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# FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY IN THE PARTY DISCOURSE IN POLAND: MAIN FUTURES

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**Abstract:**

The article examines the role of foreign and security policies in the Polish political parties discourse since 1989, trying to explain the positions of the most significant political parties on key aspects connected with these topics. In this regard, the article explains the debates and the evolution of the parties after 1989, as well as the consensus reached, connected with Poland's accession to the Western institutions, in particular the debate on the European Union (the accession to and participation in the EU), and Eastern Europe. This set of debates helps to understand the significant divisions that today exist among the political parties in Poland. The final part of the article refers to the impact of the last parliamentary elections on foreign policy.

**Keywords:** Political parties, Poland's foreign policy, Poland's security policy, party system in Poland

***Titulo en Castellano**: La Política Exterior y de Seguridad en el discurso de los Partidos Políticos en Polonia: Aspectos principales.*

***Resumen:***

*El artículo examina el papel que tiene la política exterior y de seguridad en el discurso de los partidos políticos en Polonia desde 1989, tratando de explicar las posiciones de los partidos políticos más significativos en aspectos claves de estas políticas. De esta forma, el artículo explica los debates y la evolución de los partidos a partir de 1989, los consensos alcanzados, todo ello conexionado con el acceso de Polonia a las instituciones occidentales, de forma especial el debate sobre la Unión Europa (su acceso y participación y Europa del Este. Este conjunto de debates ayuda a entender las divisiones significativas existentes hoy entre los partidos políticos. La última parte del artículo explica el impacto de las últimas elecciones parlamentarias en la política exterior.*

***Palabras clave:** Partidos políticos, La política exterior de Polonia, la política de seguridad de Polonia, el sistema de partidos en Polonia.*



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## 1. Introduction

The political parties are the main platforms for debating the political demands in a democracy. Such parties let the institutionalization of social requirements in the form of coherent concepts, establishing a basis for a government's policy construction. This also applies to an area of foreign and security policy. Although, at present time, the role of political parties has diminished, due to the raising influence of other actors at either sub-national (mass-media, NGOs and social movements, different lobbing groups, public opinion etc.), or supra-national levels (various transnational actors, the European Union's institutions, other international organizations, external lobbyists and so on).. The impact of ideology on contemporary politics has also been decreasing. In spite of all this, political groupings still hold a dominant position in the formation and implementation of governments' policy in democratic systems..

Democratic party system has been developed in Poland since 1989. Since then, the Polish political groupings have influenced Poland's foreign and security policies with their ideologies and political actions. On the one hand, it is quite easy to analyze their practical impact on construction and implementation of these areas of the state's activity. On the other hand, linking parties' ideologies and official programmes with foreign policy seems to be quite problematic at least. As it was emphasized by Krzysztof Zuba, the difficulties stem from the instrumentalization of ideology that is one of the most typical features of Polish political parties. According to this author, ideology remains a significant factor in the political discourse in Poland, though less important in terms of political action. In his view, ideological weakness of Polish political groupings cannot be denied, and each party should be treated individually, taking into account factors that limit the impact of ideology, as well as those that enhance that impact[2]. Therefore, foreign reader can be often surprised by the positions expressed by any Polish party towards a specific problem referring to the foreign policy.

I must openly agree that identity-based approaches to international relations and foreign policy analysis, especially the social constructivist one[3], seem to be the most useful for the examination of the Polish political discourse on the foreign policy. The common point of these studies is the argument that any political activity is difficult to explain without considering the role of social factors like the identity of a political actor and social norms that constitute this identity. This perspective has thus strong affinities with the social constructivist argument that actors' interests are not given, but are shaped by their (collective) identities that are constructed through (social) interactions. Other theories and approaches can be also applied to a limited extent, to certain political parties' activity in the field of foreign policy's formulation and implementation[4].

All these reasons explain the necessity to describe, in the most synthetic way, the Polish party evolution after 1989 and the political consensus reached by the most significant groupings, connected with Poland's accession to the Western institutions. The author decided to explain in more detail the Polish political debate on two specific dimensions of Poland's

[2] Zuba, Krzysztof: "The role of ideology and political parties in the process of formulating Polish foreign policy", in Bieleń, Stanisław (ed.) (2011): *Poland's foreign policy in the 21st century*, Warsaw, Difin, pp. 214-15.

[3] Elsa Tulmets, for instance, successfully applied social constructivism to her general analyze of foreign policies of all East Central European countries. Tulmets, Elsa (2014): *East Central European Foreign Policy Identity in Perspective. Back to Europe and the EU's Neighbourhood*, Basingstoke, New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

[4] Political parties' positions on Poland's foreign policy can be also analyzed applying, to some extent, neorealist, or neoliberal approaches.

foreign policy: European Union (the accession to and participation in the EU), and Eastern Europe. These sets of problems help to understand the important divisions that today exist among the political parties in Poland. The final part of the article was devoted to the last parliamentary elections' impact on the foreign policy.

The article bases on the analysis of official documents and statements presented by Polish political groupings, as well as parties' actions in the area of the foreign policy. These kinds of sources are supplemented by various studies related to the topic, and the author's practical experience of participation in the political activity, including shaping the Polish left's position on international affairs and foreign policy. Wherever it was possible, the author tried to indicate in the references, sources in English[5] to give the reader the opportunity to deepen his knowledge in this particular field.

## 2. Political scene in Poland after 1989 as a significant set of conditions influencing its foreign policy

Pluralistic parliamentary democracy was reestablished in Poland in 1989 after the, so called, round table talks between representatives of the real socialism's authorities headed by the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR)[6] and the "Solidarity" – social movement formed on the basis of the independent trade union[7] with participation of the dissident intellectuals and supported by the Polish Roman-Catholic Church. The first partially free elections took place in June 1989 and they gave rise to the first non-communist government in the Eastern bloc with Tadeusz Mazowiecki (represented former opposition movement) as a prime minister. One year later, the leader of the "Solidarity" in the 1980s and the Nobel Peace Prize winner (1983), Lech Wałęsa, became the president of Poland.

Division between "post-communist", or "post-Solidarity" political forces was one of the most important features of the Polish party arena in the 1990s[8]. It played a very significant

[5] It is worth noticing that the sources in English are usually a reflection of Polish sources (Polish press information, documents and the like).

[6] PZPR – (in Polish) Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza – the main political party of the People's Republic of Poland, created when the Polish Socialist Party (established in 1892, the main Polish left-wing party before the end of the WWII) was forcibly incorporated into the communist Polish Workers' Party (the successor to the Communist Party of Poland) in 1948-49. Formally, it was a communist party, although, after a short period of Stalinism in Poland, it gradually achieved some freedom of movement in economics and social life ( quite a lot in comparison to other parties in the Soviet-bloc countries). Reformist, hard-line, as well as nationalist factions emerged within the party. The Soviet Union (USSR) also created some divisions among the party's leaders and members. During the Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* in the USSR, the PZPR, with general Wojciech Jaruzelski at its head, supported the new Soviet leader's policy and started to liberalize the political and economic regime in Poland; in parallel it tried to reestablish closer relations with the West (partially frozen or reduced after the martial law was declared in Poland in 1981) and institutions like the IMF, and the IBRD.

[7] Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarity" – (in Polish) Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy „Solidarność" – founded in 1980 as the first trade union in the Soviet bloc that was not controlled by a communist party. The union was banned after the declaration of the martial law in December 1981. In the 1980s, "Solidarity" was a broad anti-bureaucratic social movement (supported by the West, especially the USA, also financially), using the methods of civil resistance to advance the causes of workers' rights, as well as social and political change (Judt, Tony (2005): *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, New York, The Penguin Press, p. 589; Smolar, Aleksander: "`Self-limiting Revolution´: Poland 1970-89", in Roberts, Adam; Garton Ash, Timothy (eds.) (2009): *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 127-43).

[8] The main left-right axis of division was defined primarily in terms of the diverging attitudes towards the communist past and moral issues, particularly the role of the Catholic Church in public life. Otherwise, both part of society (perceived as "post-communist" or "post-Solidarity") were heterogeneous, with broadly similar socioeconomic programmes.

role until the parliamentary elections in 2005[9]. After then, this fragmentation has become much less important. Polish political divisions have begun to resemble the Western European countries' political scenes, although political life was distinctly dominated by right-wing parties and politicians. The main axis of the political struggle in Poland has become a rivalry between the conservative right wing forces and the liberal right. This also meant the decreasing importance of the left, despite numerous attempts to avoid such tendency by various left-wing and center-left politicians and activists. Parliamentary elections in 2015 turned out to be the first since 1918 (regaining of independence by Poland) in which the left failed to win any seats in the Sejm (the lower chamber of the Polish parliament). According to the experts, in the face of the weakness of the left, a number of "traditional" functions and slogans of the left has been taken over by some conservatives (representation of disadvantaged, employees), or liberals (in the context of the building of an open society, minorities' rights, state secularism, European integration etc.).

