

## VISEGRAD GROUP TOWARDS COMMON EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

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In December 1997 the European Council has taken decision on invitation to accession talks five Central European countries and Cyprus. In this group were three Visegrad states, invited earlier in July this year to join NATO, i.e., Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Slovakia had to wait for the second wave of invitation that is for December 1999. Three first countries started with negotiations in November 1998 and Slovakia in March 2000.

One of the issues discussed in the accession negotiations was the preparation of the candidates to the EU for undertaking commitments in the second pillar, i.e., the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)<sup>1</sup>. The positions of the Central European countries on this issues (among others) were presented in the documents called *Strategies of Integration*.

Polish government in January 1997 adopted the first one. It stated that the process of integration of Poland with the EU would be accompanied by a few external conditions. Document mentioned among others: the internal reform of NATO; the development of the European Defence Identity and the expected role of the WEU.

Poland considered also that the co-operation between the WEU and the EU will be continued, accompanied by closer co-operation between the WEU and NATO. The next fragment of the document included a following statement: 'Poland already meets the requirements allowing it to participate in the CFSP. The continuation and development of the current balanced foreign policy (...) will make Poland a desirable partner of the Union'<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> More on CFSP see: Kjell A. Eliassen (eds), *Foreign and Security Policy in the European Union*, London: SAGE 1998; Ben Soetendorp, *Foreign policy in the European Union: Theory, history and practice*, London: Longman 1999; John Petersen, Helene Sjursen (eds), *A Common Foreign Policy for Europe? Competing visions of the CFSP*, London: Routledge 1998; Simon Nuttall, *European Foreign Policy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000.

<sup>2</sup> *National Security Strategy for Integration*, The Committee for European Integration, Warsaw 1997, part. IV. URL <http://www.msz.gov.pl/english/unia/nsi/r4.html>.

In the similar position, the Czech Republic did not put any conditions but clearly stated in the document from 1998 that it 'is ready to accept and to apply the UE's acquis in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union (CFSP)' since its 'foreign and security policy is based on the same principles and has a similar orientation'. The following part stated that the Czech Republic is prepared and able to participate fully and actively in the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union. It 'does not see a realistic alternative to the CFSP of the EU for the future and wishes to assume its share of responsibility. It also hopes that the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty will significantly increase the efficiency and influence of the CFSP of the European Union'. Further, the document reminded that the Czech Republic was an associate partner of the WEU and had expressed its desire to become a full member of NATO and the WEU as soon as possible<sup>3</sup>.

Hungarian government in its negotiation position announced that it shares the objectives and principles of CFSP, and declared specifically the willingness to participate in carrying out CFSP by adhering to many joint actions, common positions and statements of the European Union. Also it added that Hungary were expected to become a member of the NATO and following accession to the European Union the country will seek accession to the Western European Union'. Like Poland and the Czech Republic, Hungary stated its readiness and willingness to take on the UE's acquis by the time of accession, and does not need and request any transitional period or derogation<sup>4</sup>.

The fourth member of the Visegrad Group – Slovakia – declared full acceptance the acquis of the CFSP by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004, being set as the reference date of its accession to the EU, and does not request for any derogation or transitional period for the implementation of legislation under this chapter. The position document reminded that the Slovak Republic is one of the two non-member states of the EU and the only associated country, which participates in the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM) in the region of Western Balkans<sup>5</sup>.

Before being admitted to NATO three Central European countries did not express their positions towards European defence issue. They sought to enter the Atlantic Alliance and did not to be engaged into trans-Atlantic debate. Only Slovakia, in the position document issued before the start of the EU membership negotiations took reference to this question. It was why

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<sup>3</sup> *Position Paper of the Czech Republic on Chapter 27: Common Foreign and Security Policy*, URL <[http://www.euroskop.cz/cr\\_vyjedn\\_pozdoc27en.html](http://www.euroskop.cz/cr_vyjedn_pozdoc27en.html)>. See also *Koncepce zahraniční politiky*, Ministerstvo Zahraničních Věcí ČR, Programové Dokumenty. URL <[http://www.mzv.cz/\\_dokumenty/koncepce\\_b2.html](http://www.mzv.cz/_dokumenty/koncepce_b2.html)>.

<sup>4</sup> *Conference on Accession to the European Union, Brussels, 8 September 1998, Hungary CONF-H 13/98, Negotiating Position of the Government of the Republic of Hungary on Chapter 27 «Common Foreign and Security Policy»*. URL <<http://www.mfa.hu>>.

