



STEFAN **BATORY**
FOUNDATION

Warsaw, May 2016

Change in Poland, but what change? Assumptions of Law and Justice party foreign policy

Adam Balcer – WiseEuropa Institute

Piotr Buras – European Council on Foreign Relations

Grzegorz Gromadzki – Stefan Batory Foundation

Eugeniusz Smolar – Centre for International Relations

The deep reform of the state announced by Law and Justice party (PiS) and its unquestioned leader, Jarosław Kaczyński, and presented as the “Good Change”, to a great extent also influences foreign, especially European, policy. Though PiS’s political project has been usually analysed in terms of its relation to the post 1989, so called 3rd Republic institutional-political model and the results of the socio-economic transformation of the last 25 years, there is no doubt that in its alternative concept for Poland, the perception of the world, Europe and Poland’s place in it, plays a vital role. The “Good Change” concept implies the most far-reaching reorientation in foreign policy in the last quarter of a century, which, at the level of policy declarations made by representatives of the government circles and their intellectual supporters implies the abandonment of a number of key assumptions that shaped not only policy but also the imagination of the Polish political elite and broad society as a whole after 1989.

The generally accepted strategic aim after 1989 was to avoid the “twilight zone” of uncertainty and to anchor Poland permanently in the western security system – i.e. NATO, and European political, legal and economic structures, in other words the European Union. “Europeanisation” was the doctrine of Polish transformation after 1989. These aims were effectively realised by all presidents and governments whatever their political colour.

Foreign policy is not an area in which changes take place at revolutionary pace or on a very great scale unless in exceptional circumstances, like in 1989. Elements of change and continuity tend to coexist, and this case was no exception. Polish strategic interests in key areas, like the fundamental significance of NATO membership, partnership with the USA, relations with Russia as well as support for

Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations, remain unchanged. The PiS government has also not reversed certain important decisions and in some cases has *de facto* continued many policies of its predecessors. That might suggest that the change is superficial. But this is not the case, and not only because the ruling party itself strongly emphasises the aspect of discontinuity in foreign policy, expressed above all in the PiS slogan: "We're rising from our knees". We do not question some aspects of continuity, but we believe the reorientation occurring alongside, or perhaps despite, these elements, is of a qualitative nature. It is not just symbolic or rhetorical.

Unlike any other post-1989 government, the PiS administration treats foreign policy as secondary to domestic objectives. This assumption is not, of course, openly declared, but the order may be discerned not so much at the declarative level but at that of concrete policy pronouncements and actions. It is, we believe, a direct consequence of radicalism in domestic policy; the necessity of fundamental change of the institutions above all means that the PiS government, unlike previous administrations, that operated the strong "Europeanisation" paradigm, is not likely to take into account previously accepted legal-institutional commitments in its calculations. Nor is it so ready to accept foreign partners' opinions or willing to adapt to their expectations. The dispute over the Constitutional Tribunal, to mention an obvious example, resulted not only in a confrontation with the European Commission and the vast majority of the European Parliament, it also caused serious tensions with the United States, considered as Poland's main ally, which in the PiS security policy vision is ascribed a particular importance. Even such damage in international relations is presumably perceived as secondary, set against the priority of radical rebuilding of state and society.

The most significant element of Poland's foreign policy paradigm redefinition by PiS is based on a deep pessimism as regards the future of European integration. The vision of the EU as undergoing inevitable disintegration and basically doomed to failure, at least in its current form, shapes the mind-set of the PiS political-intellectual community and to a significant extent influences foreign policy strategy. It is in this perception that lies perhaps the most fundamental difference essential to the "good change" – a redefinition of Europe that had been hitherto unambiguously perceived as an opportunity for Poland, which, from PiS's point of view, appears as a risk or even a threat. This shift is the result of an analysis of the situation of the EU and the world, but is also to a great extent built into the ideological foundations of the ruling party, its understanding of the nation, sovereignty and attitude to the political and socio-cultural model dominant in western Europe. Of significance is also the perception of the developmental requirements of the Polish economy and the role played by the European Union in the process of Poland's future modernisation.

This report is an attempt to summarise the current foreign policy reorientation, especially as regards Europe. What are its ideological basis, expressions and possible consequences? At the centre of this text is change and so it does not address the abovementioned elements of foreign policy continuity.¹ We shall concentrate on the ideological and conceptual dimension of this policy because ideas do matter; they are not only an expression of zeitgeist but may also actively shape social attitudes and sentiments even if actual action is not their perfect representation. At stake in this current change in Polish politics are not only immediate choices and decisions (though these do of course directly influence the realisation of the party and national interest) but also the long-term perception and evaluation of Poland's role in international relations. The results of such changes at the level of perceptions

1 The problems and challenges of Polish foreign policy in various sectors shall be the object of separate analyses.

and sensitivities, both in the national and international dimension, may be felt in the long term and be stronger than in the time horizon limited to one government's term in office.

Nation and Sovereignty

The nation is the fundamental organising principle of the PiS party ideology (written mainly with a capital "N" in its programme documents).² From this perspective, the nation also plays a key role in social life as the main reference point defining the sense of every living human being's existence.³ Here the nation is above all an organic cultural and historical community, not a political entity (a community of citizens). The emphasis on the specific nature of Polish historical experience, the significance of the Catholic religion to the national identity (see below), as well as the value of cultural and ethnic homogeneity, is an expression of the belief that this model of "Polishness" ought to be defended above all else.

According to PiS, the two most important features of a fully-fledged nation are sovereignty and empowerment. On the basis of Jarosław Kaczyński's speeches, one can define sovereignty as the "real dimension of independence", or the capacity of a state to define and realise its national interest. A stronger sovereignty increases the importance of a given state on the international arena. In the case of a EU member, this is about its effective influence and so the capability of gaining advantages in relations with other actors, will the smallest concessions possible. In the matter of the relation of national sovereignty vs. EU membership, in Jarosław Kaczyński's opinion "there is no loss of sovereignty if there is a possibility of leaving the EU by unilateral decision of the national authorities".⁴ This rationale skirts around matters of the consequences of "everyday" sharing of state sovereignty with the EU and its other members from the moment of accession on the strength of a sovereign decision of the nation confirmed by referendum result or the cases where there is the merging or fusion of national interests within the EU framework.