During this quarter of a century democracy, the largest and most significant political force of the left and center-left parties was, undoubtedly, the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)[10]. The SLD was built in the run-up to the parliamentary election in 1991 as a coalition of various political and social organizations. All of them had their roots in the previous regime. The Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland (SdRP)[11], the direct organizational successor to the PZPR, occupied a central and hegemonic position among other groupings. The other significant component of the SLD became the All-Poland Agreement of Trade Unions (OPZZ)[12], officially sanctioned trade union federation in the 1980s. The SLD's leader, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, had become the president of Poland in 1995, beating Wałęsa in the elections, and was easily re-elected in 2000. The new party leader, Leszek Miller, proved to be an effective government official as well as an opposition leader, transformed the SLD into an unitary political party in 1999. Under his leadership the party reached the peak of popularity when the SLD definitely won the power after parliamentary elections in 2001, obtaining more than 40% of votes. The party was in power cooperating with its "own" president, as well as having significant influence in regional and local authorities.

The left began to weaken due to political scandals and its style of government, but also because of internal conflicts and secession of group of its activists who created the competitive political left-wing party (the Polish Social Democracy) with the former speaker of the Sejm, Marek Borowski, as its leader. The divided left lost the European parliament elections in 2004 and the national parliament elections the next year. The political scene had been dominated by the right, despite the fact that the "post-communist" left (with the SLD and the Borowski's social democrats) and some of the "post-Solidarity" liberals (the Democratic Party) joined forces for building a coalition called the Left and Democrats under the umbrella of Kwaśniewski. It lasted only three years, from 2006 to 2008.

In addition, the SLD could not resist the process of programmatic convergence in the political parties. As a result, its leftism referred more and more to the ideological roots than to the program, or practical activity[13]. Moreover, due to demographic changes (aging) the SLD

[9] Groupings of both camps had evolved in power after parliamentary elections in 1993, 1997, and 2001. This division had also an important influence on presidential elections in 1995 and 2000, as well as on the whole political discourse in Poland.
[10] SLD – (in Polish) Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej.
[11] SdRP – (in Polish) Socjaldemokracja Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej; established in 1990.
[12] OPZZ – (in Polish) Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych, established in 1984.
[13] See more: Małysa, Krzysztof: "Kwestia europejska w programach polskiej lewicy po 1989 roku. Przegląd stanowisk", *Polityka i Społeczeństwo* , Vol 12, Nº 3 (2014), p. 95.

lost its traditional electorate (with its specific attitude to the past and the real socialism) without winning younger voters. New and competitive (with regard to the SLD) anti-system political parties - the "Palikot's Movement"[14] created by Janusz Palikot (reported as a center-left/social-liberal, although more liberal than the SLD in the context of economy, and with strong emphasis on anti-clericalism; nowadays: the "Your Movement"[15]), and "Razem" ("Together", strongly leftist, dominated by young activists) - worsened the SLD's political position. Despite the creation of the broad coalition of the left and center-left parties (the United Left[16] consisted of the SLD, the "Your Movement", the Green Party, the Polish Socialist Party, the Labour Union and others[17]) elections in 2015 was a crushing defeat for them[18].

Another party connected with the previous political system has been the Polish Peasant Party (PSL)[19]. In 1990 the PSL transformed itself in the United Peasant Party (ZSL), former satellite party of the PZPR, although it has attempted to self-define as the successor of patriotic and anti-communist traditions of the earlier Polish agrarian movement that arose in the nineteenth century. The party has been trying to locate itself within the center of the Polish political scene, combining moderate moral conservatism with the pragmatic (pro-social, and non-dogmatic) attitude to capitalism and foreign policy. Such political position allowed to become a political partner of the left, as well as the liberal right. The PSL was the SLD's coalition partner in the years 1993-97 and from 2001 till 2003. It also became a junior-partner of the stable, long-lasting (two parliamentary terms) governmental coalition formed with the Civic Platform (PO) in 2007-2015. Waldemar Pawlak, the PSL's leader then, served as a prime minister from 1993 to 1995 and during that time Poland submitted its application for the EU membership.

In the 1990's, the situation on the right side and on the center of the Polish political scene was much more complicated and flexible than on the centre-left one. It is worthy to note that the "post-Solidarity" part of the young democratic party system was considerably more patchy than the "post-communist" left, or agrarians. It stemmed from heterogeneous character of the "Solidarity" movement in 1980s consisted of a wide range of social and political groupings with their various outlooks and different visions of a "better future". The most significant discrepancies were clearly visible in the context of economy, relations between the state and the Church, or a settlement with the past (problem of so called decommunization).

The most important force in Poland, in the last decade of the twentieth century, was the Union of Freedom (UW)[20] formed in 1994 by merging the Democratic Union and the Liberal-Democratic Congress, both acting since 1990. It was the most Western values-oriented party, in the middle of political arena, presented itself as the most modern, future-proof, and the "pro-European" one. There were many well-known politicians among the party's leaders (i.e.: Mazowiecki, Bronisław Geremek, Jacek Kuroń, Andrzej Celiński, Leszek Balcerowicz, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Hanna Suchocka, Donald Tusk *et altera*), and

[14] "Palikot's Movement" – (in Polish) "Ruch Palikota".
[15] "Twój Ruch" (in Polish) can be translated into English either as "Your Movement", or "Your Turn".
[16] "United Left" – (in Polish) Zjednoczona Lewica.
[17] Without the "Razem" Party, that won 3,62% of votes in 2015' elections. The party established links with trade unions until the present.
[18] The coalition got almost 8% of the votes, but less than the electoral threshold for coalition electoral committees in Poland.
[19] PSL – (in Polish) Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe.
[20] UW – (in Polish) Unia Wolności; in 2005 transformed itself into the Democratic Party (see: above). Significant group of activist abandoned the party in 2001, co-founding the Civic Platform (see: below).

intellectuals within its proponents. Those political circles had an impact either on the creation of cabinets in 1989-91, 1992-93 (with Mazowiecki, Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, and Suchocka as prime ministers) and 1997-2000 (as a junior partner in the coalition with the Electoral Action "Solidarity"), or on the definition of economic development's vectors in the 1990s (*mutatis mutandis*: foreign economic policy). It was very influential in local authorities, especially in big cities.

The right in Poland had been very shattered[21] until the creation of the Electoral Action "Solidarity" (AWS)[22] in 1996 under the umbrella of the trade union "Solidarity" with its leader Marian Krzaklewski at the head. The movement (the coalition of the trade union with some right and center-right political parties) won the elections in 1997 and ruled Poland for four years until 2001 (with Jerzy Buzek as the prime minister).

In the first decade of the new millennium, the political arena in Poland was dominated by the "big four": the SLD, the PSL, and new groupings: the Civic Platform (PO)[23], and the Law and Justice (PiS)[24]. From time to time some other smaller actors "interrupted" the existing political order but they did not change it to a greater extent[25]. Diminishing influence of the left allowed the transformation of the party system into almost a bi-partisan one with the PO and the PiS as the political tycoons starting from 2005 until the elections in 2015. Discourse between these two groupings determined the main axis of the political dispute in Poland for approximately ten years.

The PO appeared on the political scene in 2001 (in the run-up to the parliamentary elections that year), gathering mostly politicians from the UW, and the AWS. Therefore it was reported as a center-right, presenting a neoliberal economic programme combined with a rather conservative outlook. Entangled in conflict with the more conservative PiS, it has been transformed into a rather liberal party in terms of moral values, and more pragmatic in the context of social-economic solutions. Along with the SLD, the PO became the most pro-EU parliamentary grouping and concentrated on urban and better-off voters, "caught" easily the most pro-EU supporters. The PO reached power in 2007 and formed the governments until 2015 with Tusk and Ewa Kopacz as prime ministers. In 2010 Bronisław Komorowski (one of the PO's leaders) won the presidential elections. The party (sharing the power in the cabinet and many regional authorities with the PSL) had taken the widest range of political power with its influence on all public institutions in Poland since the collapse of the PZPR. It has been changing only after the rather unexpected triumph of the PiS-supported Andrzej Duda over Komorowski in presidential elections in 2015, and the PO's defeat in parliamentary elections the same year.