<sup>5</sup> *Conference on Accession to the European Union, Brussels, 28 March 2000, – Slovakia – CONF-SK 13/00, Negotiating Position of the Slovak Republic on Chapter 27 «Common Foreign and Security Policy»*. URL <[http://www.foreign.gov.sk/page\\_eu\\_pd27.htm](http://www.foreign.gov.sk/page_eu_pd27.htm)>.

Bratislava began the accession talks after the UE summits in Cologne and Helsinki. It informed that 'it has been monitoring the developments related to the European Security and Defence Policy in connection with the building of autonomous decision-making capacities and, where NATO as a whole will not be engaged, supports possible EU-led peace-keeping operations'. Also the Slovak Republic confirmed that it 'pursues the objective of joining the WEU as a full-fledged member at the same time as its accession to the EU'<sup>6</sup>.

Proclamation in June 1999 by the Cologne European Council, the new branch of the EU's CFSP in the form of the Common European Security and Defence Policy, was the turning point in the development of the concept of European integration<sup>7</sup>. Partly it was a surprise to the candidates for the UE and coerced them to formulate positions. They did not expect that the UE underwent to the new policy so quickly. Since the Maastricht Treaty was approved at the end of 1991 and from that time the UE did not implement its provision on formulation of the common defence policy. The Cologne and following Helsinki (9–10 December 1999) decisions were rather unpredictable in Central Europe. When they were announced it was necessary to comment upon them. Commitments undertaken on the building of autonomous UE's defence raised the problem of the participation of the non-EU members, which are the members of NATO (six countries: Norway, Iceland, Turkey, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary) and seven EU's partners (Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia). The EU consulted none of those countries earlier. In these circumstances both groups of countries did not know if they would have been included to the process of preparation to potential military operations conducted by the EU.

Warsaw made the first reaction. On 6<sup>th</sup> December 1999, before the Helsinki summit, Poland appealed to the EU for its full participation in the decision-making by the Fifteen on possible military intervention and for conditioned such decision by precedent NATO acceptance, what *de facto* means the acceptance of the USA. Polish government announced that the EU's initiative makes sense only if it will strengthen the US presence in Europe as a trans-Atlantic link between Brussels and Washington. It expressed the opinion that European military planning should be subordinated to the Strategic Concept of the Atlantic Alliance, and establishment of forces for the EU military operations should be in accordance with defence planning system of NATO. Warsaw also postulated to create immediately a clear and binding mechanism of cooperation between NATO and the EU. Additionally, Poland claimed for participation of the non-EU countries NATO members at equal platform in the whole process of planning and undertaking decisions on UE military interventions. Those countries should also be allowed to participate in the meetings of foreign and defence ministers and even the heads

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> See: Ryszard Zieba, *Europejska Tożsamość Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony: koncepcja – struktura – funkcjonowanie (European Security and Defence Identity: Concept – Structure – Functioning)*, Warsaw: Scholar 2000, pp. 99–100.

of states of the Fifteen. In the Polish note it was not clear if Warsaw wants to have a veto in decision-making, but it seems that so<sup>8</sup>.

The position of Polish government submitted to EU's foreign ministers in Brussels strongly displeased them. France's representatives named Poland as a 'Trojan horse of America in Europe building its independent military capability'. They accused Warsaw to be under the US pressure. Italian diplomat added that Poland would not dictate to the UE what it has to do. In the opinion of Western diplomats Poland's position witnesses that Poland judges the European Union a insufficient guarantor of security in Europe, and recognises the permanent presence of the USA in Old Continent as an indispensable factor<sup>9</sup>.

The decisions of Helsinki European Council on creation of the autonomous European defence were commented in Polish press. The commentator of the newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* wrote that many Europeans hope that common defence policy can be perceived as a circular way, but only one accessible to the common political identity of the EU. A Poland's official attitude he stated it is hard to expect that Poland will welcome enthusiastically the project constructed without its participation. He added: 'the Union should not infix the impression in candidate countries that nothing is dependent on them. What is *acquis caumunautaire* – is not disputable, but this what is the Union's future should be discussed together with the countries, which will soon participate in European project'<sup>10</sup>. The Polish rightist daily *Życie* put the rhetoric question 'Poland as gun meat?'<sup>11</sup>. The influential liberal weekly *Polityka* published the article prepared by American Pole Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, who strongly criticised the EU decision on CESDP argued that Poland stands before a pitfall and should to do the choice, of course, for the NATO and the USA; he concluded that the compromise between the EU and European non-UE NATO allies will be possible when the European Union will see that Poland and other states from that group can find any different option for themselves, if their interests are not taken into account<sup>12</sup>. The other newspaper has seen the UE attempts to create CESDP as the beginning of rivalry between the European Union and the USA (nominally NATO)<sup>13</sup>. All Polish government's concerns were expressed in the speech of minister of foreign affairs Bronisław Geremek at the North Atlantic Council session in Brussels on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1999.

