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Transformation of Polish Foreign Policy

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1. The changed conditions and new goals and directions in foreign policy

The Polish political transformation, which began in the spring of 1989 pursuant to the decisions taken at the “Round Table” talks, gave rise to the fundamental premises for the reorientation of Poland’s foreign policy. New ideas and proposals for specific actions and behaviours in the international arena came into being together with increasing political pluralism, increasing abandonment of the political solutions of “real socialism”, and changes in Poland’s international environment. New external conditions soon appeared after the unexpectedly rapid collapse of the authoritarian regimes in the states of Central and Eastern Europe during the Peoples’ Autumn of 1989. The deep internal transformations taking place in the states of the region, initiated by the fact that Marxists were stripped of their monopoly of power and incrementally pushed aside, resulted in the collapse of the entire Eastern Bloc and the disintegration of the USSR within two years. Another then-unexpected consequence of the revolution in the eastern region of Europe was the unification of Germany, or rather the accession of the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany in 1990, approved by the superpowers and other European states. All these events, and particularly the erosion and later liquidation of the Warsaw Pact and the Comecon, considerably increased Poland’s autonomy in the international arena. In these conditions the new authorities in Warsaw could define a wholly sovereign foreign policy. This process was facilitated by the fact that the inter-bloc rivalry in Europe ended when the political division into East and West ceased to exist.

Consequently, in the years 1989-1991 the geopolitical and geo-strategic position of Poland changed. Poland was no longer a part of the Eastern Bloc, which had collapsed, and found itself in a new international environment, bordering a powerful Germany and a whole plethora of post-USSR states, including since 1993 the two states which resulted from the division of Czechoslovakia. Though Russia remained one of Poland’s neighbours, it no longer held a strategic umbrella over it and began to pursue a policy of constructive cooperation with the USA and other western states.

In the beginning of the 1990s, Poland ceased to be one of the pillars of the division of Europe dating back to the Cold War. The Eastern Bloc no longer existed, and the East-West rivalry was replaced with a search for stability in the entire area of Central and Eastern Europe and the former USSR. The recent threat of an outbreak of a great nuclear war between the two antagonist political and military blocs was ended thanks to the conclusion of disarmament agreements (INF – 1987, CFE I – 1990, START I – 1991, START II – 1993), but fears remained concerning the take-over of the Russian nuclear potential by four states (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan) and the possibility of local wars among the former socialist states, including the successor states of the USSR.

Poland found itself in a new political situation. In the post-Cold War era and in an increasingly democratic Europe, Polish foreign policy was confronted with the following general goals:

- 1) the search for a new international security system which would guarantee Poland’s national security;

2) diplomatic support for the reforms conducted in Poland, including primarily the transformation of the economy and its adaption to free market mechanisms, which were designed to result in economic growth; and

3) maintaining and increasing the international prestige of Poland and the Poles, who had been the first to commence the struggle to create a democratic civil society in the Soviet bloc.¹

As a result of the ambitious and difficult nature of these three main goals in the international arena, the tasks which Polish foreign policy faced were much more extensive in comparison with the previous period. Thus the need for new ideas, views, and concepts concerning this sphere of the state's activity became more acute. It became necessary for Poland to join the initiatives of other states as well as undertake independent diplomatic actions of an explanatory or polemical nature, to join the international negotiations already underway and realise already concluded agreements, including both bilateral as well as multilateral understandings.

In the times of real socialism, beginning with the breakthrough of October 1956, the doctrinal theory of three principles of foreign policy reigned in the Polish People's Republic. The principles were as follows: 1. the principle of socialist internationalism, which meant unity, friendship, mutual aid, and close cooperation among socialist states, concerning mainly the states of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon; 2. the principle of solidarity with nations fighting for national and social liberation, i.e. the states of the Third World trying to break free from colonial and neo-colonial dependence; and 3. the principle of peaceful coexistence with states of a different social and political order (i.e. mainly the capitalist states).² Beginning in the 1970s the practical order of importance regarding these principles underwent change and the principle of peaceful coexistence rose to second rank, after the principle of close cooperation with socialist states, and when tensions arose in the relations with the Western states (e.g. in the early 1980s), the authorities of the Polish People's Republic placed increased importance on relations with the developing countries.

Since 1989, Polish foreign policy has undergone wide-ranging and significant changes. In seeking new security guarantees and new opportunities for economic development, Polish foreign policy opened up and established contacts and cooperation with the Western democratic states. Already by the beginning of the next decade this resulted in the adoption of a clear **Euro-Atlantic orientation**, which was made a number one priority in determining the remaining directions in Poland's international activities. The second direction is **cooperation with the states of Central Europe undergoing transformation**. This cooperation is also connected with the neighbouring Western states, both in terms of its function and subject-matter, thanks to which several sub-regional groupings involving Poland's participation came into being in the area of the former boundaries between the West and East. The third direction in Polish foreign policy is its **eastern policy**, which was focused in the early period on eliminating the former ties of imperial dependencies on the USSR, then on the settling of historical accounts and building the foundations for bilateral relations and treaties with our eastern neighbours. **At least one of the directions of the former foreign policy was eliminated at the beginning of the transformation, i.e. our involvement in cooperation with the post-colonial states of Asia, Africa and Latin America.** While Poland has maintained some of the contacts with these states, in fact it has been seeking only partners connected with the West, which are developing rapidly and thus hold out the prospect of mutually beneficial economic cooperation. The regressive nature of Poland's involvement in this direction was influenced by our establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, the Republic of South Africa (before the Apartheid regime was

¹ R. Zięba, *Polityka zagraniczna Polski w okresie transformacji (I)*, "Wojsko i Wychowanie", 1993, No. 9, p. 60.

² A. Rapacki, *Trzy zasady polskiej polityki zagranicznej*, "Sprawy Międzynarodowe", 1960, No 7-8, p. 4.

eliminated) and Chile, which undoubtedly adversely affected Poland's standing in the Arab states and the other neighbours of the three newly-recognised states.

We have conducted our analysis of the transformation of Polish foreign policy by examining the changes which have occurred during the 15 year period of the transformation in Poland, i.e. between 1989 and 2004. Due to the space limitations of this article, we will juxtapose the initiation of these changes with the status quo after 15 years. This approach results, *inter alia*, from the fact that in 2004 Poland is faced with new choices as a member of NATO and the EU. As the relations in the Western system develop, along with the clear conflict between the USA and Western Europe, Warsaw must presently make decisions which involve a choice between allies. Moreover, as member of the EU Poland is a co-author of the external policy of this particular international organisation, which has ambitions to become a global player in international relations.³

2. The Euro-Atlantic direction

The first non-Communist government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, established in September 1989, declared the extension of political, economic, cultural and civilisational ties with the states of Western Europe and the USA to be one of the priorities of Polish foreign policy. This aspiration was expressed by the slogan "return to Europe".

The first step in this direction was manifested by Poland's attempts to join the Council of Europe. Tadeusz Mazowiecki's cabinet took this initiative in January 1990. Soon the representatives of Poland began to participate in the works of all the bodies of that organisation and in October of that year Poland obtained "observer guest" status. Following the free democratic elections to the *Sejm* (the lower chamber of the Polish Parliament), **Poland was officially admitted to the Council of Europe on 26 November 1991**. In this way it joined the group of democratic states and obtained institutional and political support for its transformations, which were aimed at including Poles in the circle of Western civilisation. Poland's membership in the Council of Europe extended its social and cultural ties with the states of Western Europe and strengthened the opinion that Poland's accession to other, more important European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, would follow.

2.1. Cooperation and membership in NATO

The first concern of the government of democratic Poland was to ensure the country's security by including it in a strong and effective system of European collective security. Initially, at the beginning of the transformation, it was not clear if it would be possible to join the Western security structures, i.e. NATO and the Western European Union, especially since the Warsaw Pact and the USSR still existed. Given this situation, and in compliance with the then existing foreign policy practices of the Western states, Poland regarded the Conference on Cooperation and Security in Europe as an important, or even – in the early 1990s – as the central institution of the European security system, based on cooperation between the CSCE, the European Community, NATO, and the Western European Union, and connected by close ties with the UN.⁴ The leaders of democratic Poland were also inclined to take this position

³ For more information on the EU's ambitions, see R. Zięba, *Unia Europejska jako aktor stosunków międzynarodowych*, Warszawa 2003.

