable development, the focus was primarily on climate change, including preparations for the Copenhagen Conference (7–18 December). The Climate Change Summit, organised by the UN Secretary-General in New York in September, was attended by around a hundred leaders, and the Copenhagen Conference by close to 130.

Intense work was going on at the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly, with 42 resolutions adopted between September and December 2009 (including six by way of voting). The toughest discussions were about resolutions dealing with sustainable development (climate change prevention, Agenda 21 implementation, bio-diversity), macroeconomic issues (the international financial system, trade), and globalisation (new international economic order, corruption).

**Human rights and social development, promotion of democracy and inter-civilisation dialogue.** The sometimes stormy discussions at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly reflected South-North differences in approaches to human rights. The European Union failed to maintain unanimity on several key resolutions (more on which in the parts on Durban II Conference, later on), the EU's most important goals were attained. A total of nearly 60 resolutions were discussed and adopted (including eight decisions).

For yet another time, the Third Committee was successfully turned into an alternative forum to the Human Rights Council. Three draft country-specific resolutions were discussed and adopted, dealing with the human rights situation in countries where these rights had been massively violated: North Korea, Myanmar and Iran. Given the South's growing resistance to the country-specific resolutions, this should be seen as a major success, especially as regards Iran, where the authorities stepped up repressions against the opposition.

Fighting racism, discrimination, xenophobia and religious intolerance was a priority topic of the Third Committee in 2009, which was connected with the Durban II Conference, held in Geneva in April. Much reservations were provoked by the manner in which the G77 countries conducted negotiations on a draft resolution on racism. Their aversion to cooperate and an ostentatious refusal to engage in dialogue with the EU led some countries, including seven EU member states (Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Italy, Denmark and Romania), to vote against the resolution. A related G77 initiative was about a draft decision on the conference's final documents. Here, too, efforts to keep EU unity failed: Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, Romania and Italy abstained from voting, while the Netherlands voted against.

Gender equality was assigned much attention in 2009. The Secretary-General's document, *Further Details on Institutional Options for Strengthening the Institutional Arrangements for Support of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*, was presented, and wide support was extended to the idea of the so-called Composite Entity, calling for the creation of a new position in the UN Secretariat to deal with gender equality and the empowerment of women (in the rank of deputy secretary-general). But the discussion on the subject was not finalised.

The subject of women's empowerment and rights was discussed at the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the Commission for the Status of Women, held in early March 2009, and it also came as an important element of celebrations to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 October 2009).

Among thematic debates held in the forum of the UN General Assembly in 2009, mention should be made of that devoted to human trafficking, where participants sought to find out whether the existing legal and institutional arrangements proved sufficient to effectively counter those practices, which largely target women and children.

With regard to organised crime, a resolution on fighting drug trafficking was proposed by Mexico (with Poland supporting the document). Fight against drugs

was also discussed in the course of the Security Council's debate on peace and security in Africa, held in December 2009, in the context of international security (with special emphasis on that region).

**International terrorism and justice.** In the course of debates of the General Assembly and the Security Council, terrorism was unequivocally condemned in all its forms and manifestations. But it was also stressed that while the war on terror was waged, international law must be respected, especially the UN Charter, international humanitarian law and human rights. Most countries called for the adoption of a comprehensive convention on fighting terrorism. It was also stressed, especially by countries of the Islamic Conference Organisation, that terrorism must not be associated with any specific race, religion, culture or ethnic group.

But no noticeable headway was made, despite the attempts taken, with negotiations on a draft comprehensive convention against terrorism.

The Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) continued its intense cooperation with states, supported by the Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED). The Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee carried out vigorous work related to the review of persons and entities targeted with sanctions. A key development here was the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1904 (2009).

The discussions at the Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly dealt with the rule of law, at the national and international levels. No major progress was achieved in the debate on accountability of UN staff and experts on mission with respect to criminal acts committed in peacekeeping operations.

For the UN internal justice system, 2009 was truly a groundbreaking year. The United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT) and the United Nations Appeals Tribunal (UNAT) were launched, laying down the foundations for a new system based on the principles of two-instance proceedings, fairness, professionalism, autonomy and decentralisation. The judges were also selected, to adjudicate at three centres, New York, Geneva and Nairobi.

Universal jurisdiction was a new subject in the proceedings of the Sixth Committee, brought to the agenda at the request of a group of African states. It was stressed during the discussions that universal jurisdiction applies to the most serious crimes, regardless of the place where they were committed, and that it provides an instrument to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Following the accession of the Czech Republic and Chile, the number of states parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court rose in 2009 to reach 110. Intense preparations were underway for a Rome Statute review conference. As work was continued on developing the definition of

aggression, many new initiatives emerged seeking to broaden the list of war crimes, amend the Statute to include new offences (terrorism, drug trafficking, use/threat of use of nuclear weapons) and to have the Tribunal's activity summed up at a conference. A more favourable approach to the idea and proceedings of the ICC could be noticed on the part of the new U.S. administration, although a hypothetical accession of that country to the Statue was still a long way off.

In the debate on ocean affairs and the law of the sea, the subject taken up most frequently was piracy, especially off Somali coasts and in the Gulf of Aden. Calls were made for increased international cooperation in fighting that blight, and for indispensable assistance to be provided to littoral states.

**Peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance.** Dealing with this important line of UN activity, the Peacebuilding Commission worked intensely, producing the principles and modalities of cooperation with the Central African Republic and conducting semi-annual reviews of cooperation with Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. Discussion was also held on the concept of peacebuilding and the United Nations' role in this regard. Coming as part of this discussion was the UN Secretary-General's report on post-conflict peacebuilding.

With regard to humanitarian assistance, the year 2009 saw a sharpening of existing differences between developing and developed countries, mostly over the autonomy of aid agencies and their access to people in need in host countries. The expulsion of foreign humanitarian agencies from Sudan was found to pose a threat to the very idea of humanitarian assistance.

Featuring strongly in the work of the General Assembly and in informal discussions was the concept of responsibility to protect populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. No qualitative change could be seen in states' approach to this concept after the Final Document of the 2005 Summit, where it was first formulated with a recommendation of further work, nor did the group of its supporters grow. Rather, it looked like the consensus reached in 2005 was now questioned by some. Differences in interpreting what the concept was about and how to apply it were perceptibly wide.

### **Administration and Budget**

**Reform of the United Nations.** The priorities of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly included: drawing up the 2010–2011 budget with a new scale of national assessments, and a management reform. In large measure, the proceedings of the Committee sought to balance the interests of developed countries (the largest contributors to the budget) and developing countries (the

largest beneficiaries). The main role in the negotiations was played by the G77, whose main partner was the European Union. Also active were: the U.S., Japan, Mexico and CANZ group (Canada, Australia, New Zealand), countries calling for closer budgetary discipline and spending control. Russia played up its uniqueness and what it presented as independence of its position. The Committee dealt with accountability enforcement, launch of results-based management, and improvement of oversight and risk management. The Committee proved unable to effectively counter incompetent management at the Secretariat's higher rungs. Hopes for change were associated with the UN management reform and an increased U.S. activity in the UN forum under President Barack Obama.

As in previous years, the UN financial situation in 2009 presented a complex picture. Backlogs of national contributions to all the four UN budgets (regular, peacekeeping, criminal courts and headquarters renovation) continued to be the case, reflecting in part the consequences of the global financial and economic crisis. The bulk of the arrears was accounted for by the largest contributor, the United States.

The Committee adopted the 2010–2011 regular budget of \$5.16 billion (the highest ever), coming as a result of a compromise between developing and developed nations. The combined peacekeeping budgets for the annual period between mid-2009 and mid-2010 registered an unprecedented growth to over \$7.8 billion, providing a tangible indication of the evolution of UN tasks and priorities.

Following tough discussions, the Committee opted to retain the existing rules for assessing states' contributions to the regular and peacemaking budgets, while at the same time giving the nod to their periodic reviews in subsequent years. The Committee also reached agreement on the outline of a new human resources system.

In February 2009, international negotiations began on a reform of the Security Council, but no progress was achieved after four rounds, and there was no perceptible change in the way its business was conducted. Member states were presenting their respective positions on the reform's five segments: membership categories, right to veto, fair geographical representation, the size of an enlarged Council and its working methods, and the Security Council-General Assembly relationship.

**Polish contribution to UN activities.** The 2004 accession to the European Union changed Poland's position within the UN and the way the country's activities are conducted there. Most frequently, the Polish position is now presented in agreed pronouncements made by the representative of the member

state which holds the EU presidency at the time, or—increasingly often of late—by the delegate of the European Union. National presentations take place only when the EU does not have, or could not achieve, a common position (as e.g. on Security Council reform), or when an EU member state finds it proper to add, or emphasise, matters which it regards to be of special importance. Participation in meetings to work out the EU's common position has become a new line of activity for member states' missions—and one of the most important ones at that. This process is often time-consuming and complicated, given the problems that emerge when developing a shared stance. But the weight of the EU member states' common position, often joined by a large group of other countries, is incomparably greater than of the previous national positions. In many cases, the EU's common position is seen by other UN member states as an important lead to follow.

If the EU develops a common position on an issue, it also enters as a single entity the related negotiating process involving UN resolutions or other documents, where it is represented either by the rotating presidency or, as part of a burden sharing arrangement, by a selected member state. Poland represented the EU in such negotiations in the forums of the second, fifth and sixth Committees.

Also discussed in the course of EU coordinating meetings are questions related to voting on presented resolutions. Even though the EU member states increasingly vote in unison, on many issues their positions remain different.

Poland is perceived as leader among Eastern and Central European countries, and its commitment has been noticed and appreciated by EU and UN partners. Polish diplomats actively participated in developing the EU's common positions on various issues, in addition to frequently presenting national positions in the UN forum.

Presence of Polish top-level representatives at UN General Assembly sessions proved instrumental in better accentuating Poland's position within the United Nations. An important event was the visit by President Lech Kaczyński in September 2009 and his contribution to the general debate. In his address to the UN General Assembly and in many talks with other delegation heads, the president stressed the importance which Poland attaches to the United Nations.

Poland's presence in UN peacekeeping missions was reduced in 2009 to a group of a dozen military and police observers, following a decision to pull back the Polish military contingents (PMC) from missions in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the Golan Heights (UNDOF) and Chad (MINURCAT). Two Polish officers, though, remained on the staff of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations



(DPKO), and Poland kept the position of deputy head of the Office of the Special Committee for Peacekeeping Operations. Acting on behalf of the European Union, Poland led negotiations within the C-34 Committee (in the segments “personnel security” and “discipline”).

Much effort was put into reaching a favourable settlement of Poland’s contribution to UN missions. The settlement process was completed in December 2009 and a relevant agreement was signed, opening the way for Poland’s overdue financial claims of some \$2.5 million—for use of Polish weapons and military equipment at UNIFIL—to be paid out. As it turned out, from the standpoint of Polish state interests, the completion of the EU mission in Chad (and the consequent PMC transfer to the UN mission MINCURAT for a six-month period) proved a favourable development. The terms of participation in that mission, as negotiated in New York, made possible a UN refund of the considerable costs of Polish troops’ return home. In addition to that, the UN purchased some of PMC assets deployed in Chad (some some \$3.5 million).

Polish endeavors for a seminar on UN peacekeeping-related business cooperation and public procurement to be held in Poland were crowned in 2009 with success. The training event in Warsaw attracted considerable interest among Polish companies.

The Polish Permanent Representative to the UN served as chair of the UN Disarmament Commission. The Commission’s report was adopted by the First Committee, with many delegations emphasising the constructive course of the discussions and thanking the chairman for having created an atmosphere conducive to exchange of opinions.

The Polish Minister for the Environment, Maciej Nowicki, in his capacity as chair of the 14<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, convened an informal ministerial meeting (14 May 2009), coinciding with the 17<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The meeting was attended by representatives of 40 countries (from ministries of agriculture, environment, spatial planning and development) and the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The main theme of the get-together was adaptation to climate change in the context of food security, land degradation and deforestation.

In late March and early April 2009, during the annual session of the Commission on Population and Development (of which Poland is a member in the 2008–2011 term), the presentation was made of the implementation by Poland of the Millennium Declaration Goals and the country’s demographic situation. The Polish representative was elected deputy head of the Office of the

43<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission—by acclamation, on behalf of the Eastern European Group (April 2010).

Acting on behalf of the EU in the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly, Poland negotiated two resolutions, on Science and Technology for Development, and on International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. In both cases, compromise arrangements were agreed.

In addition to contributing to common positions of the European Union, Poland actively participated in the proceedings of the Third Committee, the Commission on Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women, presenting its stance mainly on the subject of procreative health.

Among the draft resolutions discussed at the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, Poland's interest was attracted in particular by the Greek proposal on return or restitution of cultural property (the matter is considered by the General Assembly every three years). Following intense efforts, provisions unfavourable to Poland—for example, on cultural property transferred in the course of World War II—were removed from the text of the draft.

At the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the Commission for the Status of Women, Polish gender equality efforts were presented by Adam Fronczak, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Health. The Polish delegation, headed by Elżbieta Radziszewska, Government Plenipotentiary For Equal Treatment, participated in the celebrations of the International Women's Day, devoted to countering violence against women and girls.

One of the first countries to transfer funds to the UN Democracy Fund, Poland in 2009 expressed its readiness to sit on the Fund's Advisory Board (for the 2010–2011 term) and it subsequently became a member of the Board.

For a successive year, Poland actively contributed to Qatar's initiative on autism awareness. Polish First Lady Maria Kaczyńska was a guest of honor at a conference devoted to the subject, which was held in parallel with the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly.

In the debate on the report of the International Law Commission, Poland presented its stance on the accountability of international organisations, reservations to treaties, expulsions of aliens, protection of persons in the event of disasters, shared natural resources, the obligation to extradite or prosecute, and the Most-Favoured-Nation clause.

In the course of work on the resolution on oceans and law of the sea, as part of the EU coordination process, the Polish delegation proposed that states laying under-sea cables or pipelines should be required to respect other states' freedom of the seas. The proposal was contested by Sweden, Germany, Denmark and Finland and, as such, could not be submitted in the UN forum, but the subject

was brought to the agenda of the EU working group for the law of sea, based in Brussels, and would surely remerge in the UN forum in an immediate future.

Poland's participation in the Peacebuilding Commission not only helped improve the Polish expertise in development assistance and African affairs, but it also provided an opportunity to demonstrate solidarity with post-conflict countries in need of international support.

Poland's payment to the Peacebuilding Fund elicited positive comments, and the Polish representative, on behalf of the Eastern European Group, participated in the December visit to the Central African Republic by a delegation of the Peacebuilding Committee.

During the High-Level Conference on the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the Polish delegate made an announcement of multi-year contributions to the Fund, thus confirming the importance which Poland assigns to UN humanitarian activity. Poland is the Fund's largest benefactor among countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Janina Ochojska from the Polish POH charity was elected to the Fund's Advisory Group.