<sup>8</sup> „Polska krytykuje plany obronne UE’ („Poland criticises UE defence plans’), *Rzeczpospolita*, (Warsaw), 7<sup>th</sup> December 1999.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>10</sup> Janusz Reiter, „Na europejski rozkaz’ („Under European Commandment’), *Rzeczpospolita*, 12<sup>th</sup> December 1999.

<sup>11</sup> *Życie*, (Warsaw), 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2000.

<sup>12</sup> „Pułapka z wyboru’ („Choice pitfall’), *Polityka*, (Warsaw), No. 18, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2000, pp. 36–37.

<sup>13</sup> See: Andrew A. Michta, „Transatlantyk. Czy plany stworzenia europejskiego systemu obrony mogą zagrozić NATO?’ („Trans-Atlantic. Can plans of building European defence system threaten the NATO homogeneity?’), *Wprost*, (Poznań), No. 47, 21<sup>st</sup> November 1999; Marek Swierczyński, „Unia nie chce NATO’ („The Union does not want NATO’), *Polska Zbrojna*, (Warsaw), No. 11, March 2000, p. 47.

He presented three theses describing Poland's attitude to the ESDI: 1) NATO has been and remains the cornerstone of the European security; 2) ESDP is a critical factor strengthening NATO's effectiveness; 3) Therefore, setting the clear mechanisms for NATO-EU co-operation is of vital importance to the process we are pursuing. He concentrated on the third question and appealed for a prompt commencement of works within the EU concerning establishment of appropriate mechanisms for full consultation, co-operation and transparency between the UE and NATO, and said 'We should not accept the situation when, by the end of the year 2000, WEU will have its purpose fulfilled and we will not have the new modalities between NATO and EU set up'; also he stressed the necessity 'to include of all non-EU European Allies in possible future EU's operations as well as in the EU's Policy in Security and Defence and its institutional dimension, building on arrangements existing within the WEU'. The head of Polish diplomacy warned against 'the establishment of the circle of *insiders* versus *outsiders* while creating new mechanisms, which will also weaken the process of the European integration' and appealed for 'the spirit of unity' and resuming 'the constructive approach in name of the future of this Alliance (NATO – R.Z.)'<sup>14</sup>. Specific in that speech and next Poland's official announcement was the name of the Common European Security and Defence Policy, which omit an adjective 'Common', what can show that Poland does not perceive this policy as a common venture. The same approach is presented US official statements.

The attitude of other Central European countries towards the EU's decisions on CESDP was similar. All members of the Visegrad Group discussed on that issue during the numerous meeting of officials from four countries.

At the meeting in Budapest in October 1999 the chairmen of foreign and defence committees of the parliaments declared their 'support the strengthening of European Security and Defence Identity within NATO', and stressed their 'firm belief that trans-Atlantic co-operation plays an indispensable role in maintaining peace on the Continent, and that the collective defence of Europe should continue to rest upon NATO. We think it is important that, after the merger of EU and WEU, non-EU NATO members play a full role in decisions concerning European security'. As a supplement to this statement they stressed the importance of 'the establishment of joint military units by the Visegrad and other Central European countries, as well as the extension of co-operation in the field of defence industry and procurement of military equipment'<sup>15</sup>.

One month later, the ministers of defence of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia at the meeting in Przemyśl (Poland) claimed for inclusion of their countries in deci-

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<sup>14</sup> Bronisław Geremek, *On European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI)*, NAC, Brussels, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1999. URL [http://www.ms.gov.pl/nac\\_esdi.html](http://www.ms.gov.pl/nac_esdi.html).

<sup>15</sup> *Joint Statement of the Chairmen of Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees of the Parliaments of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, adopted at their 4th meeting*, (Budapest, 4–5<sup>th</sup> October, 1999). URL <http://www.visegrad.org/45october1999.htm>.

sion-making process of the European Union in the fields of security and defence. They extended that postulate to the countries, which are not yet NATO members, but aspiring to both structure (for instance, Slovakia)<sup>16</sup>.

As it is known, the decisions of the European Union concerning its CESDP were undertaken without any consultation or participation of non-UE countries, including NATO new members from Central Europe. Consequently these countries have searched for other ways to be included.