[21] Although it was able to won the elections in 1991 and built the conservative coalition government with Jan Olszewski as a prime minister in 1991-92. An acute dispute between the "post-Solidarity" conservatives and far-right followers on the one hand, and the "post-Solidarity" liberals and moderate conservatives on the other appeared in those years. It has last since with an impact on politics even nowadays. The attitude to the international environment of Poland (i.e.: confidence or lack of confidence in Germany and the European institutions, openness in economics and social issues) has been part of the dispute.

[22] AWS – (in Polish) Akcja Wyborcza „Solidarność".

[23] PO – (in Polish) Platforma Obywatelska.

[24] PiS – (in Polish) Prawo i Sprawiedliwość.

[25] For example the impact on Polish politics from. the League of Polish Families (LPR – in Polish: Liga Polskich Rodzin - the "strong-right", national-democratic, catholic party), as well as from the "Samoobrona" ("Self-defence") party. Both parties had been included into the coalition government created by the PiS in 2005-2007. They were marginalized after then.

The PiS had started its political activity in 2001 created by Jarosław Kaczyński, its undisputed leader for the whole life of the party till the present. It was created on the basis of the right-wing activists of the AWS and it was described as a conservative, although pro-social, political grouping.

The party referred to the above mentioned Olszewski's government, calling for "decommunization" and protection of national assets in economy. The PiS became popular, owing to its tough anti-crime and anti-corruption rhetoric. It also proposed the "new" politics of remembrance, targeted especially to the victims of communist regime, but also to younger generations (aimed at their "patriotic education"). Patriotic slogans, as well as the highlighting of "traditional" (conservative, based on values promoted by the Polish catholic clergy) outlook and heritage, have became another party's "trademark".

The PiS began its political successes starting from parliamentary elections in 2001 (the fourth political force in the Sejm then) and local elections in 2002 when Lech Kaczyński (Jarosław Kaczyński's twin brother) won the post of the Polish capital's president. Using his popularity, Lech Kaczyński won the presidency of Poland three years later. Also in 2005 the PiS beat competitors in the parliamentary elections and formed the new government with Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz and J. Kaczyński as successive prime ministers in 2005-07. During that period, Poland developed a more assertive foreign policy, especially towards Russia.

## 3. The party consensus on Poland's foreign policy in the 1990s.

From the Polish point of view, the Gorbachev's *perestroika* finally created possibilities to break free from the grip of institutional bonds of the Warsaw Pact and the Comecon and loosen ties with the "big brother" in Moscow. Practically, there were no serious political (or even intellectual) opposition that had advocated a different way of thinking. Therefore, either the collapse of the Soviet bloc in the end of 1980s, or the fragmentation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) in 1991, encouraged a complete reorientation of the Polish foreign and security policies. Provisional weakness of the Russian Federation, the successor to the USSR, and its friendly relations with the West then, allowed Poland to take a sovereign decision in this field. Even Russia's opposition towards Poland's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), expressed by the Kremlin in 1992, could not change the choice made by Warsaw and reverse the course of events.

Polish political elites, as well as the society, were joined in the strong belief that Poland must "return to Europe". Such political and mental consensus was underpinned by the idea that Poland had always belonged spiritually and culturally to the West. The vast majority of population shared and avowedly expressed such ideas, despite political divisions, or even its attitude to the former regime and to the alliance with the USSR in the past.

Integration into the Western political, military, legal and social-economic space became Poland's top priority, together with the development of friendly relations with its neighbors. Through the accession in particular to NATO, and the European Communities, Poles intended to fulfill their dreams and ensure a fast, stable and secure development of the state. In particular, the society hoped an instantaneous, significant improvement of material standard of living. All major political forces supported that set of goals.

In the 1990s discrepancies in the political parties' positions on the Polish foreign and security policies were rather connected with "technical" details than general ideas. They were

especially referred to the readiness for the market opening, deregulation of economy, or protection of national industrial and agricultural production. The SLD, the PSL, and numerous center-right or populist political parties vowed for a slower market opening (postulated asymmetric opening in relations with the Western markets), and opted for protectionist policies towards different branches of national economy. The International Monetary Fund's policy toward Poland caused growing criticism among Polish politicians and voters (in the beginning of the decade, in particular). But the mentioned differences were manifested especially in the context of election campaigns, and parties that won the power maintained basic foreign economic policy guidelines. Economic "details" of the Poland's accession to the EU started to divide substantially the political parties, only in the end of negotiation process (see below).

A similar situation could be reported in the context of the relationships with the United States, NATO and Russia. The most important political parties placed great emphasis on NATO as the main guarantor of Poland's security and perceived the Pact as a platform of the West's unity. They expressed hope for close political and military relations with the USA (a "Polish-American strategic partnership"), the NATO's leader. The main center and right parties stressed especially the need of the US presence in Europe (or even in Poland, also in the military context). The SLD went on to hint that it will adopt a more balanced approach to the USA, or that it will improve relations with Russia. It provoked "post-Solidarity" parties to accuse left politicians of being "pro-Russian" according to their positions in the past. It turned out that the SLD maintained the Western-oriented policy in 1993-97, and even strengthen it significantly in 2001-2005. The "post-communist" governments, as they were described by the right opposition due to the links between the SLD and the PZPR, are considered as very pro-Western nowadays. In 2001-2005, the governments, formed by the SLD, had established such closed ties with Washington[26] that started to be criticized either by many party activists, or even its center-right competitors[27].

In the author's opinion, the most significant factor connected with the Polish party system that influenced Poland's foreign and security policy in the 1990s and afterwards was not only the relatively stable consensus of the main political forces presented above but also something else. Following the collapse of the authoritarian regime and the reemergence of pluralist politics in the end of 1980s, Poland evolved into a stable and increasingly consolidated liberal democracy with free market economy and the rising protection of human rights. This does not mean that the last two and a half decade had not seen periods of considerable political instability, social polarization and economic challenges. Nevertheless, overall the political, social and economic transition in Poland maintained its Western-founded, "European" patterns. It showed its important implications in a number of policy areas, not least Poland–EU relations. Main political parties supported those processes and contributed to strengthening Poland's international status, especially building confidence to Polish democracy and economy within its external environment. Polish politicians quickly learnt how to use European institutions. Hence, Poland was given better conditions for its foreign and security policies.

[26] It was connected particularly with political and military engagement of Poland in the US intervention against Iraq in 2003 and the occupation of that country, the approval of the CIA's detention center in the North-Eastern Poland, and the purchase of the F-16 multirole fighters for the Polish Air Forces.

[27] The PO stated, in the middle of the previous decade, that it will guarantee a "sober approach and attention to an assessment of the real benefits" for Poland in its relations with the USA.

Economic policy formation has remained relatively insulated from any political turbulence. Elections served as a political valve for social discontent but winning parties did not abandon "the track" when they got the power. Even if they "paid the price" and lost their popularity among voters (i.e. liberals in 1992-93, the SLD in 1993-97 and after 2001, the AWS in 1997-2001), Poland was the pioneer of post-communist economic reform, following the introduction of the radical macroeconomic stabilization and economic liberalization package in 1990. The so-called "Balcerowicz's Plan", described as a "shock therapy", led to stabilization of Poland's dire economy, restoration of equilibrium in public finances, proper functioning of the price mechanism and further emergence of the vigorous private sector (the process that had already begun at the end of the communist period). At the same time, significant social consequences of economic reform hit the majority of population. However, the transformation was continued by successive governments formed by other political parties, despite different emphasis according to evolving challenges. It created a proper economic base for Poland's international activity and let Poland to be integrated into the Western community.

An ability to form a prosperous liberal democracy, a relatively fast and stable economic growth, as well as a political consensus among key actors of the Polish party system on main goals in foreign and security policy, let Poland to improve its international status (especially in the regional and sub regional dimensions), and became a quite important part of the West. Noticed consensus began to crumble in the first part of the 2000' when it became clear that Poland reached its primary, fundamental objectives: the membership in NATO, and the EU. Since then, foreign policy or security problems were transferred into a field of regular political game at the party arena, with minor (or even any) limitations coming from principles of *raison d'état*. Challenges connected with the Polish participation in the EU and Warsaw's position on the cooperation within the Union, together with the "Eastern dimension" of Polish international activity (as well as NATO, including the US factor) have turned out to be one of the most critical areas for frequent party disputes on foreign policy. However, the problem of Polish foreign policy had a prominent place in the context of the domestic political campaigns as a part of a pro- or anti-government (pro- or anti-presidential) rhetoric. Polish party elites learned quickly how to take advantage of European institutions' forums, like the European Parliament, or the Council of Europe, to influence politics at home.