Stefan Kuryłowicz was appointed a member of the Advisory Board for the United Nations Capital Master Plan (to manage the historic renovation of the UN Headquarters Complex), which was established in early January 2010. Poland actively participated in developing the EU's position at the Fifth Committee, most notably on the scale of budget assessments, and it acted as EU coordinator on health insurance, capital investments in Nairobi and Addis Ababa, UN Postal Administration, standards of accommodation for air travel in the UN system, and funding for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

Following an above-average economic growth in preceding years, and the zloty's strength against the U.S. dollar, Poland's contribution to the UN budgets will increase by 65% in 2010–2011, to reach the following shares: 0.828% of the regular budget, 0.2484% of peacekeeping budget, 0.5382% of criminal courts budget, and 0.501% of Capital Master Plan budget. Countering the prospect of a still larger increase in contributions (especially to the peacekeeping budget) was a major motive behind Poland's participation in developing the EU's position on contribution computation methodology. By the end of the year, Poland's liabilities to the UN for 2009 were paid out in full.

The number of Polish citizens on the UN staff rose in 2009 from 60 to 65, including 18 in geographically allocated positions. Their pattern has been changing, reflecting the retirement of persons in high- and medium-level positions, coupled with the hiring of young lower-level employees within the Polish quota.

## Conclusions

1. In the years ahead, no major change should be expected in the alignment of forces within the UN and the way it operates. The United States' new, more constructive approach to the UN and global issues should help increase the effectiveness of the Organisation. The emerging powers, such as India and Brazil, may be gaining increasing influence on the UN. But deprived of a status commensurate with their ambitions, size and potential, these countries may be tempted to neglect the UN.

2. Despite all its weaknesses, the UN will remain an important platform for global politics, instrumental in search for global solutions.

3. From the standpoint of Poland, a middle-sized country and a member of the European Union (which actively promotes effective multilateralism), the UN should remain in the focus of interest and receive its support. The questions discussed at the UN also come as important issues of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. An active involvement in developing common European approaches to these issues is a must for Poland if it wants to keep a significant position within the EU.

4. Poland and the European Union are in need of constant reflection on the future of the UN and on how the Organisation can be used as an important political instrument. Given the importance of the Security Council reform for the UN's strengthening and adjustment to the new conditions, the EU—or, at least, Poland—should work out a realistic concept of this reform. Poland should also give thought to choosing its specialty from among the wide range of issues being considered at the UN. It is not possible to keep a high level of activity within the EU on all of these subjects. Such specialisation in a given set of issues may prove of importance for building the country's position within the EU, as part of the burden sharing arrangements.

5. Various aspects of development and conditions for stable growth in developing countries are the main topics taken up at the UN in New York. In the years to come, the activities will focus on the implementation of Millennium Development Goals and a post-2015 programme in this field.

Sustainable development will continue attracting keen interest, and efforts will go on to reach an international agreement replacing the Kyoto protocol, which expires in 2012. High on the agenda will be the preservation of bio-diversity.

Questions of disarmament and non-proliferation will be assigned a much higher weight than in previous years.

6. Being an EU member state, Poland is increasingly seen as a developed country, expected to seriously engage in the solving of problems posed by global economic inequalities and imbalances. Poland needs to think through its contribution to development and humanitarian assistance, and make this contribution as effective as possible.

Poland's involvement with the Peacebuilding Commission and with the nascent review of the Commission's proceedings may be drawn upon in reconsidering the Polish concept of comprehensive assistance and development-promoting measures, which would include the earmarking of resources, expert business and economic reports, and assistance in the building of state administration.

7. As far as international security is concerned, there is room for Poland to increase its engagement in disarmament and non-proliferation. Consideration should be given to a wider participation in peace operations, the UN's flagship activity. Poland's presence in these operations is highly advisable.

8. Stronger contribution to the initiative known as the UN Alliance of Civilisations, which has been growing in political importance, should also be contemplated. Coming as an expression of "cultural decolonisation" and developing countries' increasing emphasis on their traditions and culture, this initiative seeks to prevent a possible "clash of civilisations," especially between the West and the world of Islam, and it may help in tackling immigration-related problems. It is widely believed to have a potential for narrowing divisions in the contemporary world.

9. Being active in the Secretariat of the Community of Democracies, Poland should give thought to forms of the movement's presence in the UN forum, which is imperative in view of the plans to hold the Community's high-level conference in Kraków in 2010.

10. Questions related to Lisbon Treaty implementation in the UN forum need further attention. Proving more difficult and more complicated than initially expected, the process nevertheless is expected to be completed in 2010. It is important that the changed form of EU representation at the UN not infringe the principle of internal coordination and development of common positions. The burden sharing arrangement, where tasks are assigned to individual EU member states, should also be kept, thus contributing to the EU's internal cohesion at the UN. An effective implementation of the Lisbon Treaty should help the European Union in playing the role of a major player in the forum of the United Nations.

*Translated by Zbigniew Szymański*

## **Polish-Chinese Relations from 2004 to 2009: Main Issues and Developments**

### **Background**

In the wake of Poland's systemic changes after 1989 the relations with China have weakened, reflecting not only the communist regime's grudge but also Poland's failure to define its new foreign policy goals. Top of the agenda at that time were relations with neighbours and memberships of NATO and the European Union. For this reason—plus the poor state of the Polish economy at the time (with the concurrent limited room to finance major foreign policy projects) and the need to build democratic structures at home—cooperation with China did not make it to the list of Polish priorities. Also, the pacification of the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in Beijing on 4 June 1989 greatly tarnished China's image in Poland, and this negative perception has largely persisted till today, being petrified by the Polish media which look at China primarily through the prism of sensitive issues, such as human rights, Tibet, and the 1989 events. And finally, the Polish foreign policy has been marred by lack of continuity after changes in ruling coalitions, which means that a policy initiated by one cabinet (e.g. an intensification of relations with China) is not always picked up by the next.

The quality of Polish-Chinese relations has not improved in any perceptible way, even despite the attainment of Poland's strategic foreign policy goals (joining NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004) and the adoption by the Council of Ministers of a Strategy towards non-European developing nations (where China was named the priority country<sup>1</sup>) in November 2004. Most of the issues listed in the Strategy were still relevant in 2009: making up in just six years for all the delays in bilateral relations is a tall order indeed, the more so as other European countries had more time and opportunities to build their respective positions in China.

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<sup>1</sup> *Strategia RP w odniesieniu do pozaeuropejskich krajów rozwijających się*, Warszawa, November 2004, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl); K. Kacperczyk, "Polish Foreign Policy in Light of Strategy towards Non-European Developing Countries," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy* 2005.

### Polish-Chinese Relations, 2004–2009

**Bilateral relations.** The basis for two-way relations is provided by the one-China principle, involving the recognition that Tibet and Taiwan are part of the People's Republic of China. For Poland, China is the biggest trading partner in Asia, and for China, Poland is the biggest trading partner in Central Europe. Coming to the fore in these relations are the economic objectives: to balance trade exchanges and draw investments. Poland seeks to maintain a regular top-level political dialogue, but the People's Republic makes this dialogue contingent on the observance of the one-China policy. The suspension of political dialogue also comes in response to pressures exerted on the Chinese authorities over human rights, which affect mutual relations.

China's interest in Poland grew after the country's accession to the European Union. While the Chinese hope for an increase in their investments, easier access to the EU market and cooperation in environmental protection and technology transfer, it is largely up to Poland's activities and initiatives to determine the quality of two-way relations. Other EU member states are either already entrenched in China or actively seeking to increase their influences. China is more like a country to be courted rather than courting others.

Even despite China's priority status and certain signs of intensification of bilateral relations, the years 2004–2006 did not bring about any major improvement, most likely as a result of inconsistencies in Polish foreign policy and absence of a sufficiently strong stimulus to ratchet up the contacts. Poland's interest in China grew in 2007–2009, reflecting preparations for the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, China's contribution to overcoming the global economic crisis, and the approaching (2011) Polish presidency of the EU.

**The 2004–2006 period.** With the main strategic goals of Polish foreign policy achieved, its new priorities had to be defined, with account taken of the changes going on in the external environment, such as globalisation and the emergence of new international actors, communication centres or threats. And Poland's membership of the EU opened up new vistas for cooperation with countries and regions where the EU has long been present, through, e.g., ASEM or the EU-China summits.<sup>2</sup> As Foreign Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz observed in January 2004, "membership of the Union, influencing Poland's new

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<sup>2</sup> Statement by Mariusz Kazana, deputy director of the Department for Foreign Policy Strategy and Planning at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in: T. Jaskułowski (ed.), „Strategia RP w odniesieniu do pozaeuropejskich krajów rozwijających się. Materiały z dyskusji eksperckiej zorganizowanej przez PISM 15 kwietnia 2005 r.,” *Materiały Studialne PISM*, nr 11, 2006, p. 6.

role in the world, will provide conditions for an expansion of our bilateral relations, including economic relations, with countries in Asia. ... New opportunities will emerge for Polish activity in this area.”<sup>3</sup>

Poland’s membership of the EU also stimulated China’s increased interest in this country. A 2003 paper setting out the Chinese policy towards the European Union says that the EU is the strongest and best integrated community in the world and that in 2004 it would include most of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe. It was also noted that the process of European integration was irreversible, that the Union would play increasingly important role with regard to regional and global issues, that there was no conflict of interest between the EU and China, and that neither party pose a threat to the other. The document declared the intention to deepen relations, also with the block’s new member states.<sup>4</sup>

The intensification of relations was reflected in the first ever visit to Poland by the President of the People’s Republic of China, Hu Jintao, in June 2004. A joint statement of the two countries’ heads of state was then signed, as was a new agreement on economic cooperation, providing for the formation of a joint commission, headed by undersecretaries of state at ministries in charge of the economy and trade. The joint commission convenes once a year, alternately in Poland and in China.<sup>5</sup> In October 2004, for the first time, Poland participated as an EU member state in the 5<sup>th</sup> ASEM summit in Hanoi, where Prime Minister Marek Belka met his Chinese counterpart, Wen Jiabao.

In the same year, the Polish Strategy towards non-European developing countries was produced, describing China as a priority country. Despite many imperfections, the document offered chances for an intensification of two-way relations, and the announcement of its periodic reviews aroused hopes for a speedy, flexible reaction to changing developments.

As noted in 2005 by Krzysztof Szumski, the then ambassadorial candidate and later the Polish ambassador to China, Poland was treated by the Chinese as a market for their products and the source of some commodities and technologies, ranking low on the list of Chinese interests. A change could be

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<sup>3</sup> “Information of the Government of the Republic of Poland on Polish Foreign Policy in 2004 (Delivered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, at the Sejm Session of 21 January 2004),” *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2005*, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> *China’s EU Policy Paper*, [www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/ceupp/t27708.htm](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics/ceupp/t27708.htm).

<sup>5</sup> Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the People’s Republic of China on economic cooperation, done in Warsaw on 8 June 2004, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).



noticed after the EU accession, as reflected in Chinese attempts to influence the Polish stance taken within the Union on issues such as the status of China's market economy and the embargo on arms shipments to that country.<sup>6</sup> Foreign Minister Adam D. Rotfeld emphasised that Poland's membership of the EU had changed the country's room for manoeuvre outside of Europe, with the Strategy signaling its political will and the need to act.<sup>7</sup>

Towards the end of March 2006, Foreign Minister Stefan Meller paid a visit to China, and in April the Chinese Deputy Prime Minister, Hui Liangu, stayed in Poland. In September 2006, Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński attended the 6<sup>th</sup> ASEM summit in Helsinki, where he met with Prime Minister Wen Jiabao.

In his inaugural address to the Sejm in 2006, Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński stressed that his cabinet laid store by invigorating the policy towards Asia, towards building the country's economic and cultural presence on the continent.<sup>8</sup> In 2007, Foreign Minister Anna Fotyga said: "In our relations with Asian countries, especially with China, we assign priority status to the development of economic cooperation. ... We focus on promoting economic and trade contacts, and we hope for an increased inflow of investments. In relations with China, we seek to curb the trade deficit. We request an easier access to Asian markets for Polish products. We want to cooperate in mining and energy and also in the food industry, tourism and in respect of the Polish educational offer."<sup>9</sup>

On the cultural front, the first ever such event, Days of Polish Culture in China, was held in May 2005, followed by the Days of Chinese Culture in Poland, in September 2006. That period also saw quite frequent mutual visits by artists, mostly musicians.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Statement by Krzysztof Szumski, candidate for the post of Polish ambassador in Beijing, at the session of the Sejm's Foreign Relations Committee on 27 July 2005, *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych Sejmu 2005* (265), no. 4956/IV term.

<sup>7</sup> "Information of the Government of the Republic of Poland on Polish Foreign Policy in 2005 (Delivered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adam Daniel Rotfeld, at the Sejm Session of 21 January 2005)," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2006*, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> sitting of the Sejm on 19 July 2006, point 13 of the agenda: The programme of the Council of Ministers, presented by the Prime Minister, together with the request for the vote of confidence, p. 175, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>9</sup> "Information of the Government of the Republic of Poland on Polish Foreign Policy in 2007 (Delivered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Anna Fotyga, at the Sejm Session of 11 May 2007)," *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2008*, p. 33.

<sup>10</sup> M. Jacoby, "Zarys historii wymiany kulturalnej pomiędzy Polską a Chinami w latach 1949–2009," in: B. Góralczyk (ed.), *Polska–Chiny. Wczoraj, dziś, jutro*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń, 2009, pp. 349–354.

Despite declarations about the priority status of China, Poland was not particularly active towards deepening its relations with that country in 2005–2006, and this also holds for the activities in respect of Sino-EU relations in the EU forum.

**The 2007–2009 period.** A positive change came in mid-2007, which reflected a number of factors, including the beginning of Poland's preparations for the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai. Preceded by research in China, which brought home to Polish decision-makers that Poland triggered no associations for a majority of the Chinese, the preparations can be seen as an impulse to develop a long-term programme of Poland's promotion in China. Another factor was the prospect of the Polish presidency in the European Union in the latter half of 2011, the period when the EU-China summit would very likely take place and when a next round of China-EU dialogue on human rights would be held. Among other causes behind the change were: China's increasingly vigorous activities on the international arena (especially in 2008–2009), including its contribution to overcoming the global crisis; the likelihood of China's moving up in the world's rankings to the position of the second largest economy; the Chinese efforts towards reform of the international financial system; and also the climate change issues which can hardly be resolved without China's participation.

In 2007, Poland launched its preparations for the World Expo, led by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) and the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency (PAIiIZ), under the supervision of the Ministry of the Economy. The framework concept of participation in the exposition was adopted by the government in May 2008, as one in an array of long-term promotional measures in China. Drawing on the findings of research into Chinese society's traditions and habits, the promotional programme incorporated, for example, subjects related to cuisine (an important aspect of life for the Chinese); these findings were also instrumental in choosing brand colouring (the red colour as a symbol of happiness) or presentation methods (interactive and dynamic). The Polish theme was chosen as "People Create Cities" (the Expo's motto was "Better City, Better Life").<sup>11</sup>

Presenting his inaugural address to the Sejm in November 2007, Prime Minister Tusk said that Poland was well equipped to engage in cooperation and political dialogue with selected countries outside Europe, especially with

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<sup>11</sup> *Koncepcja programowa uczestnictwa Polski w Światowej Wystawie EXPO 2010 Szanghaj, Chiny* (excerpts), August 2007, [www.paiz.gov.pl](http://www.paiz.gov.pl).

regional and supra-regional powers such as China.<sup>12</sup> And Minister Sikorski said in early 2008 that “we also seek, together with our partners, to identify the lines along which new powers have been rising, especially China.”<sup>13</sup>

In January 2008, the Chinese Deputy Prime Minister, Zeng Peiyan, paid a visit to Poland, and he met here with Prime Minister Tusk and President Lech Kaczyński. In October 2008, Prime Minister Tusk went to China for talks with President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. He also attended the Poland-China Economic Forum in Shanghai, calling for business investments. He played up common themes (arguing that both countries could be leaders in a drive to get out of the crisis: China globally, and Poland regionally<sup>14</sup>), he mentioned the sister-city relations between Gdańsk and Shanghai (established in 2004, in addition to both cities’ housing the offices of the Polish-Chinese company Chipolbrok, established in 1951), and he also evoked the traditionally good mutual relations, noting that Poland had been among the first countries to recognise the People’s Republic of China (7 October 1949).

