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Polish views of the EU: the illusion of consensus

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There was a time when foreign policy was seen as the exclusive domain of the elite. At present, though, it is becoming increasingly difficult to take action in this area without the broader participation and support of public opinion. Proof of this is found first of all in the fact that the decades-long consensus facilitating further EU integration is drawing to a close. This is being caused by various factors: the partial dysfunction of European structures (e.g. the euro crisis or the migration crisis); the EU's decreasing ability of providing safety and prosperity for its citizens; and also because the EU has been encroaching on the competences of member states. "More integration" is no longer an obvious option; it needs to be justified and negotiated with citizens. Secondly, international policy is increasingly becoming a factor in domestic policy, not only due to European integration, but also due to continuous media coverage and the perception that citizens have that global economic processes (the delocalisation of industries) and demographic processes (migration) influence their everyday lives. Thirdly, in connection with the crisis of trust towards representative institutions and the political establishment, appeals to forms of direct democracy are on the rise. This has been observed recently in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Hungary. "Referendocracy" has begun also to encroach on the foreign policy arena.¹

There is particular justification in Poland in asking the question as to what degree current foreign policy is aligned with the views of citizens. Beginning in the 1990s, Poland's outlook regarding Europe and

¹ Agnieszka Łada, *Referendocracy. Will referenda lead to strengthening or weakening of European democracy?*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2016 (in Polish), <http://www.isp.org.pl/publikacje,1,905.html>.

the world was determined by its European orientation, the path to NATO and the EU. It was not merely a political and economic choice, it was also a cultural and civilisational one. In an institutional sense, this choice remains unquestioned, but in the new European and global reality it must be validated and legitimised anew. This is even more the case when one considers that it is not only Poland's presence in the EU which is at stake, **but also the quality and essence of its membership**. These depend on the degree to which the political elite and society at large are willing to constructively involve themselves in the forming of European policy and participate in the most important integration projects. However, great political courage, involvement and social legitimacy will be required to maintain the most crucial (including for Poland and the Poles) integration achievements to date (economic development, the Schengen issue) and for efforts to be made towards granting the EU increased possibilities to take foreign policy and security measures, which are all the more important as we enter the age of Donald Trump. Furthermore, Poland's and the Poles' "European calling" will depend on how they treat and define European values. By which we mean that second cultural-civilisational element of Poland's European orientation which has been accomplished over the past 25 years.

In the spring of 2016 the Stefan Batory Foundation published a report entitled *Change in Poland, but what change? Assumptions of Law and Justice party foreign policy*. In it we argued that the 2015 parliamentary elections had ushered in the period of greatest change in Poland's foreign policy since 1989. While in the past the EU was seen in Poland as above all a source of opportunities, it is now ever more frequently being defined by the government as a threat.² Six months on there is no reason to re-evaluate that judgment. This can be seen in various areas: the deteriorating clash with the European Commission and other European institutions, the crisis in relations with France, Jarosław Kaczyński's proposal to open up treaties and to clearly limit the competences of EU institutions, the common ideological front with Viktor Orbán, and the resolution in the Sejm (lower house of the Parliament) to reshape the EU into a loosely bound association of strong sovereign states. Critics often claim this Eurosceptic policy of Law and Justice party (PiS) is being implemented in the face of Polish public opinion which is, after all, one of the most pro-European in the EU.

The following report shows that the assumption that PiS's foreign policy (in particular on Europe) is only weakly rooted in public opinion (or is even in contradiction to it) needs to be clearly put into perspective since we are faced with profound divisions in Polish society concerning various questions connected to the EU. These divisions are crucial concerning the future of Poland's place in Europe and the world. The time of consensus on these issues has passed. It is important to stress that the consensus on membership alone — which still surpasses 80% — is no longer of great significance.

The scale of this erosion is difficult to estimate. It may be assumed that it is on an upward trajectory since it is intertwined with social attitudes in certain other areas which will in the coming years increase in significance from the point of view of European policy (e.g. the attitude to foreigners, in particular Muslims and non-whites, and whether to enter the eurozone). While reports in the press are frequently complaining that the policies which PiS are pursuing are leading Poland away from the European mainstream, it is worth pointing out that the critics seem to be unaware of just how many Polish citizens would be pleased by this.

² Adam Balcer, Piotr Buras, Grzegorz Gromadzki, Eugeniusz Smolar, *Change in Poland, but what change? Assumptions of Law and Justice party foreign policy*, Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw 2016, <http://www.batory.org.pl/upload/files/Programy%20operacyjne/Otwarta%20Europa/Change%20in%20Poland.pdf>.

We will place our deliberations on the attitude of Poles to the outside world and the consequences this has for foreign policy in a broader context which concerns the evolution of society's value systems and the subsequent changes in the structure of party rivalry and so-called social and political divisions. Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, leading researchers in the area of the transformation of values worldwide, suggest that there has been a significant change in how party systems are identified — the classical division into the left and right, defined by the attitude of voters to economic and social issues (the role of the state in the economy, the scale of redistribution) has lost its dominance.³ The conflict which has begun to polarise Western societies most is centred on cultural values. It is precisely these “in conjunction with certain demographic and social factors which provide the most coherent and convincing explanation of the electoral support for populist parties”.⁴ For this report, the following fact is of key significance — **in the “cultural” political paradigm currently taking over the Western world, the attitude to issues strictly related to foreign policy plays a fundamental role. This is because the issue of a community's identity defined in the context of the external world has taken on crucial significance.**

While some people view globalisation, regional integration, immigration and cultural/religious pluralism as something either neutral or positive (if requiring some modification), others reject these phenomena as being in conflict with national interests or undermining their identity. This difference is one of the most important factors in determining where somebody falls on **the scale running from “open” to “closed”**.⁵ “Open” here includes attitudes which emphasise postmaterialist values (a term coined by Inglehart) such as: universal human rights, secularism (the private character of religion), individualism, the capacity for criticising one's own nation, defining national identity in an inclusive manner as concerns immigrants (with an emphasis on integration rather than assimilation) and support for the state to be involved in solving international problems. “Closed” would be defined by way of: the idealisation of one's own nation and the view that its homogeneity is the ideal status, support for material values (social security, geared towards survival), traditionalism (the role of religion in public life), a preference for authoritarian and community-based attitudes (collectivism), mistrust of international and transnational institutions, fear of foreigners, and the pre-eminence of the desire to defend the country from external influences and risks over the wish to search for the benefits of international cooperation.

Sociological research proves that also in Poland polarisation on the “open-closed” scale is an important feature of the political and social reality. Michał Bilewicz has identified that the division in Polish society into two separate “tribes” is strongly characterised by different views, including those mentioned above (in particular the attitude to foreigners).⁶ The 2015 parliamentary election in Poland brought success for groupings proclaiming traditionalist, collectivist and materialist values. This can be interpreted as having been caused by the opposition of a part of society (and of part of its elite) to the gradual proliferation of postmaterialist values, particularly in the big cities and nationwide media.⁷ The dynamics of Poland's political life is increasingly characterised by this opposition — even if the

3 Ronald F. Inglehart, Pippa Norris, *Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash*, Harvard Kennedy School, 2016, <https://research.hks.harvard.edu/publications/workingpapers/citation.aspx?PubId=11325&type=FN&PersonId=83>.

