

***Piotr Buras***

Cooperation: *Bartek Nowak,*  
*Anna Dzieszkowska and Jędrzej Trojanowski*

# **Poland-Germany: Partnership for Europe?**

**Interests, opinions of elites, prospects**

Warsaw 2013

Publication made within the framework of the common project implemented by the Centre for International Relations, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Foundation for German-Polish Cooperation



Konrad  
Adenauer  
Stiftung



CENTRUM STOSUNKÓW MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH  
CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



FUNDACJA WSPÓLPRACY  
POLSKO-NIEMIECKIEJ  
STIFTUNG  
FÜR DEUTSCH-POLNISCHE  
ZUSAMMENARBEIT

The publication is available in various language versions  
at [www.csm.org.pl](http://www.csm.org.pl) and [www.kas.pl](http://www.kas.pl)

The opinions and theses contained herein reflect the views and  
opinions of the authors.

© Copyright by the Centre for International Relations, 2013

All rights reserved

Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych  
ul. Emilii Plater 25  
00-688 Warszawa

Make-up Editor: Michał Olewnik  
Graphic design by: Michał Olewnik

ISBN: 978-83-88216-90-9

## Executive Summary

The project related to Polish-German partnership for Europe is implemented in conditions which are distinctly different from the ones existing at the time of the “new opening” between Poland and Germany in 2007/2008. A year after a new government came to power in Poland there was an outbreak of a global financial crisis and of the following euro area debt crisis, which completely affected political dynamics in the European Union.

- What reflects the new quality in the Polish-German relations is that for the first time in the last twenty years the governing elites of both states clearly define their cooperation through the prism of national interests. It is, most of all, a result of the changes in the European politics resulting from the crisis: Berlin needs a strong partner to make his own policies more credible, whereas Warsaw needs a support in its attempts to become in the core of EU decision-making process.
- The paradox is that while both countries emphasise the importance of mutual relations and their willingness to cooperate, there is a real threat today that Poland and Germany may be in two different spheres of integration. In other words, at the time when the relations between Poland and Germany are as close as never before, the two countries may go in fact in different directions. It is caused by the reforms in the euro area which may lead to the establishment of two circles of integration.
- In each field of the potentially close cooperation between Poland and Germany, i.e. the eastern policy, the EU security and defence policy and cooperation, its balance is worse than it was expected several

## 4 Executive Summary

years ago. To a large extent, it results from external factors, but it shows that the Polish-German partnership for Europe still lacks the substance and joint projects.

- As regards the eastern policy, despite the controversies related to the boycotting of the Ukrainian authorities during the 2012 European Football Championship, the views of Polish and German elites became much closer. They do not have significantly different opinions on the challenges resulting from the development of the situation behind the eastern border of the European Union. The differences related to the strategies favoured by both countries are still preserved. But as compared with the past, it constitutes a better basis for cooperation in the policy towards Russia and Eastern neighbours.
- The biggest problem for the relations between Poland and Germany within the EU still lies in the field of the energy and climate policy and the consequences of the German *Energiewende*. But there is also high potential of cooperation between the two states, which should not be neglected due to the present controversies. The potential relates to the expansion of the power grid, energy effectiveness, and – in particular in the medium and long term – transformation towards the low-emission economy, in which Germany may be an important partner of Poland.
- Germany and Poland should accomplish for a model of relations between the euro area and the countries that declare their willingness to join in the foreseeable future that would allow to preserve the strongest possible bridges between two speeds of integration. The relations between the Ins and the Pre-ins should be based on more transparent principles. Apart from the “road-map” indicating a direction towards the “real economic and monetary union”, the European Union also needs a second “road-map”, defining the conditions and stages of the accession to the eurozone of potential candidates.

## Table of contents

Introduction . . . . .	7
1. The new opening . . . . .	11
2. Polish-German <i>Ostpolitik</i> ? . . . . .	25
3. Under the sign of <i>Energiewende</i> . . . . .	48
4. Security policy: more Europe, less involvement ( <i>Bartek Nowak</i> ). . . . .	67
5. Euro crisis: <i>polnische Wirtschaft</i> as an ally of Germany . . . . .	83
6. Towards a political union . . . . .	98
Chances and threats to the Polish-German partnership ( <i>Piotr Buras, Janusz Reiter</i> ) . . . . .	121



# Introduction

Polish and German politicians claim today that the relations between the two countries have never been as good as now, but such declarations should not be treated so straightforwardly. The relations between Warsaw and Berlin are indeed based on mutual confidence and respect, whose extent is much larger than in the last decade or so. However, as the experience shows, the partnership between Poland and Germany in the European Union is characterised by excessive expectations and disillusionment resulting from them. The non-simultaneity and incompatibility of political and intellectual processes taking place in both societies often lead to conflicts, which were considered to have been overcome a long time ago. This was the case after the expansion of the European Union eastwards in 2004, when it seemed that the path towards the Polish-German union of interests was open. Poland and Germany, connected in the process of reconciliation of the 1990s, were to act as a motor of the European integration, by cooperating with Paris in the Weimar Triangle. However, these hopes turned out to be vain, which was embodied by the multiplication of conflicts almost exactly at the time when the Polish-German partnership was to flourish. Poland and Germany took different paths during the war in Iraq, without consulting their positions and without communicating their interests (e.g. the famous “letter of the eight” or Chancellor Schröder’s concept of the “German way”). Another dispute that erupted was related to the draft of the European constitution and the new voting procedure in the Council of the European Union which, in the opinion of the Polish governing elites, could lead to weakening the position of Poland and strengthening the position of Germany. The Nord Stream, initiated at the same time, became a symbol of German-Russian agreement excluding Poland. Another

conflict arose over the centre commemorating the German expellees, and for many years it adversely affected the mutual relations between the two states.

What all these conflicts had in common is that they were not limited to differences in opinions or interests. First of all, they provoked a surge of emotions. Both countries referred to axiology that defined the differences between them. German media did not present the Polish support for the intervention in Iraq as an ordinary decision in the foreign policy but rather as an expression of a blind pro-American attitude. Such an opinion was also expressed by many Germans. And the other way round, the German “no” was provided with no rational background in the Polish comments, but it was interpreted as a traditional hostility to America. The conflict over the Centre Against Expulsions also seemed to have an axiological character. Judging from many commentaries, it was a conflict between memory and amnesia, truth and falsity, nationalism and openness. The same is the case as regards the European constitution and the pipe line. Secondly, clashes in the relations between Warsaw and Berlin in the recent years were not a result of prepared strategies or confrontations of clearly defined interests. To some extent, they were a result of an unpredictable chain of events (such as the war in Iraq, coming to power of a new government in Poland in 2005), and discourses occurring independently of one another in both countries (related to commemoration, liberation of the foreign policy, etc.), which, as if unintentionally, caused a deepening of the mutual disagreements<sup>1</sup>. Unpredicted events are the core of politics, which is why the resistance to them is the factor determining the durability and capacity of the structure of the political partnership between countries.

Are the Polish-German relations in 2012 resistant to such tensions? Beyond doubt, in the recent years both parties have made a lot of effort to base these relations on solid foundations. After the successful election in the autumn of 2007 Prime Minister Donald Tusk declared a “new open-

---

1 Compare: Buras Piotr, Fatalizm nierównoczesności: elity Polski i Niemiec po rozszerzeniu Unii Europejskiej na wschód, in: Kolarska-Bobińska Lena, Fałkowski Mateusz (ed.), Polska-Niemcy-Francja. Wzajemne postrzeganie po rozszerzeniu UE, Warszawa 2008, pp. 68-100.



ing” in the relations with Germany, which were rather poor in the period of the government of the previous coalition. When presenting the priorities of Poland in the foreign policy Radosław Sikorski, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, pointed out that Poland expected from Germany a “partnership-based dialogue of strategic character, like in the German-French relations” and expressed readiness to cooperate closely in order to overcome the historical burdens. Further actions and statements from the side of Polish government were the evidence that the words of the Minister Sikorski expressed the strategic re-orientation. Soon later in Poznan Minister Sikorski presented a more detailed offer of cooperation with Germany, under an ambitious catchphrase “Partnership for Europe”<sup>2</sup>. In the following years this phrase replaced the “Polish-German union of interests”, used in the early 1990s. This change did not have a merely lexical content. As Sikorski emphasised, the partnership does not mean a lack of different positions or interests, which should be obviously the subject of dialogue. The point is that the two parties should “abandon the stereotypical philosophy related to the Polish-German relations, whose core was unsolved issues from the past, treated as obstacles that cannot be overcome in the allied cooperation with Germany”. In the designed “partnership” stress was to be put on the joint actions aimed to deepen the integration, without resigning from advancing Poland’s own interests, which are often divergent from the German interests. Sikorski presented the areas in which the cooperation between the two countries would be desirable and might be promoted: first of all, the European Neighbourhood Policy (that was the time when Poland and Sweden introduced a concept of the Eastern Partnership); secondly, the EU security and defence policy; and, thirdly, the common energy policy in the EU. Next, the minister mentioned such issues as the review of the EU budget, scientific cooperation and cross-border cooperation.

The concept of partnership with Germany for Europe evoked a positive response in Berlin. Werner Hoyer, the new Secretary of State in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs (after coming to power of a new coalition

---

**2** Sikorski Radosław, *Polska-Niemcy. Partnerstwo dla Europy*, Przegląd Zachodni, No. 3, 2008, pp. 3-10.

as a result of the election in the autumn of 2009), referred to the turning point in the relations with Poland as the “most joyful phenomenon in the foreign policy of the recent months”<sup>3</sup>. After the presidential election in France in the spring of 2012, when Nicolas Sarkozy was replaced by Francois Hollande, “The Wall Street Journal” even suggested that the Merkel-Sarkozy (“Merkozy”) duet that was successful in the European leadership would be replaced by the “Mertusk” duet<sup>4</sup>. In Poland these predictions were considered exaggerated<sup>5</sup>, but the concept of the Berlin-Warsaw axis <sup>6</sup> and<sup>7</sup> putting the emphasis on the relations with Germany received a positive response.

This report analyses the present condition of the Polish-German partnership for Europe and views of the political elites of both countries on this project and on the interests of Poland and Germany in key areas for the cooperation. Chapter 1 focuses on the “new opening” in the Polish-German relations and its political and social foundations. In Chapters 2-4 an analysis is carried out with regard to the three most important fields of politics, in which, as Minister Sikorski stated in Poznań, the cooperation between the two countries has a special significance, i.e. the eastern policy, the energy policy and the security policy. The ongoing debate on the euro area and the future reforms of the European Union will be an important test for Poland and Germany as regards their potential to shape Europe together. Chapters 5 and 6 are devoted to this dimension. The analysis uses the opinions and information obtained in the interviews with many Polish and German politicians, officials and experts, made in the summer and autumn of 2012 by Piotr Buras, Anna Dzieszkowska, Bartek Nowak and Jędrzej Trojanowski.

---

3 During a meeting with foreign journalists in September 2010.

4 Tchorek Kamil, A German-Polish Partnership?, The Wall Street Journal, 23.05.2011.

5 Wieliński Bartosz, Merkotusk, Gazeta Wyborcza, 28.05.2012

6 Pawilcki Jacek, Oś Warszawa-Berlin, Gazeta Wyborcza, 7.05.2011

7 Nowicki Maciej, Stawiamy na Niemcy, <http://polska.newsweek.pl/stawiamy-na-niemcy,85628,1,1.html> , 12.12.2011

# 1. The new opening

The project related to the Polish-German partnership for Europe is implemented in conditions which are distinctly different from the ones existing at the time of the formulation of the concept. A year after a new government came to power in Poland and not more than a few months after the formulation by the new government of a new policy towards Germany, there was an outbreak of a global financial crisis which, together with the debt crisis in the eurozone, completely affected the the political dynamics in the European Union. The eurozone have become an area in which the future of the new EU political constellations as well as the future of the European Union itself was to be determined. This situation is of great significance for the Polish-German relations, since it sets the structural framework within which the concept of the partnership with Germany may be implemented. The changes in the euro area and the institutional reforms which had to be adopted because of the crisis may take the direction that was difficult to imagine several years ago. After unsuccessful referenda in France and the Netherlands, where the European constitution was rejected, the further deepening of the European integration was considered as unrealistic. The Lisbon Treaty, adopted in 2009, was considered as the last institutional reform of the European Union. The discussions on the *finalite* of the European integration, which were so heated at the beginning of the last decade, were no longer interesting for the European elites. The situation changed dramatically because of the crisis of the recent years. The structure of the currency union, designed in the Maastricht Treaty, turned out to be unstable. The necessity to increase the economic and fiscal cooperation in the euro area, aimed to stabilise the common currency,

is obvious today and constitutes a subject of wider consensus among politicians. Poland and Germany take part in the ongoing discussion on the “real economic and currency union” and the political integration from completely different positions. Germany turned out to be the main player in the battle for the future of the common currency (even if against its will and with resistance). Poland, in turn, being one of the Outs, has no place in the centre of this game. Both Polish and German experts point to a change of the philosophy of integration that occurred during the crisis: it is the stabilisation and strengthening of the euro area that became the number one priority for the European Union, while the other objectives, including the maintaining of the cohesion of the whole community, were treated as less important. The significance of the differentiated integration (multi-speed Europe) increased in the political and intellectual debates.

However, it is not only because of the euro crisis that the situation in the EU looked different than it was expected immediately after Donald Tusk’s government came to power and when the concept of the “partnership for Europe” was formulated. Closer look at the most important areas of the Polish-German cooperation shows that its balance and prospects are less promising than one might conclude from the declarations on the Berlin-Warsaw axis. In fact, the cooperation in each of the fields, i.e. in the field of the neighbourhood policy, the EU security and energy policies, looks worse than it was expected several years ago.

First of all, the political situation in the eastern neighbourhood of the European Union is highly unsatisfactory. By initiating the Eastern Partnership the objective of Poland and Germany’s support in this project was to strengthen the democratic and modernization processes in the countries covered by the programme. In fact, in the opinion of most observers, we could notice rather regression in the recent years (except Moldova)<sup>8</sup>. In particular in case of Ukraine, which is not only the most important country in the region, but also the most advanced country in the process of getting closer to the EU. In March 2012 an association agreement was initiated.

---

8 Compare: European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries, Renaissance Foundation, May 2012, [http://www.eap-index.eu/sites/default/files/EaP%20Index%202012\\_0.pdf](http://www.eap-index.eu/sites/default/files/EaP%20Index%202012_0.pdf)

Particularly in Poland it was considered as a success. However it was not signed due to the internal policy pursued by president Yanukovych (persecution of the opposition). Moreover, the events of Arab Spring in 2011 caused that the European decision-makers focused rather on the southern neighbours of the EU. Because of the euro crisis the ambitions in external relations of the EU faded away. As regards the Polish-German cooperation and the flagship project of the Eastern Partnership, no spectacular progress was recorded.

Secondly, the idea to strengthen the European security and defence policy, a flagship project of Polish-German partnership, is still at the early stage. Polish presidency (in the European Council) efforts, e.g. the establishment of the common headquarters of the EU, did not arouse a considerable interest, not only in France but also in Germany (despite a declaration of support expressed in joint documents). While Great Britain and France decided to strengthen the military cooperation in the bilateral dimension and beyond the institutional framework of the EU, Poland and Germany were not able to offer their support as a reliable partner in a discussion on the construction of more integrated structures of the EU security policy. The attitude of both countries in view of the conflict in Libya cast more doubts whether the countries are capable to play this role.

Thirdly, in the recent years the context of the Polish-German cooperation has changed to the largest extent in the field of the energy policy. At the beginning of 2011 Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Chancellor Angela Merkel submitted a joint letter calling for a greater integration of energy markets as a key element of the economic policy and relations with external partners in the energy policy<sup>9</sup>. After the period of disputes over the Nord Stream, this joint initiative could symbolise the opening of a new chapter in the Polish-German relations and be considered as an expression of a new manner of defining joint interests. After the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster and as a result of political decisions made in Germany under the influence of this event, the harmony between Poland and Germany was over. In June 2011 Germany made a decision to ultimately withdraw from the atomic energy by 2022 and replace it with renewable energy. This

---

9 Gazeta Wyborcza, 3.02.2011

decision, made at the national level, has significant implications for the attitude of Germany in the EU, leading to a new source of conflict rather than cooperation. *Energiewende* is perceived in Poland as a risk factor, and even a threat to the Polish economic interest. As many Polish experts believe, it is the energy policy that is the biggest problem in today's relations between Poland and Germany.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, can the "partnership for Europe" end up, despite the hitherto achievements, similarly to the "Polish-German union of interests", which could not come into life after 2004? Such worries may seem premature. The reason why the Polish-German relations are different than it was 8-10 years ago, is that the conviction of their importance for the whole EU strategy is much deeper and durable in both countries. One of the former Ministers of Foreign Affairs emphasized that the "joint European project connects Poland and Germany stronger than ever before".

This is another paradoxical effect of the present crisis, whose dynamics pose a significant risk for other reasons, described above. Due to the new dialectic in the relations between Warsaw and Berlin, i.e. the tension between the real political will of close cooperation and the de-centralising tendencies in the European Union, the effect will be the resultant of many factors. It will include also those factors, which are independent of the strategies adopted by the decision-makers in both countries. However, to determine the chances of the Polish-German partnership for Europe in the changed conditions, at first one should define what are the strategic interest of both countries consists in these projects.

From the perspective of Berlin the attractiveness of Warsaw is, most of all, a function of the new political situation in which the country has found itself as a result of the crisis. In the recent years Germany has been playing the role of the hegemon, although unintentionally. Its elites were not prepared for this. Some of Polish experts believe that "Germany does not want to be the hegemon", since this is a problem rather than prestige". Except the awful year 2009, when the German GDP fell by 5 per cent,

---

**10** Compare: Stanowisko grupy eksperckiej „Polsko-niemieckie impulsy dla Europy“; [https://dgap.org/sites/default/files/article\\_downloads/positionspapier\\_pl\\_1.pdf](https://dgap.org/sites/default/files/article_downloads/positionspapier_pl_1.pdf)

the economy turned out to be exceptionally resistant to financial shocks, which is why the economic inequality within the EU dramatically deepened. While Germany developed the trade with foreign countries and beat further records in export, the countries of southern Europe ran into deeper and deeper trouble resulting from their debt and the necessity to implement drastic reforms. The interest rate of the German bonds oscillated in the summer of 2012 around zero, thanks to which Germany was able to take loans almost for free, since their securities were perceived as a guarantee of safety in the times of uncertainty. This meaningful indicator of the financial and economic position had some political consequences. It is Berlin that had to shoulder a burden, both economic and political, to prevent the euro area from deepening of the crisis, and even from collapse. Not only did Germany have to reach deep into its roots (for now only in the form of guarantees rather than actual cash flows), but it also had to indicate a way which would lead Europe out of the crisis. No other country was able to do it because of a lack of relevant economic potential. From the perspective of Berlin, this situation was by no means convenient. On the one hand the German solutions for overcoming the crisis, such as savings, imposition of stricter rules and compliance with them, did not receive an enthusiastic response in most countries. The German leadership model was soon criticised by the European public opinion. What is more, it was not only because of the methods used by Berlin, but also due to Chancellor Angela Merkel's slow decision-making and a lack of a decisive direction. Thus, from the perspective of Germany, the country found itself between the devil and the deep blue sea. On the one hand it was confronted, with the charges of hegemony and, on the other, with the call for a greater pro-European engagement.

This was actually the first time Germany was in such a situation. In the previous decades Germany either did not put forward its ideas, or acted in a tandem with France. This time, though, it was not only the initial discrepancies between Merkel and Sarkozy that cast a shadow on the cooperation between the two countries. But most of all, it was the poor economic condition of France, treated by experts as one of candidates for the bail-out. Berlin was clearly predominant in the Sarkozy duet. As one of Polish observers points out, "Before the enlargement of the EU the

role played by France was much greater. The accession to the Union of new countries considerably strengthened Germany's position. Before that Germany was in the shadow, but the crisis of the recent years has revealed who really counts". This is how Germany unintentionally became a hegemon. Its elites were not ready to shoulder responsibility resulting from this role, as they had to take into account the financial costs contested by the society and the increasing Euroscepticism. A problem that turned out to be equally important was relative solitude on the European stage, as the dominant role of Berlin was treated with distrust in many capitals. It was a threat to the legitimacy of policy carried out by Angela Merkel. Beyond all doubt, the strengthening of the relations with Poland become important for Berlin, taking into account the situation. Poland was a large and respected EU member, the most important from the accession of 2004, which could boast about good economic indicators, pro-European government and Euro-enthusiastic society, Germany could benefit from the cooperation with Poland by: gaining significant support for legitimacy of its actions in Europe as a "reluctant hegemon"<sup>11</sup>, a role in which it found itself unintentionally and did not feel well. "Germany needs Poland to legitimise its leadership in Europe, since it cannot be a leader in the EU on its own, no matter how justified it would seem from the perspective of economy", said an important left-wing politician. This ambivalence was characteristic for Germany. On the one hand it was embodied in resistant leadership in the EU, on the other, in necessity of winning support for the real exercise of the leadership. The speech made by Radosław Sikorski in November 2011 in Berlin, during which he said that Poland was more fearful of German inaction rather than its hegemony, precisely defined this ambivalence. By uttering these words he called Germany for greater involvement and, at the same time, declared a great confidence in the western neighbour of Poland, which was significant taking into account the fact that this declaration was made by a Polish politician. There is

---

**11** Paterson William E., *The Reluctant Hegemon? Germany Moves Centre Stage in the European Union*, *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* Special Issue: The JCMS Annual Review of the European Union in 2010 , Volume 49, Issue Supplement s1, pp. 57–75, September 2011.



one more reason why Poland is perceived as a country which Germany needs more than ever before. The resilience of the Polish economy to the crisis at the time when other were suffering contraction, did not only surprise and impress Berlin. The results and the model of the Polish economy became evidence to the German elites that Poland may be an important ally for Germany in the arising dispute over the appropriate model of the economic and fiscal policy in the EU (see more on this issue in Chapter 5).

For Poland the relations with Germany after 2007 became one of the main pillars of its foreign policy. Poland expects from Germany “a strategic partnership based on dialogue, as in the German-French case”, said Minister Sikorski in his first statement introduced in the Polish Sejm. This was nothing new, but it was formulated in changed circumstances. The first years of Polish EU membership were dominated by divergence of interests and conflicts with Germany. The relations with Germany also became the subject of internal political conflicts, at the times of the Eurosceptical coalition governing in Poland under the leadership of Law and Justice, a party that is hostile to Germany. Particular controversies were related to the past and other bilateral problems<sup>12</sup>. Germany was perceived as a threat rather than an important partner in the concept of Polish foreign policy 2005-07. The fundamental change of the attitude toward Germany that took place after Donald Tusk came to power was connected with re-orientation in the foreign policy, in particular its European part. The new government had an ambition to make Poland an active player of the EU policy rather than merely a consumer of the benefits of EU membership<sup>13</sup>. The emphasis put on the relations with Germany, which was connected with the determination to end the historical disputes (the expelledes’ commemoration place) and to calm down the controversies between the two countries (the Nord Stream), become a new method to accomplish this objective. Poland wanted to be in the very centre of the EU. This strategic decision became

---

**12** See Buras Piotr, *Stosunki polsko-niemieckie: w poszukiwaniu nowego paradygmatu*, „Stosunki Międzynarodowe”, No. 1-2, 2007, pp. 9-44.

**13** Formuszewicz Ryszarda, *Na ścieżce wzrostu. Polityka Polski wobec Niemiec*, *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej*, 2011, pp. 123-135.

particularly significant in the time of crisis, when stronger division in the euro area appeared and the Germany's importance has increased.

The conviction that strengthening the relations with Germany is good for the Polish interests is also the result of economic determinants. The Polish and German economies are closely linked with each other, which is reflected in the definition of political interests.

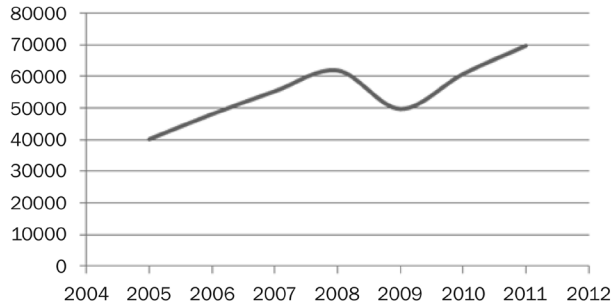
As Waldemar Pawlak, the then Polish Minister of Economy, emphasised during a visit of his German counterpart Philipp Roesler in 2012, "the trade between Poland and Germany is on the highest level in the history. Its value reaches ca. 70 billion EUR, which is higher than the trade turnover of Germany with Russia, Japan or Spain. It shows how good was the friendly transformation in the last twenty years." Indeed, it is Germany that is the most important trade partner for Poland, and the trade exchange with Germany constitutes more than 26%<sup>14</sup> of the turnover of the foreign trade of Poland. It is about four times more than the trade turnover with other important partners, such as Great Britain, France or Russia. That is why the information on the slow-down of the German economy, recorded since Q2 2012, is treated with unease in Poland.

Trade exchange of Poland with Germany <sup>1</sup>							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Export	20141,953	23 869,70	26370,121	29124,1	25685,7	31427	35664,3
Import	20024,03	24 201,70	28947,846	32755,2	24053,2	29362,4	34042,1
Value of trade turnover	40165,98	48071,4	55317,97	61879,3	49738,9	60789,4	69706,4
Balance	117,923	-332	-2577,73	-3631,1	1632,5	2064,6	1622,2

Source: Own study on the basis of: Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zagranicznego 2012 r., Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2012, p. 43 and the following.

**14** Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zagranicznego 2012 r., Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2012, p. 43 and the following.

## Value of mutual trade turnover (in billion EUR)



Source: Own study on the basis of: Rocznik Statystyczny Handlu Zagranicznego 2012 r., Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2012, p. 43 and the following.

As one of Polish politicians believes, “Poland and Germany are like a closed system. Thanks to the strong links of the Polish economy with Germany and other countries of the “northern” Europe, which overcame the crisis more rapidly, Poland suffered the consequences of the crisis to a much smaller extent than many other countries. The awareness of the common (economic) fate with the western neighbour had never been so strong before and definitely affected Poland’s attitude to the measures aimed to rescue the eurozone”.

The partnership with Germany should be analysed in the context of other objectives of Poland’s foreign policy. Poland expressed its aspirations for becoming a leader in Central and Eastern Europe and for strengthening the cooperation within the Visegrád Group already at the time of previous government. Donald Tusk’s government intensified these efforts by advocating cooperation with the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary (as well as Romania and Bulgaria as part of Visegrád Plus) in the scope EU policies. Taking into account the relations with Germany, the cooperation within V4 has a double significance to Poland. On the one hand it is the expression of a multidimensional European policy, which is not limited to one permanent ally. Another example of such a strategy is the Eastern Partnership initiative, which was introduced together with Sweden (and

not with Germany). Poland's regional ambitions are the expression of independence on the European arena, emancipation from the former patrons and flexibility in defending Polish interests to which the temporary alliances are subordinated. This may be some kind of historical conclusion, as Poland had hopes related to the idea of setting up a permanent Warsaw-Berlin or Warsaw-Berlin-Paris axis. On the other hand, Poland's good relations with Germany may contribute to building its strong position in the region. Thus the partnership with Germany is not to have an exclusive character, but it is aimed to be a pragmatic means in the accomplishment of other objectives of European policy. However, the question of German reciprocity towards Polish involvement and whether Polish emphasis on the relations with Germany does not replace a more far-reaching strategy in its foreign policy, provokes disputes both in political elites and in the wider policy community. The politicians of the opposition party define the policy towards Germany as *bandwagoning*, which was also visible in the reactions to the speech made by Minister Sikorski in Berlin. He was accused by the opposition and conservative media of being under the thumb of Berlin and of sale of national interests<sup>15</sup>. The support of Donald Tusk for the German position during the intervention in Libya (Berlin abstained from the vote in the UN Security Council), was interpreted as assistance for Angela Merkel and by some Polish observers it was perceived as an expression of excessive solidarity with the German partner<sup>16</sup>.