## 4. Polish political class towards the accession to the EU and the key problems of the Union's development at the beginning of the XXI century

Accession to the European Union[28] was to prove a much more protracted process, inevitably so, given the complexity of the *acquis communautaire* and the wide structural disparities between post-communist applicant states and the "old" EU's member states. Poland signed the association agreement with the EU in December 1991 during the change of the

[28] Detailed analysis of Polish political parties' attitudes to the negotiation and accession process in: Zuba, Krzysztof: "Through the Looking Glass: The Attitudes of Polish Political Parties towards the EU before and after Accession", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 10, Nº. 3, (September 2009)., pp. 326–349. The author of this article shares Zuba's view on the split into Euroenthusiasts, Europragmatists, Eurosceptics, Eurorejects among political groupings in Poland, and uses noticed division in the description of the problem below. See also: Grzesik-Robak, Anetta (2008): *Polskie partie polityczne wobec integracji Polski ze Wspólnotami Europejskimi/Unią Europejską (1989–2004)*, Toruń, Europejskie Centrum Edukacyjne.

government in Poland from the liberal-right (Bielecki) to the more conservative one (Olszewski)[29].

The coalition government constructed by the SLD and the PSL, led by Pawlak at the time, submitted an application for the full EU membership in 1994. That decision was supported by the vast majority of political class and society. Following the decisions of the EU's summit in Luxembourg in 1997, the AWS-UW government (Buzek as a premier) formally launched the accession negotiations in March 1998. Not only its political base but also the center-left opposition distinctly supported the process. In fact, the left-wing president of Poland, Kwaśniewski, strongly assisted the center-right coalition.

Poland made reasonable progress in the negotiations, although it tended to be in the middle of the group of twelve candidate states in terms of the negotiated "chapters" closed. As the largest by far of the twelve applicant states, Poland was going to be one of the most difficult states to accommodate. In particular, Poland had a sizeable and backward agricultural sector and, as a consequence, it became a very important factor in the struggle of the political parties looking for voters connected with rural areas, as well as with the food industry.

The Christian National Union (ZChN)[30], part of the AWS and governmental coalition then, was a Eurosceptic party that put forward a broad set of conditions and reservations about Poland's membership in the European Communities and the EU's future trajectory. Such position was supported by the Catholic and nationalist radio station "Radio Maryja" that controlled a significant part of the conservative electorate. In order to accommodate misgivings expressed by those social-political clusters, the centre-right government had to present itself as an adherent of an allegedly "tough negotiating strategy" and a "determined defender of Polish national interests". Such rhetoric continued to set the tone for the AWS' position on European issues at the verbal level at least. That provoked tensions between Warsaw and Brussels and interrupted the negotiation process. This was exemplified by the government's uncompromising policy of seeking a very long, eighteen-year transition period during which restrictions could be placed on the sale of Polish land to foreigners. In that way. the AWS attempted to distinguish itself from outright pro-European liberals and leftists. Despite mentioned rhetoric, the AWS-UW's government remained strongly committed to the idea of Poland's integration into the EU.

The SLD took power in 2001 with a pledge to significantly speed up accession negotiations. The SLD-PSL's government adopted more flexible negotiating strategy. This was exemplified by the decision to soften the negotiating stance by accepting a shorter, twelve-year, transition period[31] on the sale of land to foreigners and the EU's proposal to restrict Polish access to the Western labor markets by up to seven years. It did considerably speed up the progress of accession negotiations and by the summer of 2002 Poland had joined the leading group of countries in terms of negotiating "chapters" closed. Strong support for European integration was being a vital element in portraying the SLD's image as a modernized Western-style social democratic party and avoiding (alleviating) the accusation of

[29] Therefore, Olszewski stated that he "couldn't see the agreement before the act of signing", Olszewski tried to blame liberals for those conditions that were perceived as unfavorable from the conservative electorate's point of view (the far-right criticism towards the agreement, based on the idea of protecting the national identity, with quoted statements of various politicians, see i.e.: Bizoń, Janusz: "Nocna zmiana – czy nocna zdrada?", 7 August 2011, at https://jozefbizon.wordpress.com/2011/08/07/nocna-zmiana-%E2%80%93-czy-nocna-zdrada/.

[30] ZChN – (in Polish) Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko Narodowe.

[31] Even more: three years in the case of existing foreign lease holders and zero in the case of purchases for investment purposes.

its communist past[32]. However, the strategy posited by the SLD was criticized by right-wing Eurosceptic politicians. Miller, as the prime minister and the SLD's leader, was willing to make friendly gestures to the Catholic Church to break part of misgivings expressed by the conservative groups of citizens. It sparked criticism within the SLD's members and secular-oriented voters. Moreover, the other part of the coalition government (the PSL) presented a considerably less enthusiastic position on the EU than the SLD, trying to highlight its "Euro-realist" position, claiming to be tough in defending Poland's interests during negotiations, as well as expressing concerns over exploitation by the "rich man's club".

The PiS's attitude towards the Polish accession to the EU was ambivalent. There were even differences, concerning that issue, in the party's programme documents. On the one hand, the need for Poland's historical "anchoring" in the Western-constructed structures was stressed, and on the other, various risks, both in the economic and cultural dimension (national identity), were pointed out. The PiS strongly criticized conditions of the accession to the Union as negotiated by the Miller's government. The party's congress in 2003 supported the idea of Poland's accession to the EU, but the PiS emphasized its readiness to accept the new European (Constitutional) treaty under some specified conditions. The PiS demanded to include references to the Christian roots of Europe in its preamble, maintain the Nice voting system in the Council of the EU, and guarantee national constitutions' superiority over the EU's treaty. In 2005, when the party gained power for two years, the PiS alleviated open criticism of the EU, reducing itself to general statements that "it will stoutly defend Polish interests" during negotiations on the treaty for reforming the Union. The Polish government's refusal to sign the Charter of Fundamental Rights as a whole and the adjournment of the changes in the voting rules in the Council of the EU until 2017, were presented by the party as a great success of its government's "assertive" foreign policy.

The government constructed by the PiS put a great emphasis on the fact that its foreign policy differed greatly from that of its predecessors and that it was more assertive towards the EU, as well as to both, Germany and Russia[33].

Even the tougher position on the EU was stressed by one of the PiS's allies in the governmental coalition, the League of Polish Families that was decidedly against Poland's accession to the EU. The party vowed for the rejection of the accession treaty during the referendum campaign in 2003 because of ideological (from the point of view of Catholic-national, and national-democratic ideologies), political (to distinguish itself from the PiS), as well as economic reasons (to put the stress on domestic business). After the elections of 2005, when its leader (Roman Giertych) became a deputy prime-minister, its criticism towards the Union was significantly limited. Although the negative consequences of Poland's presence in the EU remained further voiced and the LPR pointed out that Poland should not have been a member of the EU, at the same time the party underlined "the necessity of establishing such relations which would be in the Polish economy's interest". The acceptance of the treaty reforming the EU by the J. Kaczyński's coalition government in 2007 was described as a betrayal of national interests by the LPR.

[32] The SdRP/SLD has placed a great importance on its acceptance into international social democratic organizations (the Party of European Socialists and the Socialist International), as well as on contacts with foreign social democratic leaders. For the long period the SdRP/SLD had been a pronounced leader of international activity among Polish political parties.

[33] Bobiński, Krzysztof (2007): "Poland's post election foreign policy – a turning point?", Instytut Spraw Publicznych, at http://www.archiwum.isp.org.pl/publikacja/wyszukiwarka/829/polands-post-election-foreign-policy--a-turning-point, p. 2.

The Civic Platform's politicians unambiguously spoke in favor of the accession treaty, supporting it emphatically during the referendum campaign of 2003. At the time, the PO called for the fastest possible introduction of the euro currency in Poland, although it dissociated itself from federal tendencies in a European political integration. The PO made its pro-EU attitude one of the main features that distinguished it from the PiS on the centre-right side of the Polish political scene. It was clearly visible and especially significant in the decade 2005-2015. The party strongly criticized the euro-skepticism presented by the Polish government in 2005-2007, and the president L. Kaczyński during his term of office (2005 - 2010). An active involvement in the European politics became even the PO's "trademark" when the party took power in 2007. The same attitude to the EU presented Komorowski as president of Poland. The Tusk's government put stress on a very close political cooperation with Germany, the most significant Polish political and economic partner among the EU's states. It was very complicated because the PO worked closely with the German CDU/CSU headed by Angela Merkel. This alliance resulted in the growing importance of Poland in Europe and – *inter alia* – in Tusk taking the position of the President of the European Council in the end of 2014[34]. However, after the disclosure of the international financial and economic crisis, the Polish liberal politicians stopped talking about the adoption of euro in the near future.