The most important event in 2008, one which considerably loosened the Polish-Chinese relations, was the December visit to Poland by the Dalai Lama, made at the invitation of Sejm Speaker Bogdan Borusewicz, as part of celebrations to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize for Lech Wałęsa. While in Gdańsk, the Dalai Lama met (privately) with Prime Minister Tusk and with Nicolas Sarkozy, the President of France, which then held the EU’s presidency. The visit by the spiritual leader of the Tibetans had major reverberations in the China-EU and China-Poland relations. China cancelled the 11<sup>th</sup> EU-China summit, planned to be held in Lyon in December, and suspended the Polish-Chinese political consultations, held annually at the level of deputy foreign ministers.

The suspension provided a clear signal as to how important the climate of mutual relations is for China. In order to repair these relations, special visits by both governments’ envoys were required. It was only at the 12<sup>th</sup> EU-China summit, in Nanjing in November 2009, that the Sino-EU relations were normalised, and the resumption of Polish-Chinese consultation took place only on 1 February 2010. It came in large part as a result of Chinese

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<sup>12</sup> *Exposé premiera Donalda Tuska*, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl).

<sup>13</sup> “Information of the Government of the Republic of Poland on Polish Foreign Policy in 2008 (Delivered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Radosław Sikorski, at the Sejm Session of 7 May 2008),” *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 2009*, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> M. Kruczkowska, “Tusk kusi Chińczyków,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 22 October 2008.

initiatives, which should be seen as reflecting China's interest in the whole of the European Union, and an element of a broader strategy towards the EU. Paradoxically, with bilateral economic cooperation at a low level, China had few opportunities to manifest its displeasure economically. The only perceptible, and large-scale, manifestation of the relations' cooling down was the omission of Poland from China's purchase missions to Europe in 2009. For the EU member states with durable presences in China, and seen by China as being of key importance, Beijing's manifestations of displeasure are not particularly harmful. But Poland, a country seeking to enter the Chinese market and win over investors, should take greater care of a proper political climate. As put by Tadeusz Chomicki, the then ambassadorial candidate and later the Polish ambassador in Beijing, Poland has a fourth-division position in China, while aspiring to advance to the top tables of the second division.<sup>15</sup>

In early 2009, Minister Sikorski emphasised that "despite the economic crisis we will be present at the Expo International Exhibition in Shanghai. It demonstrates our interest in developing commercial, investment and technological co-operation with Asian states."<sup>16</sup> In the same year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicated that, most likely in first quarter of 2010, the Council of Ministers would adopt a document (in the form of either strategy or framework concept) specifying Poland's policy towards the region of Asia-Pacific, including China. This testifies to the decision-makers' awareness of the importance of that country, but also to the negligences of the preceding years. Another initiative by the Ministry was the launch of the Asia-Pacific web portal ([www.azjapacyfik.pl](http://www.azjapacyfik.pl)), as a forum for those taking interest in the region, with a view to integrating the community and exchanging opinions and information.

In May 2009, Minister Sikorski set out the priorities for Polish foreign policy in Asia, including towards China:

1) promoting Polish economic interests: export growth, investment inflows and R&D cooperation;

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<sup>15</sup> Statement by Tadeusz Chomicki, candidate for the post of Polish ambassador in Beijing, at the session of the Sejm's Foreign Relations Committee on 7 May 2009, *Biuletyn z posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych Sejmu 2009 (106)*, no. 2224/VI term.

<sup>16</sup> "Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2009 (presented at the sitting of the Sejm on 13 February 2009 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Radosław Sikorski)," above, p. 11.

2) creating “Asia awareness” in Poland, by disseminating knowledge and information about the region among the central and local administration, business, and the academic and scientific community;

3) creating “Poland awareness” in Asian countries, by promoting the image of Poland as an EU member state and an attractive political, economic and cultural partner—while taking care of proper coordination of promotional efforts in the economy, tourism, culture, science and education;

4) reinforcing the Polish presence in Asia, through more intense activity within multilateral structures (the EU, UN, ASEAN, ASEM, etc.).<sup>17</sup>

In December 2009, during Defence Minister Bogdan Klich’s visit to China, a military cooperation agreement was signed, the first ever in bilateral relations. Joint meetings of defence ministers and chiefs-of-staff, observers’ presence at war games, political and military consultations, training courses and exchange of military academy lecturers were among the points agreed.<sup>18</sup> With cooperation initiated in this particular sphere, the two-way relations have grown in complexity.

In July 2009, the parties prolonged—to 31 January 2011—the 2000 agreement on development lending.<sup>19</sup> According to the Ministry of the Economy, some US\$185 million worth of goods and services’ shipments to China were contracted under the agreement in the period to late June 2009.<sup>20</sup>

An important problem on the economic front was posed by Poland’s high trade deficit in two-way relations: according to the Ministry of the Economy, a trade shortfall of more than €10 million was recorded in 2008.<sup>21</sup> Investment flows were insufficient, either, with Poland investing a dozen-plus million euro in China (the cumulative amount since 1989 stands at €180 million<sup>22</sup>). The value of Chinese investments was small, too, but steadily rising, to reach some €133 million to the end of 2007.<sup>23</sup> With the relations normalised in 2009, and given

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<sup>17</sup> Minister Radosław Sikorski’s opening statement at the Znak monthly’s session “Asia: A New Promised Land,” 21 May 2009, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>18</sup> The Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Defense between the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Defense of the People’s Republic of China, of 16 December 2009, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>19</sup> Protocol for amending the Agreement on Financial Cooperation between the Government of the People’s Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Poland, done in Warsaw on 29 September 2000, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>20</sup> *The People’s Republic of China: Information on economic relations with Poland*, [www.mg.gov.pl](http://www.mg.gov.pl).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>22</sup> I. Stokłosa, “Polski kapitał wciąż boi się Chin,” *Fakty. Magazyn Gospodarczy*, nr 5, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> *The People’s Republic of China..., op. cit.*

the growing awareness among the Polish decision-makers of the weight of relations with China, there is a chance for these investment streams to widen. In the words of PAIIZ head Sławomir Majman, “on the eve of the World Expo, the political temperature between Poland and China is the highest in ten years. We can score successes on two points. In flexing their economic prowess, the Chinese have for two years been sending import missions to Europe. Last year, they went to all countries in our region except Poland, resulting in huge investment-linked purchases. I think that this year [2010—J.S.T.], Polish exporters stand good chances of hosting such a mission. And with the political relations warming up, Poland stands good chances of getting new Chinese investments.”<sup>24</sup> Mention should be made of a first success of the consortium China Overseas Engineering Group Co. Ltd. (Covec), which in 2009 outbid competitors to be awarded a contract to build two sections of the A2 motor way linking Warsaw with Łódź. The contract was formalised in September 2009, with the project expected to be completed by May 2012. Covec opened its office in Warsaw in June 2007, as its only one in Europe.

It should also be noted that the cultural cooperation between the two countries has intensified starting from 2007. The Protocol on cultural cooperation in 2007–2011 provides that Poland will organise a festival of Polish culture in China in 2008, while China will follow up with a festival of Chinese culture in Poland in 2010. The two countries will be popularising Frederic Chopin’s music; they will also inform one another about other cultural events, and participate therein.<sup>25</sup> Also worthy of mention are the 2007 concerts in Poland by the internationally renowned Chinese pianist Lang Lang (who has Chopin works in his repertoire), and the unveiling of the Chopin statue by the Chinese artist Lu Pin, in Shanghai in 2007 (in a ceremony attended by representatives of the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage).<sup>26</sup>

**Poland’s EU membership and China: selected aspects.** The impact of Poland’s position in the European Union upon relations with China is reflected in its attitude to questions involving the embargo on arms shipments to China (imposed by the Community in 1989, following the Tiananmen Square events),

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<sup>24</sup> A. Woźniak, “Firmy na Dalekim Wschodzie znowu zainteresowane Polską,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 13 April 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Protocol on cultural cooperation in 2007–2011, between the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland and the Minister of Culture of the People’s Republic of China, done in Warsaw on 25 May 2007, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl).

<sup>26</sup> M. Jacoby, *op. cit.*, pp. 354–356.

China's efforts to have its economy recognised as a market economy, and human rights.

Poland is in favour of granting China the status of a market economy (if the EU's conditions are met), and finds this to be strictly technical issue, one that should not be politicised.<sup>27</sup> This line is also presented in the EU forum. But Poland has taken no stance on the arms embargo. Back in 2004, the MoFA spokesman said, "it should be assumed that Poland will finally espouse the same position as the whole of Europe."<sup>28</sup> In 2005, Minister Rotfeld argued that, "at the present stage, Poland should not publicly take a position on the arms embargo, and should avoid having its room for manoeuvre restricted. ... Demonstrating a distinct political position might, first, adversely affect the Polish-Chinese relations and, second, make it more difficult for Poland to participate in the EU's internal debate."<sup>29</sup> And in December 2006, Witold Waszczykowski, undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said: "In the period following its EU accession, Poland has never blocked the member states' consensus on a possible removal of the constraints. As an EU member state, Poland is prepared to join any arrangement worked out within the European Union which would take into account the positions of all the interested parties and which would be based on a broad consensus of the member states."<sup>30</sup> In the government's memorandum on its contribution to the work of the EU, there is no mention of any activities related to the embargo on arms sales to China.

The human rights is a different question. Here, Poland seeks to enter the dialogue in the EU forum which it finds an effective one. As noted by Andrzej Kremer, undersecretary of state at MoFA, "in the space of several years Poland has become an important participant in this process, by vigorously contributing to the development of the EU's position, and participating in the drawing of regular reports on human rights observance in China." He also said that in the course of the 26<sup>th</sup> round of the EU-China dialogue on human rights (November

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<sup>27</sup> Memorandum for the Sejm and the Senate on the contributions of the Republic of Poland to the activities of the European Union between July and December 2005 (under the British Presidency), 31 January 2006, pp. 51–52, [www.polskawue.gov.pl](http://www.polskawue.gov.pl).

<sup>28</sup> "Czy należy znieść embargo na broń do Chin?," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 12 October 2004.

<sup>29</sup> Reply of the minister of foreign affairs to MP Question no. 9673 about the state of Polish-Chinese relations, 5 April 2005, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>30</sup> Reply of the undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, acting on behalf of the Prime Minister, to MP Question no. 5542 about the embargo on arms sales to the People's Republic of China, 16 December 2006, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

2008), the Polish representative headed the working group of experts on racial discrimination and free speech.<sup>31</sup>

### Major Problems

**Underestimation of China's growing importance.** This has been the weightiest factor behind the poor state of mutual relations over the past years. In 2009, Minister Sikorski said that "Polish institutions and opinion-forming communities want to put an end to their negligence of Asia and of its import for Polish interests. The Asian economies are no longer waiting to be discovered, as that happened many years ago—regrettably, without any major contribution from Poland. It will not suffice just to be present there. In building our position in Asia, much belatedly in comparison with other countries, our activities must be better thought out and more professionally prepared than in the case of the countries which began their engagement with China ten or twenty years ago. Poland must resume, as soon as possible, the position of an active participant in processes going on in Asia, the position which this country deserves due to its scale and ambitions."<sup>32</sup>

**Absence of a strategy towards China.** What is needed is a strategy defining short-, medium- and long-term goals of Polish policy towards China, as well as particular tasks and instruments. The 2004 Strategy towards non-European developing countries—signaling decision-makers' realisation of insufficient attention being devoted to China—has proved insufficient, and very likely fell into oblivion (not being subsequently updated or revised).<sup>33</sup>

**Failure to estimate resources and potential.** In the 2004 Strategy, and also in the policy towards China, the decision-makers failed to estimate the real resources and potential at Poland's disposal. The Polish resources were not confronted with those of the EU member states already present in China. Another mistake is to watch China through the prism of large metropolises, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Canton, or the advanced east of the country, while leaving out the less developed central and western areas. With lower potential than that commanded by "old EU" countries, Poland should seek cooperation chances

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<sup>31</sup> Reply of the undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, acting on behalf of the Minister, to MP Question no. 8501 about the violations of human rights in China, 25 March 2009, [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl).

<sup>32</sup> Minister Radosław Sikorski's opening statement..., *op. cit.*

<sup>33</sup> T. Jaskułowski (ed.), *op. cit.*



where those countries have not yet reached, not where they are already long established.

**Failure to coordinate.** There is no system to coordinate the activities of state institutions, Academe, cultural institutions and NGOs in the pursuit of Polish policy towards China. Interest in China has been on the rise in Poland in recent years, reflecting most likely that country's growing importance in the world, but also China's promotion effort (four Confucius Institutes already operate in Poland, popularising Chinese culture and offering language lessons). But with state institutions, NGOs and China experts not acting in unison, the available resources turn out to be thinly spread.

**Insufficient activity within the EU.** The lack of Poland's position on the embargo on arms sales to China and low-level activity in the EU forum with regard to sensitive issues have the effect of limiting the country's influence upon the EU's policy towards the People's Republic of China. Irresolution on the embargo and decision-makers' pronouncements seem to indicate that Poland is ready to join any EU proposal on this subject and give up putting forward its own ideas.

**Insufficient knowledge about China.** The image of China as painted by the Polish media is not an objective one, and the knowledge about that country in Poland is insufficient. Viewing China through the prism of human rights violations, death sentences, Tibet or the 1989 events (which capture the media's attention) hardly creates a good climate for cooperation. Besides, the Polish business people who consider investing in China fear the complexity of local laws, and they have not been receiving enough support from Polish government institutions. Starting from 2000, Polish export-credit arrangements were in place and subsidies could be obtained for Polish companies' participation in trade fairs in China, but as the actual practice demonstrated, some business people either saw these trips as tourist escapades or developed still greater anxieties about their ignorance of Chinese investment law.<sup>34</sup> And as noted by the Chinese Ambassador to Poland, Sun Rongmin, a major barrier to the expansion of business contacts is lack of familiarity with potential business partners.<sup>35</sup> A related problem is that Polish self-regulating business organisations and other advisory institutions—unlike their counterparts in other EU countries—have no

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<sup>34</sup> T. Chomicki, „Metrem do Azji,” *Znak*, nr 646, 2009, p. 49.

<sup>35</sup> “Ambasador Chin: współpraca polskich i chińskich firm – szansą na kryzys,” 3 March 2009, [www.bankier.pl](http://www.bankier.pl).

representation offices in China which might accumulate knowledge of the local markets and turn it to the advantage of Polish investors.