This is a vision of international relations (even within the EU) strongly determined by thinking in geopolitical categories, of the balance of power as well as of the "concert of powers" considered a state of affairs especially unfavourable to Poland. As the then MP Witold Waszczykowski, now Foreign Minister, stated in an interview in February 2015 "Russia and Germany create a distinctive concert of powers over the head of Poland".⁵ It is within this worldview that PiS promotes its "Intermarium" concept as an attempt to balance out the influence of Germany and Russia with an alliance of central and eastern European countries. This is being promoted in parallel to an emphasis on distancing itself from the Weimar Triangle, which has been built on another philosophy: not on geographical proximity and the defence of common interests but on the search for common ground, compromise and negotiated agreement in strategic matters on the basic assumption that partners' interests (and their geopolitical orientation) could differ in particular cases. There is also the Visegrad Group within which, often not

2 According to PiS, „The Nation is a real community connected by ties of language and by an entire broad semiotic system, culture, historical fate and solidarity.” As shown further, this semiotic system is closely identified with Roman Catholicism. See Jarosław Kaczyński: „Raport o stanie Rzeczypospolitej”, 31.03.2011, <http://wpolityce.pl/polityka/111772-jaroslaw-kaczynski-raport-o-stanie-rzeczypospolitej-tylko-u-nas-fragmenty-programowej-publicacji-prezesa-pis>.

3 Thanks to the nation, „the individual could exist as a person, life has taken on a meaning and through the democratic mechanism the nation state has also gained sovereignty in the community”. Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 <http://www.fronda.pl/a/witold-waszczykowski-dla-frondapl-potrzeba-mezow-stanu-a-nie-politycznych-gier-ek,47653.html>.

without difficulties resulting from differences of interest, valuable sectoral projects are realised but whose currently strongest bond is a common opposition to a European refugee policy and migration.

According to Jarosław Kaczyński, the state is a key instrument for the realisation of the national interests. The most important purpose of the state, according to PiS ideology, is the protection of national sovereignty, which, in international relations means “the sovereignty of a nation state as regards to other states and international subjects”,⁶ in other words practically against the EU. The value of the independent, sovereign and autonomous state is proven by history. The PiS programme states that “for us Poles our own state has also got another meaning – no sovereign Polish state existed for 123 years. We could not decide on our own fate, which is why we have recognised the Polish state as a value of the highest order, and any form of undermining its sovereignty or existence are unacceptable, dangerous to the nation and a threat to Polishness in the current and historical dimension”.⁷ PiS believes that the state can only be national and in effect the European Union, if it is to survive, ought to be a union of nation states or a community of nations.

On the other hand, national sovereignty has an internal dimension as it signifies “the functioning of an efficient democratic mechanism inside the country”. The statements of PiS politicians and party programme documents indicate a close identification of internal and external sovereignty. The first is the consolidation of power in the country by the ruling party based on the model of majority rule democracy as the guarantee of autonomous foreign policy. However, the securing of Polish sovereignty at the international level is the sine qua non condition for conducting essential internal changes through the elimination of the possibility of external interference. According to PiS, internal changes in Poland encounter resistance of external actors defined by Jarosław Kaczyński as the European establishment (especially German) as well as a large part of the American establishment because, either currently or in the future, they oppose the strengthening of Polish sovereignty in international relations. According to Jarosław Kaczyński, the previous government had turned Poland into a vassal of Germany in the international arena (or into a German-Russian “condominium”) as it permitted German dominance in the economy and media.⁸ This dominance was supposed to have ended on 25th October 2015 when PiS won the Parliamentary elections.

The close relation between the internal and the external dimension means that today Jarosław Kaczyński defines the internal opposition as German’s fifth column. According to this logic, Berlin defends, with the aid of its Polish pro-German forces, its influence and economic interests in Poland.⁹ The fear of external involvement in internal affairs and the weakening of the position of the state on the international arena means that, in the opinion of PiS, the Polish nation ought to be as unified as possible within a centralised and homogeneous country. Hence PiS’s suspicion of decentralisation, national minorities’ rights and regional identity (e.g. in Silesia and Kashubia), which might undermine

6 Ibid.

7 The Law and Justice Party’s Programme 2014, p.11, <http://old.pis.org.pl/dokumenty.php?s=partia&iddoc=164> (in Polish).

8 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCK_biZe_KU.

9 Ibid.

national unity and be used to the advantage of external powers, Germany above all.¹⁰ The vision of the overt, and in particular covert, cooperation between internal and external enemies have been associated with the declared support of certain PiS leaders (Antoni Macierewicz, Jarosław Kaczyński) for conspiracy theories in the understanding of the foreign and domestic situation. The main symptom of this type of thinking is the belief that in 2010 there was a Russian conspiracy that brought down the President's aeroplane at Smolensk with the cooperation of the Polish government then in power. It is an open question whether leading PiS politicians treat these views instrumentally to gain political support or whether this is what they actually believe.

The critique of the western model

The interrelation between the domestic political agenda for radical change and the new course in foreign policy should come as no surprise at least because the whole post 1989 transformation, that has been subject to fundamental criticism by PiS, was closely related to an unambiguous fundamental concept of the necessity of "Poland's return to Europe" embedded in the West, in the EU and NATO. Thus the recognition of the European integration as a historical opportunity and a pillar of modernisation. Polish foreign policy since 1989 was defined and realised by the political elite on the basis of a default assumption that there was a basic consensus in Poland around such strategic aims. This consensus drove the Polish transformation, and the "myth of the West" was a narrative that accompanied each of its stages. There is no doubt that it concerned the basic directions of European and transatlantic integration that were not only a choice of international orientation but one of civilisation and modernisation. This approach accepted the existence of the differences of some particular interests, though it did assume the negotiation of differences and the achievement of compromise for the realisation of Poland's real long-term, strategic interests. This was the deep meaning of conducting a 'mainstream' policy, of placing itself at the very centre of the European Union.

If one can interpret the result of the 2015 elections as the strongest voice of opposition after 1989 towards certain elements of the transformation model or its effects – or maybe also a symbolic passage to a new stage – the erosion of the hitherto Polish consensus appears as an unavoidable side-effect of the process set in motion. In other words, in-so-far as Europe and the West fulfilled a certain function in the "first" transformation of the country directed to adaptation to the "western model" (in terms of the democratic system, economic policy and also sociocultural model), then their role in the "second" transformation led by PiS, which questions at least some of the earlier assumptions, must by definition somewhat differ. As a result, the currently observed reversal of pro-European policy set up for close cooperation with the Union's mainstream (with Germany and also France as closest partners), has not only a conceptual and political basis but also a cultural one, deeply rooted in the soil of the domestic politics. This is because all this is not just so much about the overcoming the German domination or "hegemony", or about the idea of integration along "the more Europe" principle, but also about the questioning of the political model based on liberal democracy and socio-cultural values dominant in Western Europe seen as a threat to traditional Polish values.