An important place in the PO's programme was given to the question of "how, thanks to the membership in the EU, Poland can catch up with the old EU members" and "not permit itself to be outpaced by the other new member states". The party's vague answer to this question was that economic reforms must be continued and the implementation of the EU's development funds be maximized. At the same time, at the party's programme, the PO hinted that the EU's budget should be expanded and pledged that the party will strive to "maintain and develop the support mechanisms for poorer regions and member states". The PO also promised to be active in creating a common EU energy policy "that will guarantee Polish interests" (it meant to reduce dependence on Russian energy resources, especially natural gas). Tusk introduced the idea of an energy union inside the EU when he was the prime minister of Poland. The PO pledged to "deepen integration in the area of common foreign and security policy" and to see a "strong EU remaining in strategic relations in partnership with the United States".

The accession to the European Union did not change substantially the Polish political parties' attitude to European issues. Euroenthusiasts, the PO, and the SLD[35], have supported the general ideas of the European integration and believed that the Union is or can be an institutional embodiment of these ideas. It has been connected with a general attitude to the milieu and social-political problems presented by the parties' leaders. Their elites have perceived the EU as an important factor in Poland's modernization, and stabilization, as well as a significant instrument for ensuring external security. Both parties have become active members of the European People's Party (the PO), or the Party of European Socialists (the SLD), that play key roles in the European structures. Euroenthusiasts have expressed greater understanding of European solidarity: the slogan "common solutions to common problems" has become close to them. Therefore, both parties have focused on Poland's participation in the EU's "hard core" (also through the "Weimar triangle" together with Germany and France). The SLD has distinguished from the PO with its proposals oriented on "social

[34] The PiS's leaders, rulling Poland currently, do not wish to support Tusk for the another term, recognizing him as "the weak" – gently speaking – in terms of Polish, as well as European, interests.
[35] As well as the new centre-left party, the "Palikot's Movement'/'Your Movement" after its foundation, and the "United Left" coalition in 2015.

Europe", following the Scandinavian model of a welfare-state, and gradual federalization of Europe.

Europragmatists, the PSL (and, partly, the PiS), have not supported the general ideas of the European integration, nor do they necessarily oppose them, yet they have supported the EU. For instance, in 2007 the PSL outlined a brave and unequivocally pro-European (although not very realistic) proposal of the EU reforms. That document emphasized that "membership in the united Europe gives Poland a chance of civilization, social and economic development". Such attitude has been very typical for many of the PSL's, and the PiS's followers: "we do not share European values (or to some extent, only), but we can see that the EU is the only realistic choice for our country".

Eurosceptics (for instance, a majority of the PiS) have shared the general ideas of European integration, but have been pessimistic about the EU's current or future reflection of these ideas. They have also tended to defend a fairly different identification of the "European values" than the leftists, or liberals, according to their conservative (national-Catholic) beliefs.

Europragmatists, as well as Eurosceptics, have usually presented a "selective" approach to the European integration. They have called for an enhancing integration, or "European solidarity" if this was required for immediate needs. On the one hand, for example, they firmly insisted on strengthening the role of European institutions in the case of the postulated Energy Union, or vowed for the EU's common action after the annexation of Crimea by Russia. But they present little understanding or even deny the same ideas in different aspects of the EU's activity. It has became clearly visible in their attitude to the present migration crisis.

The economic crisis, as well as internal problems of the Union and its member states, has contributed to the growth of the anti-EU sentiments in whole Europe, also in Poland. Far-right activists, ultra-liberal like Janusz Korwin-Mikke and its party "KORWIN"[36] (strongly anti-EU), or radically conservative like followers of the national-Catholic "Maryja" radio station, was able to promote their slogans relatively successfully. Even if the far-right parties could not get into the parliament or local authorities[37], and the results obtained by their leaders in the presidential 2015 campaign were insignificant, they infected some other anti-European groupings rhetoric (anti-liberal at the same time). The PiS adopted some anti-EU slogans during the parliamentary campaign of 2015 to gain the strongly conservative electorate and to maintain the "Maryja" broadcaster's support[38]. Similarly, a sharp criticism towards the EU was presented by the new political grouping "Kukiz-15" Electoral Committee led by Paweł Kukiz[39]. Anti-EU rhetoric touched especially the economic sovereignty (against euro currency-adoption, and "colonization" by the Western economic tycoons, Germany particularly), as well as the current migration crisis.

[36] Nowadays: "Freedom" (in Polish: "Wolność").

[37] Alhough the "New Right" Electoral Committee led by Korwin-Mikke won four seats in the Europarliamentary elections in 2014.

[38] I.e.: the PiS's leader, J. Kaczyński, said that migrants can transmit microbes what poses threats for national security. Despite the common, loud criticism triggered by the statement, the PiS won the elections winning the parliamentary majority.

[39] Popular Polish rock star, and the founder of the movement for electoral single-member districts. He got the third place in the presidential elections of 2015 (over 20% of votes).

## 5. Poland's Eastern policy in the political groupings' programs

Policy towards the Eastern European countries holds in general a special place in Poland's foreign policy. The importance of this orientation in the expansion of Polish external influence has been growing since the accession to NATO and the UE. Since then, Belarus, Ukraine, and the Russian Federation, have become the only neighbors of Poland still remaining out of the Western structures. Moreover, all Eastern European countries (including also Moldova) have been, more or less, miles away from the West in terms of their political culture, or social-economic development. It has created either opportunities, or threats for Poland.

In the 1990's Polish political elites were concentrated on the integration in the West but a decreased interest in Eastern partners derived also from the economic weakness and social and political instability of these neighbors. Ideas for boosting (renewal) cooperation with them were usually limited to the quite popular in the Polish political discourse slogan that Poland should become a "bridge between the West and the East" being, of course, a part of the West. According to that, there were proposals of increasing trade volume, or using Polish territory to draw benefits from a transit between both parts of Europe. Moreover, many Polish politicians saw their country as a role-model for the Eastern European neighbors. Simultaneously, a sense of alleged Polish specific "mission" in the East appeared (not for the first time)[40] particularly among liberal and centre-right activists. Although often criticized, such attitude to the Eastern "junior-partners" has influenced Polish foreign policy. However, in the last decade of the twentieth century, Polish governments' activity was primarily aimed at development of a new legal base for neighborly cooperation, as well as protecting the country against existing and potential threats coming from Eastern Europe[41].

The achievement of strategic objectives as a member in NATO, and the EU improved significantly Poland's international position providing its foreign policy towards Eastern Europe with new instruments. Polish political elites have decisively expressed their will of shaping "Eastern dimensions" either in NATO or the Union, thus enhancing the influence of these Western institutions in the post-Soviet area. The Kremlin has usually perceived a sense of initiative demonstrated by Polish politicians towards the new independent states as an action controlled by other powers, the US in particular, and aimed at undermining of Russia's power status. Therefore, ambitions and rhetoric of some Polish politicians, centre-right in particular, have frequently begun hindering cooperation between the West and the Russian Federation, especially when those relations were quite positive. For this reason, and because of the relatively effective Moscow's propaganda in the eyes of many Western European politicians, Polish elites, as well as society, have been portrayed as infected and motivated by Russo phobia[42]. Such perception has been changing to some extent as a result of the current

[40] See also Szczepanik, Melchior: "Another 'Mission in the East'? The Polish Policy Towards the Eastern Neighbourhood", in Tulmets, Elsa (ed.) (2012): *Identities and Solidarity in Foreign Policy: East Central Europe and the Eastern Neighbourhood*, Prague, Institute of International Relations, pp. 53-77.

[41] It should be recalled the existing appreciable threat of organized crime, or risks related to health security. Political and economic instability of the former Soviet republics in the beginning of the 1990's, especially, could cause even much more serious dangers for Poland as it was estimated. Only the war in Chechnya has caused a influx of ninety thousand refugees in Poland since 1994.

[42] See Taras, Raymond (2015): "From Russophobia to Russo-Hypopsia: Poland's Foreign Policy towards Russia 2007-15 - the Making and Unmaking of the Eastern Partnership", Paper prepared for the IX Congress of the International Council for Central and East European Studies (ICCEES), Makuhari, Japan, 7 August 2015, at https://c-linkage.com/iccees2015/uploads/2969.pdf.

Ukrainian crisis since it has turned out that some concerns reported by Polish politicians and experts had been reasonable.