At the beginning of February 2000, Portugal Presidency published drafts of three reports related to the implementation of Helsinki decisions. Propositions concerning the participation of non-EU European NATO allies in the CESDP comprised the following stipulations:

- the co-operation could start immediately after the establishment of interim governing bodies within the EU;
- the co-operation could be based on the agreements concluded by the EU with respective states according to the Art. 24 of the Treaty on European Union;
- it will follow the differentiation between '6' (members of NATO) and rest '7' (partners); the meetings in '15' + '6' formula will be provided oftener than in formula '15' + '7', particularly in the case of preparation for potential operations, and permanent participation of '6' in Military Committee will be provided.

Two main assumptions of these documents were dissatisfying for Poland and other members of '6' because the structures in format '15' + '13' will be built within the European Security and Defence Framework (ESDF) and will be the parallel and separate forum from CESDP. Such construction can lead to transformation of proposed structures into pure information bodies, in which the EU members can carry on the talks, after previously agreed position within '15'. The second contested provision is the one which offered agreement on the base of Art. 24 of the TEU. Such solution would give uniformed multilateral covenant concluded among the European Council and all thirteen states, without differentiation between '6' and '7', what can suggest that the assumption on distinctive weight of co-operation with non-EU European NATO members have only informal character. Poland has represented the stand point that the latter problem can be settled during negotiations with the EU<sup>17</sup>.

A few days after Feira meeting of the EU defence ministers, the heads of diplomacy of Poland (Bronislaw Geremek), the Czech Republic (Jan Kavan), and Hungary (Janos Martonyi) met on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2000 in London with British foreign minister Robin Cook to discuss the European Union's initiative on strengthening European security and crisis management.

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<sup>16</sup> Polish Press Agency (PAP Service), 4<sup>th</sup> November 1999. See also: *Joint Communiqué from the meeting of the ministers of defence of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Slovak Republic and the minister of national defence of the Republic of Poland, Przemysł, on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1999*. URL <<http://www.visegrad.org/4november1999.htm>>.

<sup>17</sup> Materials of the Department of European Security Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw, February 2000.

They reaffirmed the support of their countries for this initiative, and stated that they are determined that this will strengthen NATO and the EU; they agreed that the success of the EU's initiative will require full EU/NATO consultation, co-operation and transparency, so that, where the Alliance as a whole is not engaged, the EU can conduct military crisis management operations. Robin Cook briefed his interlocutors on the work in progress under the Portuguese Presidency and specifically on arrangements for the full involvement of the non-EU European allies in consultation, decision shaping and the conduct of EU-led military operations. Four ministers expressed their support for the Portuguese Presidency's proposals on the involvement of the six non-EU European allies currently under the discussion in the EU, and hoped that these proposals will be adopted at the Feira European Council. They agreed that the quality of the involvement of the six countries would be a key part of ensuring the satisfactory development of the EU/NATO relationship<sup>18</sup>. The Polish press informed that during the London meeting also the issues of the creation of European Rapid Reaction Force, Intergovernmental Conference (which began on 14<sup>th</sup> February), were discussed in the context of main questions of European security<sup>19</sup>.

The position of Poland was already clear-cut earlier, before the Helsinki EU summit. We can reconstruct the attitudes of other Central European countries on the basis of newspaper publications and fragmental statements of state officials. One of more elaborated ones was presented by the secretary of state in Hungarian MFA Janos Herman at the conference on CESDP in Budapest in March 2000. He stated that Hungary – as a country which is situated close to the region of permanent conflicts – is vitally interested in creation of an effective European crisis management mechanism. The Helsinki decisions raised two important questions: firstly – what are the goals of CESDP? And secondly – how and with whom the EU wants to achieve those goals? Then, he tried to give the answers to raised questions. As regards the first one, he stated that for Hungary the most important purpose is the improvement of European crisis management. The next purpose was building up the structures that should facilitate the integration process within the EU. J. Herman showed that CESDP causes conflict of interests within the UE and between the Union and other countries. The most important question is now if those conflicts of interests can be perceived as a threat to European security. For Hungary, which has the chance to join the EU by few next years, the most important is how the EU intends to strengthen its security? By the co-operation with NATO, or by its own? As an answer, he said: 'From the view point of Hungary the ideal solution would be the one that joined the goals of European security policy with the CESDP, conducting to strengthening and reinvigorating trans-Atlantic co-operation'. And farther he sta-

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<sup>18</sup> *Joint Press Statement by the Foreign Ministers of the United Kingdom, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic*, London, 29<sup>th</sup> February 2000. URL <<http://www.mfa.gov.hu/Szovivoi/2000/02/szov0229ang.htm>>.