**Chinese business not properly prepared.** The Chinese companies competing for Polish contracts complain of unequal treatment and what they claim to be complex public-procurement procedures. Chinese bidders failed to land the contract for Warsaw's second metro line, and were excluded from bidding for stadium construction for the Euro 2012 football championship.<sup>36</sup> In 2009, the Chinese company Lenovo pulled out from its investment project outside Legnica, which should be counted among failures of the Polish efforts to draw Chinese investments to this country. And Polish rivals of Chinese bidders tend to accuse them of unfair competition and dumping.

**Absence of a direct airline connection.** This has the effect of hampering economic cooperation and tourism. The LOT Polish airlines opened a Warsaw-Beijing line on 30 March 2008, but flights were suspended after two months. Despite a considerable interest, indicated initially, the project failed due to factors such as problems with negotiating air corridors over Russia (flights were routed via a southern passage, over Turkey and Kazakhstan, which lengthened the time by an average of two hours), late-night arrival/departure hours at Beijing airport, and frequent flight cancellations by the Polish carrier.<sup>37</sup> That image-tarnishing move was taken at a time of increased interest in China in the lead-up to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

**Neglect of cooperation in culture and education.** This dimension of cooperation may prove more important for Poland than short-term measures taken with a view to making up for delays in the economic sphere.

In 1995, the two countries signed an agreement on cooperation in science and technology, providing for annual sessions of a joint commission. But there is no agreement on cooperation in education, an area where Poland could learn from countries such as the UK, Spain or Austria, which not only finance scholarship programmes but also provide encouragement to Chinese students to take studies on a commercial basis. The challenges facing Poland in this field are reflected, for example, in these numbers of commercial students from China: close to 45,000 in the UK, 30,000 in Germany, and just 300 in Poland.

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<sup>36</sup> M. Kaszuba, „Chińscy inwestorzy powinni być cenni dla Polski,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 28 October 2009.

<sup>37</sup> L. Baj, „Chińskie problemy LOT,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 30 March 2008; L. Baj, „Pekińska porażka LOT-u,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 16 May 2008.

**Absence of an institution promoting Poland in China.** The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to open a Polish Institute in Beijing but due to procedural impediments—the drafting of legal regulations applicable to such institutions was not yet completed in China—these plans remained unimplemented. It is quite probable that the Chinese are afraid of the way such institutions operate, especially given that the Polish MoFA plans—and rightly so—to open the Institute outside the Embassy compound, most likely in the north-eastern part of Beijing where most institutions of higher learning are located. Given the Chinese misgivings, it will be important what the Institute does during celebrations of Polish anniversaries, such as the formation of Solidarity trade union, or the elections of 4 June 1989. Arguing that there are already four Confucius Institutes in Poland (with the fifth in the pipeline) whereas there is no Polish Institute in China may prove ineffective in view of the different ways these entities are organised (a Confucius Institute is established under an agreement with, and provided with premises by, a Polish university). The absence of a Polish Institute in China in the Chopin Year (2010) casts this problem in sharp relief. Chopin's music is known and appreciated in China, and this circumstance might prove instrumental when inaugurating the Institute.

### Assessment

While both countries failed to make satisfactory use of the past six years, Poland shoulders more of the blame. This reflects the differences in both parties' potentials: China does take interest in cooperation with the European Union, but given that other EU member states have long been present on the Chinese market, it is for Poland to act and show initiative. China is willing to cooperate and usually responds positively to Polish initiatives (there are not many of them but their number has been steadily on the rise). Poland's activity within the European Union must be described as insufficient. The neglect of this forum in conducting relations with China has the effect of restricting Poland's opportunities for development of bilateral relations and also for a strengthening of the country's position within the Union. This is a major challenge, especially given the forthcoming Polish presidency in 2011.

Poland is not the most important EU member state for China—and will never be. More than that, other member states seek to attract China's interest, too, thus putting up competition to Polish efforts. But Poland does have strong points where it may prove its mantle, and these deserve being played up and drawn upon. As far as the economy goes, Poland is a good place where to invest the huge Chinese financial reserves: it has chalked up growth despite the global

crisis and is among the biggest beneficiaries of EU transfers for investments and modernisation.<sup>38</sup> In promoting Polish exports the emphasis should be on their being EU products, meaning products of high standards. Standing chances of making it to the Chinese market is Polish food and traditional merchandise, such as mining equipment and crop-dusting planes. In education, Polish university/college studies are relatively inexpensive and keeping high quality (e.g. medicine)—and this at a time when “demographic bust” cohorts in Poland are entering higher education age. The educational offer, especially involving scholarships, should be promoted in the western, less developed regions of China, where there is a greater chance of attracting potential students. Tourist landmarks and the relatively inexpensive hotel facilities in Poland are also worth promoting. The Chinese society, with its growing affluence levels, has been increasingly interested in travel—and Poland could become a beach head for tourists, students and business people from that country, capitalising on its location in the centre of Europe and being part of the Schengen zone.

The starting point should be provided by drawing up a coherent strategy for policy towards China, with accurately defined objectives, targets and instruments. A detailed timetable should be provided and tasks allocated among closely cooperating institutions, and the document’s implementation should come, periodically, under review and analysis. This will help the decision-makers in taking the right choices, initiating appropriate arrangements and preparing Polish cadres, which—given China’s steadily increasing global weight—will be of importance for the bilateral relations and also in the EU forum.

*Translated by Zbigniew Szymański*

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<sup>38</sup> M. Kaszuba, *op. cit.*

**IV.**

**Polish Foreign Policy:  
Discussion**



## **Poland's Foreign Policy in 2009**

PAWEŁ KOWAL

The institutional dispute between the office of Prime Minister and the office of President was the key factor shaping Poland's foreign policy in 2009. It affected most elements of Poland's international activity. This dispute can be viewed through the prism of its negative aspects alone, or it could be seen as engendering certain positive effects too. One example of the destructive nature of this conflict was the issue over the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon by President Lech Kaczyński. The government was well aware that the head of the state's arguments in favour of postponing the signing of this instrument were not unreasonable, since after the Treaty had been rejected in the Irish referendum its legal status was unclear. The main concern was that the Irish case might be used in the future, in similar circumstances, to limit the external sovereignty of Poland and other states. The president, who had been the principal negotiator of the Treaty, repeatedly explained his point of view. He argued that since Poland was about to accede to a treaty which contained provisions on strengthening the Community's policy, it was only right that it should uphold the principle that all member states have equal status with respect to the modification of the Treaty or the adoption of a new one. The dispute moved into the parliament, where the parliamentary majority attempted to pressure the President into signing the instrument at the earliest possible date. This way, European policy became part of a vehement internal political dispute generated to serve the purposes of ongoing political struggle. Faced with the objection from the president, the Civic Platform [PO] adopted a stance of a pro-European party and hinted that the allegedly Euro-sceptical Lech Kaczyński was holding up the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon throughout the European Union (which was not true, Ireland's second, positive decision being the sole prerequisite for the adoption of the Treaty). Quarrels did not abate even after the president had signed the Treaty on

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\* Debate participants: Paweł Kowal of the Law and Justice (PiS) party, Member of the European Parliament; Paweł Zalewski of the Civic Platform (PO) party, Member of the European Parliament.

10 October. Through its chosen posture the Civil Platform was improving its standing with the Left, which was anxious not only for the Treaty of Lisbon to be adopted but also for the Charter of Fundamental Rights to be implemented in Poland as a binding instrument. The Law and Justice [PiS] party, for its part, engaged in this fray partly to uphold the president's prerogatives and his freedom to choose the time of ratification and, partly, in the context of the expectations of a proportion of its voters—those, who were either against the new treaty or who, apprehensive that a similar situation might occur with respect to Poland, saw the PO's attitude as taking part in a European exercise in bearing down on Ireland.

Indeed, the dynamic of the dispute between the president and the government contributed to bringing to a standstill the broader Polish political debate on a European policy strategy. Key issues, such as Poland's Presidency of the EU Council, a new financial perspective 2014–2020, or a new Common Foreign and Security Policy framework, receded to the background. Moreover, the inter-institutional conflict spilled over to the sphere of technicalities, such as various aspects of Poland's participation in European summits. The “chair quarrel,” which first broke out in 2008, re-echoed on occasions of consecutive EU summits (for instance, during the president's and the prime minister's participation in the meetings in Brussels on 19–20 March and in Prague on 5 April). All this was strengthening in some European states a mistaken belief that in Poland the president and the opposition were raising major objections to the very principle of European integration.

Perhaps this foreign policy rivalry of the two centres of the executive branch (and, consequently, of the two party centres) had some potentially positive effects that would be noticeable only after the elapse of a longer period of time. From hindsight, a certain complementarity can be detected. Competition was dynamising Polish foreign policy, in particular on security matters. The government put emphasis on a policy pursued within the Weimar Triangle (meetings with ministers of foreign affairs of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier on 17 June and of France, Bernard Kouchner, on 19–20 July), on improving relations with Russia (visit by Russian prime Minister Vladimir Putin at Westerplatte on 1 September), and a policy conducted along the East-West axis. The president transcended this pattern, focusing on broadly construed regional policy in Central Europe (visits to Latvia and talks with President Dalia Grybauskaitė or, earlier, with President Valdas Adamkus; visits to the Czech Republic and meetings with President Václav Klaus) and in South Caucasus (the Azerbaijan visit on 2–3 July). Lech Kaczyński was also working on improving relations with Ukraine and in doing so he did not evade difficult subjects either



in historical policy (the commemoration celebration at Huta Pieniacka on 28 February, attended jointly with Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko) or in energy policy (the 27–29 January meeting in Wrocław on the supply of Russian gas). In accordance with his constitutional prerogatives the president was concentrating on security matters (e.g. steadfastly championing the enlargement of NATO), while the government was focusing on European policy. However, in most cases this complementarity was not converted into a positive energy with which to further Poland's foreign policy objectives. The planning of a strategy that would rest on the activities of the two centres was dominated by ongoing political disputes which resulted in efforts to undermine the president's capability to act. The government's foreign policy was subordinated to the Civil Platform's self-seeking short-term aims.

Standing out as major weaknesses of Poland's foreign policy in 2009 are: the absence of reaction to NATO's deepening political and strategic crisis which, in the absence of a meaningful security policy of the EU, meant that Poland's general security situation in Europe was deteriorating; and a perceptible weakening of the U.S.'s interest in Central and Eastern Europe in the first year of the Barack Obama presidency—a shift protested against by a group of Central European politicians in a special letter of 15 July, for which President Lech Kaczyński subsequently expressed support. This lessening of interest in Central and Eastern Europe carried a risk that the U.S.'s policy might lean towards a trade-off: weaker security assurances for this region for Russia's greater interest in backing up Washington's policy in other parts of the world (Iran, North Korea). This coincided with numerous statements by PO politicians, set against the background of controversies over Poland participation in the development of the missile defence system, questioning (to various degrees) the effectiveness of Poland's broader alliance with the U.S. On the whole, Poland's foreign policy failed to find an effective remedy for the process of the U.S.'s moving further away from Europe, just as it failed to develop an adequate response to Russia's progressing expansion in the post-Soviet area (evidenced, for instance, by Moscow's disregard of the Sarkozy plan signed following Russia's aggression against Georgia in August 2008, or the gas war with Ukraine early in January 2009).

The Donald Tusk government's 2009 energy policy sparked controversies: over the discontinuance of active support to some projects designed to ensure energy security (the Odessa-Brody-Gdańsk oil pipeline); over serious delays in key diversification projects (the Świnoujście gas terminal); and over the shelving of regional inter-state initiatives (support for the Lithuania's Ignalina nuclear power plant). The commencement of construction by German and Russian

consortiums of the North Stream gas pipeline, and the dragging Polish-Russian talks on a contract for the supply of Russian gas to Poland (the ultimately negotiated contract was disadvantageous to Poland) contributed importantly to deepening the weakness of Poland's energy security situation. It should be noted that Polish-German relations and the Merkel-Tusk personal contacts failed to cause Germany to take into account Poland's position on the North Stream gas pipeline.

Poland's policy in Central and Eastern Europe became weaker despite the government's declared commitment to strengthening it; this is true in particular of relations with Lithuania and the Czech Republic. The president's efforts in this field were not supported by adequate activity of the Donald Tusk government. At the same time, more and more emphasis was put on improving relations with Moscow—just as if Poland's regional policy operated on the “pendulum principle” (either Russia, or Central-Eastern Europe). This was particularly noticeable in view of the lack of progress in relations with Russia, despite “a better climate” in inter-governmental contacts and despite Vladimir Putin's attendance at the Westerplatte ceremony marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. These gestures had no bearing at all on the resolution of such bilateral issues as the Katyn crime (in its historical and legal aspect), or on effective regulation of navigation on the Vistula Lagoon (despite the signing on 1 September of a Polish-Russian agreement on navigation in these waters the situation has not improved due to constraints imposed by the Russian side).

PAWEŁ ZALEWSKI

Rober Schumann said once: “If we were all determined to play the first violin we should never have an orchestra.” This is why in foreign policy Poland, and the other EU members, should follow the road of partner-like relations.

Understanding this simple truth is the source of the successes that came in the wake of changing the nature of the *modus operandi* of Polish diplomacy. It is an undisputable success of Poland's foreign policy under Minister Radosław Sikorski's leadership that the confrontation/besieged-fortress strategy, which Anna Fotyga, minister of foreign affairs in the Jarosław Kaczyński government, had been building, was abandoned. While this process was launched still in 2007 following the PO's electoral victory, the consistency with which it was continued in 2008 and 2009 shows that only this attitude holds the promise that,

in decades to come, solutions in international relations will be to Poland's advantage.

In the penultimate year of this decade Polish diplomacy finally came to resemble a ship with a modern navigation system rather than a rudderless yacht. Still, I believe Poland is capable of more. Nobody questions that short-term concepts of Polish diplomacy have been successfully put into practice. The Eastern Partnership, the meaningful improvement of the relationship with Russia, the building of partnership with Germany, the signing of the SOFA agreement, or the victorious race for the office of President of the European Parliament—these are considerable successes indeed. Yet the question: “Where do we go from here?” remains open. Can we turn these few successes into something more? The absence of far-sighted concepts has been an ailment of our diplomacy since this country's accession to the EU. It is time for the horizon of our foreign policy to extend beyond the Polish Presidency of the EU in 2011. This has not happened yet, but under the impact of effectiveness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' efforts and of the electoral choices of July 2010 a chance for the development of a cohesive doctrine has now appeared. The prospect that our priorities, aims, threats and consecutive activities of key importance will be identified from the perspective of the interests of the Polish state is becoming real. That said, I want to emphasise that the assessment of the entire post-Anna Fotyga diplomacy will depend on how we measure up to this challenge for Polish diplomacy.

Let's start from defining our take-off position because a fair appraisal of the achievements of Polish diplomats is possible only when we realise how much has changed in Poland's position since the Donald Tusk government and Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski took over the helm of Polish diplomacy in 2007.