4 Ibid., p. 4.

5 “The Economist” also puts forward this dichotomy, *The New Political Divide*, <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21702750-farewell-left-versus-right-contest-matters-now-open-against-closed-new>, see: Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, vol. I and II, published first in 1945, Princeton and Oxford 2013.

6 Michał Bilewicz, *Jak wykroczyć poza plemienne wspólnoty moralne?*, <http://obywatelski.natemat.pl/137781,jak-wykroczy-cy-pozaplemienne-wspolnoty-moralne>.

7 See: Klaus Bachmann, *Der Bruch. Ursachen und Konsequenzen des Umsturzes der Verfassungsordnung Polens 2015–2016*, Peter Lang Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2016, p. 80.

supporters of the extreme “open-closed” views do not form a majority of society — and this opposition at times takes on the full spectrum of hybrid forms. How the attitude of Poles on international issues will move along this scale will be of crucial significance for the future of Polish politics, including on Europe.

We define the course being followed in PiS’s foreign policy as one wary of further integration, keeping Poland’s Western partners at arm’s length, and focused on domestic policy to the detriment of foreign ambition. This report hypothesises that support for this course would only increase if the Poles would move further in the “closed” direction.⁸

Open vs. closed

Three dimensions

How is it possible to define the source of an “open” or “closed” attitude in relation to foreign policy? In this text we assume that a particular attitude is determined by the opinions of Polish citizens in three dimensions. We believe they have the strongest influence in shaping their views on foreign policy and are furthermore decisive regarding the legitimacy (or lack thereof) of the foreign policy actions of the current government.

The first dimension — which we consider to be crucial when considering the future interdependencies between public opinion and European policy — **is the attitude to Poland’s further EU integration**. We have intentionally avoided using the term “Euroscepticism” since this is in public debate often only applied disparagingly (and is simplified as opposition to EU membership). We are less interested in the stance taken on Poland’s EU membership and more in what Poles think about integration projects which may be expected in the near future, about the most important challenges the EU faces, and about the attitude to the tension between the idea of national sovereignty and how the EU functions. It is not thus a discussion of “for or against the EU”. We will instead contrast views which favour further EU integration and the involvement of Poland in future integration projects (the pro-integration attitude) with views opposed to such initiatives (the stance sceptical of further integration). Although there is no doubt that Poles support EU membership as their geopolitical and civilisational preference, we believe that this is insufficient to assess the place and role of Poland in the coming years. We state that Poland’s capacity to shape its European environment will be in large part dependent on the willingness and determination to cooperate in the European projects which will define the dynamic of integration in the coming years, such as: the eurozone, cooperation on asylum and energy-climate policy, and the common security and defence policy of the EU. Our criticism of PiS’s policy in the Stefan Batory Foundation’s first report was down to the conclusion that the idea of selective integration or selective (asymmetrical) solidarity does not serve this goal. In this report we consider whether this PiS strategy can count on the support of Polish society.

The second dimension which interests us concerning the future direction Poland takes in European policy (and its social legitimacy) is **the attitude on the involvement of the country on the international scene**. The scale of the tendency which Poles have to be isolationist is particularly crucial. This

⁸ This report is the result of the work of political analysts and not of sociologists or public opinion researchers. We did not commission our own public opinion surveys but drew on existing ones for our conclusions regarding questions of how PiS’s foreign policy is legitimised and the prospects of Polish diplomacy, in particular in the EU. We wish to thank Klaus Bachmann, Michał Bilewicz, Katarzyna Pełczyńska-Nałęcz, Andrzej Rychard and Aleksander Smolar for their comments at various stages of work on this report. As always, the authors of the report assume full responsibility for its content and conclusions.

isolationism, or concentration on domestic issues, can be gauged in the political-economic dimension (development aid, etc.) and also in the political-military dimension (solidarity toward NATO and EU allies). We wish to link to the thesis in our previous report that the PiS government clearly prioritises domestic policy and to determine what level of support is found in public opinion for policy based on domestic issues and oriented away from active international involvement.⁹

The third dimension concerns **views on foreigners and national identity**. We will focus our interest on the level of nativism in Polish society. By that term we refer on the one hand to the attitude characterised by a distance to or dislike of foreigners, the critical attitude to ethnic and religious diversity and, on the other, the method of defining nationality in chiefly ethnic terms.¹⁰ Nativism is the conviction that a nation's cultural, ethnic or religious heritage (traditional, "authentic" values) needs to be defended from what its exponents see as the threat coming from foreigners, immigrants, international structures and globalisation. Nativism is thus the polar opposite of civic patriotism, whose focal point is political community based on the rule of law and thus enshrining minority rights and accepting diversity on principle as a feature of modern-day society. When discussing foreign policy, this factor has multiple meanings. We may assume that the issues of displacement, migration and the resultant diversity will be major problems in international affairs in Europe in the coming years (and probably decades), as will the capacity for international cooperation in that area. This means that the way in which attitudes will be dispersed on the nativism-civic sliding scale will determine social reactions and define the framework in which the governments of EU member states will be able to manoeuvre and take decisions. Where a given society falls on this scale will be of key significance regarding its views on international affairs and the European policy of its country.

Ambivalence to the EU

For ten years (with a brief pause) over 80% of Poles have stated they are in favour of EU membership and only 10% are against.¹¹ Surveys show that there is no desire in Poland to follow the British example of opting out of the EU. In June 2016, immediately after the British referendum, a survey revealed that 77% of Poles are in favour of remaining in the EU, with 16% in favour of leaving (7% would not vote). Interestingly, this poll showed that young people (18–29 years old) were most in favour of "Polexit" at 27%, and the least keen on leaving were the over 60s at 9%.¹² It is also important to compare Polish society with other EU member states following Brexit. In many countries an unwillingness to follow in the footsteps of the UK was observed. The vast majority of Germans (82%) supported EU membership following Brexit.¹³ In Denmark Brexit was followed by a 10% rise in support for EU membership, to reach 69%.¹⁴ However, this trend was not seen in the Netherlands (46% in favour of staying, 43% against) and France (45% to stay, 33% to leave).¹⁵ The poll results in France, the Netherlands and certain other countries are not only indicative of dissatisfaction with the existence and functioning of the

9 See: note 2.

10 The Achilles heel of nativism is precisely the dissonance between the ideal of a cohesive culture and identity and the highly complex social reality, both internally and externally.

11 <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/sondaz-cbos-polacy-popieraja-czlonkostwo-polski-w-ue/b9d97z>.