⁴ R. Zięba, *KBWE/OBWE w polskiej polityce bezpieczeństwa*, [in:] R. Kuźniar (ed.), *Polska polityka bezpieczeństwa 1989-2000*, Warszawa 2001, p. 373. It should be noted that Poland's active involvement in the strengthening of the CSCE in the early 1990s was a creative continuation of the previous initiatives and actions of the Polish People's Republic, though the politicians of the new Republic of Poland did not admit to this in public.

because NATO was experiencing an identity crisis as a consequence of the end of the cold war, and was weakened with internal dissension and discussions. During the discussions and disputes, numerous American politicians and Western scholars who were proponents of the neo-liberal trend in the scientific studies of international relations, questioned – in their polemics with the neo-realists⁵ – the necessity for continuing to maintain the North-Atlantic Alliance at all, given the fact that its opponent in the east of Europe no longer existed,⁶ and/or proposed that it should be transformed into a “civilian community”⁷. Numerous American experts advocated the creation of a regional collective security system in Europe (based on the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Western European Union, or both organisations), offering arguments both against the further existence of NATO and against enlarging the Alliance by the acceptance of new member states.⁸

In their search for new guarantees of external security, the new authorities of the Republic of Poland rejected the paradigms and mechanisms of the old bloc system of security, which in fact meant rejection of the Eastern Bloc and the eastern orientation for the sake of the western one. Initially, the weakness of this line of evolution was a result of the fact that experts and politicians insisted on considering security in strictly military categories. This is demonstrated by the very frequent references to two types of arguments: first, that Poland should obtain security guarantees from the West inasmuch as, in the new geopolitical situation, it found itself in a „grey area” of uncertainty, facing new challenges and probable threats; and secondly that the threats associated with the instability in the area of the former USSR, the unpredictability of the behaviour and role of the Russian army (which until the autumn of 1993 still had troops stationed in Poland), and Poland’s military weakness in the face of a potential threat from the East.

This traditional perspective on security was reflected in such documents as “The Tenets of Polish Security Policy”, signed by President Lech Wałęsa, and the “Security Policy and Defence Strategy of the Republic of Poland” attached to it, adopted by The National Defence Committee on 2 November 1992. These two documents were dominated by “a narrow field and military-oriented way of thinking, isolated from the broader context of other dimensions of state security and limiting security to the physical ability to respond to physical

⁵ For representative examples of the neo-realists’ opinions, advocating the continued US presence in Europe and the maintenance of NATO, see: R. N. Perle (ed.), *Reshaping Western Security: The United States Faces a United Europe*, Washington 1991; J. J. Mearsheimer, *Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War*, “International Security”, Vol. 15, No. 1, Spring 1990, p. 5-57; P. M. Walt, *Alliances in Theory and Practice: What Lies Ahead?*, [in:] Ch. W. Kegley, E. R. Wittkopf (ed.), *The Global Agenda: Issues and Perspectives*, New York 1991, p. 189-197; Ch. L. Glaser, *Why NATO is Still Best? Future Security Arrangements for Europe*, “International Security”, Vol. 18, No. 1, Summer 1993, pp. 5-50. Cf. O. Harries, *The Collapse of the West*, “Foreign Affairs”, Vol. 72, No. 4, September–October 1993, pp. 41-53.

⁶ For more information on the debate, see G. Hellemann, R. Wolf, *Neorealism, Neoliberal Institutionalism and the Future of NATO*, “Security Studies”, Vol. 3, No. 1, Autumn 1993, pp. 3-43.

⁷ M. Brenner, *The Multilateral Moment*, [in:] M. Brenner (ed.), *Multilateralism and Western Strategy*, New York 1995, p. 8; M. A. Boyer, *International Cooperation and Public Goods: Opportunities for the Western Alliance*, Baltimore 1993, p. 121.

⁸ M. Chalmers, *Beyond the Alliance System*, “World Policy Journal”, Vol. 7, No. 2, Summer 1990, pp. 215-250; Ch. A. Kupchan, C. A. Kupchan, *Concerts, Collective Security, and the Future of Europe*, “International Security”, Vol. 16, No. 1, Summer 1991, pp. 114-161; R. K. Betts, *Systems for Peace or Causes of War?: Collective Security, Arms Control, and the New Europe*, “International Security”, Vol. 17, No. 1, Summer 1992, pp. 5-43; D. N. Nelson, *America and Collective Security in Europe*, “The Journal of Strategic Studies”, Vol. 17, No. 4, December 1994, pp. 105-124; R. H. Ullman, *Enlarging the Zone of Peace*, “Foreign Policy”, No. 80, Fall 1990, pp. 102-120; K. E. Spiezio, *Beyond Containment: Reconstructing European Security*, Boulder 1994, pp. 51-88. However, it should be noted that in the early 1990s there were numerous US proponents of continuing the American presence in Europe and maintaining NATO. See eg. R. N. Perle (ed.), *Reshaping Western Security: The United States Faces a United Europe*, Washington 1991.

violence”⁹. It should be noted, however, that the documents admitted that Poland was not facing any present military threat from any country at that time.

The inability to abandon this traditional way of thinking about security and the overly prominent role assigned to its military aspects facilitated the choice (after a short period of hesitation and indecision in 1991-1992) of the pro-NATO course. The Alliance, although aware of the non-military threats to international security which arose beginning in the early 1990s, was still dominated by the military and bloc-oriented way of thinking.

In making its decision to join NATO following the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact (on 1 July 1991), Poland perceived it as an entity which would provide the so-called ‘hard security’ guarantees, ensured by the US military presence in Europe. Warsaw was sceptical about the possibility of obtaining security from a Western European security structure devoid of the political and military presence of the USA. The experiences of the interwar period indicated that ties of alliance with France and Great Britain were not effective security guarantees for Poland. Poland manifested its disbelief in the possibility that Western Europe was able to build an autonomous security system without United States participation. For this reason, Poland did not see the Western European Union as an alternative option in its security policy, and in the early years of the transformation showed no interest in cooperating with the organisation.¹⁰ Another factor which discouraged the authorities of Poland from even presenting opinions on the issue was the existence of continuing disputes concerning the implementation of the concept of a European Security and Defence Identity and over the role of the Western European Union in the Western security system.¹¹ However, on 29 April 1993 Krzysztof Skubiszewski, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, in his Parliamentary *exposé* expressed his satisfaction with the fact that the rivalry between the Western European Union and NATO was coming to an end, and supported the trans-Atlantic, pro-American orientation among Western European politicians.¹² This position reflected the general concept (represented by Poland) of integrating the West as a homogenous system, in which the alleged absence of inter-Atlantic rivalry and the dominant position of the USA were to prevent re-nationalisation of the superpowers’ security policies and induce the creation of a cooperative, i.e. internationalised, security system in Europe, the “hard core” of which was to be NATO.

In accordance with this conception of international security, Poland commenced its political contacts and cooperation with NATO relatively early – indeed already by 9 August 1990 official relations between Warsaw and the NATO Headquarters in Brussels were established. Poland’s eastern policy, however, was undergoing a transformation following the rapidly changing situation in post-Cold War Europe. The declaration on the “Partnership with the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe”, adopted in early (6-7) June 1991 during the Copenhagen session of the North Atlantic Council, was a clear signal of encouragement for the pro-Atlantic orientation of Poland and other Central European states. The document stated that the security of the NATO states “is inseparably linked to that of all other states in Europe”, and that “the consolidation and preservation throughout the continent of democratic societies and

⁹ J. Kukułka, *Nowe uwarunkowania i wymiary bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego Polski*, “Wieś i Państwo”, 1995, No. 1, p. 211.

¹⁰ When the Union Secretary General, Willem van Eeken, came to Warsaw in the beginning of March 1990, he had difficulty finding appropriate partners in the Polish government.

¹¹ For more information, see R. Zięba, *Europejska Tożsamość Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony. Polski punkt widzenia*, “Stosunki Międzynarodowe”, vol. 23 (2001), No. 1-2, pp. 75-98.