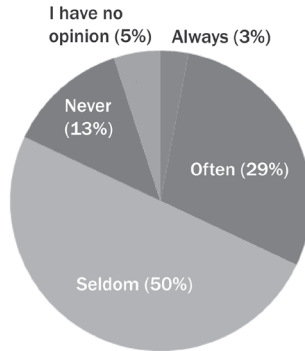
Finally, as compared with the previous years, the public opinion mood changed considerably. In 1990 the society fearfully observed the further steps taken by Germans towards national reunification, whereas today there is no trace of this trend. As the public opinion pools show, the negative stereotype of a German in Poland has been rejected and Poland's attitude to the German neighbour has changed significantly. Today the Polish society perceives the consequences of the German reunification as unequivocally positive. 68 per cent of Poles believe that the reunification

---

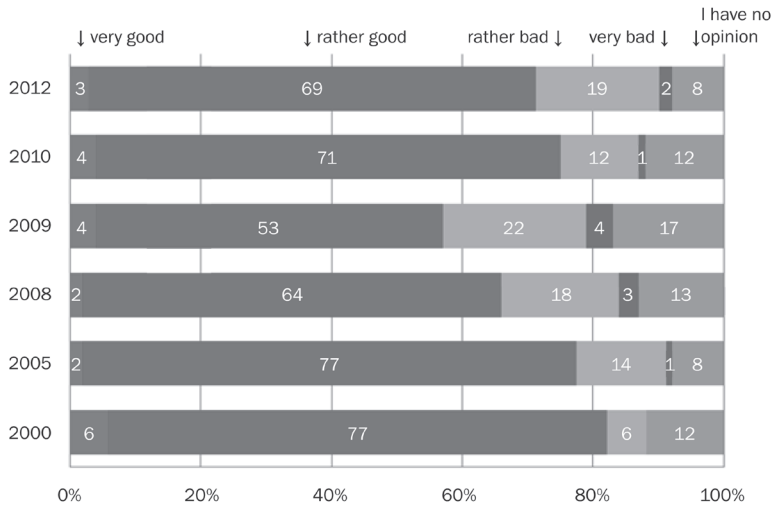
**15** Harczuk Przemysław, Marosz Maciej, Na klęczkach przed Merkel, *Gazeta Polska Codziennie*, 30.11.2012.

**16** Smolar Aleksander, quote from: Bielecki Jędrzej, Pokerowa zagrywka Sikorskiego na Niemcy, *Dziennik. Gazeta Prawna*, 4.06.2012.

## Does Germany treat Poland as an equal partner?



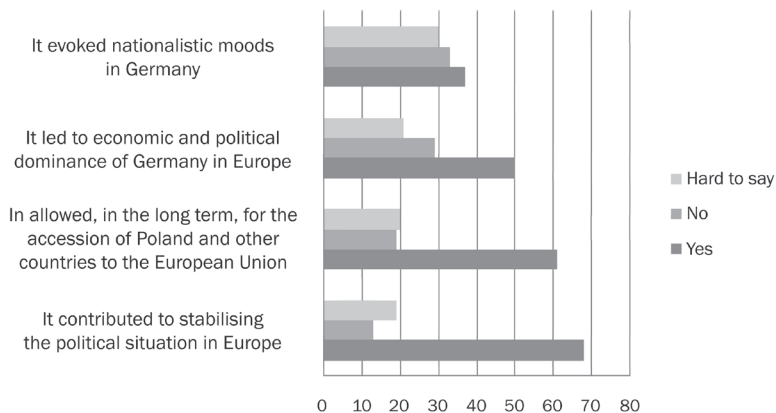
## Poles' evaluation of Polish-German relations



Source: Agnieszka Łada, Barometr Polska-Niemcy 2012, Polacy o roli Niemiec w Europie i stosunkach polsko-niemieckich, Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa 2012

of Germany contributed to stability in Europe, and 61 per cent of Poles are convinced that Poland directly benefited from the reunification. Poles trust Germans, appreciate their contribution to the integration of Europe (65 per cent of Poles think that Germans want further deepening of the integration of Europe) and see that the problems separating the two countries are related to the past of the two states (claims of the expellees and commemoration of the German victims). Poland and Germany are closely connected with each other, and the threat that the public mood would change for the worse, as in case of the United States, is considered as not very probable.<sup>17</sup>

### What is the influence of the German unification on Europe?



Source: Agnieszka Łada, *Dwadzieścia lat minęło. Polacy o zjednoczeniu Niemiec i stosunkach polsko-niemieckich w dwudziestą rocznicę zjednoczenia* Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa 2010

17 <http://trends.gmfus.org/transatlantic-trends/key-findings/>

## 2. Polish-German *Ostpolitik*?

Polish-German cooperation in the eastern policy is most of all a result of the political and geographical determinism rather than common views or interests. In the previous years the views and interests of these two countries were divergent in many cases. However, since the accession of Poland to the European Union, in particular since the Orange Revolution and the Polish-Russian “dispute over meat” in 2007, the elites of both countries have had a stronger conviction that Poland and Germany are made to look for a compromise in the issues related to Eastern Europe. On the one hand, as one of Polish high-ranking diplomats said, “Germany is the only country in the European Union that is seriously interested in the EU eastern neighbourhood.” Although the flagship project of the Polish foreign policy, i.e. the Eastern Partnership, was initiated in cooperation with Sweden, Germany is still perceived as a key partner due to the political potential and long-term involvement. The interest of Sweden (not to mention other western European countries) in the post-Soviet region beyond Russia is perceived as “superficial”. On the other hand, different attitudes to the problems of Eastern Europe lead the cooperation between Poland and Germany to a kind of a deadlock and impede the development of the common EU policy towards eastern neighbours. “Our countries are in particular called to prevent divisions in Europe, to strengthen stable, safe and democratic neighbourhood in the East of the continent and to make closer millions of people to European standards of the political, economic and social life”, said Minister Sikorski during his speech at Viadrina conference on 3 November 2010.

The fact that the eastern policy is the most frequently discussed issue between Warsaw and Berlin stems from the conviction of joint respon-

sibility<sup>18</sup>. It was particularly reflected in a wide range of joint initiatives taken by Poland and Germany in the recent years. In October 2010 the Polish and German Ministers of Foreign Affairs went together to Minsk to meet Alexander Lukashenko, President of Belarus. Minister Sikorski came up with this idea in order to break the deadlock in the relations with Belarus. Guido Westerwelle, the German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, decided to accept the invitation despite considerable resistance of German diplomats, who believed that the discussions with the Belarusian dictator would be futile. Then, both politicians talked to Lukashenko, offering Belarus (inter alia) financial support in the amount of 3 billion euros in three years on condition of fair election. The scepticism was not groundless as the visit of both ministers was in fact a fiasco. However, it was the beginning of close cooperation and consultations between both ministers as regards the eastern issues. The travel of Guido Westerwelle to Minsk is perceived by German diplomats as a breakthrough in the relations between Poland and Germany in this scope. In November 2011 both ministers published a joint letter on the relations between the EU and Russia. In March 2012 they published, with ministers from the Czech Republic, Great Britain and Sweden, a joint text on the policy towards Ukraine in *International Herald Tribune*.

The consensus reflected by such initiatives is in its present form a relatively new phenomenon. In the recent past it could not be reached because of the discrepancies exceeding temporary differences of opinion or conflicts of interests. Most of them related to Russia, which was treated in Germany as a key (strategic) partner not only in the East, but for the entire German foreign policy, while in Poland Russia was perceived as a source of threat rather than a chance for good cooperation. Russia was seen in Berlin as a weak country that should be helped, which is the origin of the concept of the “Partnership for Modernisation”. In Poland Russia was perceived as a world power attempting to extend its sphere of influence with the use of political and economic measures. Germany wanted to use the

---

**18** Łada Agnieszka (ed.) Kaca Elżbieta, Lang Kai-Olaf, Peters Jan, Rosja dziś i jutro. Opinie polskich i niemieckich ekspertów, Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa 2010



strategy or “change through rapprochement” (or “change through trade”), in compliance with the former strategy of *Ostpolitik* developed by Willy Brandt. Poland adopted a defensive “restraint” strategy. The dispute over the Nord Stream was the most characteristic example of these discrepancies, negatively affecting Polish-German relations also in other areas.

A different approach to Russia also affected the relations with the other EU eastern neighbours. When in 2007 the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the CDU/CSU-SPD coalition was in power and the head of the diplomacy was Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a Social Democrat) presented the German concept of the “new eastern policy”, it was not consulted with Warsaw. It did not arouse enthusiasm in Poland, despite the fact that it contained (inter alia) proposals related to intensification of relations with Ukraine, which was considered important to Poland. Controversies arose over the fact that three pillars of the new *Ostpolitik*, such as the policy towards Russia (the “partnership for modernisation”), towards the countries of Eastern Europe covered by the EU neighbourhood policy (the so-called ENPplus) and towards Central Asia, were treated as a whole. They were to supplement one another and were considered as prerequisites for one another. Warsaw perceived it as a hazard of subordinating all activities in the East to the requirements of the policy towards Russia in accordance with the “Russia first” strategy attributed to Berlin. From the point of view of Poland, the relations with Ukraine or Belarus should have an autonomous character and may not be merely a function of the policy towards Russia. After the Orange Revolution Poland called for “the European perspective” for Ukraine, i.e. a declaration of the EU that Ukraine may be admitted to the EU in the future. Germany, which dealt with scepticism towards accession of new countries to the EU after the enlargement of the Union in 2004, successfully blocked such ideas. Poland’s doubts over the direction of German eastern policy were deepened by the concept of the “shared neighbourhood” related to the post-Soviet area between the EU and Russia. In the opinion of German diplomacy, the EU and Russia should cooperate in this area, since this is the only way to solve problems like in security or energy policies. Poland rejected this concept, because it might lead to taking actions beyond the countries in-between, i.e. Ukraine or Belarus.

This short list of the most important discrepancies between Poland and Germany as regards the issues related to the eastern policy was presented here because it shows two different ways of thinking and perceiving the reality, which are embodied in the concepts and political activities. What characterises the Polish-German rapprochement in the eastern policy is that despite the fact that important prerequisites of this “protocol of discrepancies” are still applicable on both sides, today it would not be possible to present it in such a characteristic way. It is, most of all, a consequence of the evolution of Polish and German views, and, to some extent, of changes in the policy adopted by these countries towards the eastern neighbours. As a result, the Polish and German points of view got as close as never before. It was also thanks to putting an end to the dispute over the Nord Stream (whose significance as the most important “bone of contention” between Poland and Germany was also reduced for other reasons), and most of all, thanks to the changes occurring at that time in Russia, Ukraine or Belarus. As the diplomats in Warsaw and Berlin emphasise, today Polish and German assessment of the situations and prospects in these countries does not differ in the most important aspects; in fact, it seems to be the most important foundation of the Polish-German dialogue in the eastern issues. Several years ago the situation looked different though. However a very similar analysis does not have to lead to adopting similar policies. The conclusions drawn in Poland and Germany are often different, which hinders the formulation of joint actions at the EU level.

### *Approximation of views*

There were several factors contributing to the fact that the evolution of Polish and German eastern policies in the recent years started to go in a similar direction. This process was of gradual character, but there were three events which may be considered as the turning points. They best present the background and character of changes taking place.

The first one was the re-orientation in the Polish eastern policy as a result of establishment of a new government under the leadership of Donald Tusk after the parliamentary election in 2007. Its most expressive element was the reset in relations with Russia, which was first embodied by the visit of Donald Tusk in Moscow in December 2007 (before paying

a visit in Kiev). Its peaked in the visit of Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin during the celebrations of the seventieth anniversary of the outbreak of WWII in Westerplatte. The improvement of the relations with Moscow was a reaction to the change of international situation (taking office by Barack Obama and the turn in his policy towards Europe and Russia) and in the policy adopted by Russia itself, which seemed to appreciate the significance of relations with other countries of the EU more than with its strategic partners, i.e. Germany or France<sup>19</sup>. The improvement of relations with Russia contributed to discussing some delicate issues related to the past (rehabilitation of the victims of the Katyn massacre) and resumption of the dialogue on various levels (Polish-Russian Group on Difficult Matters, Committee for Polish-Russian Cooperation Strategy). However, it was the 2010 Polish Air Force Tu-154 crash near the city of Smolensk and in particular the controversies related to the investigation of the causes and circumstances of the catastrophe that overshadowed the cooperation between the two countries. Nevertheless, the background of the reset with Russia is not only limited to bilateral dimension. In fact, it was about a more thorough change of the way of thinking of the (new) Polish authorities as regards the eastern policy and the manners of defending the Polish interests in this field.

Jarosław Bratkiewicz, a political director in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and one of the architects of Polish eastern policy, distinguishes the two representative attitudes competing in Poland for the priority in the eastern issues. In the first one the eastern policy is treated in geopolitical categories as an autonomous pillar of the Polish foreign policy. This approach was, in his opinion, characteristic of the coalition under the leadership of Law and Justice party in the years 2005-2007, in particular of President Lech Kaczyński. Some initiatives undertaken at that time, e.g. the support for Georgia and President Mikheil Saakashvili in the summer of 2008, are the examples of activities subordinated to the geopolitical thinking in compliance with the “Jagiellonian tradition” of the Polish eastern policy. The alternative approach, adopted by Tusk’s gov-

---

**19** Compare: Ćwiek-Karpowicz Jarosław, *Reset w stosunkach z Rosją*, „Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny”, 2011, No. 3 (61), pp. 73-84.

ernment, derives from the assumption that the top priority is the Polish policy in the European Union, while the eastern policy is only a function of the EU policy. Thus, there is no separate strategy towards the East, but the strategy is a part of thinking of Poland's place in Europe, which means that the priorities and interests of Poland in other fields must also be taken into account<sup>20</sup>.

This shift in the manner of defining the Polish interests in the foreign policy, i.e. putting stress on the construction of a strong position of Poland in the European Union through establishing good relations with Germany, brought about significant effects. One of them was the reset with Russia, and the other one was change of the policy towards other eastern neighbours. The opposition reproached Tusk's government for a dramatic withdrawal from treating the relations with Ukraine as a priority and rejection of the basic principles of the hitherto eastern policy, but in fact no such dramatic withdrawal was made. At the NATO summit in the spring of 2008 Tusk's government supported the start of talks on the EU association with Ukraine and Georgia, against the majority of countries of Western Europe. However, a shift in priorities was visible. The concept of the Eastern Partnership, which Poland managed to put forward in the EU together with Sweden in 2008, was a result of the conviction that the objectives of the Polish eastern policy may be accomplished only in cooperation with other partners in the EU and with the participation of the EU institutions. There was a dependency between the eastern policy and the policy adopted by Poland in the EU: a stronger Polish position in the EU was the guarantee of activity in the East, whereas increased flexibility in the eastern policy was considered as a path for increasing the credibility of Poland in the EU.

From the perspective of the Polish-German partnership, a change in the Polish eastern policy was of great significance, which stemmed from the acknowledgement that Germany is a key partner for Poland in the policy towards Russia (despite all differences between the countries) rather than a competitor or opponent. "Only when cooperating with Berlin are

---

**20** At conference of ECFR and Heinrich Böll Foundation "Polish-German *Ostpolitik*", 5 November 2012 in Warsaw.

we able to affect the relations of the EU with Russia”, said one of the architects of the Polish eastern policy.

Berlin treated the reset with Russia with relief, as it liberated Germany from an uncomfortable position between the partners in Moscow and Warsaw, who were in conflict with each other (during the German presidency in the EU in 2007 it was particularly difficult for Merkel’s government to balance between the two countries). Moreover, the reset opened a path for attempts aimed at the trilateral cooperation among Poland, Germany and Russia on the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs as part of the Kaliningrad Triangle. The meetings in Kaliningrad in May 2011 and in Berlin in March 2012 were aimed to exchange views and build confidence, but in particular Berlin treats them as the evidence of considerable progress in the scope of the cooperation of Poland and Germany towards Russia. In fact, this German perception is the confirmation of Polish expectations: a change of the attitude to Russia is not only an expression of hopes of Warsaw for a turn in the bilateral relations with the eastern neighbour, but to a large extent, it is also an unquestionable advantage for the development of cooperation with Germany. The more distant were the prospects of permanent improvement in the relations between Poland and Russia (and between the EU and Russia), as a result of the complications after the Smolensk catastrophe and a stricter internal policy in Russia after the come-back of Vladimir Putin to the presidential office, the more significant became the other aspect.

A change of the Polish perspective on the eastern issues also had another source, i.e. the disillusionment with the course of the political situation in the post-Soviet area, in particular in Ukraine, which had been for many years (in particular after the Orange Revolution) treated as the top priority in Poland’s eastern policy. The establishment of the free trade area and visa-free movement was the objective of Polish activities towards these countries. The Eastern Partnership was to help to meet these objectives by anchoring this policy at the EU level, making available funds for the promotion of the cooperation with the countries covered by the Eastern Partnership programme and by increasing the political importance of this dimension of European foreign policy. However, not later than in 2010 after the presidential election won by Yanukovych, one could see Polish

elites become more realistic and reduce expectations. The events occurring in Ukraine were perceived as regression in the country's democratic development. At the same time, the authoritarian character of the government in Belarus was strengthened (fiasco of the visit of Sikorski and Westerwelle in Minsk was the confirmation that no fundamental changes should be expected despite the EU's readiness to open up and help Belarus). Hopes cherished in Georgian President Saakashvili also faded. Apart from Moldova, the situation in the countries covered by the Eastern Partnership gave no reasons for optimism, but it rather contributed to formulating conclusions that the hitherto policy towards the eastern neighbours overestimated the possibilities of Poland and the EU in promoting democracy and the rule of law in these countries. As regards the possibility of development of the situation in the desirable direction, the assumption also was too optimistic. "Of course, the Polish authorities have limited opportunities to affect the decisions of the leaders of post-Soviet countries. However, they should have predicted various pessimistic scenarios. But in fact it seemed that the course of events in Ukraine or Belarus was rather unexpected for them"<sup>21</sup>. The countries of Eastern Europe remained the key area of the Polish foreign policy, but the ambitions to quickly attract them to the European Union were soon abandoned. "Right now there are no prospects for Ukraine's accession to the EU. Taking into account the government, this country may not be a candidate for a Member State", said a Polish high-rank diplomat. In the past the prospects of membership in the EU were one of the issues in which Polish and German position in the eastern policy completely differed.

Another driver of changes contributing to the rapprochement of the Polish and German positions was the come-back of Vladimir Putin to the presidential office, the aggravation of the internal situation in the country and the persecution of the democratic opposition. In particular the course of events in Russia affected the German discussion on eastern policy. Its evolution towards greater distance and criticism towards Moscow was visible earlier, but the re-election of Putin may be considered as a symbo-

---

**21** Adamski Łukasz et al., *Praca u podstaw na wschodzie*, „Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej”, 2011, pp. 75-92, here: 92.

lic turning point. The change in the presidential office in Russia in 2008 aroused hope in the German elites. It was not considered as a reshuffle in the governing elite in Moscow, but rather as an expected new opening. The declarations made by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, who announced law and order, liberalisation and modernisation of the country, were usually treated optimistically. Although there were differences in the governmental coalition CDU/CSU-SPD as regards their attitude to Russia (the German Chancellery was more sceptical about the strengthening of the cooperation than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), there was a predominant conviction that Germany (and the EU) can and should seize the opportunity to support the transformation of the Russian Federation towards the western model of democracy and economy. It was already in 2007, i.e. before the change in the presidential office in Russia, that the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) formulated the concept of “change through connections” (*Wandel durch Verflechtung*), according to which surrounding Russia with a network of cooperation in various fields was to contribute to introducing reforms in Russia. “Some observers are worried that the stronger and more self-confident Russia might take the path of separation from the EU. I have the impression, in particular in the young generation, which took over the responsibility for Russia 15 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, that many, not only President Putin, want to closely connect Russia with Europe”, wrote German Minister of Foreign Affairs in the text on the “new eastern policy”<sup>22</sup>. A year later, after Medvedev had been elected the President, the policy was developed to the above-mentioned “Partnership for Modernisation”, assuming wide cooperation in the energy policy, healthcare policy, science and education policy and the widening of contacts between the administration of both countries. It was a very ambitious programme of cooperation that went far beyond the economic cooperation and trade exchange that had been taking place for many years. The relations between Moscow and Berlin were officially referred to as the “strategic partnership” (not without a reason), since the

---

**22** Steinmeier Frank-Walter, *Verflechtung und Integration*, „Internationale Politik“, 2007, No. 3, p. 8.

strengthening of world's position of both countries was the objective and common denominator of the efforts made. The so-called Meseberg Process, initiated in June 2010, which assumed making an attempt to solve the problem of Transnistria together with Russia, was an element of the German strategy. The cooperative attitude of Moscow in this issue could be a starting point for strengthening the cooperation in the field of the security policy between the EU and Russia (but the idea was not consulted in more detail with the partners in the EU)<sup>23</sup>.

The course of the parliamentary election in Russia in 2011 and mass protests resulting from that, Russia's attitude towards the crisis in Syria, the case of Pussy Riot and another reshuffling in the presidential office are only the most important elements of the disillusionment of Berlin with the presidency of Medvedev. The return of Putin to the Kremlin shook the conviction that the change in 2008 was not simulated but that it was a prelude for the actual modernisation and democratisation of the country. As most German experts admit, Medvedev and Putin were a well-tuned team, and the differences between them related more to personal qualities than the political strategy. This interpretation was predominant in the Polish elites from the very beginning, and it was spread in Germany to a larger extent only in the last year. "Many German decision-makers have no illusions now as regards the present situation in Russia", wrote an analyst advising the federal government in tink-tank *Wissenschaft und Politik* in August 2012. In her opinion, the hitherto attitude to Russia was based on the three prerequisites, which lost their validity. Firstly, "more means better" (the cooperation with Russia should be developed in all possible areas); secondly, the "unilateral rapprochement" (that Russia will get closer to the western standards and that the Russian elites do not wish that to happen); thirdly, the "difficult path" (that Russia has been for a longer time on a path to reforms, but it is a long-lasting process that requires patience). In the author's opinion, it is necessary to review these assumptions and not to repeat a mistake consisting of "attributing to Russian decision-makers the logic of activity that would apply to Ger-

---

23 Compare: Meister Stefan, *An Alienated Partnership. German-Russian Relations after Putin's Return*, FIIA Briefing Paper 105, 10 May 2012.



many". These decision-makers function on completely different political and economic coordinates"<sup>24</sup>.

"It is not the German attitude to Russia that has changed, it is Russia itself that has changed in fact. The hopes that something might change under Medvedev's presidency were not naive, and the concept of the Partnership for Modernisation was the proper decision. However, the fact is that the balance is not satisfactory", says Ruprecht Polenz (CDU), Head of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in Bundestag<sup>25</sup>. German high-ranking diplomats also emphasise on the one hand a lack of alternative to the cooperative attitude towards Moscow that has been characterising the German policy for years. On the other hand they do admit that the effects of this policy are modest because of a lack of considerable interest on the Russian part. As part of the partnership for modernisation there is a dialogue on the rule of law and support for small and medium enterprises, but its significance is clearly below the earlier expectations.

Of course, critical opinions on Russia expressed by German think-tanks and the hitherto German policy towards Russia do not represent the opinions of all economic and political elites. However, the conviction that economic interests are of fundamental significance regardless of the political situation in Russia and that they should not be adversely affected by the political situation in Russia is still common. During a public meeting a high-ranking representative of the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations (*Ostaussschuß der deutschen Wirtschaft*) called the election to the State Duma in 2011 as "the most democratic since the fall of the Soviet Union", which immediately met with criticism. The German discourse on Russia is much more heated, critical and polarised than ever in the last two decades, but the opinion that the hitherto concept of *Ostpolitik* ended in failure is not rare.<sup>26</sup> This evolution was clearly expressed in an unprecedented manner in the resolution adopted by the Bundestag (at the request of the

**24** Stewart Susan, Prämissen hinterfragen. Plädoyer für eine Neugestaltung der deutschen Russlandpolitik, SWP-Aktuell, August 2012, pp. 2-3.

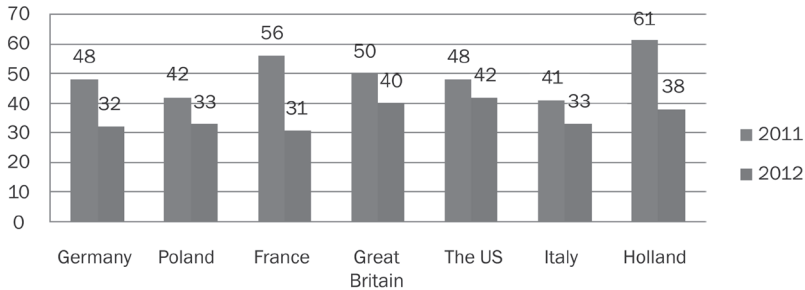
**25** In an interview with the author 22.11.2012.

**26** For example Neef Christian, Niederlage der Nachsicht, Spiegel Online, 17.11.2012, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/deutschlands-ostpolitik-ist-gescheitert-a-867725.html>

governing CDU/CSU-FDP coalition) just before the German-Russian governmental consultations in November 2012. MPs wrote with recognition about the efforts aimed at the modernisation of the country, made by many citizens and the middle class, criticising at the same time that the “Russian leadership puts into effect a different concept of modernisation. Politically-active citizens are not perceived by the authorities as partners. A dialogue with the civil society, in particular the growing middle class as the most important partner, is necessary for the modernisation of the country.” The resolution refers to the “repressive tendencies” in Russia and provides a wide range of examples of violations of the rule of law. A list containing thirteen demands from the federal government includes demands for discussing these issues in bilateral relations and claims for the rights of the opposition, political prisoners and establishing contacts not only with the political elites but, to a larger extent, with the civil society<sup>27</sup>. German mass media and the German Chancellery were more and more disapproving of Russia as a result of severe criticism expressed in Moscow against the author of the resolution, CDU politician Andreas Schockenhoff (Government Representative for contacts with the civil society in Russia). The draft of the resolution prepared by the opposition party SDP also contained a harshly critical description of the situation in Russia that had never been presented in previous documents of this type<sup>28</sup>. What is important, the perception of Russia by the German public opinion also deteriorated significantly. According to “Transatlantic Trends”, in 2012 fewer Germans (32 per cent) than Poles (33 per cent) expressed positive opinions on Russia. A year earlier 48 per cent of Germans and 42 per cent of Poles had a positive opinion on Russia. Apart from France and the Netherlands, Germany recorded the biggest fall in all countries surveyed as regards the views of Russia<sup>29</sup>.