12 <https://oko.press/polexit-nie/>.

13 Research carried out on 24th June 2016, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-germany-refe-rendum-idUKKCN0ZD183>.

14 The first poll was carried out the week before the British referendum and the next at the end of June/beginning of July 2016, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-germany-refe-rendum-idUKKCN0ZD183>.

15 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/27/frexit-nexit-or-oexit-who-will-be-next-to-leave-the-eu>. Worth noting is that as much as 22% are undecided in France. See: <http://www.rtl.fr/actu/politique/brexit-45-des-francais-pour-le-maintien-de-la-france-dans-l-union-europeenne-7783887155>.

EU, but are also caused by the negative attitude in those countries towards the political and economic situation and disappointment with the elites.¹⁶

Nevertheless, the attitudes of Poles regarding EU membership are in no way as clear as would seem from the above-mentioned surveys. **37% of Poles believe that their country could better face the future outside the EU.** Barely half (51%) disagree.¹⁷ This can be understood by stating that nearly 40% of Poles do not see the EU as an indispensable framework for Poland's future development and can certainly imagine their country functioning outside it. Nor is there a dearth of people doubting the effectiveness of the EU in other member states. This can be seen by the affirmative responses to survey questions on whether their country would cope better with future challenges outside the EU. The EU average on this issue is 33% and among the countries with greater doubts than Poland are: Slovenia (53%), Austria (43%), Italy (42%), and the Czech Republic (40%). Romania (36%) and Hungary (34%) have a similar result to Poland. Among the countries with a much lower result are: France (27%), and Germany and Spain (both 25%). Only two countries had a result below 20%: Denmark (19%) and the Netherlands (18%).¹⁸ The critical stance of a section of Poles is proven by public opinion polls concerning the competence of EU institutions. Over a third of Poles (35%) questioned in a poll from February 2016 claimed that EU membership places excessive restrictions on the sovereignty and independence of their country (in previous years this was a little higher — in autumn 2015 it was 38%). It is, though, important to note that over half of Poles (52%) are of the opposite opinion.¹⁹ The (seven-point) growth in this tendency between November 2015 and February 2016 is also noteworthy — this was the first three months of the PiS government.

It seems interesting that **when compared to other countries, the Poles are rather opposed to further integration.** According to a study from the Pew Research Center, only 9% support this, while 39% wish for a continuation of the status quo, with 38% preferring that some competences be returned to the nation states. As many as 14% of Poles — the highest number of any country — had no clear answer on this issue. Against the backdrop of other countries included in the study, Poles are the most opposed to any change. Crucially, this means that they are relatively unenthusiastic on whether the EU should be stripped of some competences.²⁰ However, it is worth noting that more than four times as many Poles consider that Brussels has too much power than those are who feel that Poland should actually leave the EU. In several of the surveyed countries, in particular in France (34%), Spain (30%), Germany (26%) and the Netherlands (24%) a large part of society wants further European integration. However, for example in the Netherlands (44%) and Germany (43%) there is a large proportion of people calling for a repatriation of certain competences to member states (compared to 38% in Poland).²¹ The fact that the EU institutions are more trusted by Poles than Polish institutions certainly has an influence on the positive opinion of the EU. Over half of Poles (53%) trust the EU and only 38% trust the Polish government and 30% trust their Sejm and Senate.²²

16 The referenda in Ireland and more recently in the Netherlands regarding the ratification of the EU-Ukraine association agreement are examples of this.

17 Standard Eurobarometer 85, May 2016, <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/>.

18 Ibid.

19 Beata Roguska, *Polska w Unii Europejskiej*, CBOS, Research report no. 31/2016, Warsaw, February 2016, p. 3, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_031_16.PDF.

20 Bruce Stokes, *Euroskepticism Beyond Brexit*, Pew Research Center, 07.06.2016, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/06/07/euroskepticism-beyond-brexit/>. Besides Poland, the survey covered: France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

21 Ibid.

22 Małgorzata Omyła-Rudzka, *Zaufanie społeczne*, CBOS, Research report no. 18/2016, Warsaw, February 2016, p. 14, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_018_16.PDF.

In this context the views of Poles on the conflict between the European Commission and the Polish government are very important. This issue was mainly caused by PiS's policy regarding the rights of the Constitutional Tribunal. Research shows that **society is deeply split on how it assesses the work of the European Commission**. According to a survey from June 2016, 42% of respondents believe that the European Commission's critical opinion of Poland (stating that the rule of law is under threat) is justified. A third of respondents (34%) believe it was unjustified. Almost one quarter of those who participated in the survey (24%) had no opinion on this issue. The assessment of to what degree pressure can be applied — and why — is the source of even more controversy. Opinions in this area are particularly significant for this report — accepting that the European Commission can speak out on Polish domestic policy and issue recommendations can be interpreted as being in favour of further integration and broadening the competences of transnational institutions. The numbers of those accepting and those not accepting statements critical of Poland as a valid means of applying pressure on the government are almost the same (respectively, 41% and 39%). 41% of those questioned believe that the European Commission's negative assessment was caused by a dislike of PiS and a similar amount (38%) believe that it was due to concern over the rule of law in Poland. As with the issue concerning the validity of the European Commission, a large proportion of respondents (respectively 20% and 21%) were not able to answer.²³

Much can be revealed about what Poles think about the EU by examining their views on particular areas of EU integration. The vast majority of member states belong to the eurozone and integration in this area — especially following Brexit — is of fundamental significance for the EU. Poland's absence from this “club” severely hampers PiS's stated desire to have more influence on European decisions. Nonetheless, in March 2016 a resounding 65% of Poles deemed that Poland should not join the eurozone, with only 13% stating that it should abandon the zloty as quickly as possible.²⁴ Opposition to the single currency has been observed in Polish society for many years. In the autumn of 2014 68% of Poles were against joining the eurozone, including 27% who were rather opposed to it. Under 25% were in favour.²⁵

As regards their negative attitude to the euro, the Poles stand out against the rest of Central Europe. According to research by Eurobarometer in May 2016, the majority of Croats, Romanians and Hungarians have a positive opinion to joining the eurozone. In Bulgaria the picture is more balanced (46% in favour, 42% against, and 12% have no opinion). The Czechs are clear opponents with three quarters against it.²⁶ In Western Europe, the Swedes, British and the Danes (approx. 65–75%) are also against joining. It is worth adding that in all the countries of the eurozone the vast majority support the single currency.²⁷ It is thus possible to assume that eurozone membership is one of the key factors building a sense of a European community among member states and their citizens.

23 Beata Roguska, *Reakcje społeczne na przyjęcie przez Komisję Europejską opinii o praworządności w Polsce*, CBOS, Research report no. 86/2016, Warsaw, June 2016, pp. 2–3, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_086_16.PDF.

24 Beata Roguska, *Elektoraty partyjne*, CBOS, Research report no. 95/2016, Warsaw, June 2016, p. 6, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_095_16.PDF.