The subject "Russia" plays specific, important role in the political discourse in Poland. Relations with Russia are one of the most challenging problems connected with either Polish history, or present times. Ages of Russian/Soviet domination over Poland, threats posed by the more powerful neighbor in the past and nowadays, a rivalry between these states for geopolitical influence in the Eastern Europe, together with similarity of cultures, habits, languages, or economic cooperation and interest in Russia showed by many Poles, have influenced Polish political debate.

"Traditionally", the left has been perceived in Poland as a "Russia-friendly" part of Polish political scene. First and foremost, it was connected with the communist roots of the SdRP/SLD. Therefore, in the 1990's the left had been accused of open or hidden "pro-Russian" orientation of its leaders by the centre-right activists[43]. However, when the SLD came to power, it undoubtedly supported pro-European/pro-Western orientation in Poland's foreign and security policy. The governments created by the SLD in 2001-05 were even described as conducting strongly a pro-US policy[44]. Moreover, president Kwaśniewski and the governments backed by the SLD supported the Ukrainian "orange revolution" in 2004. Then, just after accession to the EU, Polish diplomacy was able to advocate inside the Union, a pro-European shift in Ukraine. Kwaśniewski played a significant role in solving the crisis, being a part of the international mediation team, showing his deep understanding of Ukraine's political scene and using a close relationship (that had built personally in previous years) with the outgoing, but still powerful, Ukrainian president, Leonid Kuczma. Poland's effective political involvement in the post-Soviet area has become a thorny issue in Polish-Russian bilateral relations, causing an unfriendly reaction in Moscow.

There was a plenty space devoted to relations with Poland's eastern neighbors in the SLD's electoral programme in 2011[45]. In the programme, the party emphasized that the main task facing the Polish eastern policy is "striving to expand the area of stability and integration eastward" in order "to have the West on West but also on East from our border". The SLD noted that the EU's Eastern Partnership programme should be enriched with new initiatives and instruments to "create a system of incentives that will mobilize partners to undertake

[43] Józef Oleksy, one of the most prominent leaders of the SLD, had lost the office of the prime minister in 1995 under accusation of cooperation with Russia's intelligence services. It had provoked a huge political scandal and a wave of tensions between the "post-communist" and "post-Solidarity" groupings. Later, the accusation turned out to be baseless and Oleksy came back to the political activity. This situation clearly highlighted how fragile and influential is a "Russian topic" in politics in Poland.

[44] The decision made by the Miller's government (and supported by Kwaśniewski as a president) to militarily engage in the US action against Iraq in 2003 and the occupation of this country, or to buy the US-made multirole fighters F-16 were criticized also by many members of the party and its followers. The presence of the secret CIA-led detention centre in the North-East Poland (where the Taliban's militants were tortured as it was stated by the international court) provoked another political scandal some years later. Tough criticism towards this noticed activity have been usually expressed by the left-oriented politicians, journalists, experts, and voters, as well as human right activists. It also created a line of division between the SLD, and the "non-SLD" left (the case of the human rights' abuses made by the CIA was used by the "Palikot's Movement" in its attempt to destroy the SLD's reputation among centre-left voters a few years ago). Paradoxically, such pro-American decisions of the SLD-constructed governments were much better accepted by the centre-right.

[45] The SLD prepared and published the broad particular programme devoted to the Polish foreign policy then. That step was supported by thematic conferences and other publications. It has been the only time in history of democratic elections in Poland after 1989 that a political grouping expressed its view on international affairs in such quite large scale. See: *Przyjazna Polska otwarta na świat [polska polityka zagraniczna]* (2011), Warszawa, Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej.

political and economic choices consistent with European values and regulations". Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine were listed among the most important EU's partners. "Accelerated process of reconciliation" was expected from Kiev in the document. The left called for establishing pragmatic cooperation with Russia, based especially on socio-economic cooperation, breaking the reminiscences and prejudices. The "Palikot's Movement", in turn, put the stress on Polish economic activity in the framework of eastern polices more than other groupings. The capability to build effective alliances within the EU was underlined by the SLD as an indispensable condition of efficient Poland's eastern policy. The party also declared its readiness to consult "priorities of Polish foreign policy" with other political groupings on the regular basis.

The SLD took the restrained position on the "revolution of dignity" in Ukraine in 2013-2014, although the party expressed it support for transformation of that country in the EU-oriented style. Notwithstanding, the SLD paid attention to unresolved Ukraine's internal problems (a weakness of the state, corruption, radical nationalism etc.), called for moderation in Polish engagement into Ukrainian affairs. Moreover, the SLD's politicians tended to perceive the current conflict in Ukraine in terms of a neo-realist approach (similarly to the John's Mearsheimer's position presented in his well-known article[46]). This provoked sharp criticism, including accusations of "serving Moscow's interests", from the majority of liberal and right grouping. However, similar concerns to those presented by the SLD were expressed not only by some left and liberal-left intellectuals and experts, but also by many radical conservatives (see below).

Interestingly, the left (the SLD, as well as the United Left in its programme of 2015) clearly emphasized that there is no possibility to establish an effective European security system in the long term perspective, without the participation of the Russian Federation. Therefore, left politicians called for developing a long-term agreement between the West and Russia in this regard. The left has tried to distinguish itself from the centre-right groupings, giving evidence in its programme documents and rhetoric that they have been far from Russo phobia[47]. The SLD's leaders have usually accused their political opponents of having a tendency to overestimate the actual or potential risks generated by Russia. However, the "militarization of the Russian Federation, visible also in its foreign policy, economic, and even social life" in recent years, was highlighted in the "United Left's" electoral programme launched in 2015.

The PiS, associated with the party of the president L. Kaczyński, and the majority of the Polish centre-right followers have strongly opposed such "familiar" relationships with the Russian Federation, promoting diplomatic offensive against "Russian imperialism" in the post-Soviet area, aimed at building sovereignty of other new independent states from Russia. From that point of view, Polish eastern policy's main goals have been to support the pro-Western orientation of the Eastern European and Transcaucasian partners, as well as involve the West (not the EU only but also the US) in these processes. The US has been perceived as a very significant virtual adherent, able to balance the Russian influence in the region and the most important guarantor of Polish security[48]. In parallel, some European powers, Germany,

[46] Mearsheimer, John J.: "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault. The Liberal Delusions that Provoked Putin", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, Nº5 (September/October 2014).

[47] During the presidential campaign in 2015, the SLD-backed candidate, Magdalena Ogórek, expressed even her readiness to "make a phone call to president Putin to discuss problems" distancing herself from the anti-Putin rhetoric of the electoral race's leaders supported by the PO and the PiS.

[48] It is noteworthy that many Polish centre-right politicians pay more attention to the military threats posed by Russia, actually or potentially, strongly demanding the US's and NATO's permanent military presence on the

and France in particular, have been regarded with suspicion as "too pro-Russian" and potentially concentrated on doing "business as usual" with Moscow.

It was reported by many (domestic and foreign) observers of the Polish political scene that president L. Kaczyński (2005-2010), as well as the PiS-backed government (2005-2007), spearheaded hostility (or disapproval at least) towards both Russia and the countries deemed soft on Russia, putting stress on a very active Poland's role in transforming the post-Soviet republics into Western-oriented subjects of international relations. Such attitude regarding the eastern policy raised also problems in Polish–EU relations. Accordingly, Poland was considered as the lightning rod in the EU's relations with Russia. It became difficult to deal with Russia, being an issue polarizing the West and the Kremlin. As a consequence, Poland's eastern policy was strongly criticized by the centre-left and liberal right as too hazardous, ineffective and detrimental to the Polish state interest in general[49]. However, the right politicians highlighted that it was the only rational way to deter Russia's expansion in the Commonwealth of Independent States' area and further. To some extent, this division has started to disappear when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014.

The PiS, during the electoral campaign of 2011, strongly recommended Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO, as well as Georgia's accession to NATO. The party also opted for strengthening ties with Azerbaijan and supporting democratic transformation in Belarus. At that time, the PiS particularly emphasized its criticism towards the Tusk's government that, in the party's opinion, withdrew Poland from an active eastern policy[50]. The PiS also picked holes in Poland's policy towards Russia[51]. In particular, it was connected with the problem of the Katyn massacre (discontinued criminal proceedings by Russian authorities), as well as the case of presidential plane crash in Smolensk (the Kremlin's attitude to the investigation)[52]. In the run-up to the last parliamentary elections, the PiS consistently criticized the Kopacz's government for an erroneous Eastern policy, as well as for being left out of talks concerning the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. The PiS's politician, Witold

territory of Poland and other states belonging to the NATO's "Eastern flank". The request was expressed firmly after the outbreak of the military conflict in Ukraine in 2014. Either the PO, or the PiS have even started to compete on which political grouping will ensure effectively the presence of the allied forces in Poland. In the same context, the SLD has noticed that "no deploying military units, but highlighting values which the NATO refers to, and - above all – determining common interests of member states in a changing international environment" plays a key role in strengthening NATO's cohesion.