- 
- 27** Antrag der Fraktionen der CDU/CSU und FDP. Durch Zusammenarbeit Zivilgesellschaft und Rechtsstaatlichkeit in Russland stärken, Deutscher Bundestag 17. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 17 / ....
- 28** Antrag der Fraktion der SPD, Gemeinsam die Modernisierung Russlands voranbringen – Rückschläge überwinden – Neue Impulse für die Partnerschaft setzen, Deutscher Bundestag, 17. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 17/ ....
- 29** Transatlantic Trends 2012, <http://trends.gmfus.org/survey-respondents-views-on-other-countries-shift-or-remain-static/>

## Positive opinions on Russia in 2011 and 2012 in selected Member States of the EU and the US



Source: Own study on the basis of the data provided by Transatlantic Trends 2011

The third important factor affecting the Polish-German cooperation in the eastern policy was the *discussion on boycotting Ukraine as the Euro 2012 host country*. In Germany the issue related to the imprisonment of Yulia Tymoshenko was the subject of political debate in the period preceding the football championship. Many politicians of the governing coalition, like Minister of Interior Hans-Peter Friedrich, stated that they would not visit Ukraine during the football championship in protest against the way of treating the former Prime Minister and other violations of democracy and rule of law in Ukraine. Chancellor Merkel called to boycott Viktor Yanukovich. In Poland the German debate aroused criticism and astonishment. “The biggest problem was that no one in Germany came up with the idea to consult Warsaw while discussing Yanukovich and EURO championship”<sup>30</sup>. For many Polish observers the fact that German politicians did not take measures to work out a strategy towards Ukraine together with Warsaw was the evidence that the Polish-German *Ostpolitik* (or even the close cooperation between Warsaw and Berlin) was fiction, in particular taking into account the fact that Poland was a co-host of the championship. Diplomats claim that Warsaw was informed of the alterna-

**30** Gebert Konstanty, quote from: *Niemcy a Ukraina. Bojkot Euro i co dalej?*, Fundacja Stefana Batorego, July 2012, p. 6.

tive solutions considered by the German government, but a significant part of the public opinion and political elites had an impression that the paths taken by both countries were divergent.

This impression was strengthened because of the speech of Angela Merkel in the Bundestag, in which she stated that “in Ukraine and Belarus people are still suffering under dictatorship and repression”<sup>31</sup>. German diplomats considered it as rather an awkward mental shortcut, but for Poland linking Ukraine with Belarus was considered as evidence of degradation of Kiev in the hierarchy of the priorities of German foreign policy. This approach, i.e. harsh criticism of Yanukovych and the threat to boycott the football championship, was not understood in Poland as no one could explain the motives and interests of the representatives of the German political elites, who wanted to “punish” Ukraine in this way. It was pointed out that the democratic standards in other countries, such as Russia, but also Libya or Egypt before the Arab Spring, were much worse than in Ukraine, but these countries had never been boycotted by Berlin. This application of double standards (or the intention to do so) was of particular significance due to the comparison with Russia: putting aside Ukraine, which had better democratisation balance despite certain imperfections, with simultaneous maintenance of close relations with Moscow would be a clear confirmation that the “Russia first” strategy was still significant in the German *Ostpolitik*. It also proved that German interest in the post-Soviet republics (proved by involvement in the Eastern Partnership) was over.

The impression that Berlin was withholding its involvement in the eastern policy was not groundless. The reasons were similar as in the case of evolution of Polish attitude to the East, i.e. disillusionment with a lack of progress in democratisation of the Eastern Partnership countries and the conviction that they elites do not actually care about closer relations with the European Union. The crisis in the eurozone has also played an important role, as the federal government had to use most of its political energy

---

**31** Merkel dubs Ukraine a „dictatorship” like Belarus, Reuters, 10 May 2012, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/05/10/uk-germany-ukraine-belarus-idUKBRE84910M20120510>

to overcome it, which sidelined EU foreign policy. As the representative of the federal government says, as regards the countries of Eastern Europe “there is certain powerlessness. There is no idea how to affect the situation in the region.” In particular the events occurring in Ukraine, the second important country after Russia in the “new eastern policy of Germany”, turned out to be huge disillusionment. Opinions about President Yanukovich and his surroundings were definitely negative in Germany, and the conviction that he is not a political partner for long-term cooperation was widely spread. Ukraine under President Yanukovich seemed to have no prospects. The interpretation of the international situation was also of significance: the above-mentioned opinion about Russia as a weak country, engaged only in its own issues and the sceptical assessment of chances for the success of Putin’s Eurasian Union project. In Poland the threat related to the reintegration of Russia and post-Soviet republics is usually treated as a realistic scenario<sup>32</sup>, while in Germany it is considered as the bluff of Ukrainian elites aimed to force the EU to make concessions. “The Russian option is not a real alternative for Kiev, it is nothing but a scarecrow for the EU”, said a representative of a German political foundation.

In this situation the idea to “punish” Yanukovich by means of political boycott of Ukraine during the football championship did not involve a great risk in the opinion of a large part of German elites and mass media. Additionally, the imprisoned former Prime Minister of Ukraine Yulia Tymoshenko enjoyed great respect as an icon of the “Orange Revolution” (critical opinions on her businesses and political activities and the negative attitude of a considerable part of the Ukrainian society were known in Germany to a smaller extent than in Poland). Apart from that, Tymoshenko could count on political support from CDU, which cooperate with Tymoshenko’s party *Batkivshchyna* in the European People’s Party. The campaign for liberating Tymoshenko was given extensive coverage in the German media. In this context the idea to boycott the football championship might be treated as a justified attempt to make Ukraine

---

**32** Compare: Wierzbowska-Miazga Agata, *Przyjaźń mimo woli*, Nowa Europa Wschodnia, 2012, No. 6, pp. 81-87.

apply democratic standards, which would evoke a positive response in the society<sup>33</sup>.

However, if the discussion on the boycott did affect the Polish-German cooperation in eastern policy, the tension between Berlin and Warsaw in the weeks preceding the football championship were not the main reason. This disagreement certainly revealed (not for the first time, though) the existing differences in the attitude to the eastern partners. However, Polish and German diplomats emphasise that the attitudes of both countries to Ukraine had been complementary for some time. A good example of this division of roles is the Yalta summit in 2012, in which President Komorowski took part, while German President Joachim Gauck called off his visit in protest against the policy adopted by Yanukovych. As a Polish high-ranking diplomat believes, “Gauck could afford not to go to Yalta just because he knew that Komorowski was planning to go there”. Soon after the German discussion about boycotting the championship had provoked criticism in Poland, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chancellery made efforts to limit the damage and to talk about this issue with Warsaw. In fact, despite temporary irritations it aroused, the issue related to the boycott did not deepen the clash between Poland and Germany as regards the eastern policy, but it turned out to be the next step aimed to develop a common approach of both countries. “Germans realised that the very discussion on the boycott was a mistake and led nowhere. They saw that Poland had strong and rational arguments against blind isolation of Yanukovych. Since then Warsaw and Berlin have been holding ongoing consultations”, said a Polish high-ranking diplomat. Also a high-ranking official of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs admits that the events of the spring of 2012 were a “shock” that made Germans to think. In his opinion, the focus on Yulia Tymoshenko and the tendency to isolate Yanukovych as an authoritarian ruler were a mistake. Today the opinions of German and Polish experts and diplomats about Ukraine do not differ in the most significant issues. Both parties share the conviction that Kiev is a completely different case than Russia and Belarus as regards democracy

---

**33** More on the German debate on the boycott: Lau Jörg in: Niemcy a Ukraina. Bojkot Euro i co dalej?, Fundacja Stefana Batorego, July 2012.

and that, despite obvious problems with the development of the democracy and the rule of law, it does not make any sense to isolate Ukraine, but it is also the interest of the EU to connect Ukraine with Europe.

### *Different strategies*

Nevertheless, the increasing convergence of Polish and German views on the eastern issues, described above, does not lead to formulating a common strategy of the Polish-German *Ostpolitik* (or the strategy for the common EU eastern policy). “Majority of German politicians and diplomats agree that the hitherto policy of Berlin towards the East requires a substantial change. But this increasing conviction is not reflected in the activities of the government”, said a German expert on the eastern policy. In February 2012 a group of high-ranking German experts and former politicians (including Rita Süßmuth, Günter Verheugen, Rainer Steenblock, Markus Meckel) published a memorandum on the Eastern Partnership. “The Eastern Partnership is more than one of the elements of the EU’s foreign policy. Stabilisation and democratisation are the fundamental issue of both European and German foreign policy. However, the German policy is too passive towards the countries covered by the Eastern Partnership, as it is completely preoccupied with the financial and currency crisis. Apart from that, it also lacks an oriented, strategic thinking, focus, cohesion and durability”, wrote the authors.

They criticised the fact that the German discourse on the foreign policy does not relate to the geostrategic issues. “However, reality has to be taken into account: when Russia speaks about stability, it is analysed there in the categories of the of force and influence. Considering the Eastern Partnership from the geostrategic perspective is equally justified.” The demands include the liberalisation of the visa policy towards the EU’s eastern neighbours, strengthening the network of contacts with the civil society and withdrawal from the conviction that it is possible to lead to democratisation by means of pressure. “Germany and the European Union should not play the role of “judges of morality”, but they should accept the autonomy in searching for political concepts, make the cooperation more flexible by negotiating the basic standards and not hinder the further cooperation.” The signatories of the appeal also emphasised the impor-

tance of the agreements regarding the free trade with partners in the East (also from the perspective of interests of the entire EU) and called for strengthening the cooperation with Poland as a key partner of the German *Ostpolitik*<sup>34</sup>. The Memorandum received a very positive response of the German elites, but several months after it had been published a discussion broke out about the boycott of Yanukovych, in which the positions of many German politicians became the juxtaposition of the theses contained in the memorandum.

However, despite close contacts and consultations, the difficulties in working out a common concept of the Polish-German policy towards the eastern neighbours of the EU have a deeper background than path dependence of the German *Ostpolitik*. They are the function of different interests, conditions of the eastern policy and different conclusions still drawn from a more convergent assessment of the situation. In particular, they regard the relations with Russia, the attitude to the conditionality principle in the EU neighbourhood policy and, as a consequence, the attitude to the future of the association agreement with Ukraine, which is a key aspect for the eastern policy, and the visa policy towards the eastern neighbours of the EU.

In the policy towards Russia the Polish-German dialogue and changes in the attitude of elites of both countries led to rapprochement, which, however, did not eliminate the differences of interests (focus on the economic relations in Germany vs Polish distance to Russia, motivated geopolitically) and did not put an end to Polish distrust of the German policy towards Russia. Such distrust has been recently increased by the information on construction by the German company Rheinmetall of a training centre for the Russian army near Nizhny Novgorod<sup>35</sup>. In the meantime Russia threatened several times to carry out a preventive attack against the Missile Defence planned in the territory of Poland<sup>36</sup>. In energy policy, the issue of

**34** German foreign policy vs the Eastern Partnership. Position of the expert group of the Eastern Partnership, DGAP Standpunkt, February 2012.

**35** Rheinmetall AG baut Übungszentrum für russischen Soldaten mit, 21.02.2012, [http://de.rian.ru/security\\_and\\_military/20120221/262733282.html](http://de.rian.ru/security_and_military/20120221/262733282.html)

**36** Tarcza w Polsce? Rosja grozi raketowym uderzeniem, 11.05.2012, <http://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/swiat/artykuly/390126,rosja-znow-grozi-zniszczeniem-obiektow-tarczy-antyraкетowej-w-europie.html>



the Nord Stream ceased to dominate in the Polish-German dialogue, but the German scepticism with regard to the gas partnership between Germany and Russia and its political consequences did not vanish. “Making Germany dependent on the gas supplies from Russia will increase more considerably as a result of changes in the Germany energy policy. Due to the closure of nuclear power plants Germans will have to fill in this gap by building gas power plants, increasing import of gas from Russia”, claims one of the experts who presents a common conviction. Günter Oettinger, European Commissioner for Energy has been warning about it<sup>37</sup>. Poland is also sceptical about the investments made by Gazprom on the European energy market through the agency of German companies (Wintershall), thanks to which the Russian company gains lucrative access to the end-recipients of energy in the EU<sup>38</sup>. The German government threatened to veto this particular agreement, but from the perspective of Warsaw the contracts of German companies concluded with Gazprom are a part of the long-term strategy for close cooperation between Germany and Russia in energy supply, whose element is the Nord Stream (the potential location of the next pipe line as a reaction to the expected increase in the demand for the Russian gas also reverberated in Poland; in the opinion of German experts such an investment would make no sense).

Yet, it is not only the differences in the perception of mutual interests (or differences of interests as such) that make it hard to speak of the Polish-German initiatives for the benefit of EU’s common policy towards Russia, apart from the Kaliningrad Triangle. In fact, due to the development of the situation in Russia itself the space for carrying out such activities is limited. As German diplomats admit, a positive result of the Polish-German dialogue on Russia is not to work out common concepts for the EU’s policy towards Russia, since it is hard to count on a significant breakthrough today. This dialogue is of greater significance to the bilateral relations, as

**37** Oettinger warnt vor Folgen der Energiewende, 17.06.2012, <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/zeitung/oettinger-warnt-vor-folgen-der-energiewende-eu-kommissar-strom-wird-fuer-viele-unbezahlbar/6760964.html>

**38** Brisanter Tausch zwischen BASF und Gazprom, 14.11.2012, <http://www.ftd.de/unternehmen/industrie/energie-brisanter-tausch-zwischen-basf-und-gazprom/70117990.html>

it facilitates strengthening the Polish-German relations in general and it builds confidence between these two countries.

The opportunity for the Polish-German tandem to act is limited as regards Russia, but the most important test for the cooperation between Berlin and Warsaw in Eastern Europe remains the policy towards Ukraine and other countries of the Eastern Partnership. That is why the attitude of both countries towards the promotion and democratisation, in particular the conditionality principle in the EU neighbourhood policy, is of particular significance<sup>39</sup>. This issue became more important after the Arab Spring. The revolutions that broke out in the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood made the EU think over its strategies adopted in the policy towards the neighbours of the EU. In the new concept, announced in the spring of 2011, the “more for more” principle was adopted, which assumed awarding the countries making the most significant progress in building democracy. In turn, the countries that do not meet their obligations related to the rule of law and democracy cannot count on close cooperation with the EU. The introduction of stricter conditionality in relations with the neighbouring countries was aimed to differentiate the attitude towards these countries and to stimulate the competitiveness between them.

In Germany the conditionality principle is treated much more consistently than in Poland. Cooling in relations with Ukraine (including the readiness of some elites to “punish” Yanukovich by means of political isolation according to the “less for less” principle) was not only an expression of the decreasing involvement of Berlin in the eastern policy, but also of the conviction that Ukraine does not deserve any better offer from the EU. In Polish attitude to the conditionality principle, clear distance is observed. In this perspective it is the economic integration and liberalisation of the visa regime that are the most important carriers of modernisation, Europeanisation and democratisation of the countries covered by the neighbourhood policy. These are the activities that, according to the predominant opinion in Poland, should not be conditioned on the progress of

---

**39** Compare: Raik Kristi, *Between Conditionality and Engagement. Revisiting the EU's Democracy Promotion in the Eastern Neighbourhood*, FIIA Briefing Paper 80, April 2011.

democracy. In other words, the European Union should develop trade contacts and open borders for the citizens of Eastern Europe, assuming that it is the openness and engagement in the relations with them that best serve the creation of the conditions for democratisation of their political systems. This approach excludes the policy aimed at isolating or punishing the political elites of such countries, even if they are semi-authoritarian regimes. Polish politicians claim that the European Union should develop a dialogue with Ukrainian oligarchs because it is possible to affect the reality in Ukraine<sup>40</sup>. However, it is the civil society, democratic opposition and economy sector that are the most important partner in this policy. Basically, it differentiates the Polish attitude from the former German *Ostpolitik* based on the catchphrase “change through rapprochement”, focusing on the contacts with authorities of the Communist countries.

The assumption that the conditionality policy has its limits stems from the two prerequisites. Firstly, the principle that brought about the best results in the eastward EU enlargement, when the prospects of future membership in the EU motivated applicants to act, implement reforms and adapt their systems. Secondly, which is even more important, making the progress in the rapprochement to the EU in issues related to the economy or flow of persons conditional on the democratisation can be an effective pressure only if both parties have sufficient political will and are interested in the integration. In the recent years the most disillusioning conclusion that brought far-reaching consequences, both for Berlin and for Warsaw, was the finding that the political elites of Ukraine (and other countries of the Eastern Partnership except Moldova) are not at all determined to unequivocally take the direction towards the European Union. It was the basis of a sort of an intellectual crisis in the Polish eastern policy and of discouragement from more serious involvement in the East, observed in Berlin, whose by-product was the issue related to boycotting Yanukovych. In Warsaw the deeper conviction that Ukraine has no chance, to a large extent through its own fault, for membership in the European Union in the foreseeable future, leads to the conclusion that the attitude to this country

---

**40** E.g. Member of the European Parliament Paweł Kowal (PjN), during conference Polish-German *Ostpolitik*, 5.11.2012 Warsaw.

should be verified. “The association process may not be treated literally. We will end up trapped if we continue the policy of uncompromisingness and imposing conditions”, said one of Polish experts.

The attitude to signing the association agreement with Ukraine is a sort of a test of the conclusions drawn by both countries from this situation. In Germany a conviction was predominant for a long time that the agreement may be signed (it was initialled in March 2012) only after the fulfilment of the three conditions set by the EU: the democratic parliamentary election in October 2012, introduction of reforms in the scope of the system of justice and release of political prisoners. “Otherwise, signing the agreement would constitute complete rejection of the “more for more” principle and would be a signal for other countries covered by the neighbourhood policy. In fact, it would be the end of the policy in its present form”, argued some German interviewers before the election. From this point of view and in compliance with the logics of the European neighbourhood policy, the association agreement was an award for Ukraine, which should not be given to political elites which were not inclined to take an essential step towards the EU. As a representative of a German political foundation close to the governing coalition says, “there is no point for supporting Ukraine if it does not make any progress. Besides, the assumption that the conclusion of the agreement will immediately lead to its implementation is wrong”.

The treatment of the agreement as a unilateral gesture of the EU towards Kiev is criticised in Poland. “Treating the agreement (Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement) as a gift is misunderstanding”, believes a Polish high-ranking diplomat. According to rough estimates, thanks to the free trade with the EU, in the long term prosperity would increase by 4 to 11 per cent, but in the first years the implementation of the agreement will mean significant economic and social costs for the Ukrainian society, and the offer of the EU aimed to reduce these costs in very poor. According to a Polish analyst, here we deal with “a significant divergence of expectations and interests between Kiev and Brussels. The implementation of the DCFTA, being a part of the association agreement, could bring potential benefits to Ukraine in the long term, which requires incurring significant costs by Ukraine. Yet, the most important issue for the Ukrainian political

elites is temporary political and economic benefits, which are not guaranteed by the performance of the agreement<sup>41</sup>. Ukrainian oligarchs have an ambivalent attitude to the issue of deeper integration with the EU – on the one hand the adoption of the European law would deprive them of many privileges, on the other hand, though, the opening of the European market might be a chance for many of them for profitable business. However, as Polish diplomats and experts claim, the real interest of Ukrainian political and economic elites lies in maintaining the status quo: neither the integration with the EU nor the reintegration with Russia within the Eurasian Union is a good alternative for them. In fact, the agreement binding Kiev more strongly with Europe is in the interest of the European Union itself and the pro-European part of the Ukrainian society; thus, “punishing” Yanukovych by not signing the agreement may turn out to be a political mistake, activity against the strategic objective of the EU in the EU’s policy towards Ukraine.

In this situation the tendency to quickly sign the association agreement including the DCFTA (without strict compliance with the conditions set by the EU) stems in Poland from the conviction that this is the only way for the EU to maintain its position as an important player in Ukrainian politics, in which there are conflicting interests of followers and opponents of stronger connections with the EU. “The agreement that is signed and requires implementation is the only tool of pressure we may have”, said a Polish diplomat. Although Germany is more restrained as regards signing the agreement (the course and circumstances related to the election in Ukraine were received negatively in both countries), the Polish arguments are accepted with more understanding than in the past. Some politicians also point out that more flexibility and strategic thinking are needed instead of the technocratic approach and focusing on the fulfilment of set of criteria by Ukraine. “Following blindly the ‘more for more’ principle hinders proactive activities in the eastern policy”, said Rainer Steenblock, a former politician from the Greens<sup>42</sup>. “It would be short-sighted to limit

---

**41** Sadowski Rafał, *Perspektywy umowy o wolnym handlu UE-Ukraina*, Komentarze OSW, No. 94, 15.10.2012, pp. 5-6.

**42** At conference of ECFR and Heinrich Böll Foundation *Polish-German Ostpolitik?*, Warsaw 05/11/2012.

the activities to pressure only. Moreover, it might be treated as a good excuse for marginalising the discussion and activity towards Ukraine”, wrote a group of Polish and German experts in the report entitled “Ukraine – strategic partner”<sup>43</sup>. As German diplomats emphasise, the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius in November 2013 should result in success; the conclusion of the agreement with Ukraine by the time of the summit (assuming that the Ukrainian authorities take a step aimed to meet the expectations of the EU as regards the system of justice and/or the issue of political prisoners) is the most probable scenario, which is taken into account in Berlin.

The basic differences between Poland and Germany are on the visa policy. From the perspective of Warsaw, the visa liberalisation (abolition of visas or establishing less complicated procedures for certain groups of citizens) is the most important instrument of the involvement towards the countries of the Eastern Partnership (in particular Ukraine and Moldova, which are the most advanced in the liberalisation process). Germany is particularly divided as regards this issue: the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs accepts the arguments put forward by Polish politicians, but the Ministry of Interior is against abolition of visas. This situation, which has been lasting for many years, is the cause of the deadlock in the German policy on this issue. Its background is the visa scandal from the beginning of the previous decade, which was a source of long-lasting political controversies and the subject of the investigation conducted by the Bundestag committee of inquiry. A circular issued in 2000 by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs (under the SPD-The Greens coalition), directed to German consulates, recommended following the *in dubio pro libertate* principle (when in doubt, for the freedom) as regards the issuance of visas, and not to refuse the visa in each case when doubts arise as regards the applicant’s will to return to the country of origin. It resulted in considerable abuses in the practice of issuing visas, in particular in Kiev, where organised crime groups operated. Today German consulates follow very strict procedures related to checking the applicants’ will of return, which gives rise to many

---

**43** Grupa Kopernika, Ukraina – partner strategiczny, Report No. 22, November 2012, <http://www.deutsches-polen-institut.de/Projekte/Projekte-Aktuell/Kopernikus-Gruppe/wersja-polska22.php>

refusals. In 2011 Germany issued 110 thousand Schengen visas in Ukraine, while the number of visas issued in Poland exceeded 1 million. As Polish experts criticise, “what is predominant in the thinking of the EU about visas in the East is the paradigm of the security policy rather than the foreign policy”<sup>44</sup>. This accusation is directed mainly to Germany. In 2012 the German scepticism related to the visa policy deepened because of illegal immigration from the Balkans. The discussion about reintroduction of visas for the states of the Western Balkans certainly does not contribute to the liberalisation towards the Eastern European countries<sup>45</sup>. In Poland it is pointed out that the issue of the visa-free traffic with Eastern European countries should be “disenchanted”. “Taking into account the present level of mobility, interpersonal, political and business contacts between the EU and the countries of Eastern Europe, the abolition of visas will be a natural consequence of the liberalisation processes that have been taking place for many years and will not significantly contribute to increasing the migration pressure, as the largest wave of economic migration to the EU took place already a decade ago”<sup>46</sup>. However, the order in which the visa liberalisation is to be carried out remains a sensitive issue from the perspective of politics: Poles share the conviction that the opening of borders for the citizens of Ukraine must not take place later than for Russian citizens. In Germany the liberalisation postulate is supported by the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, an influential representation of the German industry involved in trade contacts with Eastern Europe. In April the Committee published an appeal calling the authorities to accelerate the visa liberalisation<sup>47</sup>. In another study it expressed its support for the introduction of the visa-free system by 2018, i.e. by the Olympics in Sochi<sup>48</sup>.

---

**44** Jaroszewicz Marta, *Niemożliwe uczynić możliwym. Perspektywy ruchu bezwizowego pomiędzy UE a wschodnimi partnerami*, Punkt widzenia OSW, Nr 27, Warszawa, May 2012, p. 22.

**45** Fox Benjamin, *Germany and France demand reintroduction of Balkan visas*, EuObserver, 15.10.2012

**46** Jaroszewicz Marta, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

**47** *Wirtschaftswachstum durch Visa-Liberalisierung*, 23.04.2012, <http://www.ost-ausschuss.de/wirtschaftswachstum-durch-visa-liberalisierung>

**48** *Wege zur Visa-Freiheit*, Ost-Ausschuss der Deutschen Wirtschaft.

### 3. Under the sign of *Energiewende*<sup>49</sup>

For many years the Polish-German relations in the energy policy were affected by disagreement and conflicting interests. They focused mostly on geopolitical interests, historical sensitivities and asymmetry of mutual relations. The issue was security of supplies, benefits from transit and independence of Gazprom. This accumulation of various factors explains, to a large extent, the scale of emotions accompanying in the previous years the discussions on the energy security in which Warsaw and Berlin were involved, of which the Nord Stream became an unquestioned symbol. To these days the comparison of the Nord Stream to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, made by Radosław Sikorski, is frequently quoted sentence formulated by Polish politicians. Today the situation looks different. The significance of the Nord Stream is relativised by the changes occurring in the world energy markets, such as the rapid growth of the sale of liquefied gas and the shale gas “revolution”. In this context the issue of reducing the dependence on Russia and diversification of supplies is presented in a new light.

The energy industry remains an important subject of the dispute between Warsaw and Berlin. But in the centre of attention today are hard economic interests and diverging strategies related to the energy supply rather than different perceptions of the role of Russia and conflicting definitions

---

November 2011, [http://www.ost-ausschuss.de/sites/default/files/pm\\_pdf/Positionspapier%20Wege%20zur%20Visa-Freiheit%20Nov2011.pdf](http://www.ost-ausschuss.de/sites/default/files/pm_pdf/Positionspapier%20Wege%20zur%20Visa-Freiheit%20Nov2011.pdf)

**49** While writing this chapter the author drew from his experience gained from the research carried out in Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (WZB).



of energy security. In the spring of 2011 Germany decided to change its energy policy, which was aimed at complete withdrawal from the nuclear power by 2022 and replacing it with renewable energy in 80% by 2050. In Poland the way of thinking is the opposite. Donald Tusk's government made a decision to construct nuclear power plants, shale gas arouses great hopes, and coal still plays an important role as regards the energy supply. These divergent strategies lead to significant consequences for the policies of both countries at the EU level, causing tension not only in the bilateral dimension. „After the controversies over the past and when the Nord Stream faded out of sight, the biggest bone of contention between Poland and German became the consequences of the German *Energiewende*”, claims one of the advisors to the Polish government.