25 Beata Roguska, *Narastanie obaw związanych z wprowadzaniem euro*, CBOS, Research report 151/2014, Warsaw, November 2014, p. 6, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2014/K_151_14.PDF.

26 Standard Eurobarometer 85, May 2016, “First Results”, p. 32, <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2130>. In that study 55% of Poles were against, with 35% in favour.

27 Ibid. Opposition to eurozone membership in member states ranges between 13% and 35%. Only in Cyprus does it approach 45%.

Isolationism or engagement?

In research carried out by the Pew Research Center in ten EU countries²⁸, a **clear majority of Poles (65%, against a median of 56%) support the opinion that their “country should deal with its own problems** and let other nations fend for themselves as best they can”. Only 21% (median 40%) believe their country should “help other countries”. The only countries recording a high focus on their own issues were: Greece (83%), Hungary (77%) and Italy (67%).²⁹ However, the same study shows that 45% of Poles are convinced that their country plays a greater role on the world stage than ten years ago. This is more than in other countries, except Germany (28% believe Poland’s role has diminished and 20% believe it is unchanged). It is thus valid to ask if the opinion prevalent among Polish citizens that Poland now plays a greater role means that Poland has greater responsibility (co-responsibility) for global problems? It may seem that Poles are inclined to believe that the EU should play a compensatory role in this area, i.e. the EU’s increased global influence should translate into the increased significance of Poland. In fact 61% of Poles state that “the EU should play a more active role in the world than it does today”. Nevertheless, in comparison to the remaining countries, Poland is in the bottom section of the table (the median is 74%, while from the ten countries surveyed weaker support to increase the activity of the EU was only observed in the Netherlands and the UK, with 58% and 55% respectively).³⁰ This could be caused by a lack of faith in the effectiveness of the EU as a global actor but could also be down to the conservative attitude presented above if it concerns international involvement in general (as an EU member Poland would be jointly responsible for increased EU activity).

Polish citizens have limited support for military engagement beyond their country’s borders. Although Poland is among the countries which attach most weight to NATO membership (70% evaluate it positively³¹), nevertheless, less than half of those surveyed would be prepared to support the participation of the Polish military in the defence of European NATO members should they be subject to Russian aggression. Nearly 35% stated they were against the Polish military being sent to help a European ally under attack from Russia.³² It is true that many other societies, e.g. France, Italy and especially Germany (58% against, 38% in favour) are significantly less prepared to fulfil their obligations laid out in Article 5 of the NATO Washington Treaty. Nevertheless, considering Poland’s historical experiences and how importantly it rates the issue of solidarity in response to potential Russian aggression, it is worth pointing out that support for sending troops to aid Poland’s allies is at a similar level to that seen in the UK and Spain.

Poles in general back the use of force by the EU or NATO in the fight against Islamic terrorism, but their support for the direct engagement of the Polish military to this end is highly limited. Among the countries polled by the Pew Research Center, support for the use of military force as the best method to combat terrorism is highest (52%) in Poland (the same level as in Italy and a little higher than in Hungary).³³ However, according to a poll from July 2016, as many as 73% of Poles were opposed to their country’s military involvement in the fight with Islamic State (nearly 35% “rather against”) while

28 Bruce Stokes, Richard Wike, Jacob Poushter, *Europeans Face the World Divided*, Pew Research Center, 13.06.2016, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/06/13/europeans-face-the-world-divided/>. Besides Poland, the study covered: France, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

29 It should be noted that at least in Greece and Italy (and partly also in Hungary) the sensation that they are overburdened by the migration crisis has certainly had an influence on the opinions expressed by their citizens.

30 Stokes, Wike, Poushter, *Europeans Face the World Divided...*, *op. cit.*

31 *Ibid.*

32 Katie Simmons, Bruce Stokes, Jacob Poushter, *NATO Public Opinion: Wary on Russia, Leery of Action on Ukraine*, Pew Research Center, 10.06.2015, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/10/1-nato-public-opinion-wary-of-russia-leary-of-action-on-ukraine/>.

33 Stokes, Wike, Poushter, *Europeans Face the World Divided...*, *op. cit.*

only 20% would support this action.³⁴ It is worth mentioning that the support for Polish foreign military engagement (in Afghanistan or in Iraq) was significantly higher 10–15 years ago.

Poland stands out against the backdrop of other European societies in the fact that **less than half of Poles (48%) agree with the statement, “global economic involvement is a good thing [for Poland]”** because it provides access to new markets and new possibilities for growth”. 27% of those surveyed disagreed with the statement. The result was lower only in Italy and Greece. In Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany it was over 70% and in Spain it was 55%.

Poles are divided on the issue of how important multilateral cooperation is and what consequences it has for Polish politics. 42% feel that it is important to “follow its national interests even when allies strongly disagree”, and 43% believe it is necessary to “take allies’ interests into account even if it means compromising”. Poland’s stance on this was very similar to that of the Swedes, Spanish and Dutch. A little over half of Italians, Hungarians, British and French were of the opinion that their countries’ own interests had priority. The Greeks were strongly in favour (75%) of prioritising their own interests and the Germans (30%) were most open to compromise with their allies. As with many other questions, Poland has a higher level than the EU average of people with no clear opinion (15% in this case). This could point to a relatively low awareness of international policy issues and the significance the international environment has for Poland.

Poles are sceptical about whether respect for human rights should be treated as “one of the main aims of their country’s foreign policy” — only 21% believe that defending human rights belongs in this category (54% accept it is important but believe that other issues carry more weight) and 13% disagree with this statement. From the ten countries included in the survey, only in Hungary was there a lower level of support. For example in Spain 63% of respondents agreed and in Germany, 62%.

The fairly high level of restraint among Poles when it comes to international involvement demonstrates that Poland belongs to the group of societies which are especially concerned about the international situation and which have a sense of insecurity. 71% of Poles feel that Russia poses a threat to their country (this is almost double the average of the ten countries polled by the Pew Research Center) and almost half (47%) consider China’s rise to be dangerous.³⁵

The strength of nativism

Nativist tendencies fall on fertile ground in Poland. It is the most homogeneous country in the EU in ethnic and religious terms. Poles stand out against the European background as far as moral conservatism is concerned, which feeds a sense of being different to the rest of Europeans. Furthermore, in recent years xenophobic and conservative views have been strongly on the rise in Polish society. In this dimension there have been more serious changes than in terms of Polish isolationism or the attitude to European integration.

Poland’s ethnic and religious homogeneity causes society to define national identity in a rather closed manner. Over 70% of Poles agreed that Roman Catholic faith is an important criterion in determining if someone is a true Pole (over 35% feel it is rather important). Less than 30% disagreed. To compare, the opinion that being a Christian is important in determining belonging to a nation had the

³⁴ Barbara Badora, *Stosunek do zaangażowania Polski w działania globalnej koalicji przeciwko tzw. Państwu Islamskiemu*, CBOS, Research report 109/2016, Warsaw, July 2016, p. 3, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_109_16.PDF.