¹² See *Statement by Mr Krzysztof Skubiszewski, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, made on Poland’s foreign policy in 1993, to the Polish Diet, Warsaw, 29th April 1993, “Materials and Documents”*, No. 5/1993, Vol. 2, pp. 131-141.

their freedom from any form of coercion or intimidation” was, for the Member States of the Alliance, an issue of “direct and material concern”.¹³

This obvious step taken by NATO towards fulfilling the wishes of the Central European states, combined with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, which had been decided upon several weeks later, encouraged Polish politicians to increase their efforts aimed at Poland’s accession to NATO. However, the responses which they obtained from the Headquarters in Brussels and the capitals of the NATO states were ambiguous and inconsistent in their contents. In September 1991, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, was told in Washington that neither Poland’s accession to NATO nor the opening of a security umbrella by the Alliance over Eastern Europe were on the cards, and he was also told in the US Department of State that Poland’s road to NATO was envisioned via the attainment of EEC membership. This was a most discouraging response, as it was obvious that the process of adaptation which Poland had to undergo in order to accede to the European Community would be one of long duration. Efforts to join NATO were also made by other countries of Central Europe, especially the states of the Visegrad Group in cooperation with Poland, as well as Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia (in the Baltic Group formula) and Romania.

Given this configuration of events, the establishment of cooperation with NATO turned out to be possible earlier than expected. In November 1991, the leaders of the sixteen Member States decided that at their Rome summit that the Alliance would continue to exist even though its main adversary (the Warsaw Pact and the USSR) had disappeared, and that it would take up dialogue and cooperation with the formerly hostile states and other European countries. Pursuant to the decisions of this summit, on 20 December 1991 a consultative structure named the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), to which Poland was invited, was established. Within this structure information was exchanged, staffs were trained, and military forces were prepared for peacekeeping operations, which the Alliance proposed to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations in 1992.

Due to the strong conviction, present in Poland from the beginning of the transformation and skilfully fanned by politicians, that there was a peculiar “grey security zone” or a “security vacuum” in Central Europe, it could not be expected that the Polish authorities would make do with participation in the NACC as a substitute for NATO enlargement. Poland continued its efforts aimed at NATO accession, employing a “step by step” approach. In October 1993, the USA and Germany presented their initiative for the Partnership for Peace programme. This programme was established pursuant to the decision of the NATO heads of state in Brussels on 10-11 January 1994. Though President Lech Wałęsa strongly criticized the programme as insufficient due to its failure to clearly delineate the prospects for enlargement of the Alliance, nevertheless Poland signed the framework Partnership for Peace programme on 2 February 1994 (as the third country to do so - after Lithuania and Romania), and on 5 July Poland was the first country to sign on an individual programme within the Partnership. Thereafter it actively participated in the Partnership for Peace programme, and in September the first military manoeuvres involving NATO forces in Poland took place in Biedrusk near Poznań.

In late September 1995 NATO presented a document entitled “The Study on NATO Enlargement” to the candidate states. From that time on, Poland made persistent efforts to comply with the political and military criteria set forth as preparations for Alliance membership, and actively participated in the Partnership for Peace. At the same time, polemics were engaged in with Russia, which from September 1993 unequivocally and unambiguously criticised the NATO enlargement plans.

In the spring of 1997 the Member States of the Alliance took the decision on enlargement. The preliminary step was conclusion of an understanding concerning the strategic partnership

¹³ See: J. Dean, *Ending Europe’s Wars: The Continuing Search for Peace and Security*, New York 1994, p. 252.

between NATO and the Russian Federation. The Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation and the transformation (at the request of Russia) of the NACC into the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) were preliminary framework conditions. Thanks to them, it was possible for the NATO leaders gathered in Madrid to announce on 8 July 1997 their decision to invite three Central European states, i.e. Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, to accession talks. The talks ended with the signing of accession agreements on 16 December 1997 in Brussels. The process of ratification of the agreements was smooth, and the approval of the US Senate on 30 April 1998 constituted a breakthrough. **Poland became a NATO member after submitting the ratification documents to the US government on 12 March 1999.**

Upon joining the powerful North Atlantic Alliance, Poland immediately took on the role of an active ally, clearly emphasising the importance it attached to the military presence of the USA in Europe. Twelve days after its NATO accession, Poland (politically) joined the NATO war effort in Yugoslavia (the so-called Kosovo war), which was controversial from the perspective of international law. In the subsequent months and years, Warsaw has consistently demonstrated its willingness to transform NATO into a “global alliance” in accordance with the expectations of Washington; for instance it advocated NATO participation in the US-Iraqi war, begun on 20 March 2003, and took actions designed to have the Alliance administer Iraq.

As a NATO member, Poland relatively quickly created its role as that of a close US ally. Beginning in the end of 2002, it decided to purchase the American multi-task F-16 aircraft, gave its *in blanco* support to the invasion of Iraq, agreed to administer one of the occupational zones in the country, willingly contributed to the deepening transatlantic disputes (in the so-called ‘letter of eight’ of 30 January 2003), and opposed closer cooperation among the EU states within the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). This policy reduced Poland’s role to that of a US client state and failed to gain it respect, as reflected in the fact that Warsaw’s postulates concerning the obtainment of contracts for reconstruction in Iraq and its demands for liberalisation of the visa requirements for Polish citizens entering the US have both been largely ignored. Although it is a certain oversimplification, one may perceive an analogy between being the so-called “No. 2” in the Warsaw Pact and the efforts of the cabinets of Jerzy Buzek (1997-2001) and Leszek Miller (2001-2004) to obtain a similar status in NATO. The similarity in the self-vassalage of the leaders of the Polish People’s Republic and the present democratic Poland is striking.¹⁴ However, a major difference lies in the fact that in the previous authoritarian system the leaders did not have to pay attention to the opinions of society, while in the present system they should. It is worth noting that most of Polish society opposed Poland’s joining the war with Iraq, and in February 2004 60% of Polish society opposed our participation in the post-war occupation of the country.

2.2. Association and membership in the EU

In the course of implementation of the ambitious programme of political transformation, and in particular the economic ‘shock therapy’ based on the monetarist theory of Leszek Balcerowicz, Poland established broad cooperation with Western European states and their main institution – the European Community. Poland sought to conclude an association agreement with this dynamic and rapidly strengthening entity as soon as possible, and then to join the European Union which was then being created. Poland’s commitment to this goal resulted from its conviction that affiliation with the EU was absolutely necessary due to the civilisational choices

¹⁴ It is worth noting, however, that the policy of “friendship and cooperation” with the USA has been recently pursued by politicians with considerable experience in the field of strengthening socialist internationalism and “friendship and brotherhood” with the USSR, who in the 1970s and 1980s were prominent activists of the Polish United Workers’ Party and the youth organisations connected with the party.

which the Poles had made in the late 1980s. The formal application to commence negotiations concerning the association agreement was placed on the table by the Polish government in Brussels in May 1990, and the negotiations began in December of that year amid an atmosphere of optimism on the part of both sides. During the negotiations, however, major conflicts of interest appeared. The European Commission, contrary to previous declarations, sought to limit the access of many Polish goods (coal, metallurgical products, textiles, and agricultural products) to the Western European market and to obtain preferential treatment in Poland for its own goods.

The negotiations, conducted by Poland in concert and collaboration with Czechoslovakia and Hungary, were completed in a year, and on 16 December 1991 *The Europe Agreement Establishing the Association of Poland with the European Communities and their Member States* was signed. This Agreement was to come into force on 1 February 1994, and even earlier, on 1 March 1992, its Part III regarding trade came into force as a transitional agreement. Apart from the extensive provisions on economic cooperation, the Europe Agreement was a political dialogue between Poland and the European Communities (Article 1). The preamble to the Agreement contained a provision stating that “the final objective of Poland is to become a member of the Community and this association, in the view of the Parties, will help to achieve this objective”.¹⁵

The Agreement brought Poland closer to the European Community, but difficulties occurred in the bilateral cooperation, arising from the protective policy of the Community Member States¹⁶ juxtaposed with the fact that Poland had opened its market wide for goods from the EU, which resulted in Poland’s considerable negative balance of trade with the EU. The adaptation process was long due to the structural and legal discrepancies between Poland and the standards of the European Community. In addition the then twelve Member States did not practically assist Poland in accelerating the process. Their leaders formulated the criteria of accession only in June 1993 during the session of the European Council in Copenhagen. Subsequently, for the next several years they delayed the issuance of a timetable setting forth the Eastern European candidate countries’ path to full membership in the European Community.