<sup>19</sup> „Klamka zapadła. UE przystępuje do tworzenia sił szybkiego reagowania' („The EU begins to build rapid reaction force'), *Trybuna*, (Warsaw), 1<sup>st</sup> March 2000.

ted that CESDP 'should be closely connected with the institutional system, so Hungary expects convocation of a conference on this issue'<sup>20</sup>. Hungarian officials made interpretation of Helsinki decisions, as those decisions predict close co-operation between the EU and NATO, but allies who are not the EU members have the chance to play a significant role in the development of harmonic relations both organisations. J. Herman noted that strengthening of crisis management mechanism by non-military means has enormous significance. The war is possible: to win means using military power, while building of peace rests a more serious problem. The EU has more wide spectrum of action in this domain than NATO. Presumably, it is a domain in which the EU role should increase immediately. In the opinion of Hungary, all nations in Europe live in the same security environment, including the members of the EU, NATO, and rest of countries. Despite of being the members of the EU or not, all members of NATO have the highest level of mutual security guarantees. This is the imperative for the Union's security policy in the region. The future challenges can come from the peripheries of Europe. It is why an effective co-operation of the EU with the countries situated close to the with inflammatory points would have facilitate the Union's crisis management. Hungarian politician said that in that context it is extremely important to start thinking about the relations between Russia and Ukraine, and CESDP. At the end, J. Herman concluded that it is necessary to respect the autonomy of the UE and reinforce the trans-Atlantic co-operation. He appealed not to accelerate the process of the EU development because it can lead to non-effective solutions, and underlined that CESDP is conducive to the Hungarian national interest and aspirations to participate in NATO and the European Union<sup>21</sup>.

Before the EU summits in Lisbon (23–24<sup>th</sup> March 2000) three new NATO members coordinated their attitudes towards CESDP. During the meeting in Budapest on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2000 convened 'on the occasion of the 1st anniversary of the three countries' accession to NATO' the ministers of foreign affairs of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland issued a joint statement. In this document they addressed to the heads of states and the governments of the UE as follows: 'We strongly believe that the future of security on our continent depends directly on maintaining and strengthening the North Atlantic Alliance and preserving our trans-Atlantic links. At the same time we declare our interest in the successful development of the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy, which we regard as a potential contribution to European security. We therefore emphasise the need of the development of co-operation between NATO and the European Union. We wish to stress that the role of those NATO countries which are not members of the EU must be taken fully into account'<sup>22</sup>. This

<sup>20</sup> Janos Herman, 'Konflikty i harmonia' (,Conflicts and harmony'), *Polska Zbrojna*, No. 11, March 2000, p. 49.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>22</sup> *Joint Statement of the Budapest meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic on the occasion of the first anniversary of their accession into NATO*, Budapest, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2000. URL <<http://www.mfa.hu/Szovivoi/2000/martonyi/stat0318.htm>>.

was a clear-cut common position of three Central European countries towards the new security and defence policy of the European Union. During the press conference, held after the business meeting, three heads of diplomacy did not comment upon that controversial question; they reiterated the significance of membership of their countries in NATO and supported the candidacies of Slovakia and Lithuania to join NATO<sup>23</sup>.

The first exchange of opinions among the EU member states and non-EU NATO European members and other candidate countries took place on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2000 at the level of political directors in Brussels. At that time, all the Visegrad countries did not announce publicly their positions presented at these talks. However, it was evident that they have sought to be included in the process of CESDP construction.

Before the next EU summit in Feria (19–20<sup>th</sup> June 2000) the Visegrad Group countries during the meeting of the prime ministers in Prague on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2000 issued a declaration gave the 'support for growing activity and taking in by Europe responsibility in the field of security and defence', and stated that their countries 'are ready to contribute for European security and defence policy in the framework of the EU'<sup>24</sup>. After that, the EU elaborated its decision on proposals on modalities of consultation and/or participation that will allow the non-EU European NATO members and other countries, who the are candidates for accession to the EU, to contribute to EU military crisis management, the first consultation with those countries took place. Before the Brussels round of these talks (which was on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2000 between the EU CFSP High Representative Javier Solana and high level foreign ministries officials of the allies (the Czech Republic, Iceland, Poland, Hungary, Norway, and Turkey) Hungary announced its stand point. The spokesman's Office intimated that 'Hungary supports an effective role of the EU in strengthening European security, is ready to contribute to the strengthening institutional co-operation between the EU and NATO, and to promote the success of the European security and defence policy, in which Hungary will participate after the EU accession'<sup>25</sup>.