³⁵ Stokes, Wike, Poushter, *Europeans Face the World Divided...*, op. cit.

following levels of support: the UK over 35%, Germany 30%, France less than 25%, Spain nearly 20%, Sweden over 15%. Poland compared to Greece, Hungary and Italy in this regard, with 65%–80% of those queried in those countries agreeing. In the same study 80% of Polish citizens polled stated that being born in Poland is an important criterion in determining if someone is a true Pole (with nearly 40% claiming it is fairly important). Nearly 20% considered that to be unimportant when determining if someone is a true Pole. The importance of being born in the country in determining national identity was expressed by 20% of Swedes, under 35% of Germans, over 40% of the Dutch, a little over 45% of the French, over 55% of Britons and nearly 60% of Spaniards. The vast majority of Greeks, Hungarians and Italians (approx. 80%) agreed with the Polish position.³⁶

In spite of the good economic situation, the absence of terrorist attacks or problems related to the migration crisis, xenophobia has been on the rise in Poland in recent years.³⁷ This is on a higher scale than in many European countries. CBOS has been carrying out research into the attitude of Poles to other nations regularly since 1993. From 2010 to 2016 the dislike of almost all 27 nations in the study rose (by a few to as much as 20 points).³⁸ In Poland the rise in xenophobia concerns young people in particular.³⁹

Until autumn 2015 approximately half of Poles were against receiving refugees from Africa and the Middle East, with approximately 35–40% in favour. The terrorist attacks in November 2015 and an election campaign characterised by rising anti-Muslim sentiments led to a marked increase in those opposed to accepting refugees. Since autumn 2015 an average of two thirds of Poles are against receiving refugees from the Middle East and Africa (including 25% rather against).⁴⁰ Less than 30% are in favour of accepting them. This reluctance is linked to the fact that the vast majority of refugees are Muslims and/or non-whites. They are viewed by Poles above all as a threat. The overwhelming majority of Poles (nearly 75%) believe that the large number of refugees fleeing Syria and Iraq are a great security threat.⁴¹ In comparison over 30% of Germans were of a similar opinion, under 25% of Swedes, 35% of Dutch people, and over 40% of people in Spain, 45% in France and over half of British people surveyed. Poles were most similar to Italians, Greeks and Hungarians, where the clear majority (65–70%) were of the identical opinion.

The overwhelming majority of Poles connect Muslims with terrorism.⁴² As a result of this antipathy to refugees, the already high dislike of Muslims rose, including Muslims resident in Poland. In a Pew Research Center study, two thirds of Poles declared a negative opinion of Muslims (including 40%

36 *Topline Questionnaire, Pew Research Center, spring 2016.*

37 In 2014–2016 the number of Ukrainians working in Poland increased dramatically. At present they number in the hundreds of thousands. However, the majority of them are seasonal workers and they make up approximately 2% of the country's population.

38 Małgorzata Omyła-Rudzka, *Stosunek do innych narodów*, CBOS, Research report no 53/2016, Warsaw, April 2016, pp. 4–5, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_053_16.PDF.

39 In the 2015 parliamentary elections almost 40% of young people in Poland voted for clearly anti-immigrant parties (Kukiz '15, KORWiN), which polled at under 15% across the entire electorate. Both parties also did well among Poles living in the UK and Ireland.

40 Agnieszka Cybulska, *Stosunek do przyjmowania uchodźców*, CBOS, Research report no. 136/2016, Warsaw, October 2016, p. 4, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_136_16.PDF.

41 Jacob Pushter, *European opinions of the refugee crisis in 5 charts*, Pew Research Center, 16.09.2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/16/european-opinions-of-the-refugee-crisis-in-5-charts/>.

42 In research carried out by TNS Polska in 2015 nearly 60% of Poles stated that immigrants from Muslim countries present a terrorist threat and only 15% disagreed. "Africa Another Way" foundation, *The public opinion research results of the integration of citizens of African countries in Poland*, p. 39, <http://afryka.org/download/raport2015/raportpl.pdf>.

rather negative)⁴³, while the small Muslim community in Poland causes no noticeable problems. In comparison, in France, Britain and Germany, this attitude to Muslim fellow citizens was expressed by less than 30% of respondents, and by 35% in the Netherlands and Sweden.⁴⁴ Greece, Hungary and Italy held a very similar position to Poland.

A further factor conducive to nativist sentiments is the significantly higher level of social conservatism in Poland when compared to the vast majority of Europeans. The issues most clearly indicating this difference of the Poles are the attitudes to homosexuality and abortion. The overwhelming majority of respondents consider homosexuality to be abnormal. The situation has improved somewhat since the start of the 21st century — in 2001 only 5% of Poles considered homosexuality to be normal and in 2013 this figure was over 10%. In 2001 over 45% of Poles thought that, although homosexuality is a deviation from the norm, it still needs to be tolerated (the figure for those stating that it should not be tolerated was not much lower). By 2013 this number had risen by 10 points to over 55%. Over 25% of Poles view homosexuality as abnormal and that it should not be tolerated.⁴⁵ In 2016 the number of Poles with that opinion rose to 37%.⁴⁶ Over 60% of Poles are against same-sex partnerships, with over 25% in favour. The remainder are undecided or have no opinion on the subject.⁴⁷ In comparison, in Catholic Ireland, i.e. in one of the most religious countries of the EU, 60% of voters supported the legalisation of same-sex marriages in a referendum in 2015. In the attitude towards homosexuals, Poles are similar to many Central European societies.

Poles diverge from the clear majority of Europeans when it comes to attitudes to abortion (only Malta sees similar poll results to those in Poland). That divergence has tangibly increased in recent years. In 2002 nearly 45% of Poles believed that a woman has a right to an abortion due to a difficult economic situation. An identical number were opposed. At present the vast majority of Poles (75%) state that a woman has no right to an abortion on the grounds of a difficult material situation. 14% of those polled disagreed.⁴⁸ **This social conservatism is in large part linked to Poland's significantly higher (than the EU average) religiosity and the role of the Catholic Church there, which enjoys great social approval.**⁴⁹ It is interesting to observe that the increased role of the Church is taking place in line with a gradual decrease in the level of church attendance.⁵⁰

Becoming more “closed”?

In the introduction we present the idea that in the modern world the opposition between “open” and “closed” world views has become crucial in how the political scene is organised. By making a detailed analysis of opinion polls in three categories (scepticism to European integration, isolationism,

43 Richard Wike, Bruce Stokes, Katie Simmons, *Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism Fewer Jobs*, Pew Research Center, 11.07.2016, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/07/11/europeans-fear-wave-of-refugees-will-mean-more-terrorism-fewer-jobs/>.

