Journal of the Institute for Western Affairs in Poznań

Quarterly

PRZEGLĄD ZACHODNI

Institute
for Western Affairs
in Poznań

I • 2013

PRZEGLĄD ZACHODNI
I, 2013

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Poznań

POLAND AND GERMANY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS

The Polish Presidency of the EU Council prompts questions about the quality of the Polish-German political partnership. This relationship undoubtedly determined the Polish Presidency to a large extent, as only through an effective collaboration with Germany can Poland successfully fulfil its European ambitions. This view is shared by a considerable part of the Polish political establishment. The coalition government of the Civic Platform and the Polish People's Party counted on Germany's support for the Polish Presidency of the EU in the second half of 2011. A success of the Polish Presidency could strengthen Poland's position among EU Member States, i.e. impel some of them to consider Polish opinions and views to a greater extent than they had before. Had this happened, Poland would probably become a more interesting European partner for the Federal Republic of Germany. Is it true then that the EU Presidency brought Poland a prestige bonus? Have Polish diplomatic actions in the European Union created favourable conditions for a more intensive partnership of Poland and Germany? The latter question refers to the role of Poland as a partner for Germany in the on-going power shift following EU enlargement. This is also a matter of importance to Germany as it is redefining its role in Europe again and trying to sustain the European impact of the French-German tandem as the tone-setting and decisive player in the EU.

BILATERAL RELATIONS IN 2011

The bilateral relations of Poland and Germany are influenced by a wider EU context. After Poland's accession to the EU, those relations simply changed because since then both partners have had different expectations. Apart from unfavourable international conditionalities, such as the Iraq Crisis, the inevitable change of old roles has become visible. The advocate-petitioner model predominant in the 1990's started to lose its relevance in the context of Poland's accession to NATO. This development became apparent in 2004 when both countries formally became equal partners in the EU.

The change of roles was apparent as various expectations of Germany and Poland diverged. Not quite understanding its neighbour, Germany perhaps underestimated Poland and its different, specific interests consequent to its geographical location to the outskirts of the EU. Disputable issues included settling relationships with Eastern Europe. Strategic differences included, in particular, shaping relations with Russia and with states that emerged from the ashes of the Soviet Union, especially Ukraine. The Polish idea of democratising Ukraine and bringing it closer to Europe as the best antidote for revisionism in Russian politics was beyond Germany's comprehension. Moreover, both partners often seemed to be deceived by the illusion that Polish-German relations could be shaped to resemble the close relations between Germany and France. It is hardly surprising then that in consequence, initiatives such as the Weimar Triangle neither could deepen the Polish-German political cooperation nor be a forum striving for agreement.[1]

Polish-German reconciliation's protagonists of the early 1990's expected that the "Polish-German community of interests" would impact Polish-German relations for ever, which was not quite realistic. This may be attributed to the gradually changing German identity apparent in the foreign policy of the SPD-Green coalition government since 1998. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder begun to emphasise the need for implementing politics of national interest within the European Union. Poland's distrust in Germany was revived, *inter alia*, in connection with the Iraq Crisis and fears that Germans might revoke their infamous *Sonderweg*, when the SPD-Green government opposed the USA's decision to invade Iraq. In Poland, a conviction grew that Poland had a mandate to voice its national interest in the EU as well. This was reflected in Poland's implacable position in negotiations on the Constitutional Treaty and, especially, in the lack of a strategic consensus among Polish political elites on the scope and depth of political cooperation with Germany when the Law and Justice party (PiS) governed in Poland. Since 2007, the coalition government of the Civic Platform and the Polish People's Party has taken a more open and cooperative attitude toward Germany. Moreover, in the last four years Donald Tusk's government has often succeeded in presenting Poland in the EU as a responsible and constructive partner, acting as an EU Member competent in financial and economic matters and as an advocate of deepening the European integration. At the same time Polish public opinion has perceived Germany as an important partner of Poland in the EU and concentrated on common challenges.[2]

The beginning of the Polish Presidency coincided with the 20th anniversary of the Polish-German Treaty of Good Neighbourship and Friendly Cooperation

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[1] *Cf.* J. Reiter (date missing), *Bilans polsko-niemieckiego Traktatu o dobrym sąsiedztwie i przyjaznej współpracy z 17.06.1991 r. 20 lat później*, "Raporty i Analizy" Center for International Relations, Warsaw, p. 16.