By 2009 Warsaw replaced the hostile relations with Russia and the almost-non-existent relations with Germany with a thaw in dealings with the Kremlin and with the best relationship with Berlin we had had in years. Decisions taken by the Polish government independently, without taking a leaf out of European partners' book, were most helpful. Firstly, our economy stands out among the crisis-ridden economies of our neighbours throughout Europe. The prudent financial policy proved to have been one of the most important instruments—not just of domestic policy, but of building Poland's global position. Our being a “green island,” besides giving us a psychological edge over our European partners, is a superior form of promoting the Polish economy, in particular among our weakening (in relative terms) partners in Europe.

Using our stable economic situation more forcefully than to date is becoming a new quality in Poland's foreign policy. I venture to say that if we press on and introduce internal reforms indispensable for public finances and economic life, we shall be able to challenge successfully Ireland's position as "Europe's tiger" and enhance thereby the persuasive power of our political stipulations.

Being a "green island" has, firstly, earned Poland respect of its neighbours, mainly of the Germans who are eyeing enviously our positive GDP [growth rate]. Secondly, it has put us in a position of being able to speak on ways and means of solving crisis-related problems. Minister of Finance Jacek Rostowski was given due credit for his policy (by prestigious economic magazines *Banker* and *Emerging Markets*) and named Finance Minister of the Year for Emerging Europe 2009. What is more, our European partners saw Poland's declaration of readiness to provide a loan to Iceland and Estonia—countries grappling with huge problems—as a sign of responsibility for the entire Community. This, too, is a novel feature in Polish policy and a major change, relative to the period when Anna Fotyga and Paweł Kowal were at the helm of Polish diplomacy.

Poland sent a clear message that the shift away from perceiving Europe in terms of "old" and "new" Union, referred to in the inaugural address (Jerzy Buzek's presidency of the European Parliament) was achievable only in the sphere of real political moves.

Let's start from the basics. At last Poland has become a predictable—and, therefore, credible—partner in the European Union. None of us as much as dreamed back in 2007 that a new European Parliament would be working under a Pole, a man "from behind the iron curtain," from the former Eastern bloc—a man who, on taking the rostrum, would inaugurate his term with words of momentous importance to Poland and Europe: "For five years now we have been building together a united Europe. The division into 'we' and 'you' is no more. We can say firmly: This is our common Europe." All commentators of the Polish political scene agreed that the election of Jerzy Buzek for the position of President of the European Parliament was the success of 2009—all the more so because, with the Italians' political aspirations, it had been by no means certain that this honourable office would go to a representative of this country. This election demonstrated that political parties, not just state institutions alone, were important actors in international politics. It also showed yet again that a country fared depended largely on a political strategy adopted by it.

Our relationship with Germany has been strengthened. The new minister of foreign affairs appointed after the latest elections to the Bundestag, Guido

Westerwelle, declared while in Warsaw on his first foreign visit that he wanted Poland to be a major ally of Germany. Still, it depends largely on our initiative with what content this open framework of cooperation is filled.

Critics will hasten to point out that not all aims have been achieved. Poland's situation has been complicated by the decision to build the North Stream pipeline. Yet, looking from a broader perspective, it must be emphasised that now that our erstwhile ally, Sweden, has given up protesting, the chance of stopping the construction of the pipeline has dwindled to naught. After all is said and done, the best way to enhance our own security is to develop our own projects rather than focus solely on blocking others' undertakings. For this reason the signing with Qatar of a contract for delivery of gas for the future Świnoujście terminal should be seen as a positive development, an important step to diversify our suppliers of this energy source.

One cannot help mentioning the chance for the future that the discovered shale gas reserves are. Owing to them, in the future we might not need imported gas at all. While it is early days yet to say so definitely, this is certainly an opportunity that must not be wasted.

In 2007, towards the end of Jarosław Kaczyński's premiership, relations with Russia had been as bad as never before. The conflict over meat embargo, the standstill in mutual relations, the blocking of Russia-EU talks—these were just the most drastic symptoms of the coldness in mutual relations. The 2009 policy was an attempt to make use of an opportunity which appeared in relations with Moscow following recognition by the Putin-Medvedev twosome that without an attempt to put in order relations with Poland there was no deepening of relations with the EU. In this context due credit must be given to the efforts of the [Polish-Russian] Commission for Difficult Issues and to the role Professor Adam Daniel Rotfeld and Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs Andrzej Kremer played in promoting our historical reasons and arguments.

Two 2009 events stand out as symbolic turning points in our relations with Russia: Vladimir Putin's attendance at the Westerplatte ceremony marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War, and the signing of an agreement between the government of the Republic of Poland and the government of the Russian Federation on navigation in the Vistula Lagoon. This agreement lays down the rules of navigation by Polish and Russian vessels in the Vistula Lagoon and the terms of crossing the Polish-Russian border in these waters. Owing to efforts by the Polish governments this traffic can proceed in the future on the basis of solid legal regulations, in accordance with requests of

the local governments of rural and urban communities situated on the lagoon and of navigation communities.

Attempts to forge an understanding with Russia proceeded parallel with a policy aimed at creating more effective instruments with which to influence the countries in Eastern Europe and in Trans-Caucasus. Poland's successes include the launch (at the Prague summit) of the Eastern Partnership programme. The readiness to establish closer relations with the countries bordering the EU to the east should serve as the model for Poland's further activity in this region, with changes in our neighbours' political situation duly taken into account. One important element of this approach was a joint visit by the ministers of foreign affairs of Poland and Germany in Kiev. Regrettably, with Ukraine's internal crisis deepening and with the "Orange camp" becoming more and more compromised, the scope for taking advantage of these opportunities in dealings with the most important country in Eastern Europe is limited. In 2009 the prospect of impending succession to power of the "Blue leader" Viktor Yanukovych and his Party of the Regions posed a challenge for the two Eastern policy centres, the presidential and the governmental. Radosław Sikorski was the only Polish politician to have talked with the Ukrainian opposition and to have met Yanukovych in 2009, while President Kaczyński persisted in a policy of unreserved support for President Viktor Yushchenko.

From the 2010 perspective it is evident that, owing to the Eastern Partnership concept, as the new power elite in Kiev under President Viktor Yanukovych struggles with the crisis, it is gaining in Poland a natural partner in mediations on bringing Ukraine closer to the European Union. The difference is that, unlike in the PiS's times, Poland does not propose to engage for nothing. Our signals that aid could be granted only on mutually advantageous terms have been received with understanding in Kiev. This warrants expectations of, for instance, a twinning cooperation. If it turns out that the new relations with the Ukrainian government strengthen the protection of investment with Polish participation (which is what Polish businesses investing in Ukraine count on) and improve the situation of Poles in Ukraine, these will be the greatest gains from mutual relations in many years.

The Eastern Partnership certainly has a larger potential for future benefits. I am referring to the extremely complex relations with Belarus. On this issue Poland has been setting the tone of the EU's policy. Already in 2008 the Lukashenka regime was sending out first signals evidencing a desire to establish relations with Europe. By bringing about a thaw in relations with the Belarus authorities and by causing Belarus to be included in a group of states eligible for

aid conditions were created for engaging the regime. Yet the Polish government insisted—and rightly so—that the deepening of Belarus's relations with the EU must be conditional upon improvement of the human rights situation in that country.

Moreover, the Eastern Partnership is also a new quality in Polish policy. It is something Polish diplomacy had not done efficiently for years—an exercise in working with other European partners and putting forward Polish ideas for an activity that benefits the entire Union. Carried through owing to cooperation with Sweden and to strong support from the Czech Republic, this proposal, accepted by the Union, could promote Poland to a role of the player who deals the cards in the region.

Changes in the United States' European policy were yet another momentous factor in Poland's politics in 2009. The U.S.'s withdrawal from influencing European policy (in particular in Eastern Europe), a process which had commenced early in the first term of President G.W. Bush, was arrested following the announcement of the American missile shield project. Obviously, Poland, which perceived its security through the prism of transatlantic relations, had been anxious for the project to be followed through. Yet after Barack Obama had backed out of the agreement signed with Poland the U.S.'s intentions became an unknown. Shortly after that Vice-president Biden unveiled, during his visit to Poland, a concept of a short- and medium-range missile defence system which, if implemented, could actually be better suited to our interests.

The establishment of a legal basis for the stationing in Poland of U.S. troops was a matter of importance to our security. Ten years after Poland's accession to NATO this matter had still been unregulated. The signing on 11 December 2009 of an Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the United States on the Status of the US Armed Forces stationing on Polish Territory (SOFA agreement) was a success of the negotiator for Poland, Vice-minister of National Defence Stanisław Komorowski. Following the signing of the SOFA agreement 100 U.S. troops came to the Morąg training base.

Yet relations with the U.S. show that we need to build stronger ties with our European partners, mainly with Germany and France, and that our security policy must rely to a greater extent on our own military effort and on being NATO's flagship country in Eastern Europe. Once our policy was re-defined in line with this assumption the basis was established for launching a debate on withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2012. Desirable as Poland's participation in ensuring global security and peace is, engaging in the resolution of international

problems (like in Iraq and Afghanistan) should be to Poland's advantage rather than, like under the Left and the PiS's governments, demonstrably profitless.

Another undisputable success of Polish diplomacy in 2009 was the appointment of a representative of Poland, Adam Daniel Rotfeld, to NATO's group of Wise Men. This nomination is an expression of recognition of the capability and expertise of this seasoned diplomat and former minister of foreign affairs, as well as of Poland's role in the Alliance.

The naming of priorities of the Polish presidency of the EU Council in 2011 was yet another element of great importance. Financial and economic matters will figure—alongside the Eastern Partnership, energy security, and the review of the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region—as the major themes of the Polish Presidency. In the context of Janusz Lewandowski's having taken over the [Financial Programming and] Budget portfolio in the European Commission, this focus on budgetary issues is yet another gesture of responsibility—and of shoring up Poland's position in the European family. If followed through successfully, [this programme] could become a particularly valuable argument in the debate on the shape of the evolving European External Action Service. It could provide us with a rationale for addressing the EU's Eastern policy and serve as an argument for the appointment of Polish diplomats to EU missions in the region.

One should also mention technical matters, which often go unnoticed by commentators and analysts of our activities on the international scene. Owing to Minister Sikorski, our diplomatic service took the first step towards functioning in a modern way. Following the establishment of an efficient fast communication system and with the progressing computerisation of the MFA our activities can be markedly more dynamic. The performance of the Poland-promoting service [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl) has been markedly improved.

To sum up, 2009 was the year of reinforcing Poland's position in the European Union, building partnership with Germany and other large EU member states—France, Italy (in this case bilateral inter-governmental consultations are an important instrument), Britain, and Spain. It was a time of putting relations with Russia on an even keel and of building instruments to intensify policy efforts in Eastern Europe. It was also a time of looking for a chance in relations with the U.S. at a difficult moment when Washington was focused on domestic policy and on solving problems in the Near and Middle East. This is the way to build the stability of Poland's position and to create capabilities and opportunities for more offensive actions. We must keep in mind at all times that in 2010 Europe, the U.S. and Russia—and the rest of the contemporary world with them—will



have to develop a new cooperation formula, a new structure of aims and of resulting alliances and relations. This unprecedented universal economic crisis makes a difficult policy context. It is accompanied by a deceleration of Europe's dynamic in the aftermath of completion of a certain stage of post-accession policy, one crowned with the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon. This is why it is so important that Poland should focus on maintaining partner-like relations with the Europe's leaders—first of all with Germany, our main economic partner and our neighbour.

This review of Poland's policy is positive on the whole, yet I must point to an unsolved problem, i.e. the continuous and growing need to define Poland's role on the international scene. We are all well aware that Poland needs to enhance its position in the European Union, deepen its alliance relations with the United States, keep building its relationship with Russia. Yet, to put it in plain words, these well-known slogans need filling with a content, and the content must be compatible with our internal vision of a Poland we want to achieve in 20-30 years. This concept should be the object of a strategic accord among the main power centres and political groups, so that a foreign policy consensus can be forged at a basic level. If this succeeds, quarrels over details and over ways and means of implementation can only fortify, rather than undermine, Polish policy.



## **V.**

### **Annex**



# **Chronicle of International Relations of Poland in 2009**

## **General affairs**

1.02. The 39<sup>th</sup> World Economic Forum came to an end in Davos. The predominant theme of the meeting were ways of improving financial sector and reviving the global economy. During all the bilateral meetings with politicians and business representatives Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk pledged that Polish economy in the global financial crisis was stable and doing well.

18.12. Prime Minister Donald Tusk attended an international summit in Copenhagen devoted to tackling climate change.

## **Multilateral cooperation**

### **The Visegrád Group**

21.05. The Foreign Ministers of the Visegrád Group states and Sweden met in Warsaw. They reviewed cooperation between their foreign ministries during the year of Poland's Presidency of the Group. The foreign ministers also discussed current cooperation issues.

26.05. Hanoi hosted the 9th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting during which the Foreign Ministers of the Visegrád Group states met with their counterpart from Japan. Poland was represented by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski.

29.05. Defence Ministers of the Visegrád Group states and Ukraine discussed the current situation in Ukraine and Southeast Europe, also in the context of the recent events in the Republic of Moldova. They also addressed Eastern Partnership issues and military and technical cooperation between both countries.

3.06. At a meeting of the Visegrád Group Prime Ministers in Wieliczka, a decision was made to re-establish the "V4 energy infrastructure group." Poland was represented by Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

12.09. Economic crisis, energy cooperation and further enlargement of the EU and NATO came top of the agenda during a two-day meeting of the Presidents of the Visegrád Group held in Sopot. The meeting was attended by President Lech Kaczyński.

6.10. A meeting of the Visegrád Group Foreign Ministers was held to discuss the promotion of integration of the Western Balkan states.

26.11. Energy security, reduction of administrative burdens in business as well as joint initiatives on fair competition and cluster system were high on the agenda of the meeting of the Ministers for the Economy of the Visegrád Group states in

Budapest. The Polish delegation was headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Economy Waldemar Pawlak.

## **NATO**

20.02. An informal meeting of NATO Defence Ministers was held in Kraków. Topics discussed included ISAF mission in Afghanistan and the future of NATO. The meeting was also attended by representatives of non-Nato members, taking part in ISAF operation as well as Afghanistan's Defence Minister. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and U.S. Secretary Defence Robert Gates.

5.03. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski attended the meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in Brussels. The topics discussed included, among other things, problems with NATO operation in Afghanistan and Kosovo, NATO-Russia relations and preparations for the jubilee NATO summit.

13.03. NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer paid a working visit to Poland, where he met Prime Minister Donald Tusk and President Lech Kaczyński. The talks focused on the future of the mission in Afghanistan and challenges for NATO.

4.04. On the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of NATO, a jubilee summit was held in Strasbourg and Kehl on the French-German border. The chief themes were: the operation in Afghanistan, relations with Russia and NATO's new strategy. Poland was represented by President Lech Kaczyński and Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski.

14.10. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski attended a joint session of NATO Foreign and Defence Ministers in Brussels. The discussions focused on NATO's new Strategic Concept and plans for a command structure reform, EU-NATO and Russia-NATO relations as well as NATO's missile defence.

24.10. Bratislava hosted an informal meeting of NATO Defence Ministers, attended by Minister of National Defence Bogdan Klich. The meeting was dedicated to the new missile defence concept.

23.11. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met in Warsaw NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen. The talks addressed NATO actions in Afghanistan and the allied cooperation in ISAF mission.