A classic conflict of interests is only one of the dimensions of this issue – on the one hand the country that is the most dependent on coal in Europe, on the other hand, a country with ambitions for complete shift towards the green energy. In fact, the tension stems, to a similar extent, from the political and cultural disagreement and from the uncertainty about the further course of *Energiewende* (rather than from the very direction of changes in the energy policy adopted by Germany), as well as uncertainty about the consequences of this process for the entire European Union.

#### ***Germany: source of uncertainty***

Different approaches to energy policy in Poland and Germany stem, to a large extent, from the differences in the political culture. In case of Germany, the direction taken in energy policy does not only depend on the economic interests but also on the convictions predominant in the society, resulting from many years of evolution. The decision to withdraw from the nuclear power adopted in June 2011, constituting the flywheel of the entire *Energiewende*, is the final stage of the process, whose intermediate points included the adoption of the Renewable Energy Act (EEG), which was a breakthrough, the decision made by the governing SPD-Green coalition to withdraw from the nuclear power in 2001 and the cancellation of this decision by Angela Merkel's government in the autumn of 2010. The dispute over the nuclear power, which is the ground for controversies about the direction in the energy policy, was one of the

most important disputes in the post-war Germany and seriously divided the German society.

In the 1950s the nuclear power was a source of fascination also in the Federal Republic of Germany. In 1955 the Ministry for Nuclear Issues was established, led by the outstanding politician from Bavaria, Franz Josef Strauss. The nuclear power was not only to be used for the production of electricity, but it was to be a method for everything: medicine for cancer, car drive. The belief in the nuclear power was a means for integrating the society. “Stay our friend forever” was the appeal to the nuclear power ending a film shown in German schools. At the end of 1960s it was estimated that by the end of the 20th century 80 per cent of electricity would have come from the nuclear power. Soon later this carefree fascination with nuclear power was replaced by the increasing controversies. It is difficult to imagine today’s moods and social views, including about the nuclear power, without the cultural breakthrough of the early 1970s, which was of particular significance in Germany. One of its elements was the collapse of the belief in the progress and future, much more dramatic than in the other societies. The German loss of confidence in the future was, according to many intellectuals, a late consequence of the Nazi period. The socialisation of the pre-war generation was carried out in the conviction that the expectation of progress was the hubris that pushed Germany in 1933 into a chasm<sup>50</sup>. People criticising this attitude mention the typically German, irrational inclination to apocalyptic visions, often referred to as the *German angst*. However, beyond doubt this distrust of daring projects of the future also had a positive aspect, in particular in the generation of 1968, i.e. sensitivity to climate changes, environmental protection, hazards arising from unlimited belief in the infallibility of technology. For many representatives of this generation adopting a pacifistic approach, an important argument against nuclear power was the threat of using it for the needs of the armaments industry. This is the origin of the Greens, which have never been so successful in any other country as in Germany.

On these cultural and mental grounds a dispute erupted, dividing the German society (in particular the west German society) for four decades.

---

50 Nolte Paul, interview for Gazeta Wyborcza, 25 July 2009.

Its integral element were violent protests, locks and conflicts with the police which evoked a strong response in the entire country. In mid-1970s a group of vineyard owners from a small village of Wyhl, Baden, presented a challenge to RWE concern and local authorities by protesting against the plans to construct a nuclear power station on the outskirts of picturesque Schwarzwald. Their triumph showed the strength of the social protest and made others become more daring. Wyhl became the myth of the movement that spread all over Germany. In 1976 in Brokdorf near Hamburg about 100 people were injured in the civil commotion between the opponents of the nuclear power plant and the police. These skirmishes came as a shock, many people were fearful of a civil war on the grounds of ecology. The 1970s were characterised by the terror of RAF, causing distrust of the authorities and fears of the return of the authoritarian rule. In this atmosphere the Wyhl myth received a strong response. The spiral of disputes over the nuclear power was for many years an integral part of the German reality. As time went by, the ecological ideas and aversion to the nuclear power permeated the society, although the political divisions were clear against this background till 2011. In 2011, when the government of the SPD-Greens coalition decided to withdraw from nuclear power, the conservative and liberal opposition appealed against this decision. Ten years later all political forces supported this decision, which put an end to the dispute lasting several decades. The conviction that this decision is irrevocable is shared by members of all parties in Germany.

The social agreement regarding the withdrawal from the nuclear power was reflected in the report prepared in May 2011 by the Ethical Committee, comprising representatives of different political parties and social society. The report became the ground for the government's decision on the *Energiewende*, defined as a task to be accomplished by the entire society<sup>51</sup>. As the results of the survey carried out by Forsa Institute show, after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster as many as 63 per cent of Germans were for shutting down all nuclear power plants. A year later, in the summer of 2012, the support for withdrawal from nuclear power

---

**51** Deutschlands *Energiewende* – Ein Gemeinschaftswerk für die Zukunft, Ethik Kommission Sichere Energieversorgung, Berlin, den 30. Mai 2011

(on a gradual basis till 2022) is still maintained on a high level. According to the data provided by the Allensbach Institute, 73 per cent of German citizens perceive this decision as the proper one, while 16 per cent of Germans believe it was a wrong decision. The support for *Energiewende* depends on political sympathies only to a small extent. It is supported by 79 per cent of electors of SPD and 64 per cent of electors of CDU<sup>52</sup>.

This deeper, social and cultural context of German *Energiewende* is not very well-known in Poland. Polish elites share the conviction that the decision to withdraw from the nuclear power was made emotionally, as a result of a shock caused by the Fukushima catastrophe. The decision is often perceived as “deprived of logic”, conflicting with the German economic interests and resulting from Chancellor Merkel’s political calculations related to the elections. Moreover, many people express an opinion that *Energiewende* is a project based on wrong assumptions and that leaving the path which was taken by Germany in 2011 is only a matter of time. This scepticism is closely connected with the negative attitude to the climate policy, including the development of green technologies and investments in renewable energy. The sources of scepticism are different, from questioning the anthropological character of the climate changes to (more frequently) economic issues, i.e. high costs being a burden for competitiveness of the European economy and the Polish economy in particular. Unlike in Germany, in Poland the climate policy is not usually treated (at least in the medium term) as a chance for progress in the modernisation of the economy and society, but rather as a source of risk that should be minimised. As a consequence, the belief in the durability of the direction towards the green transformation at the European level is not very common in Poland. In particular at the time of the present crisis the doubts about the reasonableness of this policy have deepened. “Today we see that even the most committed supporters of the ambitious climate policy have become less enthusiastic. In the event of stagnation or even recession it is illogical to impose additional burdens on the economy”, said one of Polish officials. Thus, the distance to the *Energiewende* project in Poland does not only stem from the expected direct (negative) consequences of its implementa-

---

52 Köcher Renate, Schwierige Wende, „FAZ”, 21.06.2012.

tion for Poland, but also from the predominant convictions in the scope of the economic and climate policies (not only in Poland but also in Europe).

Uncertainty about the future direction of the German energy policy is increased by the analysis of the hitherto course of the energy transformation. According to Polish experts, one year after its commencement it gives no reply to the questions about the future of the project. “Instead of providing solid ground for a new policy, enjoying the confidence of the society and representatives of the economy, this decision (to withdraw from the nuclear power) brought complete chaos and uncertainty (...) The process of accomplishment of the key objectives of the new strategy, such as the expansion of the transmission networks and construction of new conventional power stations, encounters bigger and bigger difficulties of economic and legal nature. Moreover, problems also arise in the scope of the development of the green technologies sector, given too high subsidies in the field of the solar energy and too low subsidies in the field of the construction of wind farms at sea. Another threat to success of the strategy is a lack of comprehensive coordination of its implementation and financial burdens imposed on the society and the economy, related to the introduction of the strategy”<sup>53</sup>.

The most important from the perspective of Warsaw is that “we do not know what partners we deal with”, said one of the officials responsible for the energy policy. Germany is perceived not as a stabilising element in the European and national energy policy, but on the contrary – as a risk factor considerably hindering this uneasy strategic planning related to the energy supply in the forthcoming decades. It is not about the very project of the German energy transformation but about uncertainty about the actual direction of the transformation, which of its objectives are realistic and how and at what speed they will be accomplished. As Polish sources estimate, at least by the election to the Bundestag in 2013 the uncertainty will not change. The implementation of the *Energiewende* project is perceived in Poland to be at risk. Political disputes make Polish politicians

---

53 Niemiecka transformacja energetyczna. Trudne początki, ed. Anna Kwiatkowska-Drożdż, Raport OSW, Warszawa, December 2012, p. 9.

look at the situation with increasing scepticism<sup>54</sup>. Most of all, negative opinions are expressed as regards the communication policy of the federal government related to *Energiewende*, which is interpreted as an expression of chaos and a lack of a consistent plan for the future. But in fact the decisions made by Germany are of immense significance to the key areas for the EU, such as the construction of transmission networks, emissions trading, development of renewable energy sources and the decarbonisation policy. By the autumn of 2012 there was only one meeting of the Ministers of Energy devoted to the consequences of *Energiewende* for the EU, held in Wrocław in September 2011. The representatives of the Polish government complain about a lack of clear information on the present stage of the particular enterprises, the schedule and prospects of further actions. It is important because from the point of view of a considerable part of the Polish elites the activities carried out by Germans in the European Union, being a consequence of *Energiewende*, are, to a large extent, conflicting with the Polish interests. “Germany wants to anchor its process of changes in the energy policy in the European Union, which means that it wants to use the EU mechanisms to implement reforms in which they do not succeed at the national level. This is how they want to stabilise their energy system with the use of the EU mechanisms. But what is the system stabilisation for Germany is in fact destabilisation for Poland. “This is the core of the dispute”, said a Polish high-ranking official. In other words, the European Union is to secure the risk of *Energiewende* for the German economy. In the opinion of Polish interviewees, European Commissioner Günter Oettinger supports Germany in its attempts. “At first Germany should arrange the *Energiewende* process in their own country before they start to convince the other countries to take the same path. At present they seem to do the opposite: they want to rescue their project with the use of the support of the EU”, said a Polish interviewee.

#### ***European dimension of Energiewende vs Poland***

Beyond doubt, it is the common energy policy (and the climate policy) of the European Union that is the field in which the Polish-German con-

---

54 Compare: Niemiecka transformacja energetyczna, op. cit.

troversies (and the possibility of understanding) against the background of *Energiewende* are particularly visible. Paradoxically enough, the development of the EU common energy policy in recent years, in particular the creation of the common energy market (the third energy package), and many connections between the energy systems of the Member States are an important source of the present tensions. “Ten years ago we would not have even discussed *Energiewende* in Poland”, said an official from the Polish Ministry of Economy. It was the construction of interconnectors and liberalisation of the energy market, thanks to which energy can flow regardless of the borders of states, that made the changes in the energy balance of one country affect the other countries. Being one of the largest energy producers in the EU, Germany is particularly significant in this issue, while the imperfections of the energy market, which still requires reforms, affect Poland most adversely, as it produces much fewer megawatts. The most popular accusation made in Poland against Berlin relates to this particular problem: “Germans do not care about the consequences of *Energiewende* stemming from the common energy market, which may be suffered by their neighbours.

A direct result of this negligence was the so-called loop flows – the excess of the electricity produced by wind power stations and solar panels in Germany which could not be consumed by the German energy system, was discharged in the Polish grid, causing disturbance in the functioning of the Polish grid and exposing Polish energy producers to loss. In the opinion of the representatives of the Polish government, by doing so Germany violates some provisions of the EU law, but the regulations of the EU internal market do not deal with such issues in detail. Because of a loophole, Poland may not pursue claims for indemnification against Germany for the damage suffered as a consequence of loop flows. The introduction of phase shifters securing the Polish grid against unexpected inflow of electricity resulting in destabilisation of the system, taken into account by the Polish government, is perceived as “a scream of despair in the event that legislation does not follow the development of the technical infrastructure for the transmission of energy”. As Polish officials say, apart from costs (PLN 380m), the only reason for the delay in the assembly of phase shifters is that the Polish government does not want to “damage good relations with Germany”.

The issue of loop flows is a technical problem, but the other aspects of the European dimension of *Energiewende* are strictly political and economic. Most of all, it relates to the objective and methods aimed to ***increase the share of renewable energy sources in the energy balance*** of the European Union and the Member States. The European objective has to be accomplished by 2020 (20 per cent of energy consumed in the EU is to come from renewable energy sources – RES), which is the basis for the national objectives of particular countries (Poland – 15 per cent, Germany – 19.6 per cent<sup>55</sup>). According to the proposal introduced by the European Commission in June 2012, the share of RES in the energy mix should be increased, but the subject of the discussion is first of all the ways of supporting the development of RES in the European Union. In the Polish government there is a conviction that Poland and Germany represent different attitudes to this issue. In the opinion of Polish interviewees, Germans make efforts to establish the general European objective to be applicable after 2020 and to introduce one central system for supporting RES at the European level (now every country regulates this issue on its own, e.g. Germany – with the use of the EEG Act, which burdens end recipients of energy with a fixed rate per one kWh, the receipts from which compensate the producers of RES higher costs of production). It is one of the options considered by the European Commission. In such a uniform system the consumers of all countries would pay equally for the development of RES, regardless of how large this sector is in their country. This system is considered in Poland to be exceptionally unbeneficial due to the poorer development of the sector and more modest ambitions in this field. “The basis for the discussion” may be for Poland, according to governmental experts, another solution that is being considered, i.e. maintaining national RES support systems, but strengthening the cooperation among the particular systems, which might contribute to minimising the costs of production (e.g. by means of exchange of green certificates).

The fear that Germany might strive for standardisation or more considerable coherence of the systems for supporting the green energy in Eu-

---

55 In 2012 the share of RES in the energy consumption in Germany reached 25 per cent.



rope is rejected by German experts, who point out that Germany is not an active player in the European debate on this issue and that this direction of changes in the energy policy is not necessarily in their interest. Today Germany has the most generous system of financing RES in Europe (the above-mentioned EEG Act), which was perceived for some time as an example to be copied by other countries (inter alia in the Czech Republic or Spain). However, it turned out to be very expensive, which inclined other countries to withdraw from such subsidies. Thus, the establishment at the European level of regulations regarding the support for RES in a similar amount as in Germany would be an unrealistic objective. Relevant plans, presented in November 2012 by European Commissioner for Energy Günter Oettinger, would mean the necessity to reduce the subsidy<sup>56</sup>. The subsidies contributed to a considerable development of the green energy in Germany, but they also caused, in the opinion of the Commission, an increase in the prices of electricity, which is a burden for citizens. Besides, the possibility of creating different, national models of the development of RES is an obstacle in the functioning of the common energy market and it is against the principles of free competition (the possibility to provide subsidies for RES in any amount is the exception justified by the environmental protection). In other words, if the Commission's proposal were introduced, Germany would have to replace their system with the European model, more unbeneficial for the producers of the green energy. Beyond doubt, for some German politicians, e.g. from FDP, and economic circles, the resignation from the expensive model may be an attractive option. However, it could considerably hinder the energy transformation, which is one of the government's priorities (supported also by the opposition). The lobby of the producers of renewable energy also protest against Oettinger's plans<sup>57</sup>, while the opinions on this issue in the German government differ greatly (as well as on most other issues related to *Energiewende*). An element of this discussion is the issue of formulating a more ambitious European objective as regards the production of RES by 2030, exceeding

---

**56** <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/vertrauliche-unterlagen-stromschlag-aus-bruessel-1.1521454>

**57** E.g. at a congress of energy cooperatives in Berlin, November 2012.

20 per cent predicted by 2020 (in fact, this objective has almost been accomplished). Polish politicians express fears that this objective would be unbeneficial taking into account the national interest. Beyond doubt, the definition of a more ambitious objective would limit the freedom of action of governments of Member States and make them support RES to a larger extent, regardless of the system chosen (the top-down European system or the national system).

What is more advanced than the discussion on the standardisation of the policy related to renewable energy on the European Union is the debate on the **reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emission** and on the **reform of the EU emissions trading system**, which has equally important implications for the energy policy of Poland and Germany, constituting a source of disagreement between the two countries. Ambitious objectives to reduce emissions are another instrument that may be used to stimulate the development of renewable energy sources. Commissioner Oettinger promotes the attitude connecting a stronger reduction in emissions by 2030 (by more than 30 per cent as compared with base year 1990) with binding obligations related to the expansion of RES (otherwise the ambitious objectives related to emissions could equally contribute to the development of the nuclear power, which the EC wants to prevent by prioritising RES)<sup>58</sup>. This attitude is rejected in Poland, as it is considered improper to favour any of energy carriers. Poland advocates competition between the best technologies of production of each type of energy rather than between particular carriers of energy (coal, gas, RES, atomic energy). What should be favoured are the most effective technologies, regardless of the carrier used (*fuel benchmarks*)<sup>59</sup>. Germany does not support this position.

What seems to be the most important area of this discussion is the dispute over the future of the European emissions trading system (ETS). The higher the price for CO<sub>2</sub> emission, the less cost-effective become conventional and high-emission sources of energy, such as coal, petroleum or even gas, as the prices of electricity produced from these sources go up, while

---

58 <http://www.euractiv.de/energie-und-klimaschutz/artikel/oettinger-fuer-kombi-vorgaben-zu-erneuerbaren-und-co2-emissionen-006879>

59 Interview with an official from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

investments in renewable energy sources become more and more profitable. It is an alternative way of supporting RES at the EU level as compared with the “premiums for the production”, stipulated in the German EEG Act mentioned above. The German Energy and Climate Fund, financing the national and foreign climate protection projects (including insulating buildings and investing in new energy-efficient technologies)<sup>60</sup>, is closely connected with the situation of the emissions trading. The fund has a budget of 3 billion euros per year, which, according to the government’s assumptions, should come from the receipts from the emissions trading. However, it is only possible to reach this amount on condition that the emission price is high enough (ca. 17 euros per tonne). It is also because of the economic crisis (smaller economic activity results in lower emission) that the prices of certificates available on the market fell in the recent years to 7 euros per tonne, as a result of which the emissions trading system ceased to meet its objective, since the low price does not encourage to reduce emissions. As regards Germany, it also means a reduction in the means of the Energy and Climate Fund by 2.3 billion euros per year as compared with the previous plans (to meet the obligation the government has to provide these funds from other sources, which is a considerable burden for the public finance)<sup>61</sup>.

In Poland a conviction is shared that these are the reasons why Germany is so keenly interested in activities aimed to artificially increase the emission price. It might be carried out by means of backloading, i.e. the withdrawal, proposed by the European Commission, of certain quantities of emission certificates from the market (900 million), which would cause an increase in the demand for them, which, consequently, would lead to an increase in prices. What the dispute really regards is in fact whether or not the emissions trading should function on market principles, whether or not such interventions should be made and whether or not a minimum or maximum emission price should be established. Poland presents a pro-

---

**60** <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2011/06/2011-06-06-energie-klimafonds.html>

**61** Wittrock Philipp, Altmaier verliert Geduld mit Rösler, SpiegelOnline, 11.12.2012

market attitude in this discussion, as it indicates that the EU should not shape the emission prices the way it does (inter alia) on the agricultural market, influenced by various lobbies. “In the case of poor economic situation the emission price should fall – it is a natural market process”, said a Polish official. The Polish party’s position is that the objective of the ETS should remain the 20% reduction in emissions by 2020 as compared with 1990. This objective is not threatened in the EU. The planned interventions, aimed to revitalise the emission market, will lead to a necessity to make higher reductions, which will be a financial burden for such countries as (for example) Poland. Moreover, Poland questions the right of the European Union to such interventions in the emissions trading, since it believes that they are against the European law. But “the high price of allowances for emissions is of key significance for *Energiewende*”, says Polish official who refers to Germany.

In Germany such opinions are also expressed by politicians, experts and, most of all, representatives of ecological organisations, who play an important role in the political debate. “The failure of the ETS means risk for the plans of the German *Energiewende*. Huge excess of permits for emission as part of the ETS means that the price incentive is too weak to ensure certainty of investments in low carbon technologies and energy efficiency”, wrote Jo Leinen, a Social Democratic member of the European Parliament from Germany<sup>62</sup>.

Also in Germany the reform of emissions trading is a very controversial issue, leading to political divisions. A political consensus cannot be reached as regards an artificial increase in the prices of allowances, aimed to multiply receipts to the Energy and Climate Fund. In fact, this issue is the subject of a serious conflict in the government between the Ministry of Economy, which is against interventions on the emissions market (because they would be costly also for the German industry) and the Ministry of Environment, which supports this initiative. This dispute explains, to a large extent, a lack of German position on this issue and a lack of the government’s activity for the benefit of backloading. The proposal of the

---

62 Leinen Jo, Cut hot air, “European Voice”, 10.10.2012, <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/2012/october/cut-hot-air/75338.aspx>

reform is supported by Great Britain, France and Belgium, whereas Germany remains indecisive. Polish officials also admit that Poland was supported by organisations of the German industry in blocking the proposal put forward by the European Commission, while Minister of Economy Philipp Rösler opposed it publicly. Similarly as in the event of the directive on energy efficiency or the objective of RES, the German position is not consistent (due to divergent interests in the internal and economic policy), which reduces the effectiveness of the German policy in the EU. This factor is rarely perceived in Poland, and the inclination to treat Germany as a country that consistently defends its clearly-defined interests is common in political and expert circles.

Poland believes that by 2020 no changes should be introduced to the EU emissions policy (making the objectives stricter would be considered as violation of the compromise reached in 2008), but it takes an active part in the discussion over the reform of the ETS and the next energy and climate package for the years 2020-2030. The attitude of Warsaw and Berlin to this issue differ. Most of all, Poland wants to postpone the decision on this issue, as it does not find it necessary to make the decision in the next months, on which, according to Polish sources, Germany insists (the EU energy summit in May 2013 is referred to as the time horizon). Polish experts refer to the decisions made in 2008, when it was agreed at the EU level that further, more ambitious steps in the EU's climate policy would be made to progress the climate negotiations at the global level. Poland is of the opinion that the "good example" strategy adopted by the EU in the accomplishment of more ambitious objectives of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction than the objectives of other partners at the international level was not effective and should not be continued. Germany is one of the countries supporting more ambitious objectives in the climate policy of the EU.

The issue of the expected reform of the ETS has significant economic and financial implications and may have a considerable significance for the Polish-German cooperation in the field of energy and climate protection. The Polish government criticises the present system, which uses a division into sectors of the economy covered by the ETS (e.g. the heavy industry) and the ones excluded from the ETS (e.g. transport). In other words, emissions from factories or power plants are subject to trade certificates (as an

assumption they are more expensive, because they are rationed), while no certificates are taken into account for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions resulting from (inter alia) vehicular traffic. Poland believes that it is aggrieved by this system, as its total CO<sub>2</sub> emission is not higher than the European average, but the biggest part of its emissions comes from the production sector subject to the ETS (60 per cent, while the EU average is 40 per cent). “However, if we counted the consumption emission (author’s note: e.g. transport), it would be at least 20 per cent lower than the European average, because a Pole consumes less than an Englishman. Unfortunately, Europe favours the idea of overconsumption”, said a Polish expert<sup>63</sup>. That is the reason why Poland speaks in favour of the changes aimed to make the ETS more flexible, which would allow for transfer of certificates from one sector to another, which in turn would result in treating all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (regardless of the source) in a similar way. As Polish experts indicate, this approach is also logical from the perspective of climate protection, since CO<sub>2</sub> emissions increase the greenhouse effect regardless of their origin<sup>64</sup>.

In Germany the Polish demands to implement a reform of the ETS are treated sceptically. In the context of sectors excluded from the ETS technical difficulties in the measurement of actual emissions are indicated. But the difference between the Polish and German attitude is more fundamental: Poland believes that it is not the ETS but the energy efficiency that should be the main instrument of the reduction in emissions. As the discussions over the directive on energy efficiency showed, in Germany there is great resistance to the EU regulations imposing higher standards and objectives in the scope of energy efficiency on Member States. For a long time Germany was not able to work out its position. The German scepticism towards the direction of reforms recalled by Warsaw (or at least the ambiguity of the German positions) is interpreted by Polish experts as an element of the economic strategy. “In fact, Germany does not care about

---

63 Żmijewski Krzysztof, “Deklaracja Katowicka” świadectwem zaniepokojenia kierunkiem europejskiej polityki klimatycznej, 7.10.2011, [http://www.wnp.pl/drukuj/318\\_4.html](http://www.wnp.pl/drukuj/318_4.html)

64 Polish policy paper on the future of the ETS up to 2030, Ministry of Environment [2012].

reduction in the emissions as such; otherwise, they would strive for reducing the consumption emissions. What is the most important to Berlin is the market signal given by high coal prices, since it justifies the development of renewable energy sources”, said a Polish official. Germany opposed (inter alia) laying down stricter criteria of emissions from passenger cars, as it would be a burden for this important sector of the German economy. It is pointed out that such a selective attitude to the climate protection is aimed to promote a certain model of the economic policy which is beneficial to the countries producing advanced technologies, such as Germany. The requirement related to the reduction in emissions in the production sector results in decreasing comparative advantages and competitiveness of the countries with energy-intensive industries, such as Poland.

Shifting the emphasis onto the energy efficiency and expansion of the ETS base, so that the system also covers (inter alia) transport and construction industry, is presented in Poland as a chance for strengthening the Polish-German cooperation and finding common interests. “Including transport in the ETS could make the production of electrical buses profitable. Instead of importing electricity technology, Poland could produce such buses together with German companies. Both parties would benefit from it”, suggests one of Polish interviewees. The energy efficiency also offers space for cooperation. Poland is one of the largest producers of energy-efficient general household goods. “Poland has made great achievements in the research and development of technology in this field and is open to wider cooperation with Berlin”, said an official from the Ministry of Economy.

Fewer moot points between Poland and Germany are visible in another key area for the future of the energy policy, i.e. the **common energy market**. On the one hand, German position on the financing of infrastructural projects in this field from EU funds has changed. The German model of the energy policy assumes far-reaching autonomy of energy companies, which are responsible for the country’s energy safety according to the Act. Direct interventions of the country in infrastructural enterprises (gas lines, construction of power plants, electricity transmission lines) are very limited. The country supports only political activities of concerns making (inter alia) foreign investments, e.g. the case of the Nord Stream. In the past this

method of operation was transferred to the EU level. Germany opposed the ideas to spend EU funds on such undertakings, e.g. the Nabucco pipeline. However, this fundamental position changed. In February 2011 Chancellor Angela Merkel and Prime Minister Tusk published a joint letter to the President of the European Commission, in which they argued in favour of the expansion of energy connections in Europe and spending public funds for this purpose<sup>65</sup>. According to the plans of Commissioner Oettinger, 9 billion euros is to be given for this purpose within the so-called Connecting Europe Facility; Poland and Germany are among the countries that submitted the largest number of applications for co-financing of such projects. In the opinion of Polish interviewees, *Energiewende* was an important catalyst increasing the interest in the expansion of infrastructural connections; today Germany needs a common energy market (and relevant infrastructure) more than in the past, which will enable it to balance the fluctuating demand for renewable energy with import from abroad. This change in the German attitude is convergent with the Polish understanding of the energy safety in the EU, whose best guarantee is perceived in the liberalisation of the energy market and creation of interconnectors. At the level of the EU Poland had already put forward proposals to co-finance (inter alia) interconnectors from European funds, but Germany was sceptical about such ideas.