[2] A. Łada (2011), *Patrzymy w przyszłość. Polacy o polsko-niemieckiej współpracy i o znaczeniu historii we wzajemnych stosunkach*, „Barometr Polska – Niemcy", The Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw.

celebrated in June 2011. This symbolized the European dimension of the bilateral relations well. The ruling elites of both Poland and Germany agreed that the bilateral relations were closer than ever before. When speaking of Prime Minister Tusk, Chancellor Merkel assured: "we are cooperating very, very willingly".[3] In June 2011 the Joint Statement for the anniversary demonstrated how great importance both sides attach to the European dimension of their partnership and to the need to enhance cooperation within the EU. What has made that easier was the Polish-German agreement on postulated by Poland improvement of the situation of Polish-born citizens of Germany and other people speaking Polish who live in Germany.

In the Joint Statement both Poland and Germany committed themselves to cooperate closely and take joint initiatives within the EU. The document reads, *inter alia*, that both partners are committed to the full implementation of the Euro-Plus Pact. Poland and Germany's close cooperation for the strengthening of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Common Security and Defence Policy, including strengthening the EU's military capacities, the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership has been emphasised. Thus this agreement has covered, in part, main postulates of the upcoming Polish Presidency. A joint commitment to develop the European energy policy to boost the continent's energy security was also confirmed. To fulfil this declaration, Poland and Germany announced in another document – the special "Cooperation Programme" – their intention to intensify the political dialogue at all levels: of the presidents, parliaments and governments. Both countries have declared their commitment to intergovernmental consultations on a regular basis, also in the form of joint cabinet meetings on specific topics. What is peculiar in the European politics' perspective, Polish-German regular consultations are to be held ahead of the European Council's meetings in order to coordinate the positions of Germany and Poland and to formulate joint initiatives. More intense personnel exchange programmes are to help deepen cooperation between ministries.[4]

One section of the Cooperation Programme is dedicated to joint initiatives at the EU level. The decision on close cooperation and joint action and initiatives within the framework of the CFSP is reiterated there as well as acting together in areas of financial and economic issues of European significance, promotion of sustainable growth and competitiveness, and Poland's adoption of the Euro. Positions on issues of economic governance and financial stability in the EU are to be consulted and reconciled. From the Polish Presidency's perspective, the declaration of close cooperation on the 2012 EU budget and the EU Multiannual Financial Framework after

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[3] K. Schuller, *Nie waren sie so eng wie heute*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" 22.06.2011.

[4] The Declaration of the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany signed on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of signing the Treaty on Good Neighbourhood and Friendly Cooperation: Neighbours and Partners http://www.warschau.diplo.de/con- tentblob/3198178/Daten/1391448/; The Cooperation Programme adopted by the governments of the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of signing the Treaty on Good Neighbourhood and Friendly Cooperation http://www.warschau.diplo.de/contentblob/3198180/Daten/1391450/Projektliste–dl.pdf.

2013 was of great importance. Moreover, a closer cooperation within the framework of the EU fiscal policy and the Common Agricultural Policy was announced. In regard to the Common Security and Defence Policy, an intention was expressed to develop the civil and military capacities for more effective crisis response in the EU. Lastly, as implied in the Cooperation Programme, both parties would want to pursue the Eastern Policy within the Weimar Triangle's framework, most importantly in dialogue with Russia with the view to implement the planned Partnership for Modernisation (which the EU planned to establish) and with countries participating in the Eastern Partnership. Moreover, Germany and Poland intend to work together toward enlargement of the Eastern Partnership.