The Hungarian approach to the CESDP is good elaborated<sup>26</sup> and can represent the general attitude of the whole Visegrad Group. However, during the consultations with the EU new mem-

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<sup>23</sup> *Press Conference of Foreign Ministers János Martonyi of Hungary, Bronisław Geremek of Poland and Jan Kavan of the Czech Republic on the occasion of their meeting on the 1st anniversary of the three countries' accession to NATO*, Budapest, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2000. URL <<http://www.mfa.hu/Szovivoi/2000/martonyi/sajt30318a.htm>>.

<sup>24</sup> *Společne prohlášení premiéru visegrádských zemí*, Praha 9. c'ervna 2000. URL <<http://www.mzv.cz/v4praha.html>>.

<sup>25</sup> *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary. Spokesman's Office, Daily Statements, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2000*. URL <<http://www.mfa.hu/spoke0628.htm>>.

<sup>26</sup> During the visit in Budapest the British foreign minister Robin Cook welcomed Hungarian expressed commitment to the CESDP and stated that Britain is keen that candidate countries (to the EU) who are already members of NATO should have every opportunity to contribute to the new European security initiative. See *Address by British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook at the Hungarian Ambassadors' Conference 'Championing Enlargement'*, Budapest, July 25, 2000. URL <<http://www.mfa.hu/spoke0725.htm>>.

ber of NATO are in the difficult position. They want to reconcile the terms of being the US allies and candidate for accession to the EU. Poland, which since the Autumn 1997 is ruled by rightist 'Solidarity' government, presents the pro-American option, an approach that can be perceived as unwilling towards the CESDP. Its position is a reflex of not only pro-American feeling within Polish society, but it rather reflects the fears of Polish Right political parties that face integration with the 'cosmopolitan' European Union<sup>27</sup>. The initial proposals for practical development of Feira decisions concerning the EU co-operation with non-EU European allies prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Policy confirm this opinion. The initial point that Poland presented is based on the assumption, which confirmed a specific role of the six non-EU European Allies, and regular exchanges among them have been recognised as one of the basic principles governing the future co-operation of the EU with third countries in the field of CESDP. Warsaw insists on the EU that further work on political and military arrangements on the CESDP might become a part of incoming joint EU-NATO works since they constitute an indispensable element of overall practicalities of co-operation between both organisations. As the areas of consultations, which require regular co-operation in the 15+6 formula, it proposed:

- political co-operation between EU and NATO on CESDP;
- WEU *acquis* concerning operational co-operation of NATO and WEU, specifically in the field of Petersberg tasks;
- the elaboration of the European Headline Goal<sup>28</sup>.

We do not have an access to the mandates established by the Ministries of Foreign Policies of other Central European states but probably they are similar. During the current round of talks with the EU its partners represent the position that enlightened their interests as NATO members (candidate status in a case of Slovakia) and simultaneously as serious candidates to the European Union. The attitudes towards the Common European Security and Defence Policy presented by them are in general lines outlined in the documents presenting the concepts of their foreign and security policies.

The government of Poland presented the new security strategy on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2000. It stated that the Atlantic Alliance is the main factor of political and military stability of Europe, and as such, it constitutes a real basis for security and defence of Poland. The second pillar of Poland's security 'will be a system comprising relations between the European Union/Western European Union and NATO. From the perspective of Poland's long-term interests, participation in that system is equally important to the participation in the North Atlantic Alliance itself. Poland is interested in harmonising the security interests of all states of the Euro-Atlan-

<sup>27</sup> See also: Ryszard Zięba, 'Security Aspects of Poland's Integration with the European Union', in Petr Kasicka and Zbyněk Dubský (eds), *European Integration as a Way to Security and Prosperity*, Prague: The Jan Masaryk Center of International Relations 1999, pp. 33–43.

<sup>28</sup> *Initial proposals for practical development of Feira decisions concerning the EU cooperation with non-EU European Allies*. URL <[http://www.msz.pl/position\\_18082k.ang\\_html](http://www.msz.pl/position_18082k.ang_html)>.

tic area and the European Union members. (...) Until it becomes an EU member, as a member of NATO and associate member of the WEU, Poland will strive to develop co-operation with other European states within the context of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, as well as the common defence policy and common defence. Poland is vitally interested in creating the European crisis management capabilities; we shall strive to participate therein in accordance with our national potential. Poland fully supports the development of European Security and Defence Identity within the Alliance as a way of strengthening NATO's European pillar'<sup>29</sup>.