Another problem, apart from infrastructural undertakings, related to the functioning of the common energy market concerns its further liberalisation and implementation of the third energy package, whose subject is the so-called “ownership unbundling”, i.e. separation of control over the network business and the production and supply. Large energy concerns cannot be at the same time producers of energy and owners of transmission networks. Such a separation is aimed to encourage investments in the energy infrastructure. At present discussion, the form of the separation takes place. In the third package there have been formulated three different options: from full ownership unbundling to a possibility of maintaining integrity of production and transmission of energy, but in compliance with

---

65 Poland, Germany adopt common position ahead of EU energy summit – paper, BBC Monitoring International Reports, February 03, 2011.



strictly-defined principles guaranteeing independence for both entities responsible for both spheres of the activity. At present the functioning of the third option is the subject of the analysis aimed to answer the question whether or not the effects are equivalent to the full ownership unbundling. The issue relates (inter alia) to Gazprom, which operates on the German market and gets involved in sale of gas to end recipients. The necessity to get rid of these investments, which may arise as a result of the obligatory ownership unbundling (if the third option was considered insufficient) might seriously affect the interests of the Russian company. This issue is the subject of a dispute with the European Commission, and, as a representative of the Federation of German Industries emphasises, the main economic issue discussed by the Russians in negotiations with Germany.

In Poland the German-Russian contacts in the field of energy are usually treated with distrust. During negotiations over the third energy package Germany opposed the introduction of the so-called third country clause (the “Gazprom clause”), which was aimed to prevent taking over of transmission networks by foreign enterprises that do not meet the conditions of the separation of the transmission and sale activities, or the take-over that might jeopardise the safety of supplies on the market of a Member State or the EU<sup>66</sup>. What came into play here is the interest of German energy concerns closely cooperating with Gazprom, which did not want to jeopardise the cooperation by imposing barriers in the access to the European market. Also today many Poles share the fear that Germany will not speak in favour of the full ownership unbundling because of the strategic partnership with Russia (Poland does not support the third option due to the Yamal–Europe natural gas pipeline). As many Polish experts believe, the German dependence on the supplies of gas from Russia will increase as a consequence of *Energiewende* – gas will be needed as the “emergency” source of energy in the event that renewable energy is not available in the sufficient quantities for natural reasons.

This scenario, in which Germany strengthens its energy partnership

---

**66** Compare: Buras Piotr, Między europeizacją a Gazpromem. Niemcy, Rosja i bezpieczeństwo energetyczne, Raporty i Analizy, No. 7/2008, Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych, Warszawa 2008.

with Russia with negative consequences for the EU common energy market, is not obvious yet. On the one hand, the expected increase in import of gas from Russia does not have to take place, as German experts indicate. Gas power plants, which would use it, are not a profitable investment since gas is relatively expensive (even the Russian gas in Germany), and because of the priority of renewable energy in the German system the electricity generated from gas might be sold only for a small part of the day (in particular at night, when prices are lower), which would not bring investors the expected benefits. On the other hand, though, due to the above-mentioned evolution of the German discourse on Russia, the perspective of the expansion of Gazprom on the German market (if the third package and ownership unbundling were not implemented consistently) does not arouse enthusiasm in Berlin. Energy companies, e.g. BASF, are inclined to sell their shares in the lucrative access to end recipients to Gazprom in exchange for shares in the gas extraction on Siberian fields (Urengoy)<sup>67</sup>. However, the political circles are more and more fearful of the take-over by the Russian giant of German transmission networks and the risk of its dominance on the domestic market. As regards the third package, on the one hand Germany encourages Russia to “seize the existing opportunities to the maximum”, on the other hand, though, it adopts the position that Gazprom may not have a special status on the European gas market<sup>68</sup>.

---

**67** Gazprom sichert sich Zugang zu deutschen Kunden, SpiegelOnline, 14.11.2012

**68** Compare: Angela Merkel at a press conference after Russian-German intergovernmental consultations in Moscow, 16.11.2012, <http://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2012/11/2012-11-16-merkel-moskau.html>

## 4. Security policy: more Europe, less involvement

*(Bartek Nowak)*

In the last decade there were at least several events in which Poland and Germany had completely different opinions on security policy:

- Signing in 2003 by Prime Minister Leszek Miller of the so-called “letter of the eight” and joining a coalition of the countries “willing and capable” to intervene militarily in Iraq under the leadership of the United States. At that time Poland was perceived, both in France and Germany, although to a smaller extent in Germany, as the US “Trojan Horse” of the in Europe.
- The NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008, during which Poland and the US strongly lobbied for the road-map for Georgia and Ukraine, which would mean an open and real possibility of NATO expansion eastwards. This was prevented by (inter alia) Germany. Yet, this situation showed divergent visions of Poland and Germany for the European security policy as regards the attitude to Russia.
- The Polish involvement in the years 2007-2008 in building the US missile defence system in Poland. Germany opposed this idea, inter alia because of Russia.

What affected the Polish-German relations in all these events was external variables of key significance to the European security policy, i.e. the policy of the United States towards Russia. In order to understand today’s Polish-German partnership in the security policy it is necessary to refer to the evolution that took place in all these countries.

The image of the United States among the societies of the EU was significantly improved after the end of the presidency of G. W. Bush. The official

relations with President Obama's administration<sup>69</sup> were not very hearty, even they were cool at the beginning, but they were quite promising for the future cooperation. However, the decisions made by the US resulted in a considerable change in the perception of the European security in the EU. Firstly, the decision related to the "reset" of the relations with Russia, made without consultations with the European allies. Secondly, the actual discontinuation of the Missile Defence project, which was also done without consultations with Poland and the Czech Republic<sup>70</sup>. Thirdly, a strategic pivot towards Asia, which was reflected in the "leadership from behind" strategy during conflicts in Georgia and Libya, where Europe played the leading role.

### *Less Atlanticism, worse relations with Russia*

The reset in the relations with Russia was connected with hopes cherished by the West in President Dmitry Medvedev, who was perceived as a liberal president. At the same time Germany, by no coincidence, started to promote the "Partnership for Modernisation" project at the EU level, aimed to use the Russian potential of reforms. But the thaw in the relations with Russia did not take place only because of the needs of the policy of the US and Germany. In fact, it would not be possible without strong will of Russia. The thaw also concerned Poland, which was mentioned in Chapter 2. Not only did Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov took part in the meeting of the renewed Weimar Triangle in Paris and twice in the meetings of the new "Kaliningrad Triangle" (Poland-Germany-Russia), but he was also a guest of the annual Ambassadors meeting in Warsaw. In the world people started to talk about the Polish-Russian reconciliation, but such opinions were premature. However, it is true that the Polish foreign policy underwent a fundamental metamorphosis after Donald Tusk had become the Prime Minister. Emphasis was put on strategic relations with Russia "as such" and the closest possible partnership with

---

**69** Obama questioned the need to convene the annual EU-US summit during the Spanish presidency of the EU Council, as a result of which the summit was cancelled.

**70** The project will be implemented in a totally different form. The US is to deploy the SM-3 missiles.

Germany. It was the first time that the geography of Poland was not to be marked with geopolitical fatalism.

In Poland more and more people started to notice that its earlier privileged relations with the US were a result of a very specific constellation, in connection with the war in Iraq, during which the relations of the US with Germany and France were particularly tense. It was the time Poland grew to be an important partner of the US, but this situation was temporary. Donald Tusk's government came to the conclusion that for the US the relations with Poland were simply the function of its objectives in the foreign policy. But the American priorities have recently changed considerably.

The US capability to affect the world policy has also changed<sup>71</sup>. The doctrine on maintaining the capability to conduct two parallel wars in two different parts of the world was canceled. For the US, Europe is whole, free and at peace. Europe has more and more difficulties as regards its partnership with the US in the world security policy. Because of the economic crisis the situation in this field changed dramatically, since Member States of the EU started to perceive the security policy as an area without urgent problems to be solved, so it was easy to make considerable financial cuts. As experts estimate, in the years 2008-2011 Member States decreased their expenses on security and defence by the amount similar to the total of expenses for defence incurred by Germany (ca. USD 45 billion), and further cuts have already been planned<sup>72</sup>. A clear warning was made by the US during the speech of the outgoing Head of the Department of Defence, Robert Gates, in 2011, who spoke openly about the "increasing difficulty for the US to maintain the support for NATO if the American taxpayers still have to incur most of the costs"<sup>73</sup>. Gates also underlined that the leaders of the United States for whom the experience of the Cold War was not the formative one "may not perceive the return from the American

---

**71** Historian Paul Kennedy would say that it was the result of too great a "strategic expansion" with simultaneous deterioration of the economic situation of the US.

**72** Valasek Tomas, *Surviving Austerity. The Case for a New Approach to EU Military Collaboration*, Center for European Reform, London 2011.

**73** Gates Robert, *Reflections on the status and future of the transatlantic alliance*, Speech at the Security and Defence Agenda seminar, Brussels, 10.06.2011.

investment in NATO as worthy of the costs incurred”<sup>74</sup>. Both Polish and German elites well understand this situation, but they do not articulate their fears clearly in the public debate.

Evolution can also be observed with regard to NATO. After the Russian attack against Georgia, Radosław Sikorski warned the allies that NATO “should not be a political club with no teeth”<sup>75</sup>. The belief of Polish political elites in the principle of solidarity amongst allies is not obvious. Already in the years 2005-2007 Poland attempted to get additional bilateral guarantees of security from the US (by making efforts related to the Missile Defence project), which may be interpreted as an expression of distrust in NATO’s guarantees). Poland consistently raises the issue of defining NATO through the prism of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which was defined in the diplomatic language by Polish official as a “necessity to look for a balance between the defensive potential of NATO and external missions”. In Poland the main threats are not defined as direct aggression, but rather events below the threshold of war, which may have very serious consequences, and which would arouse doubts whether Article 5 refers to them (e.g. short-lasting airstrike, cyber-attack). To prevent such threats Poland adopted a proactive attitude in NATO. It was embodied not only by its involvement in the preparation of a new strategic concept of the Alliance, approved at the Lisbon summit, but also in its own internal modernisation of the army, participation in military expedition, efforts made to expand the NATO infrastructure in the territories of new Member States, or lobbying for preparing contingency plans regarding the defence of the territories of the new members. However, its efforts were not generally supported<sup>76</sup> and Germany was also resistant about this issue.

Germany considerably limited its activity in the transatlantic dimension. In fact, it was admitted openly that German funds for conducting an active foreign policy were very modest, which was called by some

---

**74** Ibidem.

**75** According to Wikileaks, quote from: *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

**76** Górka-Winter Beata, *NATO po Lizbonie: strategia dobra dla wszystkich?*, *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej* 2011, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, Warszawa 2012, p. 162.

commentators in Poland as the policy “of managing its own passivity”<sup>77</sup>. Germany adopted similar principles with regard to Afghanistan, the Near East, and to policies undertaken at the UN level. The presence of German troops in Afghanistan till the withdrawal of NATO was to be limited to activities carried out by the police and trainings. Poland also transformed its mission in Afghanistan, but before that, unlike Germany, it imposed no significant restrictions on its contingent and Polish soldiers participated in an active combat.

From the perspective of Polish elites, today the American involvement in Central and Eastern Europe is not only below expectations. After all, Poland paid a high political price in the European Union for its participation in the intervention in Iraq and the willingness to host the installation of the US missile defence system. In these two cases the results of the US actions are perceived in Poland as unequivocally negative. The Polish support for the US policy and its transatlantic dimension was gradually diminished in the last four years, which is not only a result of the above-mentioned factors. One has to remember that at the same time Poland was undergoing an intensive Europeanisation process, because the European Union meant for it wider strategic security. These two parallel processes turned out to be binary and led to a situation that just 45% of Poles perceive NATO as a key organisation for the security of their own country, which is the lowest result among all Member States of the EU<sup>78</sup>.

Polish and German elites still declare that they treat the Alliance as a priority in the European security policy (“NATO first”), but they are fully aware of the need for a strong European pillar in the Alliance. In particular for Poland a logical consequence of a lack of a sense of a strategic security through NATO is the investment in the EU Common Security and Defence Policy, which aroused suspicion in Poland not long ago. The Polish dilemma: EU or NATO? has been solved. The policy of the Alliance also ceased to be the subject of political debate in Poland.

---

**77** *Niemcy: lider mimo woli?*, „Rocznik Strategiczny” 2011/12, Fundacja Studiów Międzynarodowych, Warszawa 2012, pp. 166-172.

**78** *Transatlantic Trends*, German Marshall Fund of the United States, Washington 2012.

### *Europeanisation of the security policy*

In the recent years, in particular in the second half of 2011, during its presidency of the EU Council, Poland made efforts aimed to reinvigorate the CSDP. The renewed Weimar Triangle was considered an effective tool for meeting this objective. Poland started its efforts from France. During a meeting with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bernard Kouchner, Minister Sikorski presented a non-paper on the CSDP, the so-called “Chobielin Initiative”. It called for (inter alia) strengthening of the institutional framework of the CSDP, ensuring the EU’s independence in making decisions, creating an operational headquarters for the EU mission independent of NATO, with a possibility of European leadership structures in the future. Apart from that, the non-paper called for creating a position of a deputy of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy for military and defence issues, establishment of the European Stabilisation Forces (comprising inter alia battle groups as the being of the future European army); development of the integrated logistics supporting the CSDP; unblocking the cooperation between the EU and NATO with the use of a new formula, aimed to replace the hitherto “Berlin Plus”.

Soon later in Paris there was a French-Polish summit on security and defence, which resulted in a document assuming an stronger financial solidarity in CSDP operations, support for the programmes launched by the European Defence Agency, creating and using common resources by the EU, joint purchases of the equipment and supplies, improvement of interoperability of armed forces of the EU<sup>79</sup>. In December 2010 Polish, German and French Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Defence sent a joint letter to the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, calling for the development of civil and military capacity for the EU crisis management<sup>80</sup>.

**79** *Deklaracja francusko-polskiego szczytu w sprawie bezpieczeństwa i obrony*, Paryż, 5.11.2009.

**80** Alliot-Marie Michèle, zu Guttenberg Karl-Theodor., Juppé Alain, Klich Bogdan, Sikorski Radosław, Westerwelle Guido, *Letter to Ms. Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*, Paris-Berlin-Warsaw, 6.12.2010.



During its presidency in the EU Council Poland made every effort to reach an agreement on permanent operational leadership in the EU as soon as possible. This initiative was criticised and it was pointed out that the scale of the project was unproportionally large as compared with small needs of the EU missions. However, it was the veto of the Great Britain that was the reason for the fiasco. Moreover, because of this objection Poland was not supported by its “Weimar” partners. France did not want to damage its bilateral defence cooperation with London, while Germany unexpectedly offered to establish EU command centres on the basis of its national leadership in Ulm. Internationalizing its quarter would simply mean additional savings for Germany. Poland was also involved in the development of the EU’s military capacity by establishing battle groups. The first formation of this type comprised troops from Poland, Germany, Slovakia, Lithuania and Latvia. In 2013 there are plans to establish the Weimar battle group, in which Poland will be to be “framework nation”.

Both Polish and German political elites express some federal concepts in their thinking of the security policy: establishment of common European military divisions or even a common army<sup>81</sup>. As one of the Polish politicians said, “The main problem is not of military nature but rather of political nature. In the case of crisis, if an urgent need arose to use such a division, there must be no doubts about the two issues, i.e. that we have capacity to carry out such an action, and that we are able to ensure its availability”. Federal themes are also included in speeches made by Radosław Sikorski<sup>82</sup>. The German arguments usually concern a closer time horizon and is more connected with the cost reduction in the defence policy by pooling and sharing. Both Poland and Germany came to a conclusion that the only natural way to develop the CSDP is structural coop-

---

**81** For example: Schockenhoff Andreas, Kiesewetter Roderich, *Impetus for Europe’s Security Policy. The time to act has come*, German Bundestag, 31.08.2012; *Jak Jarosław Kaczyński zbroił Europę*, Gazeta Wyborcza, 30.06.2010.

**82** “We have to avoid mistakes made by NATO. If a country enters enhanced cooperation, in case of a military operation its troops are under joined command rather than controlled from its capital” – interview with Radosław Sikorski in TOKFM, 18.05.2012.

eration in a narrow group of countries. In German proposals were put forward by prominent politicians from CDU/CSU to strengthen cooperation in the group of five (Germany, France, Great Britain, Poland, Hungary) or six countries (5+ Spain)<sup>83</sup>. Poland emphasises the formula of the extended Weimar Triangle (e.g. with the selected countries of the Visegrád Group, and, if possible, also with Great Britain). The plans of close bilateral defence cooperation between France and Great Britain announced in 2010, arouse irritation in both countries.

In this scope Poland underwent far-reaching evolution, as several years ago it perceived the possibility of structural cooperation in the EU as a threat to the transatlantic solidarity and cohesion. Today Radosław Sikorski declares: “a group of countries should create an avant-garde in the field of defence. It is simply impossible to do it in the group of all 27 Member States, since some countries do not want it to happen. We already know it – our presidency was a test”<sup>84</sup>. This way of thinking is perfectly presented in the letter of Poland, Germany, France, Spain and Italy to Catherine Ashton, which served as a reply to the British veto of the common EU leadership. The letter contained a call for “investigation of all institutional and legal options at the disposal of Member States, including permanent structural cooperation, to facilitate the development of critical capabilities of the CSDP, in particular steady capacity to plan and take command”<sup>85</sup>. The structural cooperation should take place within the EU structures and be based on the provisions of the Lisbon, including the discussed possibilities of establishing a set of criteria (e.g. percentage of GDP to be spent from the national budget on security) for countries wishing to join such cooperation. The continuation of the letter was the joint communique of the above-mentioned countries, in which it was emphasised that “the real strength of the CSDP lies in a comprehensive attitude to crisis management”, which is why the EU has to create (...)

---

**83** Schockenhoff Andreas, Kiesewetter Roderich, op. cit.

**84** *V4 czyli znak...*, op. cit.

**85** Frattini Franco, Jimenez Trinidad, Juppé Alain, Sikorski Radosław, Westerwelle Guido, *Letter to Baroness Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy*, Sopot, 2.09.2011.

real civil and military structures to control and conduct its missions and operations”<sup>86</sup>.

However, after the failure of the Polish initiatives during the presidency, the attitude to further institutional development of the CSDP is marked with far-reaching scepticism. Also Germans share the conviction that it is not the construction of new structures and institutions that is a realistic option aimed to strengthen the EU’s capabilities in security and defence. “A real test of the possibilities of deeper cooperation should be looked for elsewhere, i.e. in common interventions or cooperation in the field of defence. If a breakthrough is achieved in these fields (one of the tests may be Mali), we can talk about actual progress”, said a German diplomat.

### *Libyan lesson*

Beyond doubt, from this perspective Polish and German possibilities of reinvigorating the CSDP were limited due to the attitude of both countries towards the intervention in Libya. Since Libya is in the closest neighbourhood of the EU, this case was treated by France, Great Britain and the EU as a test of the European capacity to act. Germany, being at that time a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, abstained during the vote on establishment of the no-fly zone over Libya. Germany was the only western country that abstained, and the other countries abstaining included the BRIC. Poland decided not to join the intervention. Despite different motives, both Germany and Poland criticised a lack of a comprehensive strategy and ultimate objectives of the operation, as well as a lack of prospects to continue the stabilisation mission in the long term. Prime Minister Donald Tusk has even talked about the “European hypocrisy” as regards the motives of conducting the intervention<sup>87</sup>, while German politicians spoke, more or less openly, about economic motives of the intervention. A popular explanation of the motives of the German government also referred to the forthcoming regional election,

---

**86** *Joint Communiqué. Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Ministers and Ministers of Defence of France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain*, Paris, 15.11.2012.

**87** Interview of Prime Minister Donald Tusk for five big newspapers *Europa na ciężkie czasy*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9.04.2011.

before which Chancellor Angela Merkel did not want to risk a new military involvement of Germany.

This attitude of the German government provoked a discussion in Germany. According to critics, “Germany abandoned its close alliance with the West, which was for decades the basis of the German foreign policy”<sup>88</sup>. Joschka Fischer said that “Germany lost its credibility. (...) It also turned the idea of the EU’s common foreign policy into a farce”<sup>89</sup>. Criticism was also expressed towards the governing coalition<sup>90</sup>. The attitude of SPD was indecisive. At first both Frank Walter-Steinmeier and Sigmar Gabriel considered such voting as justified, but later they changed their opinion and argued that the isolation of Germany was a mistake.

In turn, the Polish reluctance to join the intervention was commented by many people in Europe, in particular because Poland had presented itself earlier as a country that cares about a strong CSDP. Polish motives were also similar to the German ones: a lack of the national interest, fear of real possibility of success of such a mission and forthcoming parliamentary election in Poland (taking place during the Polish presidency of the EU Council)<sup>91</sup>. One of the persons involved in the decision-making process on the Polish side mentioned the two factors that were of particular significance: “at first we looked at the reaction of Germany. Later we looked at opinion polls made among the Polish public opinion, which were unequivocal”. The difference between Poland and Germany was that the Polish lack of involvement was by no means contested by any political party. Moreover, no public debate took place. During private talks Polish politicians spoke directly that Poland had no interest to join the military operation in Libya. It was also emphasised that in fact “no one knows

**88** Neukirch R., *Germany’s Dangerous New Foreign Policy Doctrine*, Spiegel Online, 29.03.2011.

**89** *Fischer joins criticism of German Security Council abstention*, Spiegel Online, 22.03.2011.

**90** Schockenhoff Andreas, Kiesewetter Roderich Ralph, *Impetus...*, op. cit.

**91** „Ich bin unfähig, sauer auf Angela Merkel zu sein“. Polens Ministerpräsident Tusk im Interview, 9.04.2011, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/polens-ministerpraesident-tusk-im-interview-ich-bin-unfaehig-sauer-auf-angela-merkel-zu-sein-a-755826-2.html>

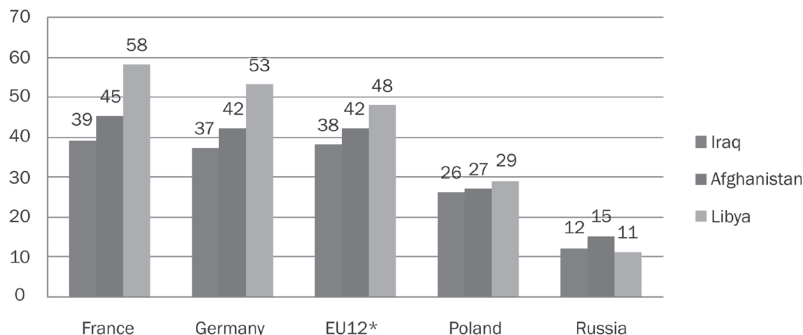
who is behind all this war and whom we would be in fact supporting in this event.” Only few politicians admitted that it was a wrong decision, but they did not present their opinion publicly. As one of the Polish politicians said, “Libya was disastrous from the perspective of our credibility. After all, we could have said that we fully supported the action, despite the fact that we physically did not take part in it, but in fact the message we put across was completely different. Poland did not agree about the purposefulness of the intervention.” As a high-level official confirms, “We cannot afford to behave in the same way as about Libya again. Such irrationality is not in our *raison d’État*. We have to show minimum of solidarity, we must be ready to care also about a wider interest”. Regardless of the evaluation of the legitimacy of reasons used by the two countries, their defensive attitude towards the conflict taking place in the immediate neighbourhood of the EU did not contribute to strengthening their position in the EU.

Polish and German elites are aware that in the foreseeable future the allies’ involvement will regard the activity “out of area”. Both countries were clearly tired of further interventions. As Polish decision-makers emphasise, since Poland’s accession to NATO, NATO’s operational activity has focused, to a large extent, on external missions, including the particularly difficult and costly operation in Afghanistan. Today this mission is perceived in Poland from an entirely different perspective, which does not take into account the historic event when NATO referred to Article 5 after the terrorist attack against the United States. In interviews there are presented hardly any arguments concerning solidarity within the Alliance, not to mention the concept of the international community’s Responsibility to Protect. As the *Transatlantic Trends* research shows, only in Russia there is a lower support for foreign interventions than in Poland<sup>92</sup>. Also in Germany the intervention in Afghanistan is an experience that political elite would like to avoid in the future at all costs.

---

92 *Transatlantic Trends*..., op. cit.

### Attitude to military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya in selected Member States of the EU and Russia (positive opinions)



\* Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Great Britain – European countries covered by the Transatlantic Trends research 2012.

Source: Own study on the basis of the data provided by Transatlantic Trends 2012

These experiences and the mood evoked by them affect the reform of the army in both countries. Germany made a decision to professionalise the army, which was connected with a necessity to reduce the number of soldiers from 250 thousand to 185 thousand and to close 50% of positions in the Federal Ministry of Defence. Funds for the army’s engagement in peace operations were reduced, and a part of transport plane fleet was sold. Cuts of German expenses for defence are planned on the level of 25% in the years 2010-2014. On the one hand, such activities are nothing exceptional during the economic crisis, but in the case of German reforms the most frequent justification of cuts is reduction in costs rather than improvement of the capabilities of the army, which might be better used for the needs of NATO or the EU. Although Germany intends to increase the number of soldiers prepared for participation in foreign operations from seven to ten thousand, and the expedition profile of the Bundeswehr will be strengthened so that it is able to carry out a wide range of tasks (including fighting), it does not mean increasing Berlin’s readiness to bear more re-

sponsibility for the security policy of the EU. German Minister of Defence Thomas de Maizière defines the purposes of the reform as follows: “Germany needs armed forces to be ready and able to carry out operations, it needs an army whose quality of the equipment and training corresponds to the status and significance of Germany in the world. (...) However, it does not mean that we will send more German soldiers to foreign missions. I am saying that in the context of the current debates: we will always make independent decisions about the operations we will and won’t take part in”<sup>93</sup>.

It means that it is not the obligations towards the Alliance but the interests of Germany that will be the main criteria of decision making whether the Bundeswehr should participate in foreign operations of international organisations, such as the EU, NATO or the UN. According to a Polish expert, “as part of the discussion in NATO and the EU on strengthening the military cooperation, the Federal Republic of Germany probably won’t be ready to take part in the development of the cooperation whose result would be establishing permanent dependence between partners in using the military capacity in foreign operations”<sup>94</sup>. As many experts indicate, the consequence of this attitude and of greater military resistance than in the last decade (after the historical participation in Kosovo in 1999) is a change of the German approach to the export of weapons. In the recent years Germany has loosened the restrictions and increased export of weapons to such countries as Saudi Arabia, in which the standards of the rule of law and human rights are not complied with (in the past the export of weapons to such countries was subject to stricter rationing). This evolution may be caused by the willingness to deliver weapons to countries perceived as an anchor of stability in the regions in which Germany itself does not want to get military involved.