¹⁰ According to PiS, „Historically, there is no such thing as the Silesian nation. One might add that the Silesian identity is just another way of defining oneself other than as Polish and presumably the acceptance of camouflaged German allegiance.” However, at least some of this minority's activists ostentatiously demonstrate their disloyalty to Poland. PiS criticised PO (Civic Platform Party) for „strongly underlining the importance of the regions, of which a particular aspect is Donald Tusk's emphasis on his Kashubian identity”. <http://wpolityce.pl/polityka/111772-jaroslaw-kaczynski-raport-o-stanie-rzeczypospolitej-tylko-u-nas-fragmenty-programowej-publikacji-prezesa-pis>.

According to PiS, the need to strengthen the internal sovereignty of the state and its institutional capacity for effective government, also in the face of external threats, is in conflict with significant aspects of the liberal democracy model accepted by all member states (recently with the exception of Hungary) and EU institutions as a standard political model for the community. This model is expressed above all in the Copenhagen Criteria, the fulfilment of which is a necessary condition for EU accession.

Many years ago, Jarosław Kaczyński criticised the “legal impossibilism”, being in his opinion at the source of the problems with governing Poland, in other words “as specific way of interpreting the law leading to nothing being permitted”. As a PiS leader and a prime minister (2006–2007), Jarosław Kaczyński decided that the Constitutional Tribunal was the main source of such “legal impossibilism”. This is when PiS developed a project for changing the rules of the Tribunal’s functioning in order to radically limit its competences, which would unblock the activity of the executive supported by a parliamentary majority. These changes were implemented with the electoral victory of October 2015. They confirm the critical position of PiS to liberal democracy based on the rule of law, checks-and-balances as well as the identification of the ruling party with the majoritarian democracy model. In this, the pluralistic model does not apply, as the executive assumes the first and dominant position supported by the parliamentary majority (the legislative), which only in exceptional circumstances may be limited by the Constitutional Tribunal (the judiciary). It is in this context that the PiS leader’s often declared intention to introduce the Hungarian model in Poland ought to be considered.¹¹ It is exactly the matter of the deterioration of the rule of law and also more widely in relation to liberal democracy, which has become the main source of conflict between the PiS government and EU institutions as well as criticism from the majority of European political opinion. As a result, the European Commission mechanism for monitoring the rule of law was initiated in January 2016. Also, the European Parliament adopted a critical resolution on the subject of Poland by a vast majority on 13th April 2016.

PiS defines the Polish nation not in citizenship but above all in the ethnic and religious terms, associating it strictly with the Roman Catholic faith. Party’s position is that the Church is the bulwark of the Polish national identity, morality, law and state,¹² making Poland, in their eyes, a specific case in the EU, distinguishing it from all the other EU members. According to PiS programme, “the Church has played a specific role in our history that differs from that of other nations. It not only created and civilised the nation, it also protected it”. Jarosław Kaczyński believes that there are certain tendencies flowing from the West for which “there is no permission” in Poland. What is more, “in the defence of religion that is threatened in western Europe, defending real freedom of speech, Poland is also defending what is best in European tradition: true freedom of speech. It is us who are the bulwark of real Europe”.¹³

11 Hungary is considered by Freedom House (the American independent public foundation) as a free country though in the last report (Freedom in the World 2016) with a detailed score at a level very close to the „partially free” category. The assessment of Hungarian democracy has been systematically deteriorating for a number of years. The Hungarian media have already been assigned to this category.

12 According to the PiS programme „the Church remains today the host and advocate of the generally accepted moral teaching in Poland. It has no competition in wider social terms, which is why it is fully true to say that in Poland the only moral alternative to the church is nihilism”. The Law and Justice Party’s Programme 2014, p. 11, <http://old.pis.org.pl/dokumenty.php?s=partia&iddoc=164> (in Polish). This belief in the close connection between the Polish identity and Catholicism is present in many of Jarosław Kaczyński’s speeches „Even if someone were to doubt and to have lost their faith but still remained a Polish patriot, they would have to admit there is no Poland without the Church”. „The foundation of the Polish identity is the Church and its teachings. Any hand raised against the Church is a hand raised against Poland”. <http://info.rp.pl/artykul/998743.html?print=tak&p=0>.

13 <http://wpolityce.pl/polityka/276606-jaroslaw-kaczynski-w-radiu-maryja-dobra-zmiana-o-ktorej-mowimy-to-rowniez-pozbawienie-pewnych-srodowisk-przywilejow-mamy-bunt-korporacji-to-swojego-rodzaju-rokosz?stro-na=2>.

Another threat to the ethnical, cultural and religious homogeneity of Polish identity stemming from western Europe is, according to PiS, the “multi-culti” ideology that, according to Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski in the „Bild” interview, is “a mixture of cultures and races” and a disease “with nothing to do with traditional Polish values”.¹⁴ According to PiS programme, the Polish national identity is not only threatened from outside but also from within by groups supporting “European political correctness, presenting an entirely un-national, European point of view”.¹⁵ The complete identification of the Polish identity with the Roman Catholic Church lends this identity, according to Jarosław Kaczyński, “a special significance – a universal significance” due to the universal character of the Church.¹⁶ The unique nature of the current Polish foreign policy makes this a historical mission. President Andrzej Duda, during his visit to Hungary in March 2016, stated that “in today’s Europe, in which there is, without doubt, a crisis of values on which European civilisation has been built, and I am thinking about a civilisation with Latin roots supported by Christianity, (...) all these ideals are being lost in today’s Europe. They are being forgotten and trampled by other ideologies that debase the essence of humanity and the human being”. He added that the Poles and Hungarians “have retained those values” and claimed that in the case of both nations “it is today our great responsibility and mission to carry those values to Western Europe and to defend those values against all the attacks we face”.¹⁷

PiS’s system of values, also shaping its foreign policy, is not of transient character. It has deep roots in Polish history and is also a result of changing attitudes in Polish society (a rise in the support of nationalistic and authoritarian opinions that are to a greater extent shared by the hard-core part of PiS electorate than that of other centre or left wing parties).

In seeking the historical roots of the PiS world-view, and without ignoring certain basic differences, one notes significant similarities between this party and the ideology of National Democratic Party from the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th Centuries.¹⁸ In these terms, of central importance was the nation and its most important attribute was the homogeneous nation state. The Polish nation was closely identified with Roman Catholicism. National Democracy was highly critical of the multi-cultural state, international organisations and western liberal democracy. It saw the West as spoilt, clearly different from Poland and as a threat to traditional Polish values. At the same time, Poland was treated as basically the most western country in Europe and considered the genuine continuation of Western tradition. This is why Poland had the mission to restore the traditional values to Europe. The National Democrats treated Germany (and not Russia) as the greatest threat to Poland in civilizational and economic terms. Another very characteristic feature of this ideology was the belief in international conspiracies against Poland in which foreign enemy powers were involved, including in-

14 <http://www.bild.de/bild-plus/politik/ausland/polen/hat-die-regierung-einen-vogel-44003034,var=a,view=conversionToLogin.bild.html#remId=1513236873310483946>.