## **OSCE**

28.06. A Greek Island of Corfu was host to a meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers. The Polish delegation was chaired by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski. The discussion addressed, among other things, the current condition of the European security as well as security threats and challenges.

2.12. The 17th session of OSCE Ministerial Council was held in Athens. The Polish delegation was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Grażyna Bernatowicz. The main theme of the meeting was dialogue on European security known as the Corfu Process.

## **UN**

25.09. During the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly President Lech Kaczyński admitted: "We have heard it said many times today that the United Nations is about to embark on a new phase. I believe that it will be yet another phase of greatness, for its history has been marked with such periods. I trust that this great global experiment, which on numerous occasions has passed the test, will succeed again on a global scale and in many decades to come."

## **Council of Europe**

12.05. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski attended a meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in Madrid.

## **European Union**

23.02. A meeting of the European Union General Affairs & External Relations Council was held in Brussels. The subjects discussed included the Eastern Partnership initiative and the situation in Afghanistan, the Middle East and the Western Balkans. The Polish delegation was led by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski.

1.03. Brussels was host to an informal summit of heads of EU member states on financial crisis. On Prime Minister Donald Tusk's initiative, a meeting of the Prime Ministers of Visegrád states, Baltic states, Bulgaria, Romania and European Commission's President José Manuel Barroso preceded the summit. All the participants agreed that in times of financial crisis pan-European solidarity and compliance with the principles arising from treaty obligations is of the utmost importance.

9.03. President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso met President Lech Kaczyński in Warsaw.

16.03. A meeting of the European Union General Affairs & External Relations Council took place in Brussels. The Polish delegation was headed by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski. The talks covered the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus and in Sudan, as well as Transatlantic relations and the Middle East conflict. The Foreign Ministers decided to suspend visa sanctions in respect of Minsk authorities until January 2010.

20.03. A two-day meeting of the European Council came to an end. The meeting was dedicated to economic, energy and climate issues as well as the Eastern Partnership initiative. Poland received EUR 330 million net on energy projects

under the plan to stimulate the European economy. The European Council accepted the Polish proposal to support the Eastern Partnership initiative with the amount of EUR 600 million. President Lech Kaczyński and Prime Minister Donald Tusk attended the summit.

28.03. Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski headed the Polish delegation at an informal Gymnich formula meeting of the EU Foreign Ministers in Hluboka nad Vltavou. The Ministers discussed, among other things, issues relating to the Middle East peace process, Belarus, Western Balkans and the development of EU civilian capacity.

5.04. An informal meeting of the heads of state and government of the European Union and the United States of America was held in Prague. The meeting centered on the fight against global economic crisis, cooperation of both parties on Afghanistan and Pakistan issues as well as climate and security policy. President Lech Kaczyński and Prime Minister Donald Tusk attended the meeting.

27.04. Luxembourg hosted a meeting of the European Union General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC). The Polish delegation was headed by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski. The topics on the agenda included, among other things, accession negotiations with Croatia and the European Neighbourhood Policy, the political and economic situation in Ukraine and in the Republic of Moldova as well as the results of the informal EU-US summit in Prague.

30.04. While in Warsaw to attend the congress of the European People's Party (EPP), President of the European Parliament Hans-Gert Pöttering met President Lech Kaczyński and Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

7.05. The Prague meeting of the heads of state and government of the EU member states and Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Belarus, saw the launching of the Polish-Swedish Eastern Partnership initiative. A joint statement was adopted. Prime Minister Donald Tusk attended the summit.

10.05. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski attended an informal meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Poland-Denmark-Cyprus Trio in Nicosia. The agenda covered EU institutional issues, the impact of the Lisbon Treaty ratification on Presidency-holding, as well as the methodology and calendar of setting the priorities of the Presidency's Trio.

18.05. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski participated in a meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC). The talks addressed the political situation in Georgia, Moldova, Iran and Sri Lanka and the preparations for the EU-Russia summit. Additionally, a meeting of EU Foreign and Defence Ministers was held to appraise the general situation in Somalia and Bosnia and Herzegovina against a background of the EU preparations to adopt a new strategy of profound involvement in the country.



15.06. During a meeting in Luxembourg, the European Union General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) addressed issues relating to the Western Balkans, the Middle East peace process, Lebanon, Syria, the EU policy on Cuba and the situation in Burma. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski headed the Polish delegation.

19.06. A session of the European Council on gas issues, financial supervision system, climate protection and the guarantees for Ireland came to an end in Brussels. European leaders also discussed the Eastern Partnership, EU economic and social situation, the problem of illegal immigration and EU external relations. The Council agreed on the guarantees for Ireland designed to facilitate the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon. Poland was represented by President Lech Kaczyński, Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski. Prime Minister Tusk met his counterparts: Silvio Berlusconi of Italy, Borut Pahor of Slovenia and Lars Løkke Rasmussen of Denmark.

27.07. Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski attended a meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in Brussels. The agenda of the meeting covered priorities of Swedish presidency, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Iceland's application for EU membership as well as issues relating to Georgia and the current political situation in Iran and Somalia.

5.09. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski attended a Gymnich format meeting of the EU Foreign Ministers in Sweden. The delegates discussed the situation in the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as the role of the EU as a global player. Minister Sikorski called for the EU's greater financial support for Afghanistan.

17.09. Prime Minister Donald Tusk represented Poland at an informal European Council in Brussels. The talks addressed, among other things, the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), financial markets supervision and regulation and climate protection. Prime Minister Tusk met with President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek.

10.10. President Lech Kaczyński signed in Warsaw an instrument of ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon.

26.10. A session of the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council was held in Luxembourg. The Polish delegation was headed by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski. The participating Ministers decided to lift the embargo on arms sales with Uzbekistan, which had been imposed in 2005 in response to the civil society massacre in Andijan. The ministers justified the decision as a means to "encourage the Uzbek authorities to take further substantive steps to improve the rule of law and the human rights situation on the ground." At the same time they

expressed concern about that situation and appealed to the Uzbek government to “fully implement its international obligations.”

30.10. At the EU summit in Brussels the heads of states reached an agreement on financing efforts against climate change. The delegates decided that internal subdivision of the funding would be determined according to differences between the EU states i.e. their financial means. Poland and 8 new EU member states proposed that states' financial contribution to the fight against climate change be calculated according to the input of a member state's GDP in the entire Union's Gross Domestic Product. The leaders accepted the demand of the Czech President Václav Klaus which made the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon conditional on the Czech Republic's opt-out from the Lisbon Treaty's Charter of Fundamental Rights, which is part and parcel of the document. Poland was represented by PM Donald Tusk.

17.11. A meeting of the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council, attended by Defence Ministers and Ministers for Development, was held in Brussels. Sustainable development strategy, post-Lisbon strategy after 2010 as well as issues related to peace process in the Middle East, Ukraine, civilian aspects of the European Security and Defence Policy and Belarus came top of the agenda. The Polish delegation was led by Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski.

19.11. At a special summit in Brussels, the leaders of 27 EU member states appointed Herman Van Rompuy as the 1<sup>st</sup> Permanent President of the European Council, Catherine Ashton as High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Pierre de Boissieu as Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union. Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who attended the summit, met President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso.

26.11. Brussels hosted Polish-Danish-Cypriot consultations on the Trio's programme preparations for holding the presidency of the Council of the European Union. The meeting was attended by Government's Plenipotentiary for Preparation of Presidency in the EU Council Mikołaj Dowgielewicz, Under-Secretary in Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kim Jørgensen and Head of the Secretariat for the Cyprus EU Presidency 2012 Andreas Moleskis.

11.12. A meeting of the European Council came to an end in Brussels. The agenda covered issues related to the Lisbon Treaty's entry into force, the Stockholm Programme on cooperation in justice and home affairs as well as financial and economic issues. The delegates also discussed issues of countering climate change in the context of the ongoing climate conference in Copenhagen. While at the summit, Prime Minister Donald Tusk met President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso.

### **Other items**

14.01. President Lech Kaczyński met in Warsaw with the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Mohamed ElBaradei. The topics discussed included: prospects of developing scientific and technological cooperation between Poland and the IAEA, strengthening verification system and nuclear security standards as well as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT).

15.05. Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski attended the 9th session of the Utrecht Conference in the Hague.

26.05. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski participated in the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Hanoi. The meeting brought a review the EU—Asia cooperation and its strengthening in the areas of international security, countering climate change and effects of the world financial and economic crisis.

15.06. President Lech Kaczyński took part in a jubilee summit of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva. He met Juan Somavía, the head of the ILO, and then delivered a speech at the plenary session which opened the global summit on labour market crisis.

19.06. President Lech Kaczyński attended the 16<sup>th</sup> summit of Presidents of Central European states in Novi Sad. The meeting focused on the EU enlargement and energy policy as well as the situation on global financial markets.

12.07. A two-day 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies came to an end in Lisbon. The conference was attended by representatives of 50 countries: Presidents, Foreign Ministers and representatives of a number of non-governmental organisations. The delegates discussed issues related to global crisis and its impact on democratic governments as well as future challenges for the Community of Democracies.

## **Bilateral relations**

### **Afghanistan**

8.04. President Lech Kaczyński paid a one-day visit to Afghanistan, where he held talks with his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai on the Polish military presence in Afghanistan and a NATO summit during which a new action strategy in Afghanistan was adopted. President Kaczyński pledged to step up humanitarian aid for Afghanistan. He also met with Polish soldiers in Ghazni.

24.04. Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta concluded his visit to Poland, where he held talks with his Polish counterpart Radosław Sikorski and was received by Prime Minister Donald Tusk. The talks addressed, among other things, bilateral relations, particularly Polish development assistance for Afghanistan, and Poland's involvement in the ISAF stabilisation mission.

15.08. As part of celebrations of the Polish Army Day, Prime Minister Donald Tusk visited soldiers from the Polish contingent in the Ghazni province in Afghanistan. Prime Minister Tusk pledged, among other things, that the government would do everything to ensure the safety of Polish soldiers in Afghanistan.

### **Armenia**

17.02. Armenia's Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian paid a visit to Poland, where he had talks with his Polish counterpart Radosław Sikorski and was received by President Lech Kaczyński. Issues discussed included: the current situation in the South Caucasus, settlement prospects in Nagorno-Karabakh, Polish-Armenian political, economic and cultural cooperation as well as the present state of work on the Eastern Partnership programme.

### **Australia**

7.10. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski met in Warsaw with his Australian counterpart Stephen Smith. The agenda covered, among other things, bilateral issues and key international affairs, primarily the situation in Afghanistan. The meeting saw the signing of a bilateral agreement on social security.

### **Austria**

15.09. Austria's President Heinz Fischer paid an official visit to Poland, where he met President Lech Kaczyński and Prime Minister Donald Tusk. The talks covered bilateral relations, the ratification process of the Lisbon Treaty and global economic crisis. The politicians expressed their satisfaction with intense economic cooperation between both countries.

### **Azerbaijan**

29.01. While at the 39<sup>th</sup> World Economic Forum in Davos, Prime Minister Donald Tusk met his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev.

13.05. The 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Polish-Azerbaijani Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation was held in Warsaw. Azerbaijan's Minister of Industry and Energy Natiq Aliyev was received by President Lech Kaczyński. The issues discussed included, among other things, the state of work on the Euro-Asian Oil Transportation Corridor, forming part of the Odessa-Brody-Płock-Gdańsk pipeline.

3.07. President Lech Kaczyński concluded a two-day visit to Azerbaijan, where he discussed problems of bilateral cooperation including cooperation in culture and economy as well as the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh with his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Artur Rasizada. With both presidents present, a Polish Lotos Group and an Azerbaijani oil company SOCAR signed a letter of intent on joint actions in oil extraction and processing.

28.11. Minister of National Defence Bogdan Klich paid a visit to Azerbaijan, where he held talks with his Azerbaijani counterpart Safar Abiyev. The talks centered on ways to develop military and technical cooperation as well as collaboration in staff training, the situation in the region and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Minister Klich was also received by President Ilham Aliyev.

### **Belarus**

24.06. "The improvement of Polish-Belarusian relations by means of the wise use of political instruments has been our priority since the first day of this government," Prime Minister Donald Tusk admitted during the 1<sup>st</sup> Poland-Belarus Economic Summit.

1.09. At Westerplatte, Prime Minister Donald Tusk met Prime Minister Sergei Sidorsky, who attended the celebrations of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of World War II. A memorandum on energy cooperation was signed.

### **Belgium**

19.03. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski paid a visit to the Kingdom of Belgium, where he met his Belgian counterpart Karel De Gucht and Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy.

### **Bulgaria**

1.09. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met Prime Minister Boyko Borisov at Westerplatte. The Bulgarian PM attended the celebrations of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of World War II.

### **China**

26.05. While at the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Hanoi, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski met his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi. Minister Sikorski also participated in a meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Visegrad Group countries and Japan.

16.12. At the close of Defence Minister Bogdan Klich's visit to Beijing, an agreement on cooperation in defence was signed.

### **Colombia**

12.05. Colombia's Foreign Minister Jaime Bermúdez Merizalde paid a working visit to Poland, where he met Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Economy Waldemar Pawlak and Minister for the Agriculture Marek Sawicki. The ministers raised issues of bilateral political relations, prospects for developing economic and military cooperation and cooperation with Colombian law enforcement agencies in preventing and fighting organised crime.

25.09. At the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in New York, President Lech Kaczyński met his Colombian counterpart Álvaro Uribe Vélez.

### **Cyprus**

10.05. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski attended an informal meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Poland-Denmark-Cyprus Trio in Nicosia. The heads of Polish and Danish diplomacy also met the Cypriot President Dimitris Christofias.

### **The Czech Republic**

8.01. President Lech Kaczyński paid a visit to Prague, where—together with his Czech counterpart Václav Klaus—they discussed the priorities of the Czech presidency in the European Union, bilateral relations and gas crisis between Russia and Ukraine.

27.01. A meeting of President Lech Kaczyński, his Ukrainian counterpart Viktor Yushchenko and the Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek took place in Wrocław. Issues that came top of the agenda included the implementation of the gas agreement and prospects for gas transport in the following years.

20.03. While at the meeting of the European Council in Brussels, President Lech Kaczyński met the Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek.

5.06. President of the Czech Republic Václav Klaus concluded his informal visit to Warsaw, where he met President Lech Kaczyński. The talks covered major political issues related to bilateral and international cooperation, including the European Union, regional cooperation within the Visegrád Group and NATO.

30.07. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski met Czech Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jan Kohout, who was paying a working visit to Poland. The talks covered bilateral cooperation and major international issues, including problem with the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.

### **Denmark**

10.05. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski attended an informal meeting of the Poland-Denmark-Cyprus Trio Foreign Ministers in Nicosia. The topics discussed included EU institutional issues, the impact of the Lisbon Treaty ratification on the presidency-holding, as well as the methodology and calendar of setting the priorities of the Presidency's Trio. The heads of Polish and Danish diplomacy also met the Cypriot President Dimitris Christofias.

19.06. At the meeting of the European Council in Brussels, Prime Minister Donald Tusk met his Danish counterpart Lars Løkke Rasmussen.