Last phrase of the document quoted shows that Poland perceives ESDI in thin format, as a part of NATO, not as a broad concept of strengthening of the European Union capabilities in fields of security and defence. Minister B. Geremek in his speech in the Sejm repeated this view in May 2000. Speaking on the Poland's acceptance of the new initiative of the European Union, he said that it 'is aimed at strengthening its Common Foreign and Security Policy by way of developing the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)'. He declared that Poland giving its back up to the Union's decisions is working 'on the assumption that all the solutions proposed aim at bolstering the harmonisation of EU and NATO operations, as well as strengthening the European security pillar, to firm up the trans-Atlantic bonds and the US commitment to European security'<sup>30</sup>.

The minister of foreign affairs Jan Kavan in the parliamentary expose presented the stance of the Czech Republic in February 2000. He said that Prague supports more independent role of Europe in security and defence issues, but Czechs are against such role as it could lead to weakening trans-Atlantic bound and US presence in Europe. The Czech Republic perceives its own interest in strengthening and supporting the links between NATO and the EU declared in Helsinki CESDP as it was. However meeting it will try to prevent from duplication or unnecessary parallelism of NATO and the EU structures. For this purpose the Czech Republic will use its associated membership in WEU, including participation in Western European Armaments Group (WEAG) it will build foundations for an effective inclusion of its own defence industry in the European armaments cooperation<sup>31</sup>.

Slovakia's position on the CESDP was officially presented to the public in the medium term concept of foreign policy for 2000–2003. In this document, the policymakers in Bratislava wrote, 'Slovakia will attentively watch the process of building the EU security capacities and is prepared to participate in the development of cooperation, especially in the area of

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<sup>29</sup> *Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland adopted at the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2000*. URL <<http://www.msz.pl/strategy.se3.html>>.

<sup>30</sup> *The Government Statement on Directions of Foreign Policy of the Republic of Poland Presented by his Excellency Prof. Bronislaw Geremek the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the Parliament on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2000*. URL <<http://www.msz.pl/expose2000.html>>.

<sup>31</sup> *Zahranicni politika Ceske republiky v rance 2000. Vystoupeni mistopfedsegy vlddy a ministra zahranicm'ch veci Ceske republiky Jana Kavana v Zahranicnim vyboru Poslanecke snemovny Parlamentu Ceske republiky dne 3. unora 2000*. URL <[http://www.mzv.cz/projev\\_ministra\\_3.html](http://www.mzv.cz/projev_ministra_3.html)>.

crisis management and Petersberg humanitarian and rescue operations'. They declared that Slovakia 'will strive to engage in discussions on forming the European security and defence identity and to actively participate in this endeavour', and at the end they stated that Slovakia perceive the building of more efficient European security capacities as a means of strengthening the North Atlantic Alliance, which is the crucial element of the European security system<sup>32</sup>. For the priorities for the year 2000 Bratislava declared its readiness to participate in the development of co-operation with the WEU, especially in the area of crisis management and Petersberg humanitarian and rescue operations. The Slovak government planned active and systemic participation in the joint NATO, WEU and EU crisis management exercises (CMX/CRISEX 2000) for Slovakia. From Slovakia's standpoint, 'it will be necessary to monitor developments related to building the EU's security capacity and the WEU's integration into the EU as presented at the EU Cologne Summit and, in contacts with the representatives of EU Members States, emphasise Slovakia's interest in retaining an institutional association with the EU of at least the same extent as its associated partnership with the WEU'<sup>33</sup>.

After European Council summit in Nice the chairmen of the committees of foreign affairs, of defence and of European integration of the parliaments of four Visegrad countries at their meeting in Warsaw (17–18<sup>th</sup> December 2000) declared the support to 'the development of the common European Security and Defence Policy and wish to participate already now in its building, including decision-shaping and decision-making'<sup>34</sup>.

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Summing all declarations, statements and announcements of politicians and governments of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia we can observe that the member states of the Visegrad Group are interested in development of the concept of Common European Security and Defence Policy and its implementation. However, they perceive CESDP as a concept, which is not clear or properly defined.

Those countries perceive and comprehend CESDP in the way allow them not to injure their vital national interests. They seek for reliable security guarantees, which they associate mainly with NATO, but also they want to assure sustainable economic and civilisational development for their societies. The latter one depends on their future membership in the European

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<sup>32</sup> *Foreign Policy Priorities of the Slovak Republic for the Period of 2000 – 2003. Medium-term Concept*. URL [http://www.foreign.gov.sk/page\\_document\\_priority.htm](http://www.foreign.gov.sk/page_document_priority.htm).

<sup>33</sup> Orientation of the Slovak Republic's foreign policy for 2000. URL <http://www.foreign.gov.sk/topic6a.htm>.