15 The Law and Justice Party’s Programme 2014, p.29, <http://old.pis.org.pl/dokumenty.php?s=partia&idoc=164> (in Polish).

16 <http://wpolityce.pl/polityka/185711-tylko-u-nas-pelne-przemowienie-jaroslaw-kaczynskiego-na-kongresie-pis-polacy-maja-dosc-systemu-tuska-trzeba-zadac-pytanie-czy-po-szesciu-latach-rzadow-po-zyje-sie-wam-lepiej>.

17 <http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-ze-swiata,2/prezydent-andrzej-duda-w-budapeszcie-w-europie-panuje-kryzys-wartosci,628650.html>. In Hungary, despite the constitution emphasizing the state’s Christian values, religious practices and identification is much weaker than in Poland. There is a liberal abortion law and the number of abortions is one of the highest in Europe. Extra-marital partnerships are legal and there are many gay clubs. Budapest is known as the European capital of the porn industry due to the very numerous Hungarian firms producing adult films. These are tolerated by the state and are the source of tax revenue.

18 National Party (known in Polish as Narodowa Demokracja or endecja) – political movement created in 1897. Its leader was Roman Dmowski, who, as much as his party, particularly in 1930s, increasingly advocated autocratic, xenophobic and openly anti-Semitic policies.

ternal Polish political opponents defined as the “half-Polish race”. Knowingly or unknowingly Jarosław Kaczyński allowed himself to publically call members of the opposition “second category Poles”.

This element of perceiving intentional activity levelled at Polish culture and tradition in the influences of external factors is strongly present in the discourse of leaders and the supporters of PiS. It is accompanied by the clear belief that social or cultural changes are not organic processes but the result of the realisation, by the states or by intellectual currents, of projects to rebuild society in the name of some definite values and aims. PiS rhetoric features the oft-returning theme of left-wing social engineering that ploughed through western society in accordance with a vision of progress associated with secularisation, ecology, glorification of minorities, cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. Influences flowing from the West are perceived as threats to the changes PiS would like to implement (at times called the “moral revolution”). The source of PiS mistrust of foreign influence lies in the views that the inspiration of such trends are considered the governments, European institutions and foreign media, and are not seen as the transfer of cultural models by osmotic, people-to-people contacts that could hardly be controlled.

Of course, the question remains to what extent such approach, strongly present in the statements of government and party’s representatives, is only a rhetorical device addressed to at least a section of society’s fears about globalisation, the condition of Europe and loss of identity, serving also as a mobilisation vehicle of theirs electorate, or in fact represent the ruling elite’s genuine beliefs. Whatever the answer to the question, this approach situates Poland in opposition to the western European mainstream and affects the shaping of Pole’s attitudes and opinions.

PiS not only sees today’s European political reality in terms of the conflict of values and identities, but it also assumes that at least in certain aspects, its cultural project (seen as archaic, 19th Century and backward-looking by its critics) is located in the vanguard, as a project for the future. Above all, the strengthening of the nation state, renationalisation of the economy, the limitation of external factors on the economy and politics, the opposition to deeper EU integration and the criticism of liberal democracy are tendencies forming the spine of PiS’s political vision. Its popularity, as PiS underlines, is growing throughout Europe. This concerns in particular the rejection of German leadership, not only in the purely political dimension, but also as an economic and sociocultural model. PiS leaders follow the belief that the “old” Europe is drawing to an end not only in institutional terms but also as far as values, the role of nations and states, sovereignty and liberalism are concerned. The rise of Eurosceptic and nationalistic sentiment in Europe is considered a sign of this. This gives PiS the sense that it is sailing with the wind of change in Europe.

The reluctance to give ground in the dispute with the European Commission may be caused by the belief that it is an arena in which today the limits of sovereignty of EU members and the boundaries of EU institutional influence are being defined. In this dispute, the PiS government expects support to grow from a group of states, governments and political forces ready to side with Warsaw’s position, also having perceived an usurpation of power in the policies of Brussels through the imposition of not only some specific policies but also a socio-cultural model.

Europessimism

The main theme of PiS foreign policy is the belief in the decline of the EU as we know it. “The European Union is a failing utopia. We were told that the European identity will be postmodern based mainly on

European institutions and universal principles of human rights, but it has not worked out. This utopia is ending before our eyes” says a PiS intellectual and an MEP.¹⁹ The concern about the European Union and the criticism of its inability to manage successive crises can be of no surprise and is a general attitude in the EU both among its opponents and supporters of the integration project. Nonetheless, the political dimension of PiS europessimism goes beyond the critical analysis of EU activity and concern for its future.

Firstly, the disintegration and decomposition of the EU as we know it is considered by PiS to be an objective and unavoidable fact, one must adapt to as being beyond Poland’s influence. This is interesting especially in the context of the principle of empowerment mentioned earlier, with the “regaining” of the proper status in the international relations being one of PiS’s main aims. Meanwhile, it should be stressed, in the context of the EU, this doctrine of empowerment is apparently accompanied by a lack of faith in the effectiveness of one’s own activity.

A good example is Poland’s attitude to the refugee crisis. On the one hand it is seen as a test of the EU’s effectiveness while the evident deficits in this area are considered serious threats to the integrity of the whole Union and for Poland. Representatives and supporters of the government proclaim that the EU is descending into disintegration exactly because of the migration crisis. At the same time these warnings are not accompanied by a reflection that Poland’s activity in relation to the migration crisis could have a fundamental bearing on the criticised disintegration processes. In emphasising the threat of the crisis to the whole EU, the Polish government openly has been questioning the European character of the crisis (suggesting it was just a German problem), failed to involve itself in developing a common policy apart from suggesting a strengthening of external borders and supported activity by individual states of their own accord (e.g. closure of the Balkan route), in effect serving not to alleviate but to aggravate the disintegration processes.

Secondly, this pessimistic assumption about the EU’s future encourages a redefinition of the strategic basis of European policy, an element of which is the already mentioned reluctance to undertake activity designed to prevent the realisation of the disintegration scenario. Since we are facing the inevitable demise of the European utopia, PiS leaders believe, involvement in close relations with partners seeking to prevent such a fiasco (above all Germany) and in endeavours requiring expensive compromises seem to be unworthy investment. Almost all activities that could lead to qualitative changes in the functioning of the European Union belong exactly to the category of such investments.