## **Egypt**

5.02. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski met the Egyptian Minister for Trade and Industry, Rashid Muhammad Rashid, who was visiting Poland at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy Waldemar Pawlak. The talks covered the development of economic cooperation. Other international issues included the current situation in the Middle East, particularly in Gaza, and the Mediterranean dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

30.09. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski concluded his tour of African countries: Rwanda, Kenya and Egypt. In Egypt, he met his Egyptian counterpart Ahmed Aboul-Gheit and Secretary-General of the Arab League Amr Moussa.

## **Estonia**

25.01. President Lech Kaczyński held talks with his Estonian counterpart Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who was visiting Poland. The politicians stressed the significance of good relations between both countries and the necessity of Polish-Estonian cooperation in the framework of the European Union and NATO.

18.04. Prime Minister Donald Tusk concluded his visit to Estonia, where he held talks with Prime Minister Andrus Ansip on bilateral relations, cooperation within the EU and in the Baltic Sea region, climate issues, global economic crisis and energy security. Prime Minister Tusk also had a meeting with President Toomas Hendrik Ilves.

7.12. President Lech Kaczyński held talks with his Estonian counterpart Toomas Hendrik Ilves who was visiting Poland. The talks covered, among other things, bilateral relations and international and regional security, with special reference to the EU energy security and the principle of solidarity.

## **Finland**

18.04. Prime Minister Donald Tusk concluded his visit to Finland, where he held talks with Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen on bilateral relations, both countries' cooperation in the EU, preparations for the climate conference and global economic crisis. The Prime Ministers also discussed issues of the Eastern Partnership and cooperation with Russia in the protection of Baltic Sea water.

8.06. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski visited Finland, where he met his Finnish counterpart Alexander Stubb for talks. Bilateral relations, current international and European issues as well as prospects for cooperation in implementing the Eastern Partnership came top of the agenda. The meeting envisaged the signing of a convention on the avoidance of double taxation and prevention of income tax evasion.

30.11. Finland's Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb paid a visit to Poland, where he held talks with Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski on bilateral relations and current international matters, including in particular EU issues as well as security and eastern policies. The ministers also addressed issues of cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.

### **France**

30.04. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met in Warsaw his French counterpart François Fillon, who attended the congress of the European People's Party (EPP). Prime Minister Fillon was also invited by President Lech Kaczyński to a private discussion.

20.07. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski held talks with the French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner in Chobielin. Talks focused on international issues and Polish-French strategic partnership. Minister Kouchner also participated in the inauguration of the Polish Ambassadors' Meeting.

1.09. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met at Westerplatte with Prime Minister François Fillon who participated in the celebrations of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of World War II.

5.11. Following the talks in Paris, Prime Minister Donald Tusk and President Nicolas Sarkozy signed 4 declarations on security and defence, agriculture, culture and energy, environment and climate. Both politicians discussed, among other things, the European security and defence policy, cooperation in nuclear energy, common agricultural policy as well as issues related to climate protection.

### **Georgia**

18.02. President Lech Kaczyński received in Poland Georgia's Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze. The main theme of their talks was the current situation in Georgia, particularly in South Ossetia and Abkhazia and the South Caucasus region. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski also held talks with Minister Vashadze.

30.04. President Lech Kaczyński and Prime Minister Donald Tusk met with Georgia's President Mikheil Saakashvili who attended the congress of the European People's Party (EPP).

27.10. Georgia's President Mikheil Saakashvili paid a working visit to Poland, where he met for talks with President Lech Kaczyński, Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski. The situation in Georgia was the main subject on the agenda. President Kaczyński assured of Poland's support for the "golden rule" of Georgia's territorial integrity. The Georgian president thanked Poland for its "political support."



28.11. Minister of National Defence Bogdan Klich paid a visit to Georgia, where he met his Georgian counterpart Bachana Akhalaia and was received by President Mikheil Saakashvili. The talks focused on military cooperation between both countries, Georgia's integration into NATO and Poland's support for Georgia's NATO aspirations.

### **Germany**

14.01. The 10<sup>th</sup> session of the Polish-Bavarian Committee of Experts came to an end in Warsaw. The Polish side was headed by Secretary of State in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, Professor Władysław Bartoszewski and the Bavarian side was represented by Minister for Federal and European Affairs of the Government of Bavaria, Emilia Müller. Issues on the agenda included cooperation in economy, finances and regional development within the EU. The talks also covered the issue of Polish language teaching in Bavaria, as well as culture and higher education.

7.02. Prime Minister Donald Tusk, attending in Munich the 45<sup>th</sup> conference on security, met Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel. The leaders raised the issue of energy security.

27.02. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel in Hamburg, where they discussed economic policy of the European Union.

17.06. Foreign Ministers of Poland, Radosław Sikorski, and Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, paid a working visit to Kiev, where they met President Viktor Yushchenko, Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, and the leader of the opposition Party of Regions Viktor Yanukovich. The internal situation in Ukraine and Kiev's relations with the European Union and other international entities came top of the agenda. The Ministers presented Eastern Partnership projects in which Ukraine could take part.

13.07. Germany's President Horst Köhler paid a visit to Poland, where he held talks with President Lech Kaczyński and Prime Minister Donald Tusk. The talks focused on ways of fighting the economic and financial crisis, the EU common security and foreign policy, relations with Eastern neighbours and the European Neighbourhood Policy. The leaders also discussed bilateral relations.

1.09. Chancellor Angela Merkel attended the celebrations at Westerplatte marking the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II.

31.10. Germany's Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle paid a working visit to Poland. He held talks with Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski and was received by President Lech Kaczyński. The delegates highly appraised the state of bilateral relations and expressed hope to further strengthen and intensify the cooperation.

18.12. Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski and Germany's Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle met in Berlin.

### **Great Britain**

23.01. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski paid a working visit to Great Britain, where he met Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs David Miliband.

5.04. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who attended the EU-U.S. summit in Prague.

28.04. UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown concluded his visit to Poland. He held talks with Prime Minister Donald Tusk on cooperation for peaceful resolution of conflicts in the world. Other topics on the agenda included problems related to the fight against economic crisis and the participation of Great Britain in Polish initiatives, for instance, in the Eastern Partnership. Prime Minister Brown was received by President Lech Kaczyński.

23.06. Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland David Miliband paid a visit to Poland. He met with Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski for talks on the Eastern Partnership initiative, policy towards Russia, joint efforts aimed at stabilising situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the situation in Moldova, climate change, energy issues and the Treaty of Lisbon.

### **Greece**

30.04. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met in Warsaw with Greece's Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis who attended the congress of the European People's Party (EPP).

23.10. Prime Minister Donald Tusk paid a visit to Athens, where—together with his Greek counterpart George Papandreou—they discussed problems of economic cooperation between both countries, climate issues and the EU enlargement. Prime Minister Tusk informed the head of the Greek government about the ways Polish economy dealt with the crisis. The Polish Prime Minister encouraged Greek entrepreneurs to invest in Poland, particularly in such areas as infrastructure and privatisation programme.

### **Hungary**

24.03. Hungary's President László Sólyom held talks with President Lech Kaczyński in Warsaw. The agenda covered bilateral relations, international issues related to the EU and NATO membership as well as the effects of global economic crisis for Poland and Hungary. The Presidents also discussed the Eastern Partnership

initiative, the prospects of EU membership for the Balkan states as well as the Treaty of Lisbon. The Hungarian President also met Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

1.07. Strengthening economic cooperation in the region of East-Central Europe as well as Polish and Hungarian ways of minimising crisis came top of the agenda of talks between Deputy Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak and Hungary's Minister of National Development and Economy István Varga.

### **Iceland**

25.09. President Lech Kaczyński met President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, while attending the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

### **India**

26.04. India's President Pratibha Devisingh Patil paid a visit to Poland, where she held talks with President Lech Kaczyński. The issues discussed included, among other things, international security, relations with Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq as well as economic cooperation. Two agreements were signed: on cooperation in tourism and on cooperation in health protection and medical science. India's President also met with Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

### **Indonesia**

26.05. Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski, attending the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Hanoi, met his Indonesian counterpart Nur Hassan Wirajuda.

### **Ireland**

12.06. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ireland, Micheál Martin, paid a visit to Poland, where he held talks with Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski. The talks addressed ratifying the Lisbon Treaty and tightening cooperation between both countries.

### **Israel**

2.06. Minister of National Defence Bogdan Klich concluded his visit in Israel, where he had meetings with Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Ehud Barak. Their talks covered, among other things, military cooperation between Poland and Israel, situation in the region and the withdrawal of the Polish Military Contingent from the UNDOF mission.

15.10. Israel's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Ehud Barak concluded his two-day visit to Poland, where he held talks with Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski and Minister of National Defence Bogdan Klich and met Prime Minister Donald Tusk. The topics on the agenda included: problems with the fight

against international terrorism, peace process in the Middle East as well as threats resulting from the development of Iran's nuclear programme.

20.10. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski paid a visit to Israel, where he met President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman. The politicians reviewed bilateral relations and discussed the situation in the region, including prospects of the Middle East peace process.

### **Italy**

29.04. The 1<sup>st</sup> Polish-Italian Intergovernmental Consultations, co-chaired by Prime Ministers Donald Tusk and Silvio Berlusconi and ministerial delegations of both countries, were held in Warsaw. Ministers of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski and Franco Frattini held talks. Prime Minister Berlusconi was received by President Lech Kaczyński.

18.05. President Lech Kaczyński paid a visit to Italy, where he held talks with his Italian counterpart Giorgio Napolitano on economic and cultural cooperation as well as joint actions of both countries within the European Union. President Kaczyński was received at an audience by Pope Benedict XVI.

19.06. Attending the session of the European Council in Brussels, Prime Minister Donald Tusk met his Italian counterpart Silvio Berlusconi.

1.09. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met at Westerplatte with Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi who attended the celebrations of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary marking the outbreak of World War II.

### **Japan**

26.05. While at the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Hanoi, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski met his Japanese counterpart Hirofumi Nakasone.

### **Kenya**

30.09. Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski concluded his tour of African countries, including Kenya, where he met Foreign Minister Moses Wetangula and Prime Minister Raila Odinga.

### **The Kingdom of the Netherlands**

30.04. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met in Warsaw Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende who attended the congress of the European People's Party (EPP).

15.05. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski paid a visit to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, where he discussed current international issues and bilateral relations with his Dutch counterpart Maxime Verhagen. The meeting of the Ministers was held parallel to the 19<sup>th</sup> session of the Utrecht Conference.

19.09. Prime Minister Donald Tusk visited the Kingdom of the Netherlands, where he met Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende and participated in the celebrations marking the 65th anniversary of the operation “Market Garden.”

### **Korea**

26.05. At the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Hanoi, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski met his Korean counterpart Yu Myung-hwan.

8.07. During his visit to Poland, South Korea’s President Lee Myung-bak met with President Lech Kaczyński and Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

### **Latvia**

27.11. Presidents of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, and Latvia, Valdis Zatlers, emphasised good bilateral relations. Lech Kaczyński expressed his hope that Poland and Latvia, together with other European countries, would work to “make the direction of the Lisbon development of Europe the best.”

### **Lithuania**

15.01. Lithuania’s Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius concluded his visit to Poland, where he held talks with his Polish counterpart Donald Tusk and met President Lech Kaczyński. Energy cooperation issues, the spelling of Polish names in Lithuania and the Card of the Pole formed chief topics of discussion. Lithuania’s Prime Minister declared that the affairs of the Polish national minority would be one of the priorities for his government and the issue of spelling of Polish names would be explained. Prospects for joint infrastructure enterprises were also discussed. Prime Minister Donald Tusk stressed Poland’s interest in a joint project of building a nuclear power plant in Ignalin.

4.02. Lithuania’s Defence Minister Rasa Juknevičienė paid a visit to Poland, where she met her Polish counterpart Bogdan Klich.

16.02. President Lech Kaczyński attended the celebrations in Vilnius marking the 91<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania.

16.04. President Lech Kaczyński paid a visit to Lithuania, where he held talks with President Valdas Adamkus and Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius. Issues discussed included: energy cooperation, the spelling of Polish names, the Card of the Pole as well as cooperation within the European Union and NATO. The meeting envisaged the signing of a joint declaration which stressed the will to develop cooperation.

22.04. Lithuania’s Foreign Minister Vygaudas Ušackas paid a working visit to Poland. He held talks with Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski on bilateral relations, including the Polish national minority in Lithuania as well as energy and infrastructure cooperation. Other topics on the agenda included current European

and international issues such as the Eastern Partnership, the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region, the Copenhagen package, relations with states in the region and security policy.

22.06. The 19<sup>th</sup> session of the Consultative Committee of the Presidents of Lithuania and Poland was held in Vilnius. The current state of cooperation and strategic partnership were discussed.

1.07. While attending the celebrations marking the 440<sup>th</sup> anniversary of signing the Union of Lublin, Presidents Lech Kaczyński of Poland, Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania and Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine adopted a declaration, emphasising that the Act of the Union of Lublin was, for Europe at that time, a symbol of co-existence of different religious, social and cultural traditions within one state. President Kaczyński appealed to the Lithuanian and Ukrainian Presidents for mutual forgiveness of “horrible things” from history.

6.07. President Lech Kaczyński attended the celebrations related to the Lithuania’s Millennium anniversary.

28.08. President Lech Kaczyński held talks with Lithuania’s President Dalia Grybauskaitė on both countries’ cooperation problems, including the Polish national minority in Lithuania and the spelling of Polish names as well as collaboration between both countries within the EU and NATO. President Grybauskaitė declared Lithuania’s willingness to settle “all problematic issues” between Poland and Lithuania, including issues relating to the Polish national minority in Lithuania. Dalia Grybauskaitė also met Prime Minister Tusk who stressed that little progress in resolving the Polish minority issue might affect the atmosphere of cooperation in other areas. Lithuania’s President promised to spare no effort to settle difficult national minority issues in the cooperation with Lithuania’s government.

11.11. Lithuania’s President Dalia Grybauskaitė paid a working visit to Poland, where she also attended the celebrations marking Poland’s National Independence Day. She met President Lech Kaczyński for talks on the current state of bilateral relations, with special reference to energy security of both countries and the EU.

21.12. Lithuania’s Minister of Energy Arvydas Sekmokaš held talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Economy Waldemar Pawlak in Warsaw. The main topic was energy cooperation, including building nuclear power plant in Lithuania.

### **Luxembourg**

30.04. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met in Warsaw with Luxembourg’s Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker who attended the congress of the European People’s Party (EPP).

### **Macedonia**

19.06. While at the 16<sup>th</sup> summit of Presidents of Central European states in Novi Sad, President Lech Kaczyński met Macedonia's President Gjorge Ivanov.

18.11. Macedonia's Foreign Minister Antonio Milošoski paid a working visit to Poland at the invitation of his Polish counterpart Radosław Sikorski. Macedonia's future Euroatlantic integration, international security and bilateral economic cooperation came top of the agenda.

### **Malta**

26.01. Following their talks in Warsaw, Presidents of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, and Malta, Edward Fenech Adami, agreed that economic and cultural cooperation would contribute to both countries' development. Malta's President also held talks with Prime Minister Donald Tusk on Maltese experience as a member of Euro zone, bilateral economic cooperation and cooperation within the EU.

23.07. Malta's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tonio Borg paid a visit to Poland. During his meeting with Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, Toni Borg presented the candidacy of Malta as the host country of the European Asylum Support Office. The Ministers also held talks on bilateral relations and prospects for cooperation in the main areas of European and international policy.