While Poland filed a formal application for EU membership on 8 April 1994, the European Union showed no hurry from its side to make the formal decision to invite the candidates for membership. It was not until 13 December 1997 that the European Council invited them to participate in the accession negotiations. Talks with six candidates (Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia and Cyprus) were inaugurated on 31 March 1998, and on 10 November of that year the working stage began. The programmes of all the subsequent governments in Warsaw invariably articulated the goal of Poland’s accession to the EU. In the meantime problems remained in the relations between Poland and the EU concerning EU barriers placed on the export of Polish metallurgical and agricultural products, which increased the number opponents of accession in Poland.¹⁷

The entirety of matters to be negotiated were divided into 31 chapters. Some of them, e.g. the issues concerning research and development, education, training and youth raised no controversies and were (initially) closed already on the day when the working talks began. The most difficult issues, such as agriculture, finance, budgetary, and competition policy were delayed by the Polish government until the end of the negotiations. As a consequence, the European Council session which took place with the participation of the heads of state of candidate countries in Copenhagen on 12-13 December 2002 was most dramatic. Poland, which

¹⁵ The Polish wording of the Agreement can be found in *Dziennik Ustaw RP*, 1994, No. 11, item 38.

¹⁶ For instance the ban on the import of cattle and beef from Poland, introduced in early 1993, was justified on the grounds of fears of foot and mouth disease, which Poland had not observed for 20 years, and the ban on imports of fruit from Poland in the summer was also justified by sanitary reasons.

¹⁷ See: R. Zięba, *Polska debata na temat Unii Europejskiej*, [in:] *Unia Europejska. Nowy typ współpracy międzynarodowej*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 113-129.

had posed the greatest demands regarding the protection of its national agriculture (transition periods regarding the purchase of land by foreigners, direct payments for farmers) and subsidies to the budget from EU resources, was very successful in the end; it negotiated highly favourable accession terms, which were beneficial for the other acceding states as well. Admittedly, it made a bad impression on the EU partners, but the entrance gate to the path to accession was opened.

The signing of the Accession Treaty on 16 April 2003 in Athens by the heads of the 25 EU states, including 15 Member States and 10 acceding states (with Poland among them), was a great historic event. On that day the Prime Minister Leszek Miller, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz and the Minister for European Affairs Danuta Hübner, in the presence of President Aleksander Kwaśniewski and the first Prime Minister of democratic Poland, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, signed the extensive document defining the terms of Poland's membership in the European Union. The Accession Treaty is almost 5,500 pages long and it contains provisions relating to all 10 acceding states, as well as separate chapters devoted to each of the states. The regulations regarding Poland are the longest – as many as 1,000 pages.

The Accession Treaty was accepted by Polish society at large in a referendum on 7-8 June 2003. Though there were considerable fears regarding the outcome, it proved to be unambiguously positive. The voter turnout for the referendum was 58.85% of eligible voters, of which 77.45% gave their consent to Poland's accession to the European Union. The Accession Treaty was ratified by the President of the Republic of Poland on 23 July 2003, and Poland's road to the European Union was officially opened on the Polish side. As a result, **on 1 May 2004, Poland, along with nine other states (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia and Slovenia) became a new member of the EU.** This marks the historic date on which Poland joined what seems will constitute, for many years, the most powerful integration organisation in the world, and which is also a strong centre of European culture and civilisation. In joining the EU, Poland has knotted close and apparently permanent ties with the democratic states of the Western civilisational circle. Thus the slogan announced at the beginning of Poland's transformation – “return to Europe” – has been fulfilled.

After the euphoria, loudly expressed by the Euro-enthusiasts, died down, Poland soon began to re-evaluate its positive attitude towards the European Union. This was the result of at least two factors. Firstly, there were signals coming from Brussels indicating that the European Commission interpreted certain provisions of the Accession Treaty differently than the government in Warsaw (*inter alia* those on direct payments for farmers and production limits), accompanied by critical judgments from Brussels claiming that Poland was the worst-prepared state with regard to the implementation of EU standards.¹⁸ This gave rise to increasingly voiced criticisms from the Euro-sceptics, who also became more and more numerous.¹⁹ Secondly, Poland's involvement in the war and subsequent occupation of Iraq, strongly criticised by Polish society, fixed the perception of its role as that of “the closest ally of the US among the new states of new Europe.” This role gave Polish leaders a false impression of their country's allegedly

¹⁸ This judgment was officially presented in the *Comprehensive Monitoring Report on Poland's Preparation for Membership*, submitted by the European Commission on 5 November 2003. The text of the report can be found on the website of the Office of the Committee for European Integration (UKIE) <www.doc.ukie.gov.pl/>.

¹⁹ The group of Euro-sceptics was joined by the Polish Peasant Party, after it left the ruling coalition (with the Democratic Left Alliance and the Labour Union) in late February 2003. The Peasant Party particularly criticised the government's consent to signing the Accession Treaty in spite of the fact that Brussels had introduced Article 23, authorising the EU Council to make such adaptations before the accession of the new members (via unilateral decision taken at the Commission's request and after consultations with the European Parliament) in the areas of common agricultural policy which may be necessary pursuant to the changes in the Community regulations. The Party proposed dismissing the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, and the Minister for European Affairs, Danuta Hübner (who was appointed a commissioner in the European Commission) for this reason.

growing prestige in the international arena, which was used as a premise for the assumption that Poland's position in the European Union would be strengthened thanks to its support of Washington. The effects of this way of thinking were demonstrated in the debate on the institutional reform of the Union.

On 9 September 2003, the government of the Republic of Poland formulated a critical judgment concerning the Treaty Establishing the Constitution for Europe, previously presented (on 10 July) by the European Convention. Poland made four major postulates: the first and most important was that the system of weighted voting in the EU Council established under the Nice Treaty²⁰ be maintained, which meant rejecting the system of the so-called 'double majority' proposed by the Convention (absolute majority of states plus a stipulated demographic majority, proposed at the level of 60% of the total EU population); the second regarded improving the efficiency of the institutional system of the EU – Poland objected to the idea of establishing a single EU president and advocated a group presidency, as well as abandonment of the concept of establishing a Council for General and Legislative Affairs and maintaining the "one state – one vote" principle in the choice of members of the European Commission; the third involved ensuring the participation of all EU members in decisions defining the cooperation mechanisms in the area of Common Foreign and Security Policy (and in issues concerning the ESDP), as well as including a stipulation regarding the role of NATO in the Euro-Atlantic security system (which in practice meant an objection to the establishment of defence structures in the EU which could be competitive towards NATO); and fourth – the inclusion of a reference to Europe's Christian tradition in the preamble to the Constitutional Treaty.²¹

Poland presented its position concerning all the above four postulates during the Intergovernmental Conference which began on 4 October 2003 in Rome. In subsequent weeks Polish diplomats made intense efforts to gain support for Poland's position, which in fact delayed the work on the European Constitution. This is when the peculiar Warsaw – Madrid axis was established, along with the divisions in the EU caused by the Iraqi crisis. In spite of its intense efforts, Poland did not manage to gain any support for its position from any EU Member State (apart from that of Spain) or candidate country. Consequently, the unyielding position of Poland and Spain during the 13 December 2003 session led to the fiasco of the summit, and the work of the Intergovernmental Conference was prolonged.

Following his return from Brussels, Polish Prime Minister Leszek Miller was greeted with as a hero. He was praised in the first instance by that political opposition which was pro-European, which had taken a distinct liking to the slogan presented in the *Sejm* (by MP Jan Rokita of the Civic Platform) – "Nice or death". Even more striking, his political opponents who were opponents of Poland's accession to the EU (the parties League of Polish Families and Self-Defence) could not conceal their satisfaction, arguing that even the head of the Cabinet understood that Poland's accession to the EU was economically disadvantageous and posed a threat to state sovereignty, as Poland could be dominated by strong states such as Germany or France. The President and his chancellery, as well some liberal circles (the Democratic Left

²⁰ Warsaw demanded preservation of the Nice provisions according to which Poland (and Spain) were granted 27 weighted votes, i.e. only two votes less than the "great four", i.e. Germany, France, Italy, and Great Britain. In practice, this procedure meant "a triple majority", as a decision requires at least 232 weighted votes (out of 321) of the states with at least 62% of the EU population, which in turn meant favouring small states. The Polish argumentation referred to the *pacta sunt servanda* principle. The new voting system, proposed by the European Convention, **would**, after its entry into force in 2009, mean taking decisions in compliance with the "double majority" principle, i.e. a majority of the states representing at least 60% of the EU population. According to the opinion of the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, this system will reflect the dual character of the EU as a union of states and citizens. In fact, the system gives a considerable advantage to large EU states over the remaining members.

²¹ See the Communiqué after the Council of Ministers, 09.09.2003, <www.kprm.gov.pl/1937_10002.htm>.