Poland also reduced the number of soldiers to 100 thousand, which was connected with its modernisation in the recent years and purchase of

---

**93** de Maizière Thomas, speech before the Bundestag during a debate over the budget, 07.09.2011.

**94** Gotkowska Justyna, *Bundeswehra 3.0. Polityczny, wojskowy i społeczny wymiar reformy sił zbrojnych RFN*, Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, Warszawa 2012, pp. 5-6.

new equipment, such as F-16 fighter planes, CASA transport aircraft and Rosomak wheeled armoured vehicles. What was important, though, is that Poland was one of few NATO countries that maintained a steady level of expenses on the army (1.95%, guaranteed in the legislation), and the increase in its GDP meant in fact an increase of these expenses. Similarly to Germany, in Poland we deal with “renationalisation” of thinking of the security and defence policy, despite an active support for the CSDP<sup>95</sup>. Radosław Sikorski emphasised many times that “most of all one has to ensure security on its own. (...) we know that allies may only supplement the national defence capability”<sup>96</sup>. This tendency also leads to selectivity in making decisions on involvement in foreign operations. Poland withdrew its forces from UN’s peace operations. Similarly to Germany, in Poland it is mainly the national interest that will count more than allies. Moreover, more and more Poles think through the categories of territorial defence, which may result in limits to actual expeditionary capacity. One of Polish politicians put it straightforward: “In Poland we deal with a kind of split. We would like to strengthen the CSDP but we are neither ready nor able to take part in military expedition undertakings. As compared with Poland, Germany prepares itself for totally different challenges, which are much more corresponding to the activities in other armies. It is a completely different type of armies. For example, they reduce the number of tanks to 250, while we have as many as 950”.

### *The small step strategy*

The elites of both countries are sceptical about the possibility of institutional development of the security policy, but despite that Poland adopted a clear strategy to present further far-reaching ideas. Poland assumes that, firstly, such a debate should be stimulated. Secondly, by means of developing such initiatives Poland presents itself as a country that thinks

---

**95** The renationalisation of thinking is demonstrated (inter alia) in the announcement made by President Bronisław Komorowski of the extension of the time limits for the construction of the Polish missile defence system.

**96** *V4 czyli znak jakości. Interview with Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski, Rzeczpospolita, 2.07.2012.*



using the categories of the entire EU. Thirdly, it assumes that the atmosphere in the EU may become better, and then Polish arguments will be accepted. Germany is more sceptical about it, as the German debate on the European issues is dominated by the crisis in the euro area. That is why Germany focuses on what is possible within a relatively short time horizon. For example, Poland (together with Sweden) became involved for the benefit of the update of the European Security Strategy (in 2013 there is the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Strategy), or preparation of a completely new document. According to Germany, there is no atmosphere at present to discuss this issue, and an attempt to discuss the issue seriously would only reveal the difference of opinions among Member States. That is the reason why it proposes the small step strategy and, first of all, preparing the EU White Paper on Security and Defence. The motivation of Poland for supporting the idea of EU military headquarter (more comprehensive development of the CSDP) was different than in Germany (cost reduction). It is Poland and not Germany that presents arguments for increasing the competences of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy or for improvement of the operation of the European External Action Service (EEAS). And, finally, it is Poland that insisted on devoting a separate meeting of the European Council in 2013 entirely to the CSDP. Germany formally supported these initiatives but with a certain reserve.

Being aware of the changes occurring in the European security policy and parallel processes of its renationalisation and fragmentation, both Poland and Germany became involved in promotion of various projects that would be a response to this situation. This Polish-German contribution to the CSDP is of incremental character, without far-reaching ambitions related to the comprehensive development. Apart from the above-mentioned structural cooperation (including battle groups and common headquarters), one may mention first of all strengthening of the crisis management for the purpose of civil and military operations, pooling and sharing, the so-called smart defence, e.g. cooperation of navies on the Baltic Sea or common air defence. In the spring of 2013 there will be a meeting of the countries of the Visegrád Group and Germany, focusing on smart defence. Poland encourages the German defence industry to take part in its territorial

**82** 4. Security policy: more Europe, less involvement

missile defence project, extended for several years, announced by President Komorowski in August 2012. Both Poland and Germany will take part in the Alliance Ground Surveillance programme, from which Poland withdrew earlier because of too high costs. Neither France (for ideological reasons, as it believes that the system should use European technologies rather than American ones) nor Great Britain (it prefers to construct its own system) joined the programme.

## 5. Euro crisis: *polnische Wirtschaft* as an ally of Germany

One of the most unexpected and important political consequences of the economic crisis was a clear change in the perception of the “new” EU Member States by German elites. Although Germany promoted the expansion of the EU eastwards and a conviction that this step brought significant benefits to Germany and Europe was shared by German political elites, the CEE countries were perceived, to a large extent, through the prism of lower living standard, backlog in the scope of modernisation and cash transfers from the budget of the European Union. In Poland a conviction was shared, not only by the part of elites having aversion to Germany, that Poland and other countries of the region were treated by Germany as second category partners<sup>97</sup>. Former President Aleksander Kwaśniewski expressed it clearly in the interview given in the autumn of 2005 for “Tagesspiegel” daily, saying that “Germany does not take us seriously”<sup>98</sup>. The coming to power of conservative and national parties in Poland in 2005 deepened this sense of a gap separating both countries and societies in the scope of culture and modernisation.

This opinion was changed as a result of coming to power of a new coalition in Poland, and, most of all, the experience of the economic crisis and new problems faced by the euro area. Contrary to the countries of Southern Europe, which found themselves on the brink of bankruptcy, the economies of CEE (except Hungary) turned out to be much more sta-

---

**97** Kolarska-Bobińska L., Łada, A. (ed.), *Polska-Niemcy wzajemny wizerunek i wizja Europy*, Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa 2009

**98** „Der Tagesspiegel“, 8.11.2006.

ble. Poland distinguished itself against the background of other countries, since it was the only Member State in 2009 that recorded economic growth (GDP of 1.6 per cent while the average in the euro area was -4.4 per cent). The results of the Polish economy made an impression in Berlin, which is emphasised by most German interviewees. What is more, Poland and other countries of the “new Europe” were perceived by Germany as an example of a successful economic transformation carried out with high social costs, but taking place in the conditions of relative social peace and without riots. German elites appreciated the significance of such a course of political and system changes in Poland and the other countries of the region, in particular taking into account the fact that as a result of the economic crisis in Europe the political and social tension grew in the countries most struck by the crisis. For Germany, which put an emphasis on the saving policy and budgetary cuts in the anti-crisis policies of the countries, which used the EU aid, the example of CEE (in particular Poland) illustrated that strict treatment is the only proper strategy to overcome the crisis. Competitiveness and resistance to shocks of the economy, relative budgetary discipline, liberal labour market and thrifty welfare state are the elements composing the “Polish” model, as it was defined in Berlin, which could be an example to be followed by Greece, Portugal or Spain. As Ivan Krastev pointed out<sup>99</sup>, the lesson of expansion eastwards, bringing positive effects of the conditionality policy (financial aid only in exchange for deep, even painful reforms), may explain the belief of Berlin, against severe criticism from some economists and political elites of Member States, in the success of strategy of savings and reduction in expenses, adopted towards the countries of the South.

Thus, the economic crisis deepened, or rather revealed, the contrast not only between competitive and relatively stable economies of such countries as Germany, Austria or Finland and Member States from Southern Europe, but also between the East and the South of the EU. For Germany, which was in the defensive in the dispute over the shape of economic policy in Europe, it was of considerable significance. According to German sources, already in 2008, when the European Commission sent to Member

---

<sup>99</sup> Interview with the author 31.08.2012.

States a questionnaire on the planned reforms of the EU internal market, Berlin was astonished that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had the closest opinions to Germany as regards the structural reforms necessary to be implemented or emphasis on the budgetary discipline as the methods of supporting the economy. Since then the conviction, that a country like Poland is not only an opponent in the discussion on the EU budget but may be also an ally in the field of the economic policy, has deepened, which would have been hard to imagine several years earlier. In the euro area Germany is in an uneasy situation with its economic model and budget policy. Its position is supported by such countries as the Netherlands, Finland or Austria, but most countries (Southern Europe) do not approve this direction. The division into countries promoting the policy of savings (the North) and countries insisting on implementation of policies aimed, most of all, to stimulate the economic growth (the South) was deepened as a result of the crisis. Against the background of the latter, Poland is perceived by Berlin as an example of the economy based on healthy foundations, devoted to the budgetary discipline and caring about its competitiveness. In other words, against the *polnische Wirtschaft* stereotype perpetuating for decades, the Polish economy seems to resemble the *deutsche Wirtschaft*<sup>100</sup> in many aspects. Poland is perceived in Berlin as a potential ally that might, assuming its entrance to the euro area, change the division of power between the states for the benefit of Germany. During the discussion on the fiscal pact in the spring of 2011 German Minister of Finance Wolfgang Schäuble recommended the Polish version of the so-called debt threshold as the solution that should be adopted by the entire EU. A year later, during the debate on the banking union, the Polish model of the bank supervision aroused interest of Berlin. From the perspective of Germany, the largest limitation of the possibilities for Polish-German cooperation in this field is the fact that Poland has not joined the euro area yet. As officials from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs point out, “It

---

**100** Compare: Follath Erich, Puhl Jan, *Das Wunder von nebenan, Der Spiegel*, No. 21, 2012. and Czachur Waldemar, Trojanowski Jędrzej, *Obraz Polski w Niemczech – zmiany dzięki prezydenturze*, *Komentarze i Opinie* No. 4/2012, Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych, Warszawa 2012

is only joining the euro area by Poland that would bring about a qualitative change in the mutual relations”.

In Poland the thesis about the belonging of the country to economically “healthy” north of the continent was quickly supported and was used to emphasise the European ambitions. Not being in the “euro club”, Poland could make its voice in the EU more audible thanks to its fine reputation. It happened so despite internal political disputes on the direction of Tusk’s government in the economic and fiscal policy and charges formulated against him, not only by the opposition, but also by prominent economists, e.g. Leszek Balcerowicz, relating to inactivity and reluctance to use the good economic situation for repairing the public finance. In Germany this internal dispute in Warsaw did not play a considerable role and did not adversely affect the positive image of Poland in political elites and mass media. However, the answer to the question about how the newly-defined Polish-German share of opinions on the economy is embodied in the definition of interests and cooperation of both countries at the EU’s level is ambiguous. The positions of the governments on key issues regarding fight against the euro crisis and opinions expressed by Polish and German elites about further steps indicate that the discrepancies are still bigger than the thesis about the common membership in the “northern” camp in the EU might suggest.

The most significant from the perspective of Berlin was the position of Poland on interpretation of sources of the crisis and, consequently, direct actions aimed to stop the crisis. The controversy over the main cause of the trouble in which the European Union has been at least since May 2010 (risk of Greek bankruptcy) was for Berlin an important political tug of war about the strategy of overcoming the crisis. From the very beginning the German government was of the opinion that the reason for the dramatic situation was excessive debt of the countries of Southern Europe resulting from their financial mismanagement, insufficient competitiveness, high expenditure on the administration and the welfare state. It is because of their extravagance and financial mismanagement that these countries lost confidence of financial markets, were made to pay high interest on their national bonds, got into the debt trap and found themselves on the verge of bankruptcy – this is briefly how the German authorities explained

the sources of the crisis. According to this explanation, blame was also to be put on the European Union for inconsistent enforcement of the principles of the Stability and Growth Pact, according to which Member States should use budgetary discipline. According to Berlin, the recipe for crisis was compliance with the above-mentioned principles (which were violated also by Germany in 2003 and 2004) and making the principles even stricter. The strengthening of the supervision of Brussels over the budgetary policy of Member States became the priority of the German policy.

An alternative interpretation, spread in particular in Anglo-Saxon countries, France and in the south of Europe, opposed the “one-dimensionality” of the German analysis. At the very beginning of the crisis in the eurozone the then French Minister of Finance Christine Lagarde criticised Germany on the grounds that its expansive export policy leads to a lack of the economic balance in the common currency area. Germany reduced labour costs, which contributed to an increase in its competitiveness but also to a reduction of the internal demand, and, consequently, import. In 2009 the German export surplus reached 7.7 per cent of GDP, whereas Greece reached the level of -14.1 per cent. The German thesis about the “crisis being a debt crisis” met with objections also for another reason, i.e. because before the outbreak of the crisis in such countries as Ireland or Spain who had lower government debt than Germany. As critics pointed out, their problems related to the indebtedness did not stem from extravagance of their governments, but from the necessity to rescue the banking sector against bankruptcy and giving many billions for this purpose. That is why the German recipe, proposing to restore the economic balance in these countries mainly by means of budgetary cuts, was considered wrong (since the real problem was the debt of private entities rather than the state’s debt) or at least insufficient (since radical structural reforms contribute to high unemployment rather than generate quick economic growth). After Socialist President Francois Hollande came to power in France in May 2012, this attitude opposing the German proposal gained significance. In Europe there was a heated discussion on the possibility of stimulating the economic growth from contingency plans financed by the EU. Germany opposed this idea, but during the EU summit in June 2012 a pro-growth package for the amount of 120 billion euros was adopted.

In this debate Poland was clearly on the side of Germany. The opinions of German decision-makers that “it is the crisis of sovereign debt of several European countries”<sup>101</sup> rather than a crisis of euro as a currency, corresponded to the German viewpoint and were necessary for the policy adopted by Berlin. “We have to support Germany, since it has always been the EU’s problem that everyone did what they wanted to. The structural reforms promoted by Germany increase the competitiveness of the EU’s economy”, said one of the Polish officials responsible for European policy. The understanding expressed by Poland for the German direction was not limited to rhetoric. What was probably the biggest success of the Polish presidency in the EU in the second half of 2011 was the adoption of the so-called six-pack, i.e. a set of legal acts strengthening the powers of the EU to intervene in the budgetary policies of Member States and providing for sanctions for violation of the established rules. The six-pack together with the European Semester and the fiscal pact, adopted in December 2011, compose the new mechanism of management of the economic and fiscal policy in the EU, based to a large extent on German ideas. Poland signed the fiscal pact with resistance, but the government’s doubts did not concern the mechanisms forcing countries to save, which raised objections in many countries, or even the limitation of independence by giving more power to institutions of “technocratic federalism” (Juergen Habermas). The so-called budget brake, i.e. mechanism aimed to ensure that the countries’ structural deficit does not exceed 0.5% GDP, the most important element of the fiscal pack, promoted by Germany, enjoyed Polish support. The main worry of Poland, though, was that because of staying out of the euro area this country might be excluded from decision-making processes arising from the new agreement. Poland even threatened that it would not sign the fiscal pact if it was to divide Europe. “Poland should take part in making the most important decisions. Poland believed that joining the European Union Poland would guarantee it a great future, and now it also wants to shape the future”, said an expert from one of the governmental

---

101 Dariusz Rosati in an interview with „Tygodnik Powszechny”: Kryzys dwóch prędkości, „Tygodnik Powszechny”, 29.05.2012, [http://tygodnik.onet.pl/30,0,76084,kryzys\\_dwoch\\_predkosci,artykul.html](http://tygodnik.onet.pl/30,0,76084,kryzys_dwoch_predkosci,artykul.html)



think-tanks. Principal objections made against the pact by the opposition (e.g. that it opens a path for financial participation of Poland in rescuing the euro area or harmonisation of taxes) were rejected by the government as unjustified. Eventually, it was stipulated in the fiscal pact (Article 13 Section 3) that countries of the euro area will take part in all discussions regarding the architecture of the EMU or competitiveness and, at least once per year, in discussions on compliance with the provisions of the fiscal pact. “The fact that Poland joined the fiscal pact stemmed from the need to affect the decision-making process in the EU and to give a signal that Poland (despite being beyond the euro area) is interested in cooperation within the EU, aimed to improve the financial stability and to effectively overcome the crisis”<sup>102</sup>. As a future member of the eurozone Poland wants to have an influence on the shape of the reforms and solutions adopted at present. Poland expressed satisfaction that it was Chancellor Angela Merkel that unequivocally, against the policy adopted by Paris, supported the position of Poland calling for “a place at the table” (Germany also supported the demand related to participation of the Polish Minister of Finance in meetings of the eurogroup)<sup>103</sup>. Since then this fact has been treated both in Poland and in Germany as an example of close cooperation between the two countries.

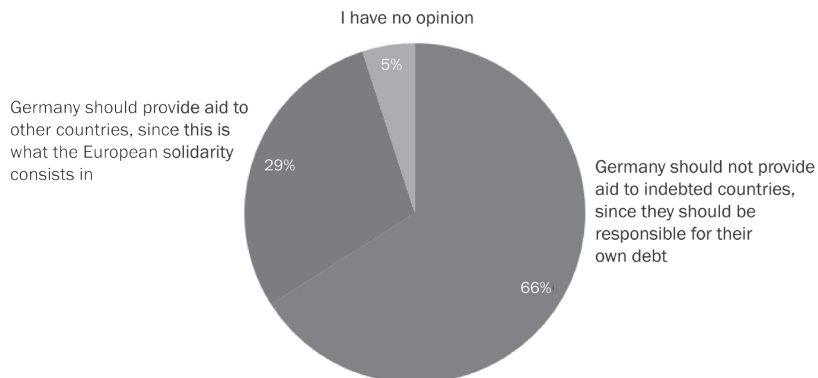
But the circumstances related to the accession of Poland to the fiscal pact also demonstrated that the Polish-German symbiosis in the issues related to rescuing the common currency was not perfect. Despite the fact that Poland signed the pact, the signals from Warsaw were ambiguous. In an interview given soon after signing the fiscal pact Minister of Finance Jacek Rostowski expressed doubts about the soundness of Poland’s compliance with the provisions of the pact. Polish provisions on the budget deficit are less strict, so compliance with the provisions of the pact would mean a necessity of more considerable budgetary cuts, for which the go-

---

**102** Gospodarczo – społeczne efekty członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej, z uwzględnieniem wpływu rozszerzenia na UE-15 (1 maja 2004 – 1 maja 2012) – główne wnioski w związku z ósmą rocznicą przystąpienia Polski do UE, [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl)

**103** Interview made in the Polish Ministry of Finance.

### Poles on the German role at the time of the crisis



Source: Agnieszka Łada, *Barometr Polska-Niemcy 2012*, Polacy o roli Niemiec w Europie i stosunkach polsko-niemieckich, Instytut Spraw Publicznych 2012

vernment was not ready. So, Poland is to be a signatory to the pact, but the provisions of the pact are not applicable to Poland yet. This strategy is not satisfactory in particular for supporters of quick accession of Poland to the euro area. “(The government) hopes that the mission of the fiscal pact will soon be completed and become an event from the past, and that thanks to good relations with German politicians Poland will not find itself in the “draught” between the East and the West. Such calculations are rational, but not very ambitious”<sup>104</sup>. The opposition is against the Polish accession to the fiscal pact. One of the MPs from Law and Justice pointed out that “Poland should not enter the pact, because it is an agreement for countries of the eurozone and means a threat to our independence”. In a discussion at a meeting of joined Sejm committees in December 2012 former Minister of Foreign Affairs Anna Fotyga defined the fiscal pact as an element of “Pax Germanica” imposed upon Europe by Angela Merkel.

The differences between the Polish and the German attitude to overcoming the crisis were seen in different areas. One of them is the role of the European Central Bank. According to Germany, the ECB should

---

**104** Gadomski Witold, Pakt fiskalny, czyli ryzyko polityczne, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 3 March 2012.

not be directly involved in providing aid to jeopardised countries, e.g. by purchasing their bonds on the secondary market. The independence of the central bank of politics and strict limitation of its role to care about stability of money is the foundation of the German political system, while the ECB was constructed to a large extent according to the model of Bundesbank. Since the very beginning Germany has rejected interpretations related to extension of the powers of the ECB, according to which the expansive policy would be directly aimed to stabilise the common currency (jeopardised in the event of bankruptcy of one of more countries of the euro area). Although in the summer of 2012 the German government no longer protested against the policy of the President of the ECB, Mario Draghi, who declared that he would “do everything to rescue the euro”, this decision met with criticism in Germany, inter alia from the Head of Bundesbank Jens Weidmann. The opposition party SPD criticised the government for not informing before the elections of real financial risks for Germany, related to operations carried out by the ECB (costs are incurred by Member States proportionally to their capital contribution to the ECB). Thus, despite the fact that the federal government eventually came to the conclusion that the interventions of the ECB are, in the light of the dramatic situation of some countries, the fastest and the only available means to prevent a catastrophe in the euro area, Germany still had serious doubts about the legality of such steps and their possible political and financial consequences.

Unlike in the case of fiscal discipline, Poland did not unequivocally support Germany in this dispute. On the contrary, Minister of Finance Jacek Rostowski, a politician close to the traditional Anglo-Saxon attitude to the economy, perceiving the role of the central bank in a different way, spoke several times in favour of giving the ECB an active role in the EU’s strategy aimed to rescue the euro. In May 2012 Rostowski called the countries of the eurozone to strengthen the so-called “firewall” (rescue activities for the 17 countries of the euro area exposed to a threat of bankruptcy) in the event that Greece leaves the euro zone. In his opinion, it is only the European Central Bank that can provide protection<sup>105</sup>. Also Minister

---

**105** Rostowski apeluje o wzmocnienie „ściany przeciwpożarowej” strefy euro», Euractiv.pl, 16.05.2012.

Sikorski, during his famous speech in Berlin in November 2011, said that the ECB should become a lender of last resort – this idea was conflicting with the German concept of the function of this institution (presented not only by the government but also by the opposition). As we found out in Warsaw, this fragment was included in Mr. Sikorski's speech at an express request of the Ministry of Finance. Beyond doubt, not very consistent signals on the fiscal pact and the role of the ECB given by representatives of the Polish government stem from different views within the government. However, they did not turn out to be the basic problem for the Polish-German relations for two reasons. Firstly, unlike in Germany, it is not the Polish Minister of Finance but rather the Minister of Foreign Affairs that plays a leading role in shaping Poland's European policy. Secondly, the opinion of Poland on the ECB is not of key importance, since Poland does not belong to the euro area and has no representative in the Council of the ECB.

Poland presented a more "Anglo-Saxon" attitude also as regards the financial transaction tax (FTT), which was adopted by 11 countries of the EU (including Germany) as part of the enhanced cooperation in the autumn of 2012. For the German governing coalition the introduction of the tax had not been a priority for a long time. The situation changed in the spring of 2012 under the influence of the left-wing opposition, which made the government agree to the FTT in exchange for the support for Merkel's policy in the EU. Poland took an ambivalent position on this issue, which was characteristic of its attitude to the euro crisis and to the German policy, as it decided to support the activities aimed to deepen the integration, but involving in them only to the extent to which such involvement is in the Polish interest. On the one hand, Minister Sikorski said that Poland had "considerable intellectual problems with the FTT", since it would make more sense to introduce a financial activity tax. On the other hand, Warsaw did not intend to block the initiative it considered as an important step towards the "construction of a sense of a community". What was characteristic, though, was another difference between the Polish and German attitude to FTT: According to the Polish sources in Warsaw, Poland would be ready to join this initiative provided that receipts from the tax increased the EU budget. Germany was from the very beginning on the position that receipts from FTT should go to national budgets of particular

countries. This difference of opinions was the echo of different views on one of the most controversial issues between Poland and Germany, i.e. the role of the EU budget and its size for the years 2014-2020.

As these controversies and differences of interests show, Poland did not completely join the pro-German camp of supporters of the saving policy, as it made the support for Germany conditional on its own interests. Expressed opinions in the Polish Ministry of Finance suggest that in the fiscal policy there are very few disputable issues between Poland and Germany. "If the issue is of secondary importance to Poland, we help Germany. On the other hand, our objective is to support solutions that are beneficial from the perspective of the European Union, and it is not always in the political interest of Germany, the evidence of which is the case law of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany." Warsaw showed its understanding for the German interpretation of the sources of the crisis, as it saw in such an attitude a chance for promotion to the role of Berlin's ally in the EU and for strengthening its position as a country implementing better economic policy than "laggers" from Southern Europe. However, in particular cases Poland and Germany did not always share their opinions, for example on the most important controversies in the European dispute over the method of overcoming the crisis: between the supporters of continuation of the saving policy (Germany) and advocates of activities aimed to stimulate the economic growth (President of France, Francois Hollande). This dispute broke out in the spring of 2012, when the economic and social situation in countries which are subject to the policy of saving started to become more severe. As Kai-Olaf Lang points out, in the dispute between the supporters of "Neo-Keynesians" and "fiscal conservatives caring about competitiveness" Poland, like other countries of CEE, was in-between. The countries of this "third camp" share, despite differences separating them, the "conviction about the necessity to rescue public finance with simultaneous emphasis put to "growth with the use of EU's funds""<sup>106</sup>.

"I believe that the fiscal pact may be compared (...) to the security system that is important for each mechanical vehicle. Safety belts are im-

---

**106** Lang Kai-Olaf, Wachstum durch Kohäsion, SWP-Aktuell, Juli 2012, p. 4.

portant, brakes are important, the traction control system is also important, but the most important element is the engine. This is what we have to remember all the time, since there is a real threat that we will deal with slowdown in the economic growth”, said President Bronisław Komorowski in February 2012<sup>107</sup>. Minister Radosław Sikorski spoke even more openly in the autumn of 2012: “Berlin’s pressure on savings and reforms is understandable, but if it is too big, it will suppress the economic growth, which will make it impossible for these countries to reduce their debt. This is where very serious mistakes were made. For example, in the first aid packages for Greece there were forced very deep cuts in exchange for high-interest loans, while loans should be given on preferential conditions. The repair of these mistakes will cost Europe a lot”<sup>108</sup>.

These differences between Warsaw and Berlin gained significance in particular in the light of the negotiations on the future financial perspective of the EU, but they stem from the completely different perspectives of the two countries on this aspect. As regards this aspect. Indeed, under the pressure of the economic and political situation in Europe in the spring of 2012 Germany changed its direction and saw the necessity to carry out activities aimed at economic growth in Europe. The consolidation of public budgets is only one part of necessary efforts aimed to overcome the crisis. Apart from the fiscal discipline, the second pillar on which strong European economy should be based is the growth policy – such were the signals sent by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Nevertheless, the policy was limited to “traditional” German demands. In the opinion of German governmental experts, the best prospects are offered by structural reforms improving competitiveness of countries, such as liberalisation of the labour market, making pay systems more flexible, reform of social insurance systems and investments in science and research. Sectors that have been protected so far should be open to competition. Germany

**107** Bronisław Komorowski, Speech of the President of Poland summing up the debate entitled „Economic future of Europe in the light of the euro crisis”, 15.02.2012, [www.prezydent.pl](http://www.prezydent.pl)

**108** Interview for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18 November 2012, [http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,12691307,Sikorski\\_dla\\_Gazety\\_\\_Mamy\\_Unie\\_teraz\\_trzeba\\_stworzyc.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,12691307,Sikorski_dla_Gazety__Mamy_Unie_teraz_trzeba_stworzyc.html)

presented a much more sceptical position as regards public investments aimed to stimulate growth. In Berlin politicians point to misuse of the EU Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund (50 billion euros wasted per year) and the necessity of better spending, for example for new technologies and research. Germany also emphasises the necessity to make infrastructural investments (in particular in the connection of energy networks, which aroused bigger interest in Berlin after making a decision on *Energiewende*). But funds raised for these purposes should come mainly from private sources and sources of private-public partnerships rather than from the common EU budget. Decisions made at the EU summit in June 2012 reflected, to a large extent, German priorities. The EU adopted the pro-growth package, but it comprised in particular the funds from unused sources of the EU budget for the years 2007-2013 and facilitation in access to loans of the European Investment Bank.