The dilemma of the EU is that further integration, especially in economic policy and migration, is a condition of further effective functioning of the Union, but this “more Europe” approach does not seem a political option due to the resistance of some societies and governments. Poland with a PiS government is one of those countries that most loudly and effectively formulate the opposition to deepening integration, instead maintaining that retreat from “ever closer Union” is today’s solution to the European malaise. Minister Waszczykowski has even supported a return to the old European Economic Community as a metamorphosis the EU should undertake in the near future. The rejection for years to come of the goal of Poland joining an Eurozone, but also the possibility of deeper integration of the zone in order to improve its functioning, as well as the passive attitude in the migration crisis (accentuation of the reluctance to accept migrants and the priority of maintaining sovereignty), may in this context be regarded as a sign of cold calculation: the EU project (including Schengen) shall

19 Professor Zdzisław Krasnodębski in <http://wpolityce.pl/polityka/286970-prof-krasnodebski-unia-europejska-to-jest-utopia-ktora-upada-ta-utopia-na-naszyc-oczach-sie-konczy>.



not survive in the current form, so Polish policy ought to focus on defensive activities calculated to limit a damage to Poland in order to lay the foundation for as broad as possible independent action in the future. Such europessimism may therefore be called fatalism that carries features of self-fulfilling prophecy. As an example one could mention the opinion expressed on Twitter of an academic, Zdzisław Krasnodębski, one of the influential PiS advisors, in the context of tensions over the Constitutional Tribunal: "If EU politicians carry on acting with such political tact and expertise, we shall also soon be faced with the need of a referendum in Poland" (to exit the EU).²⁰

Thirdly, the European Union is considered by PiS to be an organ dominated by large states and the European Commission to be an instrument by which these states realise their interests. In this critique it is possible to notice a reaction to changes in how the EU has been functioning over the last few years. Under the influence of successive crises and also the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has started to work more on an intergovernmental basis (with the domination of the European Council and large countries, especially Germany), at the cost of the community model in which the European Commission played a key role. Distancing itself from this model of EU functioning stems from the fact that both Germany and the European Commission are today patrons of deeper integration (Eurozone and asylum policy), which the PiS government rejects as pointless and incompatible with the Polish interest. PiS's sovereignty-based policy leads also to the automatic rejection of attempts to influence internal situation in member states by supra-national Union institutions like the Commission and Parliament. The conflict over the Constitutional Tribunal is not only a classic example, but serves also to strengthen such opposition. While in the past the European Commission was perceived as an ally by Poland and by other smaller, including "new", member states, as an institution that has been taking care of the integrity of the Union and equalising opportunity of development, today such a perspective is, in the PiS view, fundamentally different.

It is true that Witold Waszczykowski admitted that the EU is more than "a sum of national egoisms", while its existence as a tight union of "nation-states, are able thanks to it to overcome differences and disputes, compete with each other and create prosperity", and as such is in accordance with the Polish interest.²¹ However PiS, in its vision of Europe constantly underlines the principle of maximum sovereignty, the necessity of decisive reversal of the European integration process and sees the EU as a hard game of national egoisms, by definition in conflict with each other; it sees the EU as a state of nature in Hobbesian terms as war of each against the other. It misses out not only the EU's post 1945 achievements as the foundation of peace in Europe but also the merging and interdependency of national interests of member states with obvious advantages for all.

In this analysis of the EU's functioning and its perspectives for development, one ought to note the sources of this significant redefinition of Poland's alliances in the EU. According to statements by minister Waszczykowski, Poland's strategic partner is from now on to be the United Kingdom, a country sceptical about deeper integration (or to a large extent, even membership as such) and critical of

20 <https://twitter.com/zdzkrasnodebski/status/719599903119405056> It should, however, be noted such J. Kaczyński has later publically rejected such calls for a referendum calling them 'damaging'.

21 Witold Waszczykowski, "Wir wollen führende Rolle beim Aufbau eines stärkeren Europas", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 23.01.2016. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/europaeische-union/artikel-von-polens-aussenminister-witold-waszczykowski-14029077.html>.

international institutions.²² This declaration also means an abandonment of close relations not only with Germany but also with France, which was the basis of previous governments' European policy.

The European Union as a risk to modernisation?

The fourth aspect, apart from matters of the nation/sovereignty, attitude to the western model and assessment of the future of the EU in which there has been an ideological reorientation of Polish European policy, is economic modernisation. As we mentioned, the pro-European course was over the last 25 years bound up with the transformation process, which it was assumed was leading Poland towards the "western model". Today, both this process and the perspectives of its continuation are subject to fundamental criticism by PiS and circles close to the party. The positive account of Polish membership in the EU is questioned more or less openly, a sign of which is the setting up of the parliamentary commission to assess that account (on the initiative of the opposition party Kukiz '15), though fundamental doubts as to the economic achievements of EU membership have been raised by the Jagiellonian Club and the Sobieski Institute, both close to PiS). Characteristic of the changing discourse on these matter was the title of the debate held by the Freedom Institute (Instytut Wolności) in March 2016: "Foreign investments – Do we still need them?".²³ As such, the problem of the EU has become central to perhaps the most basic dispute today over Poland's model of development – the shape of its modernisation 25 years following the start of the transformation and even the value system at the basis of Polish society and culture.

In the economic dimension, PiS is seeking a solution to the problems perceived by many economists and experts whatever their political sympathies. The concern is to avoid the so-called middle-income trap, to achieve development based more on innovation and not so much on low pay and EU funding. A part of this discourse is the questioning of the purely (neo)liberal economic model receiving criticism not only from PiS but also other political options. It is accompanied by highlighting economic patriotism, understood as the necessity of building and promoting large Polish companies as national champions and allocation of a greater role to the state in economic policy with elements of protectionism to the extent allowed by EU rules. Policy of this kind was initiated even by the previous Civic Platform (PO) government, at least in words.

In circles close to PiS, doubts are expressed more strongly about the role the EU is supposed to play in the search for Poland's new course of modernisation. "Poland shall not be modernised without the European Union. On the other hand, membership in the Union is hampering this process", wrote the experts of the Sobieski Institute, a think tank from which many members of the government have been recruited²⁴. This assessment is based on a belief that a strongly exogenous economy has arisen as a result of participation in the integration process development model, one that is dependent on external actors, foreign investment and demand coming from among Poland's largest foreign partners (especially Germany). Its basis are low production costs including low pay that have been causing frustration especially among the young section of society. The European Union defines the developmental frameworks, stimulating it e.g. with the aid of structural funds, but imposing certain rules, which, in PiS view, paradoxically is supposed to hamper entry on a more dynamic path of modernisation based

²² It is worth emphasizing that PiS's claims to being a party similar to the British Conservatives ought to be treated with great caution. The Tories clearly differ from PiS in terms of world view (relation to Islam, abortion, homosexuality), the character of the relation between state and church and its support for liberal democracy.

²³ See <http://www.instytutwolnosci.pl/index.php/wydarzenia/347-inwestycje-zagraniczne-relacja-z-debaty-2>.