Alliance and independent experts) appealed for granting the Polish government greater flexibility in the further work on the European constitution, coordinated in the first half of 2004 by Ireland, which was holding the presidency of the EU Council. Apparently, the increasing disenchantment expressed in Poland with the choice of its pro-American course in foreign policy, which improved the perception and negotiating position of the main proponents of a strengthened EU, i.e. France and Germany, was a factor strengthening the pro-European attitudes of the Polish political elites. In mid-March 2004 Poland was left all alone after the Spanish Prime Minister-elect, José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero,²² announced a change in the Madrid position and its acceptance of the EU Constitution. As a result, during the meeting of the European Council on 25-26 March in Brussels, Poland ultimately resigned from its defence of the Nice voting system in the EU Council, expressing its consent to a compromise based on a draft containing a double majority system in the decision-making process of the European Council of Ministers.

In 2003 serious tensions occurred in Poland's relations with Germany and France, which until then had been the main advocates of Poland's accession to the EU. They were mostly connected with the differences in position regarding first Iraq, and then the European Constitution. In addition, the atmosphere was worsened by the property claims made by the German Union of Expellees against Poland and the initiative to establish a Centre against Expulsions in Berlin. All this had a negative impact on cooperation within the Weimar Triangle. On 9 May 2003, a meeting between the Presidents of Poland and France and the Chancellor of Germany was held in Wrocław, Poland at the behest of the Polish side. Though all the participants of the summit made references to the atmosphere of European holiday (the so-called Schumann Day) and tried to eliminate the climate of misunderstanding, the importance of the Weimar Triangle as a vehicle of integration between Poland and the EU was not restored. Polish observers noted the difference in emphasis during the press conference after the meeting of the three leaders and that which prevailed at the rapprochement of France, Germany and Russia during the Iraqi crisis.

3. Sub-regional cooperation in Central Europe

Sub-regional cooperation in Central Europe and adjacent areas has turned out to be a new direction in the foreign policy of Poland during its transformation. Its involvement in this direction was proposed by Western political scientists and politicians, although it also had its domestic advocates (e.g. Adam Michnik and Bronisław Geremek), who indicated the need to replace the East – West axis of the Cold War with a new direction of Polish foreign policy along a North – South line. When the old division of Europe began to collapse, Poland began seeking common interests with its neighbours, first in the south and then in the north, and contributed to the creation of a „new regionalism”, which was initially attributed the function of acting as a facilitator in the co-creation of a new, democratic, and cooperating Europe without blocs or privileged economic groups, and subsequently assigned the role of a vehicle pushing the former socialist countries towards integration with Western and security structures.²³

²² The parliamentary elections in Spain of 14 March 2004 were won by the socialist party (PSOE). Its electoral victory and the defeat of the People's Party of José Marii Aznar to a certain degree resulted from the terrorist attacks against Madrid (11 March 2004), in which 190 people died and 1900 were wounded. Al Queda admitted to having organised the attacks, which were in revenge for Spain's participation in the occupation of Iraq.

²³ For more information, see. R. Zięba, *Nowy regionalizm w Europie a Polska, „Sprawy Międzynarodowe”*, 1992, No. 1-2, p. 25 and subsequent pages.; J. Zająć, *Polska w strukturach współpracy subregionalnej*, [in:] T. Łoś-Nowak, A. Dudek (ed.), *Poziomy aktywności Polski w środowisku międzynarodowym*, Legnica 2002, pp. 398-399.

Poland was one of the initiators and most active proponents of closer tripartite cooperation with **Czecho-Slovakia** and Hungary within the Visegrad Triangle, the name of which was changed into the Visegrad Group after the disintegration of the federal state of the Czechs and Slovaks. The main achievements of this consultative, informal **grouping** included the signing of the Europe Agreements associating those states with the European Communities and their Member States on 16 December 1991, which was achieved thanks to the coordinated efforts of the Visegrad Triangle, the creation (pursuant to the agreement of 21 December 1992) of the Central European Free Trade Area – **CEFTA**,²⁴ facilitating the accession to NATO first of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary (in March 1999), and then of Slovakia (in March 2004), as well as the four states' simultaneous accession to the EU (1 May 2004). After the establishment of a Presidency of the group, Poland held the position in 2000/2001 **and then again in 2004/2005.**

Poland was also a co-initiator of cooperation with the Baltic states. The first non-communist Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, proposed an initiative to organise a conference of the heads of Baltic state governments in Poland. Such a conference took place, although in Swedish Ronneby, on 2-3 September 1990 and inaugurated the cooperation of the states in this sub-region, initially concerned only with the protection of the Baltic Sea environment. On 6 March 1992, the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) was established, which develops effective cooperation in various areas: ecology, economy, nuclear safety and radiological protection, promotion of democracy, cooperation among youth, and in combating organised crime and epidemic diseases. The functions of the CBSS also included preparing candidate countries for EU membership and the preparation of Russia for partnership cooperation with the organisation. Warsaw initially demonstrated high interest in the Baltic cooperation; *inter alia*, it initiated the creation of the **Union of the Baltic Cities** – Gdańsk was the first seat of this organisation – and together with Sweden it co-initiated the creation of a task group for combating organised crime and **establishing** the permanent Secretariat of the Council.²⁵ Poland held the CBSS presidency in 1994/1995, and then again in 2004/2005.

The third sub-regional group, which Poland joined in July 1991, is the present Central European Initiative, which was then called the Pentagonale. In its first years, this **grouping** focused on sectoral cooperation in various areas, mainly economic, and then extended its activity to include the issues of protection of national minorities, promoting democracy, and combating terrorism. Poland was encouraged to get involved in cooperation schemes south of the Central European zone by the fact that Italy and Austria, two states belonging to stable western structures, were members of the Pentagonale. Poland's participation in both the CBSS and the CEI has been beneficial in terms of gaining experience in international cooperation and gradual adaptation to EU integration and building general European cooperation.

Poland has also shown interest in other **groupings** associated with “new regionalism”, perceiving its interest in the commencement of cooperation – as an associated member – with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (from the time when the **structure** was established on 25 June 1992) and then with the **Barents Euro-Arctic Region** (also from the beginning, i.e. from 11 January 1993) and the Arctic Council (from 17 September 1998).

²⁴ The last meeting of the prime ministers of the CEFTA states in the then formula of eight states took place on 7 November 2003 in Brdo near Kranje in Slovenia. The participants (Poland was represented by Vice-Prime Minister Marek Pol) adopted the declaration of the summit, which confirmed the significant contribution of the organization in strengthening the mutual relations and the EU integration process. After the accession of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia to the EU, the states which will remain in CEFTA will be Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia.

²⁵ The first head of the CBSS Secretariat, with its seat in Stockholm, in 1998-2002 was a Pole, Jacek Starościak.

Beginning in the mid-1990s, Poland tried to play the role of leader of the entire Central Europe.²⁶ This policy was not accepted by all its partners, which gave rise to problems in the bilateral relations with some states (e.g. with the Czech Republic in the early 1990s or Hungary in the beginning of the next decade) and weakened cooperation within sub-regional groupings to the point that, on the verge of the EU enlargement, some were in an impasse, in particular Poland's most important collective partner, the Visegrad Group. By the end of the EU accession negotiations in December 2002, Poland's southern neighbours no longer supported the demands of Warsaw.

When preparing for full membership in the EU, the states of the Visegrad Group were interested in joining the Schengen agreement on the visa-free crossing of the internal borders of the EU. During a meeting in Prague on 11 September 2003, the home affairs ministers of the four states discussed national strategies on the full participation in the Schengen system and declared that the states of the Visegrad Group aimed to fully participate in the Schengen system as soon as possible after joining the EU. However, the states decided against eliminating border controls on the borders between the Group states themselves.

Immediately before the Intergovernmental Conference of the European Union, a meeting of the Visegrad Group prime ministers was organised on 1 October 2003 in Dobříš, near Prague. It was wholly devoted to coordinating the positions of the four states regarding the draft of the European Constitution. Though the states agreed on a number of issues, e.g. preservation of the “one state – one commissioner” principle, the rotation of the presidency of the EU Council, and expressed a common objection against the creation of “a closed circle in the EU which would work on the issues of security and defence in Europe”, there was no support for the fundamental element of the Polish position, i.e. maintenance of the Nice system of voting in the EU Council. Several days later it turned out that Poland was left alone when presenting the entirety of its postulates during the Intergovernmental Conference, and critical opinions appeared in the states of the Visegrad Group concerning “Polish stubbornness” in the promotion of its postulates. The meeting of the presidents of the four states in Budapest, held on 3 November 2002, did not change the positions of our southern neighbours, and neither did the numerous bilateral talks held by the President and Prime Minister with their counterparts from the Visegrad Group states.²⁷ Warsaw's inability to gain support for its postulates during the EU Intergovernmental Conference should be considered a bad sign for Poland's presidency of the Visegrad Group for 2004/2005.