The Polish pro-growth agenda has a different hierarchy of priorities. For Poland, which is a country that still works its way up, the economic growth stimulated by financial impulses (rather than only structural reforms) is of key importance. What also plays an important role is that in the years 2007-2013 Poland was the biggest net recipient of funds from the EU budget, whose value only in 2012 reached 10.5 billion euros, constituting 3 per cent of gross national income. By March 2012 net cash flows from the EU reached the total of 40.3 billion euros. Poland is also one of the countries that may boast of a relatively high ratio of use of funds from EU sources (70 per cent according to data as at December 2011)<sup>109</sup>. In the recent years this huge capital injection has been, besides export, one of the most important drives of the economic growth, on the level fluctuating from 2 per cent of GDP (2008) to 6 per cent GDP (2007) per year. The fear that the Polish economy will experience a considerable slow-down in case of significant reduction of funds from Brussels is expressed by many Polish experts. In the Polish strategy the EU budget plays an important role, not only as a mechanism of the European solidarity but also as a source of the economic growth. It is the investments in cohesion of the EU and expansion of the infrastructure financed from funds of the European Union

---

**109** Data provided in: 8 lat członkostwa, p. 8.

that are a mechanism that should help to improve the European economy. “Countries-net payers to the EU budget, such as Germany, also considerably benefit from the cohesion policy”, says a high official responsible for the Polish regional policy. According to a study commissioned by the Polish government (and accepted by the European Commission), each euro invested by Germany in the implementation of the cohesion policy in the countries of the Visegrád Group brings the German economy 1.25 euros in the form of additional export and contracts for German companies regarding the implementation of projects co-financed from the funds of the EU. A large part of the export of goods and services, as the Polish government argues, falls on the high and medium technology sector, while 50 per cent of this “additional” export generated thanks to good implementation of the cohesion policy goes to Poland. Apart from Germany, there are two other countries, Ireland and Luxembourg, that benefit from the positive balance of costs and benefits from the implementation of the cohesion policy in the Visegrád region<sup>110</sup>. This data supported the Polish diplomatic offensive during negotiations over the EU budget, directed mainly to Germany. However, the Polish and German proposals remained the opposite poles in this dispute, although some officials emphasise that thanks to very regular contacts between Warsaw and Berlin the German position is predictable for Poles and it is definitely not Germany but rather Great Britain that is the biggest problem for Poland.

Not only in the rhetorical dimension is the dispute over the budget, in particular between Berlin and Warsaw, an element of a broader discussion on the future of the European Union and deepening of the integration. In Poland, the German position, according to which the European Union should take another big step towards closer fiscal and economic cooperation, is perceived as conflicting with the will to limit the common budget of the EU. As Polish interviewees point out, it is impossible to have more Europe for less money. More Europe does not only mean more common

---

**110** Speech made by Minister Ewa Bieńkowska in the European Commission Representation in Berlin, 26.04.2012, see also: Ocena korzyści uzyskiwanych przez państwa UE-15 w wyniku realizacji polityki spójności w krajach Grupy Wyszehradzkiej, [www.mrr.gov.pl](http://www.mrr.gov.pl)



control, but it also means more co-dependence and solidarity. This position was expressed very openly by Prime Minister Donald Tusk during the congress of the European People's Party in Bucharest in October 2012: "Do you know what hypocrisy means in politics? We deal with hypocrisy when a politician talks about 'more Europe' and the next day, in another place he/she talks about "smaller EU budget". Let us not allow hypocrisy to triumph in Europe"<sup>111</sup>. At the EU summit in November 2012 negotiations over the next financial perspective were not completed, which was mainly because of the position of Germany, which did not want to isolate Great Britain opting for a considerable reduction in the budget and caused postponement of some decisive talks until the beginning of 2013. What aroused anxiety of Polish experts was not only the threat of reduction of funds in regional policy, but also a possibility of connecting negotiations over the EU budget with a discussion over the idea of separate budget ("financial mechanism") for the euro area, put forward by Germany, and supported enthusiastically (inter alia) by France, as the establishment of a separate budget might even more significantly reduce the interest of Member States in financing the budget of the entire EU by countries of the eurozone. Although at the EU summit in December 2012 the idea of a real eurozone budget was not accepted (but it may be discussed again in the first half of 2013), it is a good example of threats, also for Polish-German relations, resulting from the development of the second (besides crisis management) important debate devoted to institutional reforms and construction of a political union.

## 6. Towards a political union

Changes in the European integration process were a result of the crisis in two different areas and in two different time horizons. On the one hand, it was about a direct response to increasing debt in several, most jeopardised countries of the EU, stopping the crisis and prevention of uncontrollable bankruptcy of such countries or even collapse of the monetary union. The debate on ways to stimulate the economic growth was also an element of anti-crisis activities. The crisis management was, by nature, of temporary character, although the steps taken, e.g. withdrawal from the no-bail-out clause, establishment of the European Stability Mechanism, adoption of the fiscal pact or interventions made by the European Central Bank, changed the way of functioning of the entire European Union significantly and for a long term. As one may observe, in this process Poland, although it does not belong to the euro area, turned out to be a useful ally of Berlin, despite differences separating the two countries in more detailed, but equally important matters. This dimension of the crisis significantly affected the perception of Poland by German elites, revealed a potential of strategic partnership of both countries in the EU and inclined the countries to cooperate more closely.

On the other hand, the longer the crisis lasted and the longer the European Union functioned under emergency procedures, adopting at further summits extraordinary measures aimed to reduce the budget deficit or to prevent speculations on the financial markets, the more obvious it was that this short-term strategy would not suffice. “Between the summer of 2011 and the summer of 2012 the political discussion on integration

in the EU changed completely”<sup>112</sup>. There were at least three reasons for this change.

Firstly, the effectiveness of further mechanisms and rescue actions turned out to be limited. The strategy based on saving programmes and increased control of budgets did not, in the long term, improve credibility of the ill countries on the financial markets. The expected positive effects of the implemented structural reforms were not seen in the short term, but the unemployment and recession problems, which deepened as a result of the reforms, generated political and social tension in Spain and Greece. At the beginning of November the unemployment rate in the eurozone reached 11.6 per cent, which was the highest level since 1995, when such data was published for the first time<sup>113</sup>.

Secondly, the crisis revealed a defective shape of the currency union. The EU has a common currency, but it lacks a common fiscal policy. Countries decide about their budgets, taxes and debt on their own. This problem is not fully solved by reforms increasing coordination of the economic policy (the so-called six-pack or the fiscal pact), or any other activities. “European leaders face the fact that in its present shape the EU is able neither to survive the crisis nor to prevent another one”<sup>114</sup>.

Thirdly, as a result of the undertaken anti-crisis policies, the functioning of the European Union changed fundamentally. In key issues related to the economic and fiscal policy, reserved so far for the competences of Member States, there was a significant shift of responsibility to the EU level. The European Commission and the Council of the European Union, authorities possessing limited or indirect democratic legitimisation, gained more opportunities to affect the policies adopted by particular countries. The active role of the European Central Bank, an institution deprived of the political mandate, in anti-crisis activities was an important

---

**112** Janning Josef, *Political Union: Europe’s Defining Moment*, EPC, Policy Brief, 24 July 2012, p. 1.

**113** <http://www.euractiv.pl/gospodarka/artukul/w-strefie-euro-rekordowe-bezrobocie-004129?newsletter=410>, 2.11.2012.

**114** Leonard Mark, Zielonka Jan, *Europe of Incentives*, European Council on Foreign Relations, London 2012.

signal of changes in the institutional balance of forces in the EU. Many people, in particular in Germany, perceived it as violation of legal bases for the functioning of the EU and criticised non-democratic character of its evolution leading to “technocratic federalism” (Jürgen Habermas). “There is a risk that the increasing complexity of the European Union will weaken the bonds between Europeans and European institutions”, warned German Minister of Finance Wolfgang Schäuble while receiving the Charles the Great award. While at the EU level important decisions are made, the real politics with participation of parties, electors and mass media takes place at the national level.

This is the background against which there is a second debate taking place. It is of key importance for the political dynamics of the EU, apart from crisis management, related to further reforms of the European Union, aimed, as an assumption, at the establishment of a “real economic and currency union” (the title of the report worked out under the direction of the President of the European Council Herman van Rompuy)<sup>115</sup>. In the European political elites a conviction was shared that the hitherto integration model was no longer valid. “The point is that we should build a political union, which was not done at the time of introduction of the euro”, said Chancellor Merkel in her speech at the invitation of BELA foundation in February 2012<sup>116</sup>. The policy of small steps, such as abolition of customs barriers, connecting markets, introduction of common regulations and coordination of activities towards a “closer Union” is not able to remove the scratches that appeared on the foundations of the common Europe. “If we want to strengthen the position of Europe in the world, we have to transform the economic and currency union into a strong European political federation, which will include the currency, fiscal and banking union”, wrote Commissioner Viviane Reding. In the summer and autumn of 2012 this discussion became more intense. In Germany it received a strong response from the world of mass media, science and politics, much stronger than in any other country. Chancellor Angela Merkel declared her readi-

---

**115** Towards a genuine economic and fiscal union, 12 October 2012.

**116** Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel bei einer Vortrags- und Diskussionsveranstaltung der BELA-Foundation, 7.02.2012.

ness to convene the European Convention and make a substantive revision of European treaties, while Minister of Finance Wolfgang Schäuble (and representatives of opposition party SPD) talked about the necessity to change the German constitution and to call for a national referendum on this issue.

The debate on a “real economic and monetary union” inevitably leads to the necessity to deal with two issues of key importance for the future of the EU. The first is the political union, i.e. a question about how much sovereignty do the Member States able to transfer to the EU level and how the EU’s institutions are to be constructed, so that the decisions made at the EU level have democratic legitimacy. The key question is how much (financial) solidarity is to be guaranteed at the EU level and what price national countries will have to pay for solidarity (revocation of sovereignty in budgetary issues).

The second challenge is the issue related to differentiated integration, i.e. establishing relations between the euro area, in which the economic and fiscal integration is to be strengthened, and the other Member States of the EU, which have not adopted the common currency yet. In the past the great steps aimed to deepen the integration were usually taken together with the enlargement of the EU. This time, the necessity to rescue the common currency requires taking a large step forward, in particular by the countries that already use the common currency. This is what the dispute over the fiscal pact and the Polish “place at the table” consists in. This was the first time the problem arose on such a scale, which started to play a bigger role in the European public debate, in particular in the autumn of 2012; the adoption of the fiscal pact under an intergovernmental agreement rather than under a treaty showed that the rescue mechanisms for the eurozone may lead to cracking of the European Union or introduction of second-category membership.

### ***Germany vs the political union***

In the recent years the German discussion on the scope of reforms that should be implemented in the EU and their direction has undergone a significant change. In the first years of the crisis German elites shared a conviction that the recipe for the current challenges was a return to the

principles of the budget discipline established in the Maastricht Treaty and introduction of reforms, based on the German experience, in countries tackling the biggest problems related to their debt. Germany reacted temperately to appeals for more solidarity, i.e. more generous financial aid from Berlin for countries under threat of bankruptcy, which was perceived as its reluctance to accept responsibility for Europe, national egoism and short-sightedness. Social moods in Germany encouraged a cautious attitude of the government: Germany was worried about the vision of the “transfer union”, in which it would have to pay for “laggers” from Southern Europe. But from the perspective of Germany the euro crisis did not only mean a financial risk, but also resignation from many prerequisites on which the hitherto German policy in Europe was based. It is the awareness of the end of a certain stage in the European integration and in the relations between Germany and the EU that made German elites seriously think about the revision of political and legal foundations of the European Union.

Firstly, the crisis revealed that the common currency and the common market are not sufficient mechanisms to lead to economic convergence of Member States and ensure stability of the currency union. The assumption that such convergence and stability in the euro area might occur is what accompanied the decision on the introduction of the common currency. Germany had always been against the idea to establish an “economic government” in Europe, which was supported by France. Berlin was afraid of the statism of Paris, of shaking the independence of the European Central Bank and inflation. Germany opinion was, that the control of public expenditure and budget discipline (the Stability and Growth Pact) was a sufficient guarantee of effectiveness of the system. For 10 years the monetary union was based on one pillar of the pecuniary policy, which Germany benefited from by selling products to other, profoundly indebted countries of the eurozone. But the problems in the euro area showed that this system may not be maintained in the longer term.

Secondly, the German model of complete independence of the central bank, caring only about the inflation purpose, aroused doubts. It is only thanks to interventions of the ECB on the bond market that it was possible to ease the situation and that the jeopardised countries felt relieved

for a while. Germany had to, not without resistance, accept these steps as there was in fact no alternative.

Thirdly, the subject of criticism was not only the German *Ordnungspolitik* and saving strategy as a response to the crisis but also the model of the German economy, based on export. In the opinion of many economists, the exceptional competitiveness of the German economy in the system of incomplete currency union caused a dramatic trade imbalance among Member States, i.e. German surplus vs deficits in the countries of the South, which was one of the most important causes of the crisis. According to this interpretation, the advantage of Germany, whose economic indicators went up in the last decade thanks to the common currency, extension of the EU eastwards and internal reforms, did not turn out to be a rescue for Europe, which also refutes the thesis about the identity of German and European interest. In Germany such criticism is rejected on the grounds that it is unjustified, as its logical consequence would have to be steps aimed to weaken the German economy, which no one should hope for. Nevertheless, there are many German experts that agree that the present model of the monetary union, resulting in such a considerable imbalance, requires fundamental changes.

Fourthly, the statement that the EU is not a transfer union and that each Member State must care on its own expenditure and debt also turned out to be untrue. In fact, the political decision to introduce the common currency without an economic union was successful then, as declared, since it irrevocably connected Member States with one another to such an extent that the trouble Greece and Spain got into (inter alia due to faulty construction of the system) constitutes an enormous threat for the entire European Union. Germany had to, in its own interest, get involved in the rescue activities for countries on the verge of bankruptcy, by making many billion euros available for the needs of the EFSF and the ESM.

These circumstances materially affected the German perception of the crisis and the direction the European Union started to take under the influence of the crisis. While Europe was worried that Germany had started to dominate on the continent and to shape it according to its model, German elites had a completely different impression. From the perspective of Berlin the shape of the European Union that is being formed today

is by no means the “German Europe”. On the contrary, the euro crisis is in fact the dramatic crisis of the European structure that was shaped (to a large extent) according to German ideas and under the influence of Germany. From the German perspective, the changes in the European Union, necessary to overcome the crisis, go in a direction that is contrary to the convictions expressed for a long time in Germany. “The new financial architecture in the EU does not only differ from Berlin’s plans. It also means an end of many German principles”, wrote “Die Zeit” weekly. Establishment of further rescue funds, discussion about Eurobonds, coordination of economic cooperation (rather than only common control of budgetary policies), and, finally, elements of the transfer union – all these things have been the anathema for Germany’s European policy. Today most experts, including German ones, believe that these steps are necessary to stabilise the monetary union and to ensure a possibility of its further functioning.

It is the end of the hitherto model of Europe that is an important reason why German elites look to the future with anxiety. That is also why the German policy towards the crisis has been so far characterised by the defensive attitude, aimed, most of all, at limitation of damage rather than active measures intended to permanently reshape the EU. Germany made every effort to save, at all costs, as much as possible from the model of Europe which they actively co-shaped in the past and which served the interests of both Germany and the entire European Union for many years. In the first years of the crisis, when the functionality of this model came to an end, Berlin was not inclined to support quick and far-reaching reforms but it chose the small step strategy, postponing the decisions which were contrary to the hitherto German concept of the European policy (bail-out, aid for banks, pro-growth activities).

But perhaps the most important factor that made the discussion on the treaty reform and the political union become more lively in Germany was the conviction, deepened as a result of the aggravating crisis, that the undertaken measures lack democratic legitimisation. Not without a reason did this aspect play a greater role in Germany than in other countries, e.g. in France. Germany drew two fundamental conclusions from the tragic experience of the Third Reich, which have been used by it for decades as a guide for its political culture. Firstly, democracy should be protected



at all costs, even against one's own citizens. Secondly, the anchoring of Germany in Europe and the success of the European integration are the basis for the German *raison d'État*. Both lessons were taken into account in the constitution and provided with precautionary measures which are not encountered in any other country. To ensure compliance with the principles of democracy a Constitutional Court gained a lot of powers and the so-called perpetuity clause was introduced, which significantly limits possibilities of violation of the principles in the course of amendment of the constitution. The preamble of the constitution constitutes the expression of the will of the German nation, as to "serve peace in the world as a member of the united Europe possessing equal rights". The devotion to these dogmas was a guarantee for the post-war success of Germany and reconstruction of its credibility in Europe and all over the world. Their strength was (*inter alia*) that they were an inseparable tandem and supported each other. Strict compliance with the principles of democracy was for the Federal Republic of Germany a ticket to Europe, while the European integration was a policy guaranteeing Germany its democratic identity. The entire European project was aimed to promote democracy, which was best embodied by the extension of the EU eastwards.

Worries about the direction of the German policy in Europe stemmed (*inter alia*) from the fact that tension started to grow between the German devotion to democracy and the European vocation. As a result of the crisis, democracy and Europe ceased to be inseparable. Anti-crisis mechanisms introduced under the time pressure limited some competences of the Member States in key areas as regards independence and democracy we know (budgetary policy), giving them to bodies that do not possess full democratic legitimacy. Decisions on many billions euros of aid for Greece, made in May 2010, or agreements regarding economic cooperation in the euro area, which had adverse effects, were rash and made without a real parliamentary debate. Billions made available by European potentates to support countries under threat of bankruptcy mean risk that may be estimated by no Member of Parliament or politician. Without these steps the common European currency would probably be over now, and the European Union would be on the verge of collapse. But, unlike in the past, the activities designed for this purpose did not contribute to strength-

ening democracy. On the contrary, they became one of the sources of the deepening crisis of democracy.

Germany is not the only country faced with this crisis, but it felt its consequences most severely due to its specificity. Firstly, in this crisis-based chaos it is Berlin that had to shoulder the greatest political and financial responsibility for finding good solutions for Europe. Secondly, the conflict between democracy and Europe struck the very heart of the German political culture and political system, as a result of which the institutions and principles that were previously considered as the best guarantees of democratic and pro-European growth became, paradoxically enough, a source of anxiety that Germany starts to drift in an undesirable direction. Severe criticism was expressed most of all towards the Federal Constitutional Court. Its strong position and great social authority effectively protected the German democracy from potential and real threats. The consistent defence of the German constitution, which was perceived by many as obsessive, and narrow interpretation of democracy stemming from its importance made the future of the European Union hang by a thread. Already in 2009 in the decision related to the Treaty of Lisbon, regulating the bases of the cooperation with the EU, the court defined the borders within which the representatives of the nation may operate in delegating sovereignty to the EU level. The court reserved that “the unification of Europe on the basis of treaties concluded by sovereign countries may not be done so that Member States do not have sufficient space for shaping the economic, cultural and social conditions of living for their citizens”. Further decisions issued by the Federal Constitutional Court (in particular the decision of 12 September 2012) showed that the border of constitutional and legal acceptance of changes in the EU system of power was almost reached in Germany. Transfer of sovereignty to the authorities of the EU will require amendment to the German basic law.

Under the influence of these processes the question related to the political union or *finalite* of the European integration became in the second half of 2012 one of the dominant issues of the German public debate, in which many intellectuals, academics and politicians became involved. However, it does not mean that there is consensus in Germany about the shape of the future European Union or that there are clearly defined models of the European political union. As regards the political discussion, the most important

line of separation runs between the supporters of the “stability union” and supporters of the “European federation” covering community dimension of debts of Member States. The “stability union” is based on the above-mentioned assumption that the most important condition for restoring balance in the euro area is to strengthen the budget discipline of Member States through return to the criteria established in the Maastricht Treaty and making them stricter. Reforms implemented in the recent months and years, such as the fiscal pact or the six-pack, go in this very direction. But the democracy deficit in the functioning of the EU, deepening as a result of these changes, makes German elites share a conviction that they must be accompanied by political reforms. In Germany more attention is put to the legitimising function of the Parliament than in France, which is why the weakening of the significance of the Parliament in the European policy of the recent years aroused anxiety. Further decisions issued by the Constitutional Court made the federal government take into account the opinion of the Bundestag and inform the Bundestag of the measures undertaken. In the German discussion the concept of the “political union” as supplement to the “stability union” is a consequence of the problem related to the democratic legitimisation. Wolfgang Schäuble, probably the most important architect of the European policy adopted by Germany and author of the further integration concept, presented the concept of the political union in his speech made in Aachen during the collection of the Charles the Great award. “We have to build a political union right now. We need strong European institutions”, said Schäuble, suggesting general election for the President of the European Commission and transforming it into a European government. In his opinion, the Council of the EU should play the role of the second chamber of the Parliament, while the European Parliament should be given the right of legislative initiative<sup>117</sup>.

Similar ideas were included in the resolution passed by CDU in November 2011<sup>118</sup>. It is where the basic principles of the “stability union”

---

**117** Rede von Bundesminister Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble, [http://www.karlspreis.de/preistraeger/2012/rede\\_von\\_dr\\_wolfgang\\_schaeuble.html](http://www.karlspreis.de/preistraeger/2012/rede_von_dr_wolfgang_schaeuble.html)

**118** Starkes Europa – Gute Zukunft für Deutschland, Antrag des CDU-Bundesvorstandes an den 24. Parteitag der CDU Deutschland am 14/15. November 2011 in Leipzig.

were formulated, e.g. that the European crisis is a result of the debt crisis and violation of the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty, the necessity to keep a balance between the responsibility of countries and solidarity between Member States and to catch up with the best ones in the economic policy (integration cannot mean weakening of the strongest countries). By designing the political union as the supplement to the economic and monetary union, CDU proposed to strengthen mechanisms for controlling national budgets by means of appointing a commissioner for savings and the above-mentioned new, two-chamber structure of the European Parliament (“chamber of citizens”, elected directly, and the Council of the EU as representation of Member States). The stability union, and in the next step the political union (but with transfer mechanisms limited to minimum) are the vision of the future of Europe, represented mainly by CDU and the governing coalition. However, also within the coalition the scale of necessary reforms and deepening of the integration is the subject of controversies. Arguments warning not only against excessive financial burden of Germany but also against risky transfer of further competences to the EU level and weakening of the parliamentary control at the national level are strong both in CDU (Wolfgang Bosbach) and CSU (Horst Seehofer, Markus Söder), but also in the liberal FDP (Frank Schäffler). Also in the public debate does the necessity to build a political union arouse doubts between experts<sup>119</sup>.

Supporters of the ‘European federation’ also place emphasis on increasing the democratic control in the EU’s system of power which intervenes more and more in the sphere that has been so far reserved for countries. In the text written as part of the intra-party discussion in SPD, three distinguished intellectuals Jürgen Habermas, Julina Nida-Rümelin and Peter Bofinger put forward proposals which are not different in this scope from the concepts formulated by CDU. What differentiates the two parties, though, is, first of all, the attitude to the scope of the desirable financial solidarity among Member States. CDU consistently rejects the idea of the “transfer union”, but the position of SPD, which had been for long sceptical about giving the debt a Community dimension, changed considerably in the summer of 2012. The head of the party, Sigmar Gabriel, spoke in

---

**119** Compare: debate in FAZ.

favour of establishment of the debt reduction fund – the idea which had been put forward already a year before by an independent council of economic experts advising the federal government. It would mean burdening Germany with a part of the debt incurred by other Member States of the euro area. While the parties of the governing coalition criticise SPD and the Greens for giving a green light to the “transfer union” which may lead to the moral hazard and which means a big risk for German taxpayers, the opposition argues that the introduction of such solidarity mechanisms is in fact only arranging the factual situation. SPD accuses Chancellor Merkel that her policy in fact leads to giving the debt a Community dimension (since the interventions of the European Central Bank indirectly exert such an influence on the financial markets), but the government does not inform the society of it. Carsten Schneider, spokesperson for budgetary issues of the parliamentary fraction SPD believes that the actual liabilities of Germany resulting from rescue activities reach several times more than the government claims. The introduction of the debt reduction fund in the euro area, as SPD argues, will result in regulating, in a transparent and direct manner, the mechanisms for whose functioning certain institutions, such as the ECB, are responsible and which constitute a much greater risk.

German politicians are aware that there are slight chances for the success of a deep reform of the EU, as the reform would require consensus within the EU and ratification in each Member State. “Although German people are also sceptical today as regards the deepening of the integration, I believe that the German society could be convinced to support this step. Today all political parties are of the opinion that the present condition may not be maintained. Such basic consensus is very important. It is hard to expect that the situation could change soon”, said one of the leading politicians of SPD. Such opinions are shared by German elites. They are based on the assumption that the pro-European consensus in the society, even if the society is critical of the euro currency and is afraid of costs related to the rescue of the eurozone, is durable. In the government one may even hear that the German offensive for a convention, reforms of treaties and construction of a political union stems from the fact that arguments for repair of the entire European project receive a better response from citizens than the arguments focused entirely on the defence of the euro. “People do

not like the euro, but they care about Europe”, said a high-ranking official from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thus, a positive idea of the political union is more convincing than the earlier words of Chancellor Angela Merkel: “when the euro currency collapses, the entire Europe will collapse”. Assuming that the great treaty reform, necessary to build a real political union, is not very realistic right now, German proposals to arrange the convention and take another huge step in the integration may be interpreted as a bargaining card in the discussion on less far-reaching projects of changes in the EU, which are the subject of the present discussion. The basic reform of treaties leading to a political union is a long-term project. German Minister of Finance spoke in Aachen about the next 5 years. In SPD an opinion is shared that the European Convention should be held immediately after the election to the European Parliament in June 2014<sup>120</sup>. Because of the German election in the autumn of 2013, the German federal government will certainly make no far-reaching decisions hastily during the election campaign.

However, one should expect that the change made in the German policy in 2012 will be long-term. Beyond doubt, the decisions made during the EU summit in December 2012 related to the establishment of centralised banking supervision (Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM)) in the EU, being the first step for the creation of a banking union, constitute an important breakthrough. Germany was not enthusiastic about this project. It opposed (inter alia) the establishment of supervision within the European Central Bank (since, according to Berlin, the role of the ECB should be limited to monetary policy), control of local banks and saving banks and a possibility of direct recapitalisation of banks in the European Stability Mechanism. Moreover, as the main payer and guarantor of the system, Germany criticised a lack of sufficient influence of Berlin on decision-making bodies (Germany has only one vote in the Board of the ECB, just like other countries). Germany was successful as regards acceptance of some of its demands (limitation of supervision to large banks possessing balance of min. 30 billion euros, division of the supervision and monetary

---

**120** Schäfer Axel, *Sieben Schritte für ein hoffnungsvolles Europa*, SPD-Bundestagsfraktion (2012).

policy in the ECB, postponement of coming into effect of the banking supervision to 1 March 2014). A banking union, established in this way, means a significant step in the financial integration. It will be followed by further steps, in compliance with the road-map towards the “real economic and currency union”, sketched by Herman van Rompuy, such as the establishment of the above-mentioned budget for the euro area, an integrated economic policy system and political reforms ensuring larger democratic legitimisation in the eurozone<sup>121</sup>. Not all proposals contained in this document (in particular the proposals related to the budget of the euro area) are accepted by Berlin in their present form. However, it is beyond doubt that Germany is determined to considerably deepen integration in the euro area in the following years, and the banking union that is being established is an important catalyst of this process.