<sup>34</sup> *Joint Statement of the Chairmen of the Committees of the Foreign Affairs, of the Defence and of the European Integration of the Parliaments of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland adopted at their 6th meeting*, Warsaw, December 17–18<sup>th</sup>, 2000. URL <http://www.visegrad.org>.

Union. Consequently any rivalry between Europe and the USA can be harmful to them. It is why all the Visegrad countries want to see the West as the cohesive system, in which NATO and the EU are equally needed, and both organisations are ready to co-operate closely. However, such vision of the Western system is not adequate to the post-Cold War Europe. As we are further from the time when the Eastern block collapsed, the differentiation of interests within NATO is becoming more evident. Also the logic of deepening of the European integration has already led to the situation in which the EU has decided to back up its growing economic and political weight by reliable military capability. All the facts are perceived by Central Europe.

Generally, the countries of the region share position of the EU, but they are not ready to support effectively its preparations to build autonomous European defence system yet. They present eclectic position which tries to balance between two main poles in the Western system, and they want delude themselves that the EU will be ready to subordinate its security and defence policy to the strategic interest of the USA. It is why they appeal for the agreement between the EU and NATO on the implementation of the CESDP, which allow for avoiding the duplication of defence capabilities.

An important factor which influences the attitude of Central European countries towards the new proclaimed CESDP is a fear of close integration within the EU, which might embrace security and defence, traditionally counted to the indispensable meaning of sovereignty. Most of Central European states favour a Europe of nations than a federal one<sup>35</sup>. The viewpoints of the former Czech prime minister Vaclav Klaus or the leaders of Polish 'Solidarity' are the points in case. The speech of Joschka Fisher from May 2000 on federalisation of Europe was strongly criticised in that region.

The position of Poland could be named as particular. It opts for an opposite vision of development of European integration, due to its historical experience remains (shared with the Baltic states), slightly biased in the assessment of Russia's policy and it prefers strong security guarantees, which were recently gained from NATO. Poland has bad experience from inter war period as regards safeguarding national security with the assistance of Western European allies (France and Britain). That is why it is suspicious to their current defence plans and it made a choice for NATO hard guarantees secured by the US military presence in Europe. The Poland's attitude seems to be logically grounded.

At the Brussels Capabilities Commitment Conference in November 2000 Poland declared its contribution to the building of the European military force, but it conditioned that it will not implicate additional burdens beyond its commitment in NATO. The defence minister of Poland Bronisław Komorowski declared a 'framework brigade' for European army, but he

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<sup>35</sup> Comp. Mathias Jopp, 'Developing a European Security and Defense Identity: the Specific Input of Present and Future New Members', in: Franco Algieri, Josef Janning and Dirk Rumberg (eds), *Managing Security in Europe: the European Union and the challenge of enlargement*, Gutersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers 1996, p. 76.

did not point out how many soldiers the Polish contingent will count. He stressed that it will be the same unit that was previously assigned for NATO operations, and he conditioned that before every EU's military operation Poland will decide about the participation<sup>36</sup>. Poland maintained an unwilling position towards the new EU's policy that was evidenced by the dictum of the Polish defence minister who stated 'if a milk has spilt over', and as regards the idea of European armed forces is in progress, Poland 'must have for itself a relevant place in that concept secured'<sup>37</sup>.

Notwithstanding such strange behaviour Poland also realises that its security interest have to be co-ordinated with the economic needs and aspirations to prosperity, which are conditioned by its future membership in the European Union. The EU has many votaries in Poland. This was evident during the parliamentary debate on directions of foreign policy for the year 2000. Many deputies from the leftist opposition (Democratic Left Alliance – SLD) were unwilling to support strongly pro-American orientation of rightist government of the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) and appealed for an 'European choice' in foreign policy. Afterwards, a year later on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2001 the minister of foreign affairs, Władysław Bartoszewski, in the speech at Warsaw University, for the first time expressed clearly Poland's support for the European Union decision on undertaking common security and defence policy<sup>38</sup>.

The new Polish government, formed after parliamentary elections in September 2001, by Democratic Left Alliance – Labour Union – Polish Peasant Party, has intensified the accession negotiations with the European Union. However, during first period of functioning it did not introduce any new accents as regards the approach towards CESDP.

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<sup>36</sup> 'Udział bez entuzjazmu' ('Participation without enthusiasm'), *Rzeczpospolita*, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2000.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>38</sup> Jan Barcz, Katarzyna Zukrowska (ed.), *Przyszłość Unii Europejskiej. Polski punkt widzenia*, Warszawa: Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych 2001, pp. 87–90.