²⁶ The most obvious expression of Poland's will to be the leader of all Central European states was the so-called Riga Initiative, presented by President Aleksander Kwaśniewski on 5 July 2002 during a meeting with the leaders of the 10 states of the Vilnius Group in the capital of Latvia. The initiative proposed close cooperation of this *gremium* with the Visegrad Group. Then, on 19-20 March 2003 a conference entitled “The Riga Initiative – Europe without Divisions” was organized in Warsaw. The participants included advisors of presidents and government representatives of 17 states of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe, i.e. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine. The conference discussed the ways of realising the initiative of the Polish president, aimed at building a Europe without divisions and supporting the European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes. The ideas were to be implemented by the XIII Economic Forum in Krynica Górska on 4 September 2003; however, the invitation of the Polish president was accepted only by the President of Croatia, Stipe Mesić, President of Macedonia, Boris Trajkovski, and President of Romania Ion Iliescu; the prime minister of Slovakia Mikuláš Dzurinda also attended the event.

²⁷ E.g. on 19 March 2003 the prime minister L. Miller met the delegation of the National Council of the Republic of Slovakia, headed by Pavol Hrušovský, in Warsaw; on 16-17 September the Polish prime minister paid the first official visit to Croatia; on 30 September he paid an official visit in the Czech Republic, and on 20 November he received the visit of the Hungarian prime minister Péter Medgyessy in Warsaw, whereas President Kwaśniewski paid a working visit to the Czech Republic on 25 September.

Poland chaired the Central European Initiative twice, in 1995 and again in 2003. During the first term, it attempted to formalise the principles of cooperation within the group and advocated its enlargement to include new members. During the meeting of prime ministers of 6-7 October 1995 in Warsaw, a document entitled *Guidelines for Activities and Rules of Procedure of the Central European Initiative* was adopted, and ground was prepared for inviting six new states the following year: Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Poland's goal was to tighten the cooperation of the Central European Initiative with the European Union, particularly within the context of the EU enlargement to the east. The issue was discussed, *inter alia*, during the meeting of foreign affairs ministers of the CEI states in Wrocław on 12–13 June 2003. Poland was also the organiser of the Warsaw meeting of prime ministers on 20-21 November 2003, connected with the VI CEI Economic Forum and the Youth Forum. The heads of government accepted the CEI action plan for the years 2004-2006, prepared by Poland. Thanks to the participation of the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, at that time holding the presidency of the EU Council, the meeting was also used by Poland to promote its position on the draft of the EU Constitution. However, Poland did not manage to convince either the Italian prime minister or his Austrian counterpart to share its opinion. Moreover, as the media coverage emphasised, the Warsaw meeting was not properly prepared in terms of organisation.

4. Eastern policy

In the initial period after the victory of the Solidarity forces in Poland, during the time when the Eastern Bloc still existed and the Western superpowers remained convinced of its further existence, there were no realistic opportunities for a quick revision of Poland's 'eastern policy' towards the USSR. The German problem, which was growing in intensity, was an additional obstacle. In this situation, the government of T. Mazowiecki pursued a pragmatic policy towards the USSR, declaring its readiness to fulfil Poland's alliance obligations and trying to convince its partner of the necessity to establish equal, partner-like, and good neighbourly relations based on respect for the principle of sovereignty and the rule of non-interference in the internal affairs of the other side.²⁸

Taking into account the emancipation efforts of the nations within the USSR, the concept of "two tracks" was developed at the beginning of 1990 in Warsaw. It assumed the maintenance parallel relations with Moscow as the centre, and with selected newly independent republics. The Polish policy was extremely cautious. When Lithuania declared its independence (11 March 1990), the Polish authorities limited their actions to gestures of support, but did not decide to officially recognise the Lithuanian government.²⁹ The October 1990 visit of the foreign affairs minister, K. Skubiszewski, to the USSR was a more decisive, although not completely successful, attempt to practically implement the new eastern doctrine. The visit resulted in declarations on the principles of Polish relations with Ukraine and the Russian Federation, signed in Kiev and Moscow, but anti-Polish demonstrations took place in Minsk, followed by territorial claims concerning the Białystok region, and the visit ended in a fiasco.

Polish – Soviet relations were burdened with many difficult problems resulting both from the complex historical heritage of relations between the countries as well as the fact that Poland had just been in the same bloc as the USSR. One of the issues which hindered the reconstruction and development of bilateral relations based on new principles was the presence of the USSR's

²⁸ See *Exposé sejmowe premiera PRL Tadeusza Mazowieckiego (fragmenty dotyczące polityki zagranicznej i stosunków międzynarodowych)*, Warszawa, 12 września 1989 r., "Zbiór Dokumentów", 1990, No. 3, pp. 23-27.

²⁹ R. Yakemtchuk, *Les républiques baltes et la crise du fédéralisme soviétique*, "Studia Diplomatika", 1990, nos 4-6, pp. 235-236.

Northern Army Group in Polish territory. Poland raised the issue of its withdrawal in the autumn of 1990, but an understanding with the government of the Russian Federation was not reached until as late as May 1992. The withdrawal of Russian military forces was practically finished in September 1993. In the first years of the transformation, Poland focused on settling historical accounts with Russia, demanding that the Kremlin admit to committing the massacre at Katyń and, having obtained that, asking for further acts of expiation from Moscow. This did not create a good climate for the development of political cooperation, especially inasmuch as Poland's eastern policy was not only conceptually weak, but in addition it was not supported by either economic cooperation, nor commercial or cultural exchanges.

The propaganda of the Polish leaders emphasised their successes after the disintegration of the USSR by pointing to the conclusion of bilateral treaties on friendly cooperation and good neighbourly relations with Ukraine (18 May 1992), Russia (22 May 1992), Belarus (23 June 1992), Latvia (1 July 1992.) and Estonia (2 July 1992.), as well as, after difficult and protracted negotiations, with Lithuania (26 April 1994). The delay in the negotiation of the latter treaty was caused by disputes over the rights of the Polish minority in Lithuania (approximately 300,000 persons) as well as varying interpretations of history, especially the most recent.

Concluding political treaties with these states, however, did not make the bilateral cooperation any more dynamic. The impasse in the relations with Russia lasted as long as until 2002, and was primarily caused by Moscow's objections to Poland's increasingly close cooperation and integration with NATO. On the other hand, despite manifest demonstrations of the will to pursue a strategic partnership on the part of both Poland and Ukraine, and the numerous advances made by Warsaw to Ukraine, Polish – Ukrainian bilateral relations during the first four years had no qualities of genuine partnership, neither in terms of their substance nor in the protocollar forms. A revival took place in mid-1996 thanks to the initiative of the President of the Republic of Poland, A. Kwaśniewski, after Ukraine declared its intent to pursue a Euro-Atlantic orientation in its foreign policy.³⁰

After initial misunderstandings in the autumn of 1990, bilateral cooperation between Poland and Belarus developed dynamically, both at the political and economic levels. However, after Aleksandr Lukashenka took over the office of the president in 1994, the non-democratic course of his domestic policy, his anti-market economic policy, and the unfriendly attitude he expressed towards pro-Western Poland reduced Polish – Belarusian relations to a bare minimum, even though Warsaw did not join the policy of firm isolation of Belarus pursued by other democratic states.

Poland's accession to NATO, though consistently opposed by all the political forces in Russia, paradoxically facilitated the reconstruction of bilateral relations between Warsaw and Moscow. The visit of the new president of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, on 16-17 January 2002 was of symbolic significance. Though the political climate had changed the basic problems remained, and the issue of the supply and distribution of energy resources, i.e. oil and natural gas, as well as their transport through Polish territory to the West, was particularly important for Poland.

The renegotiation and signing, on 12 February 2003, of an additional protocol to the agreement with Russia (of 25 August 1993) regarding the pipeline system for the transit of Russian gas through the territory of the Republic of Poland and the supply of natural gas for Poland was a clear success of the Polish side. Under the protocol, the supply of gas will be decreased by 74.6 billion cubic meters (i.e. by 35%) and will last until 2012. Thanks to the overall reduction, Poland will spend USD 5 billion less on the import of gas from Russia than originally planned under the earlier contractual obligations. Decreasing the gas supply gives

³⁰ For more information on the meanders of the strategic partnership of Poland and Ukraine, see R. Zięba, *The 'Strategic Partnership' between Poland and Ukraine*, "The Polish Foreign Affairs Digest", 2002, vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 195-226.