***Poland: avoid a division within the EU***

Poland takes part in the debate over further reforms in the European Union from a totally different position as compared with its western neighbour. Polish politicians and diplomats admit that it is a natural thing that the responsibility for reacting to the economic crisis and proposing changes in the structure of the EU was taken over by Member States of the eurozone. However, the fact that it leads to significant shifts in the EU’s structure of power arouses anxiety: “The attempts made to overcome the financial crisis weakened the so-called “community method” (process of making decisions in the EU according to transparent principles, defined in Treaties of the European Union, which ensures relevant participation of supranational institutions acting, as assumed, in the interest of the entire Union, most of all of the European Parliament and the Commission)”<sup>122</sup>. The significance of the European Council, in which the vote of larger countries (in particular Germany) is more important, increased, while in the financial issues the eurogroup (meetings of Ministers of Finance of the euro area), deprived of formal competences, started to play a key role.

---

**121** Towards a genuine economic and monetary union, 5 December 2012.

**122** Szpunar Maciej, Czym jest Traktat fiskalny, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 7.04.2012.

What reverberated in Poland was the speech made by Angela Merkel in Bruges in 2010, during which the Chancellor of Germany spoke of the transfer from the community method to the so-called Union method. Merkel defined it as a “combination of the Union method and coordinated activities of Member States”. In the opinion of the Chancellor, the former division into the community method and the intergovernmental method of the integration is no longer valid. On the one hand, said Merkel, the absolutisation of the community method is not justified. Not every initiative of the European Commission is the proper one, while the Council is also an important authority of the EU, which possesses democratic legitimacy. Member States are not adversaries of the EU but rather key elements of its structure. On the other hand, the community method is only effective in the areas that have already been given the Community dimension. Thus, it is not an instrument for deepening the integration but rather a technical way of acting within the borders applicable to it. Each next step in the integration is within the competences of Member States, which have to initiate and agree to transfer of further competences to the EU level. It is not the most important how Member States reach an agreement, but that we should have the same opinion on important issues. “A coordinated European position is not necessarily the result of applying the community method. Such a common position is sometimes also the result of the intergovernmental method”, said Angela Merkel giving an example of the energy policy, in which progress may be achieved only thanks to closer cooperation among governments of the Member States<sup>123</sup>.

In Germany the “Union method” is presented as a lesson learned from the euro crisis, for whose overcoming a key role was played, out of necessity, by Member States and as a method for deepening integration in areas not covered by this method so far. In Warsaw the appreciation of the European Council at the cost of the Commission and the Parliament, as it was often perceived, aroused anxiety. What is particularly criticised is that

---

**123** Speech made by Chancellor Merkel during the celebrations of the inauguration of the 61st academic year in the College of Europe in Bruges on 2 November 2010, “Nowa Europa. Przegląd Natoliński”, 1 (12) 2012, p. 138 and the following ones.



the relativisation of the community method by Germany may be treated as withdrawal of Germany from thinking in categories of the European interest, inclination to a more egoistic attitude and favouring of the “concert of superpowers” in the EU. These threats (without direct reference to Germany) were mentioned in the governmental document adopted in the spring of 2012, defining the priorities of the Polish foreign policy for the years 2012-2016<sup>124</sup>. Merkel made her speech only several days after the meeting with Nicolas Sarkozy in Deauville (October 2010), during which they reached an agreement regarding key steps to be taken in the fight with the euro crisis, before the debates within the entire European Union, which aroused severe criticism because of making politics in the duumvirate. The speech made in Bruges was treated as an intellectual justification of such activities. In particular the weakening of the European Commission is perceived in Poland as a source of risk, since it is the Commission, safeguarding not only treaties but also cohesion and solidarity in the EU that was in 2012 the main ally of Poland and other countries—“Friends of Cohesion” in negotiations over the EU’s multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020.

However, despite its peripheral position in the European Union Poland became one of the most active players in the debate on the future of the integration. In Germany the speech of Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski made in Berlin in November 2011 and his active participation in the so-called reflection group, discussing further institutional reforms in the EU, appointed by German Minister of Foreign Affairs Guido Westerwelle, received a broad and positive response. Polish and German ideas are not very divergent in this issue. The reference to the example of the American Federation, whose key element is joint responsibility for debt, used by Minister Sikorski in Berlin, aroused sceptical reactions in German audience, as it too much resembled a “transfer union”. However, the basic message of the minister, i.e. “if we consider renationalisation or collapse of the EU unacceptable, the only way is to make Europe start functioning and become more credible”, corresponds with the conviction expressed by the German elites that the response to

---

**124** Priorytety polskiej polityki zagranicznej 2012-2016, Warszawa, March 2012

the crisis must be “more Europe”. “This new European agreement must balance responsibility, solidarity and democracy as cornerstones of our political union”, said Sikorski presenting his vision of the reformed EU based on institutional changes similar to the ones proposed by Berlin, such as introduction of general election for the President of the European Commission and combining this position with the function of the President of the European Council, strengthening the supervision of the EU over budgetary policy of Member States, strengthening the Commission and reducing the number of commissioners, and election of a part of Members of the European Parliament from the European lists<sup>125</sup>. These proposals were elaborated on and supplemented in the final report of the reflection group on the future of Europe, announced on 17 September 2012<sup>126</sup>. The evidence that Westerwelle and Sikorski played a very important role in the preparation of the report and supported most demands contained in the report was their joint text published at the same time in the *New York Times*. Ministers did not only support changes in the functioning of the EU’s institutions, but also strengthening of other policies of the EU, inter alia by means of introducing majority voting in the scope of foreign and security policies and establishing the EU’s “border patrol”<sup>127</sup>. The question to what extent the concepts presented by the Polish Ministry of Foreign affairs are the reflection of the new consensus on the issues of the EU in the government and to what extent they are more independent ideas of the minister remains unanswered. As it seems, there are still differences of opinions between the interested ministries in the issues related to e.g. the “border patrol” or the role of the European Central Bank. The strongest opposition party Law and Justice and a part of elites that have similar ideas to Law and Justice unequivocally oppose the path adopted by the government as regards further steps towards a political union in the EU.

**125** Sikorski Radosław, Poland and the Future of the European Union, Berlin, 28 November 2011.

**126** *Final Report of the Future of Europe Group of the Foreign Ministers of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain, 17th September 2012*

**127** Sikorski Radosław, Westerwelle Guido, A New Vision of Europe, *New York Times*, 17.09.2012

However, what is more significant than the particular proposals whose implementation might be possible in undefined future, anyway, is the political signal coming from these joint initiatives and declarations. Active involvement of Warsaw in the debate on the future of the EU and close cooperation with Berlin are the expression of a well-thought choice. Firstly, they are aimed to emphasise the Polish ambitions to play an important role in the EU and to gain influence on the shape of the reforms being introduced. “Staying beyond the euro area, Poland has limited influences. A loud voice about the future of the EU is an attempt to act a little in advance, but that’s the only thing we can do”, said a Polish diplomat. Secondly, it is important to acknowledge that the best way to achieve this influence would be close relations with Germany, with which Poland also shares other interests, in particular economic ones. A far-reaching declaration of confidence in the western partner was made by Minister Sikorski in Berlin, who said that he is “less afraid of the German hegemony than he starts to be afraid of German inaction”. Thirdly, Poland’s support of deepening the integration is the expression of the *raison d’État*, understood as strong anchoring in the EU and in the core of integration.

For Germany Poland gained political significance at the time of the deepening of the crisis in the relations between the European Union and Great Britain. In December 2011 London refused to sign the fiscal pact, in the summer of 2012 Prime Minister David Cameron, under the pressure of the Eurosceptical wing of the Conservative Party, supported holding a referendum over the membership of Great Britain in the EU in undefined future. In the autumn of 2012 the British government announced its withdrawal from the cooperation within the EU in the field of justice and internal affairs. The increasing (self-) marginalisation of Great Britain, the country perceived as a guard of the economy based on free market and competition, means weakening of an important stream in the European economic policy for Berlin.

“Great Britain ceases to be a counterweight for countries of the South, headed by the statist France. Poland is the country that may take over this role to a certain extent”, said a high-ranking official of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Despite good relations with Germany this objective may not be accomplished, which is the subject of greatest worries in Warsaw. “We are

against creating divisions within the EU. We do not want to be pushed into the side track of the European integration”, wrote the Deputy Head of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>128</sup>. During the congress of the European People’s Party Prime Minister Donald Tusk severely criticised the concept of the Union of two speeds, in which the euro area and the other countries of the EU would have different rights. “We deal with hypocrisy when a politician talks about “more Europe” and the next day he/she talks about the necessity to split this Europe into the two different systems, i.e. euro countries and non-euro countries which are about to enter the euro area in the future. Then we deal with hypocrisy and here in Bucharest people particularly remember it when the same politician says “more Europe” and he/she says then that not all European countries should be in the Schengen Area. It is the height of hypocrisy”. The last charge related to German and French ideas to suspend the application of Schengen rules towards such Member States and candidates to the EU that do not cope with implementation of the European law in the scope of justice and interior affairs. Tusk’s criticism, which was a call for application of equal standards towards all Member States, was a characteristic expression of the position of Poland, perceiving itself as an advocate of cohesion and solidarity within the EU, even if it has to be done in opposition to Germany. At the beginning of 2012 Prime Minister Tusk defended Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban, criticised (mainly in Western Europe) for violation of standards of democracy. What played an important role, apart from solidarity within a political party (PO and the Fidesz are members of the European People’s Party), was regional solidarity and opposition against the application of double standards within the EU (Berlusconi’s case).

However, the issue of the Union of two speeds is more connected with the functioning of the institutions of the EU as a result of the reform of the eurozone than with the “political hypocrisy” criticised by Tusk in Bucharest. In Poland it is pointed out that the way of functioning of the EU has changed in the last two years. The crisis in the euro area and the necessity to quickly react made euro countries arrange actions within the euro area more frequently and more strictly. The eurogroup, i.e. meetings

---

**128** Szpunar, *op. cit.*

of Ministers of Finance of the euro area (possessing formally no competences), became the place where key decisions, often affecting the other countries, not represented in the eurogroup, are arranged. The dispute over whether Polish Minister of Finance Jacek Rostowski, as a representative of the presidency in the EU (in the second half of 2011), may take part in the meetings of the eurogroup was an example of tension evoked by this evolution. Controversies concerning the European banking supervision and the Polish participation in the supervision had a similar character. On the one hand, staying beyond the banking union would not be beneficial for Poland, as it would push Warsaw into the “second circle” of integration. On the other hand, locating the supervision at the ECB, in which Poland is not represented as a country staying out the euro area, would prevent Warsaw from affecting the decisions made by the eurogroup. Poland and Germany criticised this model, which was not the first time that these two countries had similar opinions. The solution introducing an additional supervisory body independent of the ECB and appointed by governments of all Member States of the EU makes these worries disappear. However, so far Poland has not made a final decision whether or not to join the banking supervision<sup>129</sup>.

In October 2012, when discussions about the political union got into the decisive phase, great controversies were aroused in Poland by the above-mentioned proposal (made by the German Chancellery or supported by it) to establish a separate budget for the eurozone (fiscal capacity), which, as Berlin proposed, could be supplied from the receipts from the financial transaction tax. Thus, the strengthened cooperation in finance would serve the establishment of a separate budgetary mechanism for the euro area. In Poland this idea evoked anxiety. On the one hand, in the press worries were expressed that it would adversely affect the budgetary negotiations by making Germany even more reluctant to the budget of the entire EU. On the other hand, though, in the governmental circles one could hear that this proposal was the furthest-reaching idea towards the creation of a hard core of the European Union, i.e. performance of the

---

**129** Samcik Maciej, Zwycięstwo Niemców. Unijny nadzór bankowy tylko dla dużych, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 14.12.2012

scenario rejected by Warsaw and perceived as conflicting with the lively interests of Poland.

As a German diplomat explains, the idea of such a budget (or, more accurately, “fiscal capacity”) is, from the perspective of Berlin, an element of negotiations over the comprehensive reform of the euro area: while other countries, such as France, press Germany for the introduction of instruments of joint liability for debt of Member States (euro bonds or at least a debt reduction fund), Berlin consistently rejects such a solution. A separate “budget” of the eurozone, for example supplied with receipts from the financial transaction tax, would mean meeting the expectations of the partners without abandonment of one’s own principles, since a fund of limited size would be intended for particular measures, such as reduction of the unemployment rate among the young in the countries of Southern Europe. However, it would not open a path for a permanent “transfer union”, to which Germany does not want to agree. In an interview given to several European papers in October 2012 French President Francois Hollande said: “I am for Europe of many speeds, with many different circles. That is why I support the idea to strengthen the eurogroup and to give its chairman a clear mandate. Moreover, I am also for monthly meetings at the level of countries and governments of the euro area”. Hollande supported establishing the European *avant garde* without paying attention to the other Member States of the EU. “Such opinions arouse great anxiety in us, as they may lead to a permanent crack within the EU”, said a Polish diplomat.

Polish worries stem from the conviction that the institutional and political processes taking place in the EU have their own dynamics, which cannot be completely controlled. The introduction of common procedures and institutions reserved only for the eurozone may result in further weakening of a sense of solidarity within the entire EU. The stronger fiscal integration may be followed, in more beneficial conditions after overcoming the crisis, with a will to strengthen the cooperation also in other fields, e.g. taxes or social issues. Further changes of this type lead to imposing stricter conditions for the Polish accession to the eurozone. “We already know that the conditions of Poland’s accession to the euro area will differ from the ones stipulated in the Lisbon Treaty. Not only does Poland have to agree to the fiscal pact, but it must also join the European Stability Mechanism.

Ratification of these agreements will require qualified majority in the Parliament. Depending on the political composition of the Polish Parliament at a given time, it may provoke internal political disputes or even stop the process”, warned an expert on the European law. “As a result of the crisis a question arose if the euro countries, functioning in different legal conditions of the economy management and in different economic realities from the other Member States of the EU, should not get integrated otherwise. Beyond doubt, such a scenario would lead to establishing “Europe of two speeds” and Poland would find itself in the “peripheral” part of Europe. It is not hard to predict that in the long term such a scenario would mean a significant weakening of the two most important policies adopted by the EU, i.e. the internal market and the cohesion policy, which constitute the most important factors contributing to the economic growth in Poland nowadays”<sup>130</sup>.

As German politicians and diplomats emphasise, the Union of two speeds is not in the German interest. In particular, says a high official of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the drift of Great Britain slowly distancing itself from the EU makes the value of such allies as Poland (large country, representing the free market economy) increased from the perspective of Germany. At the same time, it is the “British problem” that is one of the main catalysts of the discussion about the necessity to strengthen the integration within the eurozone, since its progress as part of EU-27 is not possible due to the obstruction of London. Moreover, because of this problem some changes (e.g. the fiscal pact) may be introduced in the course of intergovernmental agreements rather than within the existing treaties, which contributes to weakening the legal structure of the entire EU.

---

130 Szpunar, op. cit.





# Chances and threats to the Polish-German partnership for Europe

*(Piotr Buras, Janusz Reiter)*

The mutual relations between Berlin and Warsaw are for both parties not an objective as such, but an important element of their strategies in the European policy, whose significance increased at the time of the crisis. However, the impression that an ambitious plan to establish a permanent partnership between Poland and Germany in the EU is about to be implemented is premature. Without a doubt, the European Union and its international environment have undergone important, even revolutionary changes as compared with the time of formulating this concept. A change in the logics of integration resulting from the euro crisis made the relations between Poland and Berlin face up a paradoxical challenge: both parties emphasise the importance of mutual relations and willingness to cooperate, but there is a real threat today that Poland and Germany may be in two different spheres of integration as a result of the processes taking place. In other words, at the time when the relations between Poland and Germany are as close as never before, the risk that the two countries may go in different directions, if the reforms in the euro area lead to the establishment of two circles of integration, is also higher than ever before. The risk management and efforts made to prevent this pessimistic scenario from coming true will be the most important test of the Polish-German partnership in the coming years. But the dimension of this task goes far beyond the bilateral relations between Warsaw and Berlin, since the question refers to the manner of functioning of the entire EU in the conditions of deepening diversity of the integration. Is the eurozone to constitute a hard and closed core of the EU, or is it to be the avant garde, which the other members might join on condition of political will and economic capacities? Today

Germany is not only the most powerful country of the EU, without whose participation no integration project would be implemented, but it is also the most determined promoter of deepening of the integration and taking a path towards a political union. Thanks to its good economic condition, political potential, European ambitions and, last but not least, good relations with Berlin, Poland is the most important actor in the EU outside the euro area. That is why the relations between EU-17 and EU-28 after the implementation of reforms being a subject of a heated discussion today depend, to a large extent, on cooperation between these countries.

At the time of the election to the European Parliament in 2014 all key decisions related to the future of the eurozone and the entire European Union will probably be taken. At the EU summit in June 2013 the proposals of institutional reforms which were included in Herman van Rompuy's report presented at the beginning of December 2012, will be discussed. In the autumn of 2013 election will be held in Germany, a little later there will start the campaign before the election to the European Parliament. This perspective also sets the most important framework of the Polish-German cooperation in the coming months, in which the evolution of the EU will be the central issue. Beyond doubt, these relations will affect the direction of the process. The course of the debates and the content of the decisions made will affect the cooperation between the two countries. Taking into account this "coupling", the following conclusions can be drawn by Poland and Germany.

Firstly, Europe of two or more speeds is becoming the reality and one should not expect this process to be stopped. It stems from the situation in which the euro countries are determined to rescue their hitherto achievements and to ensure stable future by means of deepening of the integration. Such an evolution is in the interest of Germany as the most important member of the euro area and it is Germany that is the main promoter of many reforms being implemented. The strengthening of the euro area is also in the Polish interest, as the development of the eurozone is the best guarantee of economic stability and modernisation of Poland. It is in both countries' interest to prevent the institutional changes from leading to a permanent split or such violation of the cohesion of the EU that would hinder the future accession of pre-ins to the euro area. The reforms imple-

mented so far, such as the fiscal pact, the European Stability Mechanism, the banking union or plans to introduce a special budget for the euro area, are certainly necessary but they make the structure of the EU less and less transparent and they create new barriers for non-euro countries to access this circle. The official conditions of membership have not been changed (the criteria of the Maastricht Treaty remain in full force and effect), but the political reality is different today and it would be reckless to ignore this fact. That is why the “road to the euro” should be drafted anew, taking into account the evolution of the EU during the crisis. **The main task that should be accomplished by Germany and Poland in the coming months is to search for a model of relations between the euro area and the countries declaring their will to join the euro area in the foreseeable future that would allow to preserve as many bridges as possible between both groups or circles of integration.** In changed political and institutional conditions, the relations between the Ins and the Pre-ins should be based on more transparent principles. **Apart from the “road-map” indicating a direction towards the “real economic and monetary union” the European Union also needs a second “road-map”, defining the conditions and stages of the accession to the eurozone of the other countries willing to enter the zone.** The “road-map” of reaching the euro currency would be a political guarantee for both countries (members of the currency union and the other Member States of the EU) that the project is still open and would prevent the EU from drifting towards a more and more strengthened split into two or more circles of integration<sup>131</sup>.

Secondly, the pro-European moods in Poland and the atmosphere of confidence in the relations with Germany have not been given once for all, like good results of the Polish economy, which are an important basis for

---

**131** A concrete proposal of establishing the relations between the Ins and the Pre-ins was put forward by think-tank demoseuropa, supporting the introduction of the “associated membership” status in the euro area for the Pre-ins. See: Paweł Świeboda, Ryszard Petru, „Associate membership”. Anchoring the pre-ins in the eurozone, 5 December 2012, [http://demoseuropa.eu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1219%3A-associated-membership-anchoring-the-pre-ins-in-the-eurozone&catid=135%3A2012kom&Itemid=159&lang=en](http://demoseuropa.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1219%3A-associated-membership-anchoring-the-pre-ins-in-the-eurozone&catid=135%3A2012kom&Itemid=159&lang=en)

European ambitions of Warsaw, and the interest of Berlin in the partnership with Warsaw. **The time before the parliamentary election in Poland in 2015 (in particular the year 2013) should be used to unequivocally define the direction of the Polish policy related to the accession to the euro area as a strategic political and civilisational choice.** Initial declarations were made by Prime Minister Donald Tusk after the EU summit in December 2012. A clear definition of the Polish “road-map” related to the accession to the eurozone is a necessary argument in the negotiations over the institutional reforms in the EU and the “road-map”, postulated before, for the accession to the eurozone for the Outs. The readiness of Germany to establish the EU’s “road-map” and Poland’s political determination to accelerate the accession could be the pillars of the Polish-German understanding and cooperation at the EU level. Active involvement of the Polish government in the support of the objective to introduce the euro, of which many Polish citizens are against, is the condition of its social legitimacy. If Poland does not take advantage of the present moment, i.e. the dynamics of institutional changes in the EU, its good economic condition and good relations with Germany, to take the above-mentioned steps, negative consequences may arise for its European policy (peripheralisation or hampering of the accession to the eurozone in the coming years), for the internal debate in Poland (strengthening of the negative attitude to the euro) and for the Polish-German relations. In the last case, the long stay outside the euro area would mean a **risk of bilaterisation of relations with Germany and abandonment of the ambitious idea of partnership for Europe.** Today these relations are deeply rooted in the European context, which significantly softens the effects of differences in potentials of both countries.

Thirdly, despite the fact that the question of the new institutional structure and relations between the Ins and the Outs will be a dominant factor in the Polish-German relations, its agenda is broader. The greatest potential for conflicts in the relations between Poland and Germany lies in the energy policy. In particular in Poland there is clear anxiety that the German *Energiewende* will contribute to such changes in the European energy policy that will turn out to be disadvantageous for Polish economy. As long as both countries implement basically different strategies related

to the energy supply, the differences of interests at the European level will be maintained. After the end of the budgetary negotiations in the spring of 2013, the energy and climate policies will remain the main area of the clash between the Polish and German attitudes and concepts. However, despite these differences in the energy policy, which is not only limited to the EU's mechanisms and regulations, the potential for Polish-German cooperation does exist. It is because of *Energiewende* that Germany is interested in the expansion of interconnectors (traditional Polish demand) and larger opportunities to import energy from abroad, aimed to stabilise its system. The Connecting Europe programme may be used for strengthening the common energy market in the context of the Polish-German cooperation, which will be beneficial for both parties. Germany and Poland are keenly interested in increasing the energy efficiency (Germany – because this is the easiest way to limit the demand for energy, Poland – because of the necessity to reduce emissions), which offers a natural area for cooperation in the field of technology and economy. **In the medium- and long term, it is low-emission economy that should become the common denominator of the Polish-German cooperation in the area of energy.** Because of its resources of energy carriers and the direction of the public debate, in the coming years Poland will not become one of the “countries of the energy transformation” (*Energiewendestaaten*), with which the German government (Minister Peter Altmeier) wishes to build a coalition for the renewable energy in the EU. Nevertheless, from the perspective of modernisation of the Polish economy, the evolution towards low-emission economy (also with the use of CCS technologies, shale gas or nuclear power) is a possible and desirable path of development<sup>132</sup>. It may bring about positive effects for the economy as a whole<sup>133</sup>, although it is connected with high costs for the energy and heavy industry sectors. Germany, being the largest neighbour of Poland, who possess know-how

---

**132** Compare: Brzeziński Krzysztof, Bukowski Maciej, Niskoemisyjne dylematy. Jak ograniczyć emisje gazów cieplarnianych i co to oznacza dla polskiej gospodarki, Instytut Badań Strukturalnych, Warszawa 2011.

**133** Compare: The Cost of Meeting A 30% Reduction Target in Europe, Bloomberg New Energy Finance, 16 March 2012.

and experience in this field, may be an important partner of Poland on the way towards such a gradual transformation.

Fourthly, 2013 will be an important year as regards the strategic challenge in the EU's eastern policy, such as the selection of the path of development by Ukraine. The disillusionment with the political situation in Kiev and the course of the last election should not lead to reduced involvement of Poland and Germany in Ukraine. The stagnation in relations with eastern partners of the EU (but also the situation in countries of Northern Africa after the Arab Spring) will make the EU to think over the instruments and strategies in the neighbourhood policy. The 'more for more' strategy based on the conditionality principle, adopted in 2011, encounters certain limitations in the event that (like in Ukraine) governing elites are not inclined to cooperate so closely under the principles defined by the EU. A strategic attitude in the EU's neighbourhood policy, based to an increasing extent on interests and to a lesser extent on technocratic criteria, should be the objective of the Polish-German cooperation in this field. In the short-term Poland and Germany should cooperate closely to seize such opportunities in the relations with eastern neighbours which would enable them to maintain and strengthen their bonds with Europe. In particular, it relates to trade contacts and the visa policy. Signing the association agreement with Ukraine and Moldova at the summit of the Eastern Partnership in Vilnius would be an important step in this direction.

Fifthly, Poland and Germany should continue the cooperation in the field of the security and defence policy, aimed to strengthen this element in the EU's policy. Introduction of comprehensive institutional reforms, which have been the subject of discussions in the recent years, is not very probable in the nearest future. Both countries will also be more restrained as regards the participation in foreign military operations. **They should consider a possibility of closer cooperation in the scope of the defence policy in compliance with the pooling and sharing principle. A starting point for such talks may be the German *Anlehnungspartnerschaft* concept (partnership based on support), which is an offer of cooperation for neighbouring countries by means of closer adjustment of military potentials.** Beyond doubt, the Polish-German cooperation in this field would not only be an important project of bilateral partnership of

these countries, but also an important signal for strengthening the defence of Europe and reducing costs of military projects in case of shrinking resources.

Sixthly, the partnership of Poland and Germany may constitute a value added in the European policy only if it is not an exclusive partnership. It may be an important element of the political puzzle in Europe, but it neither conflicts with nor replaces any other formats of cooperation between both countries in the EU, in particular as regards the relations with France or the cooperation within the Visegrád Group. Because of the maintained asymmetry between the two partners, which will not disappear after the accession of Poland into the euro area, the cooperation will still be subject to structural limitations, despite increased interest of both parties in the cooperation in the EU, demonstrated in the recent years. Realistic evaluation of its potential is a condition for preventing a scenario of excessive expectations and unpleasant disillusionment, known from the past, from coming true.

**Piotr Buras** – since January 2013 Director of the Warsaw office of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), earlier journalist of *Gazeta Wyborcza*; expert on German issues. Author of “Muzułmanie i inni Niemcy. Republika berlińska wymyśla się na nowo” (Warsaw, 2011).

**Bartek Nowak** – Executive Director of the Centre for International Relations and lecturer of Vistula University. He specialises in international organisations and global governance. Graduate of Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

**Anna Dzieszowska** – studied European Studies at Maastricht University and International Relations at the University of Geneva. Since 2010 employed as an Expert in the Centre for International Relations.

**Jędrzej Trojanowski** – studied Law and International Relations at Warsaw University and International Economic Relations at Warsaw School of Economics. Since 2010 employed as a Research Associate in the Centre for International Relations.