44 Ibid. Again Greece, Hungary and Italy (65–70% declared an unfavourable opinion) were very similar to Poland.

45 Michał Feliksiak, *Stosunek do praw gejów i lesbijek oraz związków partnerskich*, CBOS, Research report no. 24/2013, Warsaw, February 2013, p. 3, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2013/K_024_13.PDF.

46 Rafał Boguszewski, Antoni Głowacki, *Między patriotyzmem a nacjonalizmem*, CBOS, Research report no. 151/2016, Warsaw, November 2016, p. 12, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_151_16.PDF.

47 Beata Rogucka, *Elektoraty partyjne*, CBOS, Research report no. 95/2016, Warsaw, June 2016, p. 6, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_095_16.PDF.

48 Marcin Herrmann, *Opinie o dopuszczalności aborcji*, CBOS, Research report no. 51/2016, Warsaw, April 2016, p. 5, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_051_16.PDF.

49 As many as 70% of Poles trust the Catholic Church, see: Małgorzata Omyła-Rudzka, *Zaufanie społeczne*, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

50 At the beginning of the '90s over 50% of Poles attended mass every Sunday. This number has dropped to 40% in recent years. At the beginning of the 21st century nearly 75% of weddings in Poland had a religious character. In 2015, though, this number was marginally over 60%. At the beginning of the 1990s one in six marriages ended in divorce; this figure now stands at one in three. See: *Ślub Kościelny coraz mniej popularny*, onet.pl, 27.10.2016, <http://kobieta.onet.pl/slub/slub-koscielny-coraz-mniej-popularny-infografika/0m0ly5>.

nativism), we can see that in the case of Polish society we can generalise three distinct groups. The first is the “**open**” group. According to the polls we recognise as being crucial regarding foreign policy, this group comprises those who are in favour of further integration, are prepared to help other countries, are open to foreigners, etc. We feel that the opinion polls which we cite allow us to put forward the thesis that approximately 30–35% of Polish society falls into this category. We estimate that approximately 40% of Poles belong to the opposite group, the “**closed**” group (which lays the emphasis on defending sovereignty, has a dislike of foreigners, and focuses on “its own backyard”).⁵¹

The third group, the “**intermediate**” group, encompasses almost a third of society. It is of fundamental importance for the main question of our report — is the majority of Polish society rather “open” or rather “closed”? We may attempt to define this group by analysing surveys in three key areas on European policy: the attitude to the eurozone, to accepting refugees from the Middle East and Africa, and regarding military support for European allies in the fight with Islamic terrorism. In the case of the first question, research from autumn 2014, 68% of Poles were opposed to entering the eurozone, including 27% rather opposed. According to a survey from June 2016, nearly three quarters of those asked were opposed to Poland’s military engagement in the war against Islamic State, including 35% “rather opposed”. Since autumn 2015 an average of two thirds of Poles have been against accepting refugees from the Middle East and Africa, including 25% who are “rather opposed” to this.

These results suggest that the “intermediate” group in many key issues regarding European integration opt for the stance of “**rather closed**”. Polls indicate that the pendulum of moods and opinions in Polish society is swinging rather in the direction of “closed” than “open”. This is not in contradiction with the high level of support for Poland’s membership of the European Union, which is only questioned by an extreme section of the “closed” group. Nonetheless the Polish tendency towards “rather closed” opinions is highly important when considering the foreign policy of the current government, the strategy of the opposition, and above all the fundamental questions about Poland’s future place in Europe and the world. We will present our conclusions on these questions in the next chapter.

However, although the “intermediate” group is often composed of people choosing “rather closed” opinions, we do not automatically place them in the “closed” group since it is because of this group that over half of Poles surveyed support positions such as trust towards the EU or that the EU does not limit Poland’s sovereignty. These are, after all, “open” attitudes.

It is worth pointing out here that there appear to be factors in the framework of Polish society which foster the closed stance and thus the existence of the “rather closed” group rather than a “neutral” or “rather open” group. Polish society is characterised by a large level of general mistrust linked with a high level of fear of external threats (e.g. terrorism) and by the susceptibility of a section of Poles to conspiracy theories. Furthermore, the level of interest in foreign affairs is already low and is diminishing further. In research carried in 2015, a little more than 35% of Polish people polled stated that they have a large knowledge about Europe. When asked about other continents an average of around 10% expressed that opinion. Over 40% of those surveyed would like to learn more about Europe but only 30% would like to know more about other continents. Interest in them dropped 5–10 points in comparison to 2010.⁵² According to surveys carried out by CBOS regularly since 2002, approximately

51 It is important here to stress that those groups are of course not communities in a strict sociological sense. The research we cite was carried out by various institutions, which prevents us from stating that the same people always and consistently come down on the “open” or “closed” side.

52 *The public opinion research results of the integration of citizens of African countries in Poland, op.cit.*, p. 22.

three quarters of Poles believe that it is necessary to be cautious when dealing with other people. Less than a quarter state that it is possible to trust most people in general.⁵³

The political consequences

Fertile ground for PiS's European policy

The opinion polls presented in the first chapter, in both absolute terms and in comparison to other countries, reveal a large proportion of Polish citizens leaning towards — either clearly or with some reservations (“rather”) — the stance which we have termed “closed” in this text. This is why, in spite of the heralded opinion that Poland is deeply pro-European, **the PiS government can count on the consent of a large part of society (at least approximately half) for its European policy, or at least for certain aspects of it.** In other words, PiS and similar groupings (e.g. Kukiz '15) can assume (or at least count on it) that their European policy has stronger legitimacy than would appear to be the case when looking at the support for EU membership. The potential for opinions sceptical of transnational cooperation or regarding Poland's international involvement is no less (and is often stronger) than in countries where there is a lower level of support for EU membership. In Poland the feeling of being different to other EU members stands on very solid foundations. It is the only country in Europe which simultaneously opposes entering the eurozone, which has a strongly negative attitude towards Muslims becoming Polish citizens and which supports conservative morals (particularly as regards abortion).

As a result of this, PiS's room for manoeuvre in implementing foreign policy is broad. This concerns questions such as: the distance to EU institutions (particularly in the context of the Constitutional Tribunal), opposing the “EU mainstream” defined as a concert of powers with Germany playing the central role, and demanding a reversal of integration and for the EU to take the form of a loose union of strong, sovereign national states. The new political division mentioned in the introduction which will polarise society along an “open-closed” sliding scale will foster this policy. Identity politics in the last 25 years has never been such a strong catalyst of political conflict as it is now, also in Poland. Change in this area is particularly profound and essential when considering the evolution of sentiments in Poland, including the consequences for foreign policy. As is seen in the research quoted in the subsection entitled “The strength of nativism”, identity politics in Poland is linked to particularly conservative sets of views — not only among PiS's electorate — which clearly mark Poland out from the vast majority of other European countries. The ruling party regularly makes use of the threat posed by refugees, of the alleged threat to Polish identity, sovereignty and security as a result of the migration crisis and also of the deeper integration in other dimensions (e.g. membership of the eurozone). This resonates positively with the opinions of a large section of society. Besides the general lack of trust Poles feel to outsiders, the government can also exploit the high sense of security common among Polish citizens⁵⁴ and try to convince them that “foreigners” (and also the multicultural social model “imposed” by the EU) are a threat to the country and personal safety of its citizens.