Poland an opportunity to diversify its sources of supply, which will result in increased domestic production and imports from other sources. Under the new understanding, the first part of the Yamal pipeline is to be wholly financed by funds obtained from the payments for the transit of gas through Poland, without committing resources from the national state budget.³¹

In subsequent months Polish – Russian relations were disturbed by the issue of visa requirements, which Poland tried to introduce from 1 July 2003 in an attempt to comply with EU regulations. Russia, which opposed the plan, proposed to the EU the mutual elimination of visas, but the Russian postulate was rejected by Brussels. Poland, on the other hand, offered a solution which Ukraine had accepted; it proposed the introduction of free visas for citizens of the Russian Federation, in exchange for which Russia would eliminate the visa requirement for Polish citizens entering Russia. In reliance on the principle of reciprocity, Russia rejected the offer³² and as a consequence no agreement was reached along these lines. Thus on 18 September 2003 the vice ministers of foreign affairs of Poland and Russia signed an agreement on the introduction of a visa requirement for persons moving between Poland and Russia from 1 October 2003. The same solution was applied towards Belarus, while the Ukrainians, as noted above, in return for the issuance of free visas to its citizens do not demand visas from Polish citizens.³³

The continuation of commercial exchanges is a serious problem in Poland's relations with Russia, because as a result of its EU accession Poland had to terminate certain agreements on bilateral cooperation due to the necessity to adapt to EC legal and treaty requirements as well as to the standards imposed by Community law.³⁴ On 31 October 2003, Warsaw terminated the 25 August 1993 treaty between the Republic of Poland and the Russian Federation on commercial and economic cooperation. That treaty had guaranteed trade at the level of most favoured nation status, and defined the conditions of operation of commercial representative offices and the Joint Commission. Following its termination there was the risk that Russia may apply higher customs duties to goods imported from Poland and in other ways block the development of bilateral commercial relations. Moreover, in spite of the regular political dialogue between Warsaw and Moscow there is still no progress in the so-called ‘difficult issues’, including *inter alia* compensatory damages for Poles persecuted in the USSR.

From the year 2000 onward Polish – Ukrainian relations have continuously lost momentum, due to the ambiguity in Kiev’s course of foreign policy³⁵ and the growing Ukrainian opposition (from the spring of 2001) to the political position of President Leonid Kutschma. However, Poland has supported Ukraine’s ambitions with regard to NATO and EU accession. On the other hand the Ukrainian president, who under the influence of Aleksander Kwaśniewski had concluded a number of agreements with Poland, turned out to be an unreliable partner insofar as their implementation was concerned. Ukraine continuously failed to comply with its obligations, particularly those pursuant to the agreement on cultural

³¹ In late June 2003 representatives of Russia and Great Britain signed a memorandum of cooperation on the construction of a new pipeline from Russia to Western Europe via the Baltic Sea. This provoked anxiety in Poland, fearing that Russia would resign from the idea of building the second line of the Yamal pipeline through Belarus, Poland, and Germany. Though Russia denied that the Baltic pipeline was a competitive solution, it delayed the decision on the construction of the second pipeline crossing Poland until the end of 2005.

³² *Polska - Rosja Nie będzie «wariantu ukraińskiego». Do kolejki po wizy*, “Rzeczpospolita” of 26 March 2003.

³³ The understanding on this issue was signed on 30 July 2003 in Kiev in the presence of prime ministers Victor Yanukovitch and Leszek Miller, who was paying a two-day visit to Ukraine.

³⁴ In total, in 2003 Poland terminated 68 bilateral agreements with non-EU states.

³⁵ Ukraine concluded with Russia subsequent agreements on cooperation and integration within the Commonwealth of Independent States, and in 2002 President Kutschma accepted the office of the CIS Chairman.

cooperation (of 1997) and those concerning the restoration of the Polish Cemetery Orląt (Eaglets' Cemetery) in Lviv.

The issue of settling the accounts of recent history has provoked fierce emotions, both in Ukraine and in Poland, as it encompasses the problem of mutual harms inflicted by the Ukrainians and Poles during WW II and immediately after its end. The identical declarations of the Polish and Ukrainian Parliaments passed on 10 July 2003 on the Volhynian tragedy, i.e. the murders of Poles committed by Ukrainians, constituted an attempt to bring about a breakthrough.³⁶ The next day, the presidents of Poland and Ukraine participated in memorial celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the murders in Volhynian Pawliwka (the former Poryck). However it was obvious that the Ukrainians, especially those inhabiting the regions on the Polish border, were still not ready for reconciliation with the Poles.

Given this psychologically precarious situation, the national authorities of Poland, having in mind the necessity to tend to the requirements of the general concept of national security, have continued to emphasise the importance of a strategic partnership with Ukraine, though they primarily have focused on tightening economic cooperation; cooperation in other areas remains burdened with suspicion and/or the unreliability of the Ukrainian side. The arrangements concerning the oil pipeline Odessa–Brody–Gdańsk turned out to be highly important, especially after the European Commission expressed its interest in the realisation of the project in late March 2003. During the visit of the Polish prime minister Leszek Miller to the Ukraine, a memorandum was signed between the Polish PERN “Przyjaźń” and the Ukrainian “Ukrtransnafta” on the extension of the Odessa–Brody pipeline to Płock. The realisation of this enterprise would ensure the transportation of oil from the Caspian Sea to Poland, which is of importance in Poland’s search for the diversification of supplies of this vital resource. The project gained the support of the Polish and Ukrainian governments, as well as of the European Union, which included it in the energy resources security programme. In early February 2004, the Ukrainian government decided that the Odessa-Brody pipeline would transport Caspian rather than Russian oil, which was an important step towards implementing the arrangements on the transport of oil to Poland and then further to Western European states. The arrangements concerning the construction of the pipeline were confirmed by President Leonid Kutschma during his Warsaw meeting with President Aleksander Kwaśniewski on 12 February 2004.³⁷

Contacts with other partners of the Commonwealth of Independent States has been, from the very beginning, of minor importance in Polish foreign policy. Warsaw was unable to organise repatriation on a greater scale for the Poles living in Kazakhstan (approximately 60,000), who live there not by choice but due to the expulsions conducted by the Soviet authorities after 1939, i.e. after their annexation of the Polish eastern borderlands.

5. Non-European countries

The primary characteristic of the foreign policy of democratic Poland is its pro-Western orientation. This direction is determined by the newly-adopted definition of Poland’s *raison d’etat*, whose core involves integration with Western European and Euro-Atlantic institutions,

³⁶ During the ethnic purge, begun in Volhynia in 1943 and conducted by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the local peasants, 30,000 to 60,000 Poles were killed (the Ukrainian side considers the figure of 60,000 to be excessive). The Ukrainian side talks of 10,000 – 12,000 Ukrainian victims of Polish retaliatory actions, whereas the Polish side maintains that the figure is approximately 2,000 – 2,500. The Ukrainian action was aimed at eliminating all Poles from Volhynia. 11 July 1943 is considered the to be the culmination day of the anti-Polish action, as 167 villages inhabited by Poles were attacked on that day. In Poryck alone, i.e. the contemporary Pwaliwka, Ukrainians murdered approximately 200 Poles.

³⁷ The presidents also discussed the issues of bilateral cooperation on the reconstruction of Iraq and confirmed the strategic relations between the two states.

which it treats as the “first priority” or “strategic goal” of Polish foreign policy. The adopted doctrinal assumptions have had their consequences for Poland’s relations with a very numerous and highly diverse group of Asian, African, and Latin American states.

Due to the important role of foreign policy in supporting the economic transformation which Poland was undergoing, in the 1990s it focused its efforts on developing good relations with states with great and modern potential and high levels of industrial development. With these goals in mind, Poland instigated frequent political contacts with Japan, South Korea, the ASEAN states and China, as well as Iran, Nigeria, the Maghreb states, Argentina, and Brazil. Poland also made efforts to develop economic cooperation with these states, and commenced diplomatic relations and economic cooperation with Israel, Chile, and the Republic of South Africa. Poland’s increased association with the EU was accompanied by limitations on its contacts with most non-European states.