²⁴ Łukasz Hardt, Tomasz Grzegorz Grosse, Unijna pułapka, Rzeczpospolita, 14.02.2014, <http://www.sobieski.org.pl/unijna-pulapka/>.

on innovation and not imitation of the western model. "Poland has gained the historical opportunity to improve its international position and advance from the periphery to the half-periphery of Europe. But this is only a chance that may be wasted and involvement in the EU ("europeization") may even cement our dependency and peripheral nature on the European map".²⁵ This is as much the opinion of experts as of PiS politicians. Foreign minister Witold Waszczykowski stated that "today Poland has strong ties to the European market, which accounts for over 60 percent of our foreign trade. On the one hand, we are glad to see Polish entrepreneurs doing so well on one of the most difficult global markets, but on the other it is a source of concern that we are so dependent on the business cycle of just one economic area".²⁶

The belief that the European Union should not be the single or perhaps even the main vehicle of further Polish development, is one of the sources of hope that going beyond the EU, for example through closer economic relations with China, may offer the opportunity for greater diversification benefiting Poland's developmental aspirations. According to PiS experts and politicians, one of the important problems of Poland's modernisation within the EU is the very strong and asymmetrical bond of the Polish economy with Germany: "this will be the source of our demise as we shall really become a backwater of the German market, which will mean a lack of opportunity to develop the country".²⁷ This is the "paradox of Europeanisation" that the experts of the Sobieski Institute write about and of which PiS politicians speak. It assumes that there is no good alternative to modernisation other than through EU membership and neither do they attempt to present one. In effect, there is no barrier to stop Polish business from trading outside the European Union. Also the so-called Morawiecki Plan, presented by Deputy PM Mateusz Morawiecki, a Development Minister, which defines the aims and means of Polish modernisation in the coming years, assumes the enormous role of future foreign investment and use of EU funds in its realisation.

There is a general belief in Poland that after ten years of EU membership and 25 years of transformation, Poland needs new developmental impulses and must find new more innovative courses for its economic model while Polish export demands diversification. However, it is worth mentioning that the large European economies (e.g. Germany, France or the UK), which are much more globalised than the Polish one, still export most of their goods and services to the EU and are strongly linked together in terms of investments and services with the remaining EU members. What is more, all the Central European economies are very strongly integrated economically with Germany and this has not meant an automatic loss of developmental opportunities. The Czech Republic for example is much more integrated with the German economy than Poland while this symbiosis has not prevented the Czechs to achieve, according to the European Commission, over 2.5 times the innovation growth than Poland between 2007 and 2014.²⁸ The much bigger share of Czech advanced technology export products confirms this.²⁹

25 Tomasz Grzegorz Grosse, „Złoty kaftan europeizacji” – refleksje po 10-ciu latach obecności Polski w UE, Analiza Instytutu Sobieskiego nr 68, kwiecień 2014, <http://www.sobieski.org.pl/analiza-is-68/>.

26 Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Polish Government's foreign policy in 2016, http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign_policy/goals_of_foreign_policy/annual_address_2011/.

27 <http://www.rp.pl/Plus-Minus/311139990-Witold-Waszczykowski--Jestem-jastrzebiem-o-golebim-sercu.html?template=restricted>.

28 In 2007, the economic innovation coefficients to economic activities for the Czech Republic was 0.373 while for Poland it was 0.292. By 2014 it had risen to 0.447 in the Czech Republic and in Poland to 0.313. The rise in innovation in the Czech Republic over that period was the fourth highest in Europe. Innovation Scoreboard 2015, p. 92, http://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/innovation/facts-figures/scoreboards/files/iis-2015_en.pdf.

29 In recent years it was even 1:2 to the advantage of the Czech Republic.

The sceptical attitude in PiS circles towards economic relations with the EU and Germany has deeper causes. Many of the activists and especially sympathisers of the governing party also believe that the market economy model (symbolised by the West and the EU) to which Poland aspired, has been to a great extent questioned by the economic crisis and no longer presents the sole desirable target. Without doubt, the opposition to the adoption of Euro is a fragment of this perception (in May 2015, 70% of Poles opposed the common currency, while only 25% were supporters of its adoption³⁰). This is not just a sovereignty-oriented thinking but to a great extent such discussion generates a debate about Poland's empowerment in Europe, the development of which PM Szydło defined as the second, after national security, priority of foreign policy in her parliamentary speech in November 2015.³¹ The belief that the current model of European integration (e.g. restrictive legislation on environmental protection, energy policy and competition law, hampering the creation of national champions) limits further development and blocks the shaping of a new, sovereign Polish economic model, is another, perhaps key element of the change in approach to Europe proposed by PiS.

Conclusions and perspectives

The priority given to deep reconstruction of domestic politics and the dependency of PiS foreign policy on ideological beliefs means that a return to previous governments' European policy assumptions is very unlikely. Without prejudging the position Poland is going to take in the discussions concerning EU sectorial policies, the political change initiated by the PiS government (a very important part of which is the redefinition of relations with the EU), implies a range of consequences.

First

the reconstruction of the state involving infringement of the constitution, weakening of institutional check-and-balances, taking over of the public media and other foundations of the liberal-democratic order are leading to conflicts with the European Commission, the European Parliament (also in time with certain member states) and with Washington that will only intensify in the coming months and years. This is going to lead to Poland's marginalisation in the structures of the western world and especially in the European Union. This marginalisation will limit Poland's influence on EU policies and on that of individual member states in accordance with Polish national interests, which will mean a situation contrary to the basic aim of PiS policy – the rebuilding of Poland's international influence.

An example is the relations with the European Commission. The dispute with the EC obscures the fact that in many key matters for Poland, the support of the Commission is especially important. These include that of the construction of Nord Stream 2 and the reform of the European energy market, the review of the current EU budget, assessment of Polish budgetary policy, state support in some sectorial policies and many other cases in which the Commission has a large scope of free interpretation of EU law to the advantage or disadvantage of a member state. The gaining of the Commission's cooperation in controversial matters important to Poland will be more difficult while Warsaw's influence in Brussels (relative to other countries) wanes. Poland's marginalisation in the EU shall not only influence our room for manoeuvre within the EU, but will also harm our interests beyond it, especially as far as

30 <http://www.polskieradio.pl/42/273/Artykul/1450258,Badanie-CBOS-Polacy-zdecydowanie-przeciwni-wprowadzeniu-euro>.

31 "Under the rule of Law and Justice, under the rule of united right wing, Poland shall become empowered. We shall be active and self-assertive. We shall oppose the division of Europe, both within the European Union and beyond. We shall strive to empower not only our policy but also the policy of the entire region to which we belong. We shall be pushing for a strong Poland's position on the international arena", See <https://www.premier.gov.pl/en/policy-statement-by-prime-minister-beata-szydlo-stenographic-record.html>.