The EU and the West at the centre of the social-political conflict

Reference to the “open-closed” conflict is crucial here also because it shows how domestic issues are linked to foreign policy. Today we talk of a deep political-social division in Poland and the clash of two

⁵³ Omyła-Rudzka, *Zaufanie społeczne*, *op.cit.*

⁵⁴ Agnieszka Cybulska, *Opinie o bezpieczeństwie i zagrożeniu przestępczością*, CBOS, Research report no. 61/2016, Warsaw, April 2016, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_061_16.PDF.

models or visions of the state (simply put: open and closed). The attitude to the EU and the world is a part of that disagreement and its implications for foreign policy should not be ignored. **This clash of two different approaches to the EU or to Poland's place in it is not just a conflict within the elite — it is rooted in the views of citizens. From the point of view of "open" citizens, it may be encouraging in the long term that approximately half of society supports the EU's engagement in Polish domestic issues. It is important to remember that Poles trust EU institutions much more than their own government and parliament.** However, the durability of support for an open stance should certainly not be taken for granted in the future.

This political fracturing of society particularly on issues related to the EU is visible in the case of party electorates. The majority of the right-wing electorate claims that EU membership excessively limits Poland's sovereignty and independence. Voters of the centrist Civic Platform (PO) and Nowoczesna are of the exact opposite opinion. As many as 75% of Kukiz '15 voters are opposed to Poland receiving any refugees, regardless of their country of origin. PiS voters are also clearly opposed to this option (65%). The unwillingness to accept refugees is significantly lower among PO (41%) and Nowoczesna (21%) voters.⁵⁵ It is not at all surprising, then, that the opinion of the European Commission about the threat to the rule of law in Poland met with sweeping approval among supporters of opposition parties: 90% of Nowoczesna voters deemed it justified, and 72% of PO voters. Only 9% of PiS voters agreed, while 73% were of the opposite opinion.⁵⁶

When considering the clash of two visions for Poland and its place in the EU in the medium and especially the long-term, the opinions of the young generation has great significance. In the autumn 2015 parliamentary election two thirds of younger voters cast their ballots for three right-wing parties: PiS, Kukiz '15 and KORWiN. The latter two parties claimed almost 40% of their votes. Young people (18–24 years old) have the most negative opinion on refugees — nearly 80% of them are opposed to receiving refugees from the Middle East and Africa. However, as far as the activities of the European Commission are concerned, the opinion of the younger generation is more balanced and does not diverge much from the average of the population as a whole. When asked if the EU limits Poland's sovereignty, though, members of this age group are the most convinced that it is not the case — 62% reject this idea, against a 52% average for society as a whole.⁵⁷

Most importantly, what is at stake in this clash is bigger than the choice between one model of foreign/European policy or another. Since 1989 the Polish elites leading the country to the EU treated the "return to Europe" or "being a part of the West" as decisions on belonging to a certain value system, a model of an open society, and to a political system of liberal democracy. In this respect, they gained the approval of society, even if the character of this acceptance was in large part silent and not fully aware. Today this axiological dimension is no longer obvious. **For the first time since 1989 the government and party in power are not only making use of or emphasising the language of national egoism, but also anti-Western rhetoric (occasionally strongly so). It is aimed squarely at those values and principles which were meant to be the anchor of Poland's presence in the EU according to the philosophy of its integration, beginning in the '90s.** In other words, the government is not only interested in what it feels to be the need to defend Poland's interests against those of other countries or international institutions — it also wishes to emphasise the distinctiveness of Polish culture when compared to the "rotten", "left-wing" West.

55 Michał Feliksiak, *Stosunek do przyjmowania uchodźców*, CBOS, Research report no. 128/2016, Warsaw, September 2016, p. 2, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_128_16.PDF.

56 Roguska, *Reakcje społeczne na przyjęcie przez Komisję Europejską opinii o praworządności w Polsce*, op. cit., p. 4.

57 Roguska, *Polska w Unii Europejskiej*, op.cit.

According to the government, the key examples of this Western decadence are same-sex partnerships, which are already the norm in the countries of Western Europe and a significant part of Central Europe (Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Slovenia), and the liberal legislation on abortion, which is “the norm is nearly” all EU countries (except Ireland — where this may change soon — and Malta). The government warns that further integration with the West within the framework of the EU will lead to the “imposition” of solutions and social changes which are incompatible with “our traditional values”. That is why the ruling party feels it is necessary to keep some distance to Western Europe.⁵⁸ One new phenomenon in PiS’s anti-Western rhetoric seems to be the link between the refugees and Muslims and the threat to Poland’s identity and sovereignty stemming from the West.⁵⁹

The “open” side cannot count on the anti-Western rhetoric in Poland being rejected by the majority of society since research shows that there is fertile ground for this (and not just the “less EU” option). It is also noteworthy that the perception of the EU as a community of values is no longer strongly rooted in Poland. CBOS carried out a survey in 2014 on the 10th anniversary of Poland entering the EU. The responses Poles gave to an open question on the benefits of EU membership were overwhelmingly concerned with the economy, while factors such as democracy or human rights were firmly placed in the margins.⁶⁰ **It cannot be ruled out, however, that the European Union as a community of values will gain greater significance for a large part of society due to their opposition to the domestic policy of PiS. A growing section of society believes it is leading to the foundations of the principles of democracy being undermined.**⁶¹

The possibility of “the EU leaving Poland”

The excessive attachment to the scale of support for Poland’s membership in the EU as a yardstick of the Polish stance on European integration diverts attention away from an important fact: social assent for possible decisions which in the future may decide on Poland’s place in Europe is in no way obvious. It is true that Polexit — Poland following the UK’s example in leaving the EU — is not currently a realistic scenario in any way (not only society at large but also the ruling party oppose this). However, the inverse process, that is to say, “the EU leaving Poland”, cannot be ruled out.

Indeed, **“the EU leaving Poland” is currently the greatest threat (if a still distant one) for the country in conjunction with PiS’s European policy and also in effect of the social opinions and stances described in this report.** By “the EU leaving Poland” we understand the situation in which a deeper integration of the eurozone in crucial areas might lead to Poland’s EU membership as we know it being stripped of real influence on the situation in Europe. This would mean that Poland, along with the few other countries outside the eurozone, if it wishes to maintain access to the free

58 See, for example: the speech of President Andrzej Duda in Dubrovnik at the Trimarium countries summit, when he said that, “it is necessary to apply nuance to the system of relations between the “centre” and what it indicates as the “periphery”, whose essence is a unidirectional transfer of political, economic and cultural solutions.”, <http://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/wystapienia/art,69,wystapienie-prezydenta-rp-pana-andrzeja-dudy-podczas-dubrovnik-forum-2016.html>.