[49] According to the opponents of the PiS, Poles lost confidence in the party in 2007, also because they had enough overcharged nationalist discourse and exploitable fears directed at Russia and Germany.

[50] Such "active Eastern policy", aimed at building close ties with Eastern European countries even at the cost of sharp deteriorating in relations with Russia, has been usually called the "Jagiellonian policy" what referred to the Polish-Lithuanian royal dynasty that built powerful state in the 15th-16th centuries gathering the majority of present territories of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, and Ukraine, as well as the part of current territories of Estonia, Russia, Slovakia, and Moldova. In opposition to the "Jagiellonian policy", more moderate Eastern policy has been described as the "Piast policy" (the Piasts – another Polish dynasty that had ruled the country before the Jagiellonians). In political discourse in the second half of the 2000's and the beginning of the next decade the PiS's politicians were often reported as proponents of the "Jagiellonian policy", and their opponents from the governmental coalition PO-PSL as exponents of the "Piast policy".

[51] See, i.e.: Dempsey, Judy: "Grounded: Poland-Russia Relations", *Carnegie Europe*, 13.04.2015, at http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/?fa=59752.

[52] The Smolensk tragedy (death of the president L. Kaczyński, his wife and almost a hundred other personalities) has become one of the most important parts of the PiS's political narrative after 2010. The party has criticized either the Russian authorities, or the Polish government, accused both of omissions and faults in the investigations, and – in case of the PO/PSL-backed government - weakness in face of Moscow's position. The Smolensk case raised a number of conspiracy theories (a plot to assassinate the president and the like) usually propounded and supported by the right-wing followers. It should be noted that Antoni Macierewicz, the deputy chairman of the PiS, was among them. He has become the ministry of defense, recently.

Waszczykowski (the head of Polish MOFA at present), emphasized that Poland should not only be included in the Normandy format, which he described as pro-Russian, but has also called for the creation of a format that would include Warsaw with a broader representation of the EU and the United States[53].

The PO and the PSL have tried to position themselves as moderate political forces in the context of Poland's eastern policy. The PO, for instance, foresaw in 2000's a "long march" and "a patient dialogue" in relations with Russia, declaring that "good neighborly relations" can be re-established. Ukraine was described as a "great and important" partner of Poland. The PO stated it would remain committed to supporting democratic changes in the country and an "ally in Ukraine's drive to come closer to the NATO and the EU". The party cautioned, however, that this process "will take longer than initially thought".

A launching of the Polish-Sweden initiative of the EU's Eastern Partnership, as well as an unquestionable success of the Small Border Traffic, established between the North-East part of Poland and the Kaliningrad Oblast' (the Russian Federation) through the efforts of the Polish diplomacy, were presented as "trade marks" of such reasonable and efficient Eastern policy.

Poland's foreign minister then, Radosław Sikorski (one of the PO's distinguished leaders at the time), was engaged in numerous diplomatic initiatives in 2013–2014 related to the crisis in Ukraine. He was a regular visitor to Kiev where he met with Ukraine's pro-Western politicians and participated in mediations between the parts of the conflict. The mentioned crisis forced the coalition government (PO-PSL) to take a more robust stance towards Russia, especially when the Kremlin decided to occupy Crimea. Many representatives of the PO, together with delegations of the PiS and other political groupings, went on a pilgrimage to Kiev encouraging a pro-European shift in Ukraine. The coalition PO-PSL, supporting sanctions on Russia, tried to reduce the negative impact of Moscow's "counter-sanctions" on Polish agriculture. The PSL, in particular, had to show itself as a "pragmatic" party that mitigates tensions in Polish-Russian relations, alleviating hereby damages suffered by its rural electorate (farmers) and the food industry.

In the last parliamentary campaign of 2015 all main electoral committees focused to a greater extent on problems connected with security in relations with the Eastern European partners. It stemmed obviously from the Ukrainian conflict and Russia's policy in recent years. As it was noticed above, they differed in their positions on the Ukrainian conflict settlement, or tackling threats posed by Russia. All the most significant groupings supported the democratic processes in Eastern Europe and sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation. Although, of course, the "United Left" presented a much more moderate position (underlining a need for dialogue with Russia) than the PiS (calling for a more assertive policy of the West towards Russia). The coalition PO-PSL backed the government's policy, obviously through the PO, and opted for tightening sanctions against the Russian Federation. The new liberal-right party "Nowoczesna"[54] also supported an active Eastern policy and Poland's involvement in the westernization of Ukraine. At the same time, most of parties expressed, more or less,

[53] Prus, Justyna: "Polish-Russian relations. Can they get any worse?", *New Eastern Policy*, Vol. 20, No 1 (2016)., p. 66. According to Waszczykowski, Poland has reduced its role to being a German vassal, rather than becoming a strong player in the EU (ibid.).

[54] "Modern". It is the most serious competitor for the PO nowadays. Both parties and their leaders (Grzegorz Schetyna, the PO, and Ryszard Petru, "Nowoczesna") are struggling for the leadership of the liberal opposition towards the PiS at present.

their skepticism towards the Eastern European republics' prospects for a membership in the EU and the NATO. The need to expand economic cooperation with Eastern Europe was usually highlighted in programmes, or pre-election rhetoric. The "United Left" considered a "human dimension" (cultural, academic, broader social cooperation) as exceptionally important[55].

In conclusion, it should be underlined that a general vision of Polish eastern policy (transferring democracy and free-market economy eastward, as well as building neighbourly relations with post-Soviet partners), implemented for more than a quarter of a century, has been shared by all political parties, except from some less significant (without an impact on a practical implementation of foreign policy) groupings like "KORWIN", or "Zmiana" ("Change") nowadays. While the radical conservative party "KORWIN" has tried to prove its "pragmatism", "free" from a predominance of democratic values over "real" interests[56], "Zmiana" has clearly expressed its pro-Russian orientation, seeing Moscow as a "natural" ally for both Poland and the EU, as well as strongly criticizing the US ("the first Polish non-American party" as it has found itself), simultaneously[57]. Some conservative circles gathered around several magazines (like "Polityka Polska"[58], or "Opcja na prawo"[59]) should be also noticed. They usually call for an "independent", "sovereign" Polish foreign policy, being critical towards the "liberal", "leftist" West. Therefore they also propose more rational (based on political realism's principles), in their opinion, Polish Eastern policy, positioning itself in the role of an intellectual alternative towards the Polish "mainstream" in that case.

## 6. Parliamentary elections in 2015 and its influence on Poland's foreign policy

After the stunning victory in parliamentary elections the PiS won an absolute majority in the Sejm, the first time any party has done so since 1989. Since the party also controls the presidency (the candidate, backed by the PiS, Andrzej Duda was elected in August of the same year) and the upper house of the parliament (the Senate), it has an unique opportunity to conduct a legislative revolution in Poland, as well as to implement a relatively free foreign policy[60]. In the same day that the PiS announced its new government, Konrad Szymanski, the newly appointed deputy minister at the MOFA (for European affairs), declared that the new government's foreign policy strategy would not deviate from the foundations set by its predecessor[61].

[55] Mrozek, Krzysztof (2015): "Wybory 2015: Komitety wyborcze a polityka wschodnia", Warszawa, Fundacja im. Stefana Batorego.

[56] The charismatic leader of "Korwin" ("Wolność"), Korwin-Mikke, can be hardly described as a pro-Kremlin, or pro-Russian politician. He rather emphasizes a kind of admiration for a Putin's style of ruling. At the same time, he criticizes an alleged lack of pragmatism in the West's attitude to the international relations.

[57] Mateusz Piskorski, former the populist "Samoobrona's" activist, has become a leader of "Zmiana" (established in 2015). He denies the fact of Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula (supporting the separatist movement there), or Russian army's military engagement in the Donbas. He also accuses the Polish governments of implementing of "confrontational" and "anti-Russian" politics. "Zmiana", and Piskorski in particular, is affected by a kind of political and social anathema and plays margin role in politics, being accused of backing Moscow's interests. Piskorski was even detained in May 2016 on charges of spying for Russian intelligence.

[58] "Polish policy" (monthly). The magazine's motto in its subtitle is "Free nation in a strong state".

[59] "Option right".

[60] Orenstein, Mitchell A.: "Paranoid in Poland. How Worried Should the West be About the Law and Justice Party's Victory?", *Foreign Affairs*, 1 November 2015, at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/poland/2015-11-01/paranoid-poland.