Eastern Europe is concerned. Up until now, a part of our interests in this region were realised through Union's policy as Poland had at least some capability of forming said policy. The Eastern Partnership may serve as an example of this.

Second,

PiS's attitude to the European Union is particularly defensive due to the assumption of its uncertain future and direction of development deemed to threaten Polish interests. At the same time, in the declarations of government representatives, there is a lack of a long-term reflection on the scenario in which the predictions concerning EU disintegration would turn out to actually be accurate. The weakening of the EU or the loosening of the ties fundamental to its functioning shall not remove relations between each member state but only change their character. The disintegration of the EU shall most likely mean a deepening of the integration of its part already functioning as partially autonomous (the Eurozone) and the creation of new centres of integration (e.g. in the sphere of migration or asylum policy) within the hard core of the Union. These processes shall result in new forms cooperation between participating members.

In this context, questions about Poland's place and mode of settling relations with main partners (as well as calculation of loss and gain) take on particular significance. A consequence of a rejection of the principles of EU functioning will be the inevitable weakening of ties between Poland and the European "hard core", while Poland's basic strategic developmental and security interests depend on cooperation with that very core. This will inevitably weaken the readiness of our hitherto partners (net contributors) to direct their taxpayers' money to this country as they realise that politics of civilisation-al separateness might threaten their own integration within the EU.

Third,

the evolution of the EU according to the direction preferred by PiS towards a union of maximally strong sovereign nation states is at odds with the Polish interest. Seeing itself in the vanguard of the changes taking place in the whole of Europe (crisis of liberal democracy, rise of Euroscepticism and renationalisation of policies), PiS appears not to appreciate that in Europe that would follow principles taken from the PiS catalogue of values, Polish national sovereignty, if not egoism, is going to find itself on an immediate collision course with the identical tendencies of other nation states, including those stronger than Poland.

European integration is a platform and an instrument for negotiating differing interests and achieving compromises on the important assumption that member states are united in their desire to maintain and strengthen the EU. Without this last element, the survival of the EU shall be much more difficult. A Europe dominated by a nationalistic and anti-liberal right will also be one in which the realisation of the most important Polish interests, for example policy towards Russia, is going to be extremely difficult. Abandonment of the liberal and community-based model of the EU, which despite its faults and the crisis remains in force and still functions, would bring about long term and negative consequences to Poland's international context and position. In other words, the questioning of liberal democracy and the rule of law also means the undermining of the foundations of the community that continues to exist despite its crises and remains the best guarantee of Poland's security and prosperity.

We should also treat as significant the calls of Washington directed at the UK, but also at other countries, that a strong and integrated European Union is in the interest of the United States. A hostile

attitude to the EU is going to cause, in effect, changes in the policies of the US, with negative consequences for Poland.

The United States has been regarded since 1989 as the final guarantor of Polish security both in bilateral terms and within NATO. The necessity of preventing or limiting the negative consequences of various threats in the world requires that the US (independent of who is president) seek in NATO and in the European Union an internally cohesive ally, capable and ready to take on a part of the responsibility for security. The rise in the significance of Germany and France is especially significant in this context. Relations between Europe and the US have never been easy, but a partner that is going to build its policy on European disintegration and mistrust of Germany, so leading to a weakening of transatlantic ties, is not going to find much understanding of its needs in Washington, and this includes its security needs.

Fourth,

PiS policy signifies not only a redefinition of the EU's place in Poland's foreign policy but a total change in the Polish *soft power* paradigm. The successful western orientation and movement towards that West-European socio-cultural model as an expression of the historical aspirations of a great majority of society and a source of credibility in Europe have been questioned by PiS as a "policy of imitation" and a succumbing to western "fashion".

Under the PiS government, Poland wants to present itself as the defender of the real, traditional West as opposed to the "decadence" dominant today. This is the language used today by parties in Europe that are not so much conservative (e.g. the Tories) as openly hostile to the European Union and the open society (e.g. the German AfD and Austrian FPÖ). The main current of European public opinion is varied and is made up of conservatives, centre-right, Christian Democrats, liberals, social democrats and greens, but all are united in not only support for liberal democracy and the rule of law, but also for a certain model of political culture. It is characterised by respect for diversity and rejection of intolerance, xenophobia, nationalism and of clericalism.

PiS sees this model as an expression of an imposed left-wing "political correctness" project that needs to be combated. This locates that party, and together with it the Polish government, on a collision course with the vast majority of the European establishment, which regards the value system and political model represented by PiS as archaic, and also, as regards the rule of law, as incompatible with the principles of the EU. An example of this was the voting in the European Parliament on the resolution on changes in Poland on 13 April 2016. PiS could count on the support of no more than 18% of EMPS. Not counting Fidesz and the Tories, no serious group that were not openly Eurosceptic or in power in any EU country voted with PiS. The main "defenders" of PiS were opposition parties, nationalists and Eurosceptics that were also in the vast majority pro-Russian.

Apart from that, the views represented by PiS are closer to the vision of international relations presented by Vladimir Putin and the authoritarian government of Azerbaijan or Belarus than the democrats in the east. Not only does this weaken the serious role of Poland as a source of inspiration for the pro-European transformation and example of the enormous, greatly appreciated success of transformation but as an important participant in the EU's eastern foreign policy.

All the more so as, despite the routine assurances of the continuation of the eastern policy, there has been up to now a lack of any initiatives from the PiS government on the matter of policy relations

towards Russia and Ukraine. This is noteworthy because during the election campaign, the main PiS activists protested the alleged lack of initiatives of the former government and the lack of Poland's presence in the Minsk negotiations, and supported other formats of talks with Moscow and Kiev. Not without significance remains the greater emphasis placed by PiS on 'historical policy', on the past and the symbolism of Volhynia or Bandera,³² than the need to provide Ukraine with effective aid today. The similarity of the critique of the West conducted by Jarosław Kaczyński to the Vladimir Putin's or Recep Tayyip Erdogan's rhetoric is certainly much more an important reason for the growing sense of cultural distance to Poland's political elite among a large part of western societies and establishments (and gradually to Poland as such). This factor is of great political significance. Today, Poland is the main country serving as an example of the renewed harmful division between east and west in Europe and that the deep differences in the value systems of the two parts of the continent have not disappeared over the last 25 years. In conditions of EU crisis, this assessment may quickly become politicised and serve to support the argument that the EU's eastern expansion was a mistake³³ and that it is necessary to deepen cooperation only with the countries sharing the same values.