59 See, for example: the statement by Jarosław Kaczyński, “Poland today is the subject of pressure regarding the shape of our life, the situation of an average Pole. The shape of our society. We are being offered to radically change, to create a multicultural society, to create a new identity. Everyone who knows how the situation in many Western countries looks knows that that means a radical deterioration in the quality of life.”, <http://wpolityce.pl/polityka/295423-jaroslaw-kaczynski-na-kongresie-pis-suwerennosc-jest-wartoscia-sama-w-sobie-jest-sprawa-godnosc-narodu-nie-poddamy-sie-koncepcjom-sorosa?strona=3>.

60 Beata Rogucka, *10 lat członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej*, CBOS, Research report 52/2014, Warsaw, April 2014, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2014/K_052_14.PDF. Unfortunately there are no more recent surveys on this subject.

61 In the first six months of the PiS government the number of people worried about what is happening with democracy in Poland has risen by ten points (in spring 2016 it was 41%, compared to 31% in autumn 2015). Nevertheless, half of Polish society is satisfied with the state of Polish democracy, although in spring 2016 this number was 12 points lower than it had been when PiS took power. See: Standard Eurobarometer 85, May 2016. <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2130>.

trade area and other benefits, will be forced to adopt all the EU laws and norms determined by the eurozone member states while not having any influence on how they are established and applied. By loosening ties with Europe's "hard core" by demonstrating also a distinctness in the field of values and conducting a policy of "flexible solidarity" (e.g. the lack of joint action on refugees), Poland will end up isolated and the EU will be less engaged in the future development of Poland. This may bring various grave consequences.

It is of course difficult — especially ahead of the elections in France and Germany in 2017 — to predict how the EU will develop in the coming years. Various scenarios are possible, including one in which the EU will entirely lose its capacity to take action and its political identity. That would have catastrophic consequences for Poland. Another scenario is possible, though, one which is essential to the hypothesis of a potential "EU exit from Poland". If a centre-right candidate wins in France and Germany sees a continuation of Chancellor Merkel's government (and these scenarios are currently the most likely to happen) then the path to further selective integration may be open.

We see three areas which may have particular significance from the point of view of the future shape of the EU. Firstly, a change in EU "geometry" will be crucial. The main centre of gravity will indisputably be the eurozone, especially if there are further reforms of the system of economic, fiscal and social governance. However, even without them this evolution is almost inevitable. From the departure of the UK from the EU, the share of the eurozone in the EU economy will grow from its current level of two thirds to approximately 85% of the GDP of the EU as a whole.⁶² Poland, along with the few other member states remaining outside the eurozone, will be marginalised. There are strong reasons to believe that the eurozone will be the "real" EU.

Secondly, the constant migration pressure and the problems with the implementation of the March 2016 deal with Turkey may persuade certain countries to cooperate more closely in the fields of asylum and migration policy. This is not the place for an analysis of specific ideas, which are already being discussed.⁶³ However, it is essential for our thesis that, regardless of the form this cooperation will take, it is almost certain that it will lead to increased solidarity between the countries involved in it. It will also affect financial solidarity, no doubt at the cost of budget expenditure directed to the countries outside this circle, and this will have a knock-on effect on cohesion funds.

Thirdly, the EU is bound to integrate more strongly in the area of security and defence policy. The foreign policy of Donald Trump's new American administration may be a further catalyst. This concerns military cooperation, defence industries, and also taking on greater responsibility for the EU's external security policy.

None of these projects currently meets with the support of the Polish political elite (in particular PiS but the same is true for the "liberal" side), nor the sympathy of general public. In the case of the euro and migration policy, the push-back from society is very strong. It would be easier to convince the public about security policy but steps taken by the government (the conflict with France concerning the Caracal helicopters) seem to be leading in the opposite direction. The issue of anti-Western attitudes will play an essential role. While PiS does not advocate leaving the EU, it still has a clearly different world view (Islamophobia, clear moral conservatism, negative attitude to liberal democracy) than

⁶² It is worth recalling that Denmark and Croatia are de facto in the eurozone since their currencies are strictly tied to it.

⁶³ See: Sebastian Dullien, *Paying the price: The cost of Europe's refugee crisis*, ECFR, April 2016, http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/paying_the_price_the_cost_of_europes_refugee_crisis.

the EU's political mainstream, even when compared to the most conservative mainstream parties, such as the CSU or PiS's allies in the European Parliament, the Tories. Furthermore, when compared to certain Eurosceptic groupings, PiS turns out to be more radical in the issues mentioned. This means that the feeling of estrangement between the Polish ruling elite and the mainstream of the European political elite will only grow. If the scenario of further integration or extended cooperation in the mentioned areas comes to pass without the participation of Poland then this will lead to a crucial change in the country's position in Europe. This situation of further integration could also strengthen the anti-European propaganda of the government and the media affiliated to it since they portray activity of this kind as being taken over Poland's head and calculated to harm it.

If current opinion poll results are taken into account, along with observed trends, then it is not possible to rule out a scenario which could potentially lead to "the EU leaving Poland". This would come about due to the passivity of society or perhaps even due to a large portion or even a majority accepting this turn of events.

Conclusion

From the point of view of Poland's current pro-European opposition, which is on the defensive politically, the results of this report should be a warning. There is a conviction that, at least in the field of European and foreign policy, this direction has the backing of public opinion and PiS is implementing its own against the wishes of society. This conviction is unfounded. Attitudes critical of the EU on certain issues are already strong in Poland. In the future these may move further along the line towards a "closed" stance, for example due to the likely fall in financial support from the EU, which many people in Poland view above all as a source of money they deserve. Furthermore, we are faced with a strong anti-Western pivot at the level of the ruling elite, and it is accompanied by a social climate conducive to various anti-Western resentments. The question of how much Poles still identify with the European Union as a cultural and axiological choice is not an abstract question — it has enormous significance for the position of Poland in Europe. Despite appearances to the contrary, the narrative of PiS on Europe and the world often, though not always, resonates with the views of a larger part of society than that of the pro-European opposition.

However, whether the pendulum of Polish society may continue to swing in the direction of a "closed" stance or switch direction to the "open" end of the scale will depend on various factors, both external and internal. Among the factors influencing the Polish attitude to the EU will be how the situation develops in the EU itself: the economic climate, the stability of Germany following the parliamentary election and of France following the presidential election (both in 2017), and what compromise is reached in Brexit talks on Poles living in the UK. It is possible to avoid a negative outcome in all those issues. Considering the data which indicate that Poles have a greater level of trust to EU institutions than to their own government and parliament, a positive change in the stance Poles have to the EU may also come about as the result of a major setback for the current government, both in foreign and domestic policy.

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