[61] See more in "Polish Foreign Policy Will Remain Largely Unchanged", Center for European Policy Analysis, 9 November 2015,at http://www.cepa.org/content/polish-foreign-policy-will-remain-largely-unchanged.

However, the PiS's leaders had proclaimed the implementation of a "deep reshuffle" in foreign policy (or an "amendment in foreign policy" as minimum) and made numerous announcements of upcoming "defenses of national interests" against the "abusive power of European mainstream" before winning the power. When coupled with emphatic comments on the role of history and national dignity in the foreign political agenda they are often seen as echoing Victor Orban's idiosyncratic inclinations in Hungary. The "brotherhood" with Hungary has been very often highlighted by the PiS's politicians recently. The party's leaders have announced tight cooperation with Budapest on the international arena, in the context of European issues in particular.

Adam Balcer and Krzysztof Blusz, Polish experts, underline that it is hardly surprising, given the economic and political significance of Poland, that the way in which the PiS conducts its foreign policy will be carefully watched and may test the nerves in many capitals. A new, more assertive foreign policy may bring consequences not only for Poland and the Central Europe but for the entire European Union. In the experts' opinion, the PiS "likes the EU *a la carte*". It means that "Poland needs to be an indispensable part of the EU when money is available from its coffers or when Russia invades Ukraine. However, when the refugee crisis happened, Poland should refrain from getting involved, with a small exception of humanitarian aid". The party "eagerly accepts solidarity while remains reluctant to be a `solidarity giver´"[62].

Securitization, or *bellisation* from its critics' point of view, is one of the core factors constituting the PiS's foreign policy agenda. The party focuses on hard security, announces the tightening of the strategic alliance between Warsaw ad Washington, as well as calls for closer transatlantic partnership. Poland under the PiS-controlled state authorities sees the US as its main defense guarantor, with a strong emphasis on drawing as much the US support to Poland as possible: permanent military bases on the Polish territory and enhanced American military activity in the region, in particular. Just after entering the office in August of 2015, Polish president Duda paid its official visit to Berlin expressing skepticism towards the EU, and a clear preference for close security ties with the US[63]. Such position on national security has been already criticized by the opposition. In the left's opinion for instance, security of Poland and Europe should be provided primarily by political and socio-economic factors.

Simultaneously, the EU is treated as a significant, positive driver of economic prosperity. What the PiS will do, however, is to make a more concerted effort to lock in strong relations with the United States. Under the right wing government, relations with Brussels would deteriorate. The party's Catholic base dislikes what it sees as the EU-imposed secularism, so reforms mandated by the Union on issues such as gay rights or women's equality would not be a priority. Therefore, the PiS-led Poland's foreign policy can be limited to countering the EU social-cultural "difference", seeking to undermine a German leadership

[62] Balcer, Adam; Blusz, Krzysztof: "Changing course? Foreign policy in Poland after the elections", 23.11.2015, *Commentary*, European Council on Foreign Relations, at http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_changing_course_foreign_policy_in_poland_after_the_elections5025.

[63] "Poland: A Foreign Policy in Flux", *Global Politics*,7 September 2015, at http://global-politics.co.uk/wp/2015/09/07/poland-a-foreign-policy-in-flux/. Such trend are also clearly visible in the context of military spending: the PiS-backed government prefers buying armaments from (or produced in cooperation with) the US arms industry than from the European states or European consortia. The recent cancellation of the purchase of the Airbus Helicopters "Caracals" in favor of the American equipment has been a meaningful sign of the new Polish strategy. It has triggered the deterioration of the Polish-French relations.

of the bloc[64]. Poland is not even afraid of entering into disputes or conflicts with the European institutions. The vivid example has been the dispute over the regulations related to the Constitutional Tribunal in Poland between the present Polish government, on the one hand, and the Polish liberal-right and center-left opposition, whose views are in this case generally supported by the European Commission, the majority of the European Parliament, or the Venice Commission (the Council of Europe's advisory body).

Polish foreign policy is nowadays premised on the idea that the "Central Europe" should be a key reference point. It is reported as an attempt to build Poland's "own stream" within the EU. What follows from this is that Poland ought to do what it can to facilitate regional cooperation and, in the best-case scenario, become the region's *de-facto* leader. Warsaw, hereby, strives for balancing the superior power of European tycoons, especially Germany[65]. However, the PiS overestimate the importance of the region for Poland and takes insufficient account of the huge internal differences among these countries[66]. Since coming to office, president Duda has specifically sought to build a new alliance under the leadership of Poland in the Central-Eastern Europe. He pronounced the "founding of a partnership block, stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the Adriatic"[67]. In other words, the president and the PiS postulate to build the so-called *Intermarium* ("Between the Seas") aimed at both increasing Polish status within the EU, as well as to deter Russia form expanding its influence in the region.

Summarizing, the PiS advocates a closer alliance with the US and greater political independence from Brussels and Berlin. Although the new government, backed by the party, supports Polish membership in the EU, the PiS is described as a broadly anti-federalist political force, underpinned by skeptic inclinations in the context of the EU, strongly committed to opposing further European integration and aiming at strengthening Poland's "sovereignty". This would especially apply to the political and moral-cultural spheres[68], but also to the economy. At the cornerstone of the party's political strategy are concepts such as self-reliance, robustness and assertiveness in advancing national interests within the EU and NATO. It is presented as a rational alternative to simply aligning the country with the German-led politics of the EU[69].

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[64] Kureth, Andrew: "Elections Affirm the Fixed Truths of Poland's Foreign Policy", *The Compass*, 8.April,.2015, at http://www.realclearworld.com/blog/2015/04/elections_affirm_the_fixed_truths_of_polands_foreign_policy_111101.html,

[65] Concerns expressed in the context of German domination in the region stems not only from history, but are also related to relations between Berlin and Moscow. The Polish centre-right, in particular, tends to define the German-Russian cooperation, both political and economic, as the factor that endangers Poland's national security, or threatens even its sovereignty. J. Kaczyński described Poland under the previous government as the non-sovereign entity, a "German-Russian condominium". Poland is also often reported in the political debate as Germany's or West's "colony", with reference in particular to the economic dependence, and it is quite popular among the Polish society (right-oriented, in particular, but not only). Such phrase was repeatedly expressed, for example, by Paweł Kukiz,, a leader of the right-wing "Kukiz'15" movement.

[66] Balcer, Adam; Blusz, Krzysztof: op. cit.

[67] Weiss, Clara: "Polish ruling class divided over foreign policy in run-up to general election", *World Socialist Web Site*, 24 October 2015, at https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2015/10/24/pola-o24.html. It was called "Three Seas Initiative" (I3) – its summit took place in Dubrovnik (Croatia) in August 2016 with the active participation of Duda.

[68] The "'liberal-left hegemony" within the EU, in the view of the conservative politicians, undermines the country's traditional values and national identity.

[69] Contradictions connected with leadership and eastern policy (see: below) are followed by these related to climate policy. The PiS is being limited by its supporters from trade unions of coal miners. See Adekoya, Remi:

Poland's foreign policy has not been hit by a radical shift as a result of the elections. There is a strong support for maintaining an active role in shaping a vigorous international response against Russia's illegitimate intervention in Ukraine and a larger NATO presence close to the eastern border of the alliance. Profound distrust with Moscow is likely to form the backbone of future foreign policy decisions by Warsaw. In line with the PiS's rhetoric, the president and the government actively support the idea of carving out a more assertive and independent foreign policy, using the NATO's summit in Warsaw in July 2016 to ensure the Alliance's greater military presence in Poland. A specific goal is the permanent stationing of the US forces, military bases, and defense weaponry on the NATO's "Eastern flank", which was often opposed by some European allies (Germany, in particular) as too provocative toward Russia. In addition, renewed diplomatic efforts to forge a coalition of some "Eastern flank" NATO's member-states under Poland's leadership to hold Russia off can be expected[70]. This would mark the most significant difference between the PiS's political narrative and that of the PO, that considered the ties with Germany and the EU's as "hard core" priority.

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[70] De Vivo, Diana: "The new politics of Poland's foreign policy", *Aspenia Online*, 27 October.2015, at https://www.aspeninstitute.it/aspenia-online/article/new-politics-poland%E2%80%99s-foreign-policy. The new prime minister, Beata Szydło, speaks in favor of remaining in the EU, but insists on more Polish influence in the Union. She accuses the previous premier, Ewa Kopacz, of capitulating to German chancellor Angela Merkel because the Kopacz-led government agreed to accept almost ten thousand refugees in Poland.

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