A certain revival was observed only on the verge of EU accession, when the Polish decision-makers realised that as an EU member, Poland must participate in the global policy of the organisation within such mechanisms as the Community policy, the CFSP, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, association agreements and free trade agreements, as well as the political consultation and cooperation procedures between the EU and the regional integration organisations from various continents and important individual states. In addition, the reconstruction or commencement of new relations with developing non-European states may yield quantifiable economic benefits. The change became noticeable in the years 2003–2004. Poland began to be more intensely involved in the reconstruction and development of neglected relations with the states from outside the Euro-Atlantic zone, particularly from Asia and the Pacific region. Numerous exchanges of visits took place at various levels with many Asian countries (India, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, as well as Arab countries³⁸ and Iran). However by June 2004, the political revival of Poland’s relations with China, which is growing into a superpower, has been insufficient.

6. Conclusions after 15 years of transformation

Before joining the European Union, Polish foreign policy focused on strengthening the international position of the the Republic of Poland, mainly thanks to its alliance with the United States of America, although the increased diplomatic activity towards Asian states also helped. A new and important challenge, increasingly intense since mid-2002, is posed by the exacerbating rivalry between the USA, which prefers a policy of unilateralism, and the European Union, which is enlarging and growing stronger. In the trans-Atlantic conflict, Poland unambiguously supported Washington, which complicated its process of joining the European Union, and in addition Warsaw took a critical position towards the project of tightening European integration as formulated by the European Convention in July 2003. There was no support for this attitude among the Central European states which Poland tries to lead. And there has been no qualitative breakthrough in Poland’s relations with its eastern neighbours.

Poland faces a serious choice between an alliance with the USA and the EU, and – more broadly – the need to formulate a new strategy in a rapidly changing world. In addition, the fact of EU accession has created the problem of stronger ties between the foreign policy of the Republic of Poland and the external policy of the EU and Poland’s own internal policy, which in May 2004 made the need to socialise Polish foreign policy more acute.

³⁸ On 20–24 March 2004 President Aleksander Kwaśniewski paid official visits in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar.

An analysis of Poland's activities in the international arena in the fifteenth year of its transformation leads to the following conclusions:

Firstly, the more Poland integrates with the Western world, the more difficult will be its choice between the diverging paths of the leaders of this world, i.e. the USA and the European Union. Poland was right to promote an alliance with the USA, a decision justified by its geopolitical security concerns. However the government, supported by the political opposition (with the exception of Self-Defence and the League of Polish Families), went against the grain of public opinion and chose to unconditionally offer carte blanche support for the US intervention in Iraq in the spring of 2003, followed by the occupation of that country. In addition a number of awkward gestures and actions were made seemingly against the main proponents of accelerated European integration (e.g. the signing of "the letter of eight", the announcement on sending a Polish-German-Danish corps to Iraq, and the "discovery" of the French-German missile systems in Iraq) and excessive expectations were generated in Polish society concerning the bonus benefits which Poland was to be granted by the USA. This reduced Poland's role to that of Washington's client and adversely affected its relations with the leading EU states, especially Germany and France.

Secondly, while the signing and ratification of the EU accession treaty was a great success, Polish political leaders had no vision of the place and role of Poland in the European Union nor any vision of European integration in general, due to which the work of the Intergovernmental Conference on the European draft constitution was blocked and Poland "theatrically" defended the Nice arrangements according to the slogan "Nice or death". It is unclear how the fiasco of the Brussels session of the European Council (13 December 2003) should be judged. If Poland wants to play the role of Great Britain in the EU, then the Brussels session was a success; if it wants to strengthen the EU, it was a defeat. Poland demonstrated excessive rigidity in promoting its position and demonstrated an inability to predict the consequences of its actions. This had an adverse effect on Poland's reputation in the EU. Poland made the wrong assumption that it was "a zero sum game", whereas the European integration process is not such a game – it offers benefits for all its participants. In defending the Nice Treaty, Poland supported national egoisms, which the Convention draft was trying to tame. It thus assumed, and even before its actual EU accession, the role of a state trying to block the Union's decisions. Building an alliance with distant Spain was another error, as Spain has more in common with Germany or France than with Poland. The President and the government, while speaking of a coherent and loyal Europe, in fact made the wrong choice of instrument to create these values by supporting the Nice Treaty, which is worse in this respect than the draft of the European Constitution. Only in March 2004 did the government express its readiness to compromise with the advocates of accelerated European integration. The most important task for Warsaw, following its spate of pro-American and anti-EU behaviour, will be convincing its EU partners that the alliance with the USA, of key importance for Poland, will not be used against them, as there is no alternative for Europe to the trans-Atlantic connection.

Thirdly, Poland is trying to continue the policy of acting as a leader of the Central European states, both within the Visegrad Group and in the broader context of the so-called Riga Initiative. However, while in previous years these states all had a common interest, i.e. their goal of NATO and EU accession, once the accession took place or was decided upon the Central European partners abandoned Poland during its most important diplomatic offensive, "the defence of Nice". No state of the sub-region supported Poland's position in spite of the intense efforts undertaken by the government and the president to gain such support. Consequently, the issue of the future of the Visegrad Group after the EU accession of all its member states is of utmost importance. Even though since 2001 the leaders of these states have all given positive answers to the question of Visegrad's future importance, there seems

to be no chance that they will accept Poland as their leader. During the battle which took place at the Intergovernmental Conference 2003/2004, Poland demonstrated that it lost its position, as neither its persuasion, its authority, nor its role sufficed to convince its partners to support its postulates.

Fourthly, Poland's eastern policy is at a standstill. Though the political dialogue with Russia has improved, there has been no breakthrough in the development of economic relations, and the issue of Poland's introduction of visas for Russian citizens marred bilateral relations for several months. The issue of settling historical accounts is still to be resolved. It can clearly be seen that in light of Russia's increasingly improved relations with the USA, NATO, and the EU, it does not treat Poland as an equal partner. Attracting Ukraine and Belarus to the West was an important goal in Polish eastern policy. In both cases, the policy has so far failed. Poland undertook no dialogue with Belarus, though it did not join the Western states which isolated this country. Poland's support of Ukraine, with which it is trying to pursue a policy of strategic partnership, has been made difficult because of the unreliability of president Leonid Kutschma. Obtaining the preliminary consent of the Ukrainian government for the extension of the Odessa-Brody pipeline for the transport of the Caspian oil to Poland was a success, whereas the unfriendly attitude of the Ukrainian side towards the policy of reconciliation based on a joint assessment of the difficult history between Poles and Ukrainians has been a failure. New opportunities for development of Polish-Ukrainian relations have emerged after a victory of "orange revolution" and election of new president of Ukraine – Victor Yuschenko at the end of 2004.

Fifthly, the increased engagement of Polish foreign policy with the states outside the Euro-Atlantic zone should be regarded as positive, particularly the renewed high level political contacts with states of Asia and the Pacific region, some of which contacts had been dormant for decades. They have created opportunities to tighten political relations and develop mutually beneficial economic cooperation. Due to Poland's involvement in Iraq, contacts with the adjacent states of the Near and Middle East have been intensified, as well as those with Turkey and Israel. In general, the intensification of non-European contacts is a beneficial trend in Polish foreign policy, not only for national reasons but also because this fact may strengthen Poland's position in the EU, which is actively cooperating with all regions and states of the world.

Sixthly, since 1989 Poland as a democratic state has justified its actions in the international arena with the moral values inherited from the Mediterranean and Christian culture of which it is a part, and has advocated strengthening the principles of international law, peace, security, and international solidarity. It invariably maintains close relations with the Holy See, headed by a Pole, Pope John Paul II. In recent years however, especially after joining NATO, Poland has disregarded the words of the Pope and begun to apply double moral standards, getting involved in such controversial "humanitarian interventions" as the NATO war with Yugoslavia in the spring of 1999 or the US attack on Iraq in the spring of 2003 and the subsequent occupation of that country. Apparently the vassalage-oriented nature of the alliance with the USA puts Poland in an ambiguous position, and its client-like attitudes towards the administration of George W. Bush may lead to a questioning of all the principles and assumptions upon which Polish foreign policy has been based since 1989. After over a decade of transformations, Poland is facing new, difficult choices. The only thing which we know for certain is that we should remain in the family of democratic states. However, that certainty does not release either politicians, experts, or society at large from the obligation to seek new solutions which will subordinate Polish foreign policy to Polish interests and national aspirations, and at the same time adapt it to the standards of the European Union.