Fifth,

foreign policy based on the principles of the 'sovereignty' and of 'empowerment' that has been leading to conflict with the European Commission and other western partners as well as the "good change" questioning the rule of law, may have important negative consequences for Poland's economy, despite the good macroeconomic indicators. This is because they seriously damage Poland's credibility on the international arena as a stable and predictable market. A portent of these negative phenomena was the lowering of Poland's credit rating for the first time in 20 years. This took place when the largest agency Standard & Poor's changed the rating from A- to BBB+. The new rating also has a negative perspective, which means a 33% likelihood of a further lowering within the next two years. Experience suggests that the S&P decision is likely to lead to a domino effect lowering of Poland's creditworthiness by the remaining agencies. Financial analysis expected that on 13th May Moody's would lower Poland's rating.³⁴ In effect, Moody's only cut the outlook on Poland's A2 rating, citing rising fiscal risks and the new conservative government's shift to more unpredictable policies and legislation.³⁵ These rating moves may lead to a reduction in the flow of foreign investment into Poland, an outflow of portfolio investments from the Warsaw Stock Exchange, a weakening of the zloty and a rise in the cost of foreign debt servicing.

Also, the conflict with the European Commission and the EU's main players may have other negative consequences for Poland. The Commission may be more scrupulous in its control of EU funds spending by Poland or may not support Polish interests in negotiations on the revision of the EU budget in the current financial perspective and on the subject of the financial framework for 2020–2026. In these negotiations, a conflicted Poland will have a much harder task to persuade the most important EU players like Germany and France to support its position, not to mention other net-payers to the EU coffers.

32 Exploiting Germans' 'neutrality' the Ukrainian Insurgent Army carried out ethnic cleansing of Poles in the regions of Volhynia and in Eastern Galicia in 1943–1944. The objective was to purge all non-Ukrainians from the future independent Ukrainian state. About 100 000 Poles died. In retaliation Polish underground organisations and self-defence units killed several thousand Ukrainians. Stefan Bandera was one of the top leaders of the Ukrainian nationalistic movement.

33 See Wolfgang Muenchau's commentary in Der Spiegel, <http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/soziales/polen-der-fehler-der-eu-osterweiterung-kolumne-a-1071041.html>.

34 <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-04-04/moody-s-warns-polish-constitutional-crisis-is-credit-negative>.

35 <http://www.reuters.com/article/poland-ratings-moodys-idUSL5N18A62L>.

Sixth,

Poland's honeymoon that lasted for a good few years after EU accession has ended independent of changes in the government and the new foreign policy paradigm. The second decade of Poland's EU membership would have anyway been more difficult than the first. The bonus from the economic success and the slowing of other member states' development that elevated Poland's position in Europe during the crisis years above its real weight is running out. Poland's most important partners shall to an even lesser extent consider particular Polish interests (whatever the party in power) in the definition of their policies.

Most EU and NATO members do not share today the same sense of direct threat (especially military) from Russia even if they are under no illusion as to the nature of Putin's politics. Poland was in a specific way a paradoxical beneficiary of the Russian-Ukrainian war as its perspective on eastern neighbourhood not only contributed to the internationalisation of the fate of the Eastern Partnership states but also lifted the odium of Russophobic hysteria ascribed to Warsaw. However, the migration crisis and the terrorist threat have meant that the matter of the Russian threat has ceased to dominate the European foreign and security policy agenda. The belief that because of the overriding importance of events in the Middle East (radical Islam, war in Syria and the state of affairs in Libya), which are the main source of the wave of migration and terrorism, some form of future cooperation with Russia is inevitable is present in a large section of the European and US elite. Russia's military involvement in Syria has greatly promoted this view. In these conditions, the realisation at the Warsaw summit in July 2016 of at least the „Newport Plus” plan (considered in Poland as inadequate) to significantly greater increase of the NATO permanent presence on its eastern flank, benefiting Poland's security, may prove to be impossible.³⁶ From the point of view of many member states, the need to strengthen the southern flank of NATO is a much more urgent issue.

Also on the matter of further sanctions on Russia, the group of strong advocates is not great. Italian opposition, with some other countries hiding behind it, accompanied their extension by six months in January 2016. The pressure to loosen sanctions or their withdrawal together with progress in the implementation of the Minsk accords and not their full implementation, shall grow and such voices have been heard in German, French and other government circles. For Poland, for whom the strengthening of Ukraine's state and sovereignty is of fundamental importance, concessions in this matter could be as hard to accept as impossible to prevent.

What is more, the “structural marginalisation” or the involuntary shifting of Poland to the EU's decision-making periphery may take place as a result of PiS government policy not only in the sphere of security or Russia policy. Already now, such an area is energy and climate policy, where Poland may count on certain support in the region, but its position as a country that overrelies on coal has long been treated in the EU as extreme.

Seventh,

with the exception of security policy, we note the lack of formulated concrete, pragmatic aims or foreign policy projects. This has strengthened the lack of understanding of the signals coming from Warsaw and partners' negative reactions. All these elements have contributed to the weakening of Poland's hitherto strong international position and the loss of good will of our European partners to

³⁶ On the reform of the alliance from the Polish perspective see Tomasz Kowalik, NATO on the Right Path from Assurance to Deterrence, GMF Blog Post, 15.12.2015, <http://www.gmfus.org/blog/2015/12/15/nato-right-path-assurance-deterrence>.

seek compromise with Warsaw. This may affect the domestic situation as the inevitable negotiations and compromises, especially within the EU, may lead to the frustration of radical activists and a section of the PiS electorate, who have been promised assertive new policies, and as a result to a further hardening of the leadership on international arena.

* * *

In the coming years, the realisation of Polish interests is going to demand even more diplomatic skills and ability to build effective coalitions, or, in other words, good relations and cooperation with partners, that has been the case up to now. Above all, Poland needs to take care to be perceived as an important, trustworthy, predictable actor with a positive attitude to numerous problems currently besetting the European Union and its very future – a partner worthy of investment into and whose expectations should be taken into account.

The report *Change in Poland, but what change? Assumptions of Law and Justice party foreign policy* is the first in a series of reports prepared by a group of experts appointed in 2016 by the Stefan Batory Foundation. Their mission is monitoring and reflecting on Poland's foreign policy. The group includes persons from various think tanks and organisations – Adam Balcer from WiseEuropa Institute, Piotr Buras from the Warsaw office of the European Council of Foreign Relations, Grzegorz Gromadzki from the Stefan Batory Foundation and Eugeniusz Smolar of the Centre for International Relations.

Stefan Batory Foundation

Sapieżyńska 10a
00-215 Warszawa
tel. (48-22) 536 02 00
fax (48-22) 536 02 20
batory@batory.org.pl
www.batory.org.pl

Publication is licensed
under the Creative Commons
Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported
Licence (CC-BY-SA 3.0)



ISBN: 978-83-62338-71-9