22.10. Prime Minister Donald Tusk paid a visit to Malta, where—together with his Maltese counterpart Lawrence Gonzi—they discussed climate protection, the EU immigration policy as well as political and economic cooperation between both countries. Prime Minister Tusk also held talks with President George Abela on cooperation problems of both countries and their economic situation.

### **Moldova**

24.07. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski paid a day's working visit to Moldova, where he met Acting President Vladimir Voronin and Foreign Minister Andrei Stratan. The aim of the visit, supported by the Swedish Presidency in the EU and Greece, which holds the chair of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), was to emphasise the support for democratic and pro-European feeling in Moldovan society in the pre-election period.

### **Morocco**

26.06. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski paid a visit to Morocco, where he held talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Taieb Fassi Fihri. Topics discussed included: bilateral cooperation, the European Union and the situation in the Middle East. Minister Sikorski also met the Moroccan Prime Minister Abbas El Fassi.

### **The Palestinian National Authority**

9.02. The Palestinian National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas paid a visit to Poland, where he held talks with President Lech Kaczyński and met Prime Minister Donald Tusk. Talks focused on Polish-Palestinian cooperation and the internal political situation on the territory of the Palestinian National Authority. The two Presidents' meeting was accompanied by a meeting of Foreign Ministers Riad Al-Malki and Radosław Sikorski. The discussion addressed the development of Polish-Palestinian relations with special emphasis on humanitarian aid and development cooperation. The Ministers signed a framework agreement for cooperation in this area.

20.10. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski paid a visit to the Palestinian National Authority, where he was received by President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. Foreign Minister Sikorski also held talks with his Palestinian counterpart Riad Al-Malki. The meeting envisaged the signing of a protocol on political consultations between both ministries.

### **Portugal**

12.07. Attending the 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies in Lisbon, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski met Portugal's President Aníbal Cavaco Silva and Foreign Minister Luís Amado.

### **Qatar**

29.01. At the 39<sup>th</sup> World Economic Forum in Davos, Prime Minister Donald Tusk met Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani.

8.08. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met Qatar's Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani in Paris. The talks addressed strategic economic cooperation and prospects for investing Qatari capital in Poland, i.a. in energy security-related investments.

25.09. At the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in New York, President Lech Kaczyński met Qatar's Prime Minister and Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani.

### **Romania**

5.03. Romania's President Traian Băsescu paid a visit to Poland, where he met President Lech Kaczyński and Prime Minister Donald Tusk. The talks centered on both countries' economic cooperation in the context of financial crisis.

20.05. Romania's Foreign Minister Cristian Diaconescu paid a working visit to Poland, where he met his Polish counterpart Radosław Sikorski for talks on bilateral



relations and cooperation with the Eastern neighbours of the EU, particularly in the context of the Eastern Partnership.

4.06. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met his Romanian counterpart Emil Boc in Kraków. Talks were devoted to the current European Council agenda as well as both countries' strategic cooperation within the European Union. The heads of government decided to initiate regular intergovernmental consultations between Poland and Romania.

7.10. President Lech Kaczyński paid a visit to Romania, where he met President Traian Băsescu. Both Presidents signed a declaration on strategic partnership in which Poland and Romania undertook to promote joint projects increasing the energy safety of the European Union states.

### **Russia**

29.01. While attending the 39<sup>th</sup> World Economic Forum in Davos, Prime Minister Donald Tusk met his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin for talks on gas crisis and prospects for its solving.

6.05. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski paid a visit to Russia, where he held talks with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov. The talks focused on energy security and plans of deploying missile defense elements in Poland as well as the situation in Georgia. Both Ministers co-chaired the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee on Polish-Russian Cooperation Strategy.

29.05. The 3<sup>rd</sup> plenary session of the Joint Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Matters, chaired by Adam Daniel Rotfeld and Anatoly Torkunov was held in Kraków. The participants evaluated current work of the Group and defined plans connected with the present stage of preparations for a joint publication on difficult problems in the history of Polish-Russian relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

1.09. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met at Westerplatte with Russia's Prime Minister Vladimir Putin who participated in the celebrations marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of World War II. Prime Minister Tusk stressed that understanding could only be built on truth about our history.

7.10. Deputy Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak and Russia's Minister of Energy Sergei Shmatko held talks in Moscow.

25.10. Deputy Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak and Russia's Minister of Energy Sergei Shmatko held talks in Moscow. Both countries reached an agreement on equal allotment of the EuRoPol Gaz shares between Gazprom and PGNiG (Polish Petroleum and Gas Mining).

9.11. A session of the the Joint Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Matters, chaired by Adam Daniel Rotfeld and Anatoly Torkunov, was held in Moscow. The main theme of the meeting was a joint publication dedicated to difficult problems in

the history of Polish-Russian relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Issues on the agenda also included the initiative to create two centers, in Poland and Russia, whose task would be an objective analysis of problems in the common history, including the Katyn massacre.

### **Rwanda**

30.09. Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski concluded his tour of African countries: Rwanda, Kenya and Egypt. In Rwanda he met Prime Minister Bernard Makuza.

### **Serbia**

13.05. The aim of President Lech Kaczyński's visit to the Republic of Serbia was to discuss with President Boris Tadić the main issues of bilateral relations as well as issues related to Serbia's integration process into structures of the European Union and NATO. President Kaczynski acknowledged that his stance on Kosovo's independence differed from that of the government and that he shared Serbia's position on the lost, historical province.

2.07. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Vuk Jeremić met his Polish counterpart Radosław Sikorski. The talks centered on Serbia's aspirations to EU membership and the process of European integration in the Western Balkans.

19.06. While at the 16<sup>th</sup> summit of Presidents of Central European states in Novi Sad, President Lech Kaczyński met President Boris Tadić.

### **Slovakia**

8.01. Prime Minister Donald Tusk attended the ceremony of Slovakia's entering the Euro zone and met Prime Minister Robert Fico.

21.02. President Lech Kaczyński and Slovakia's President Ivan Gašparovič paid joint visits to border towns: Jabłonka in Małopolskie Voivodeship and Námestovo in Slovakia.

16.04. Slovakia's Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák held talks with Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski and Deputy Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak. The talks addressed: bilateral cooperation (infrastructure, energy, the Euro, cross-border cooperation), regional cooperation (the Visegrad Group) as well as key European issues (economic crisis, energy security, the Eastern Partnership, the Treaty of Lisbon, EU enlargement) and transatlantic issues.

26.11. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovakia, Miroslav Lajčák, who attended a conference in Warsaw organised by DemosEuropa, held talks with his Polish counterpart Radosław Sikorski.

### **Slovenia**

19.06. While attending the session of the European Council in Brussels, Prime Minister Donald Tusk met Prime Minister Borut Pahor.

13.09. Slovenia's President Danilo Türk attended the second day of the meeting of the Presidents of the Visegrád Group states in Sopot. The Slovenian President held talks with President Lech Kaczyński.

### **Spain**

1.04. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski paid a visit to Spain, where he held talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé. The foreign ministers discussed bilateral cooperation, European issues and selected international issues. The meeting saw the signing of an agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain on access to consular and diplomatic premises and infrastructure of the contracting parties in third countries.

9.11. In Sopot, the 6<sup>th</sup> Polish-Spanish intergovernmental consultations were held, chaired by Prime Ministers Donald Tusk and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. The aim of the consultations was to strengthen political dialogue and develop economic relations, while at the same time increasing investments and strengthening cooperation in view of the countries' presidencies of the EU Council. Poland and Spain declared mutual support for each other's priorities within the EU. The meeting saw the signing of an agreement under which Polish officials would take part in internships in Spain during the Spanish EU Presidency.

### **Sweden**

11.06. During his visit to Stockholm, Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski met his Swedish counterpart Carl Bildt. He also held talks with Sweden's Minister for European Affairs Cecilia Malmström on the priorities of the Swedish presidency of the EU Council and current issues on the EU agenda.

1.09. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met at Westerplatte Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt who attended the celebrations marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of World War II.

### **Switzerland**

29.01. Prime Minister Donald Tusk who attended the 39<sup>th</sup> World Economic Forum in Davos met Switzerland's President Hans-Rudolf Merz.

27.03. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski held talks with his Swiss counterpart Micheline Calmy-Rey in Bern. The talks addressed current international issues and bilateral relations. An agreement on scholarship fund between the Swiss Confederation and the Republic of Poland was signed.

## **Syria**

4.03. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met Syria's Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah al-Dardari who visited Poland at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Economy Waldemar Pawlak. The talks focused on bilateral political and economic relations and mutual investments.

## **Turkey**

29.01. While attending the 39<sup>th</sup> World Economic Forum in Davos, Prime Minister Donald Tusk met his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

26.02. A session of the Polish-Turkish Consultative Committee was held in Warsaw. The Polish delegation was led by Undersecretary of State in the Office of the President of the Republic of Poland Mariusz Handzlik and the Turkish side was represented by Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Zergün Korutürk. The state of Polish-Turkish relations was evaluated as very good.

14.05. Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan concluded his visit in Poland, where he held talks with Prime Minister Donald Tusk and was received by President Lech Kaczyński. A declaration on strategic partnership was signed which stipulates, among other things, political dialogue on global, Euro-Atlantic and regional issues as well as supporting the policy of strengthening energy security and fight against the effects of climate changes. Prime Minister Tusk assured of Poland's consistent participation in the process of negotiations and integration of Turkey into the European Union.

## **Turkmenistan**

25.09. President Lech Kaczyński, attending the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, met President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow.

## **Ukraine**

14.01. Presidents of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, and Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko, met in Wisła, to discuss gas crisis.

16.01. During his visit to Ukraine, Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski met his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Ohryzko and was also received by Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and President Viktor Yushchenko.

28.01. The Presidents of Poland and Ukraine, Lech Kaczyński and Viktor Yushchenko, and the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic Mirek Topolánek met in Wrocław. They addressed the implementation of the gas agreement and prospects for transit of gas in the coming years. President Yushchenko declared that Ukraine would never tighten the screw on Russian gas for the EU.

28.02. President Lech Kaczyński and his Ukrainian counterpart Viktor Yushchenko participated in the celebrations of the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary marking the murder of the Polish inhabitants of the village Huta Pieniacka.

20.03. While at the meeting of the European Council in Brussels, Prime Minister Donald Tusk met Ukraine's Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko.

30.04. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met in Warsaw Ukraine's Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who attended the congress of the European People's Party (EPP).

29.05. Ukraine's Defence Minister Yuri Yekhanurov, who attended a meeting of Defence Ministers of the Visegrad Group and Ukraine in Warsaw, held talks with Defence Minister Bogdan Klich and Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski. The agenda covered the current situation in Ukraine and in the region of South-East Europe, including recent events in the Republic of Moldova. Other topics discussed included the Eastern Partnership and military-technical cooperation between both countries.

17.06. Foreign Ministers Radosław Sikorski of Poland and Frank-Walter Steinmeier of Germany paid a working visit to Kiev, where they met President Viktor Yushchenko, Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and the leader of the opposition Party of Regions Viktor Yaukovich. The talks covered internal situation in Ukraine and Kiev's relations with the European Union and other international entities. The Ministers presented Eastern Partnership projects in which Ukraine could take part.

19.06. President Lech Kaczyński met Ukraine's President Viktor Yushchenko while at the 16th summit of Presidents of Central European states in Novi Sad.

1.07. During the celebrations marking the 440<sup>th</sup> anniversary of signing the Union of Lublin, Presidents Lech Kaczyński of Poland, Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania and Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine adopted a declaration in which they stressed that the Act of the Union of Lublin was, for Europe at that time, a symbol of the co-existence of different religious, social and cultural traditions within one state. President Kaczyński appealed to the Lithuanian and Ukrainian Presidents for mutual forgiveness of "horrible things" from history.

9.07. Prime Minister Donald Tusk paid a one-day visit to Ukraine, where—together with his Ukrainian counterpart Yulia Tymoshenko—they discussed the actions of both governments aimed at minimising the effects of global economic crisis as well as economic cooperation, including cooperation in gas security. The politicians raised the situation of Polish companies in Ukraine in times of global economic crisis and preparations of both countries for the European Football Championship EURO 2012.

1.09. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met at Westerplatte his Ukrainian counterpart Yulia Tymoshenko, who attended the celebrations of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary marking the outbreak of World War II.

8.09. Ukraine's President Viktor Yushchenko paid a visit to Poland, where he met President Lech Kaczyński and Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

15. 10. Minister of National Defence Bogdan Klich held talks with Acting Defence Minister Valeriy Ivashenko. The agenda covered, among other things, the state and prospects of developing defence cooperation between both countries as well as creating a common Polish-Ukrainian-Lithuanian peace-keeping brigade.

25.11. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski held talks in Warsaw with his Ukrainian counterpart Petro Poroshenko. The agenda covered economic and energy cooperation, cultural and scientific cooperation, as well as historical issues and questions of the Polish minority in Ukraine and the Ukrainian minority in Poland. The meeting saw the signing of two intergovernmental agreements: an agreement on movement of persons at the Polish-Ukrainian border and an agreement on financing the post-graduate education of Ukrainian citizens in the College of Europe in Natolin.

16.12. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski held talks in Ukraine with Foreign Minister Petro Poroshenko and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Minister Sikorski declared that Poland would reduce the fees for national visas issued to Ukrainian citizens and simplify the procedure of issuing Schengen visas.

### **The United States of America**

7.02. While attending the 45<sup>th</sup> conference in Munich devoted to security, Prime Minister Donald Tusk met Vice President of the United States Joe Biden. The declaration on deploying the elements of anti-missile shield was sustained.

20.02. Prime Minister Donald Tusk met United States Secretary of Defence Robert Gates who attended an informal meeting of NATO Defence Ministers in Kraków.

27.02. Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski paid a visit to the United States of America, where he met Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Their talks did not clarify the issue of building anti-missile shield or installing a battery of Patriot missiles in Poland.

5.04. President Lech Kaczyński and Prime Minister Donald Tusk met President Barack Obama who attended a summit EU-US in Prague. Major problems were raised, including plans for deploying anti-missile shield in Poland. Foreign Ministers, including Minister Radosław Sikorski, met Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

17.09. The United States of America made a decision to transform the project of anti-missile shield system which was supposed to be deployed in Europe. This implies the resignation from deploying the elements of antimissile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic.

21.10. Vice President of the United States Joe Biden paid a visit to Poland. He held talks with President Lech Kaczyński on issues of interest to both countries, i.e. the issues related to antimissile shield cooperation, military cooperation, NATO as well as Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The US Vice President met also with Donald Tusk who declared Poland's readiness to participate in the project of anti-missile shield system based on SM-3.

4.11. Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski paid a working visit to Washington, where he met Barack Obama's National Security Advisor General James Jones. The meeting of Minister Sikorski and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton did not take place as US Secretary of State had to prolong her visit in the Middle East.

10.12. Deputy Minister of National Defence Stanisław Komorowski and the American Under-Secretary of State Ellen Tauscher signed in Warsaw a Polish-American SOFA agreement (Status of Forces Agreement) which allows to station American troops and military equipment on Polish territory.

### **Vietnam**

26.05. Attending the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Hanoi, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski held talks with Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Gia Khiem and was also received by the Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung.

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