In these documents, a co-dependency of good Polish-German relations and Poland's becoming a stronger player in the EU is clearly visible. In other words, making the partnership stronger could support Polish European policy and, consequently, Poland could gain more political leverage in the EU. To the coalition government of the Civic Platform and the Polish People's Party, that co-dependency means that Poland's aspirations can be fulfilled only through close cooperation with Germany. Of course, both partners have their own strategic interests and would not give them up. This refers to the issue of energy security in particular. The dispute over the Nord Stream pipeline, in particular its disadvantageous for Poland route that could block a further development of the Świnoujście harbour, has not ceased though it was diplomatically hushed up for the time of the anniversary meeting. Thus, in 2011 the partnership created a leverage necessary to boost the Polish-German cooperation at the EU level.

Almost concurrent events on the Polish political arena created favourable conditions for the above. The Civic Platform won parliamentary election in October 2011 and thus the continuation of the Polish foreign policy and Poland's cooperation with Germany were confirmed. German observers have underlined that though in Poland there is no consensus on the Polish-German relationship, the government of the Civic Platform can pursue its policy effectively thanks to parliamentary majority.[5] The fact that the abovementioned programme of comprehensive and very close cooperation between Poland and Germany covers EU's financial perspective for 2014-2020, energy policy and climate change issues, clearly highlights Poland's hope for Germany's decisive support in these areas. In 2011 Poland, naturally, wanted to indicate that it would treat Germany's involvement in pursuing Polish postulates as a test of its attitude to close cooperation for European integration. On the eve of the inauguration of the Polish Presidency of the EU Council, Germany officially declared its support. German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said that "Poland will give the impulses to the European Union that we need today to move Europe forward. [...] Poland is known for its resolute Euro-enthusiasm and dynamic economic growth."[6].

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[5] A. Quirin, S. Bastos, *Polen auf Stabilitätskurs*, "DGAPanalyse kompakt" Oktober 2011, No. 8, p. 6.

[6] R. Romaniec, *Prezydencja Polski w UE: Berlin oczekuje i wspiera*, 1.07.2011, http:__www.dw-world.de_dw_article_0,,15203479,00.html.

SIGNIFICANCE DISPROPORTIONALITY OF POLAND AND GERMANY

Polish-German cooperation on EU issues, so enthusiastically announced in the second half of 2011 in connection with the Polish Presidency, makes one critically re-think its workability. It needs to be underlined again that increasing the cooperation within EU depends primarily on Germany's approach. Firstly, some most important conditionalities should be pointed to. They reveal that both partners have played different roles and have different potential to impact European policies and that, *inter alia*, the need to discuss and shape joint interests, especially in the area of the EU Foreign Policy, is urgent.

To start with, generally both partners define their roles in the EU somewhat differently. Germany's role is to initiate, shape and moderate changes in the area of integration (also thanks to its close cooperation with France). Poland, until now, has not been considered, and has not considered itself, to be a creator of change that feels co-responsible for its implementation. Only occasionally Poland displayed its European aspirations e.g. while postulating to retain the voting system defined in the Treaty of Nice. However, in that case Poland's actions were neither effective nor constructive as it did not find allies. The current financial crisis in the Eurozone might be contributing to a slight re-definition of the mentioned disproportionality of the roles played by Germany and Poland. Poland becomes to be perceived as a reliable partner in economic and financial matters, though it is not a member of the Eurozone. Positive official reactions of Merkel's government to the speech given by Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski addressed to the elite audience of the German Association for Foreign Policy (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik*)* in Berlin on 28 November 2011[7] seem to confirm that in Germany's political calculation how to resolve the Eurozone crisis, the importance of Poland grows.[8]

Secondly, both states have different, to a lesser or greater extent, visions of the EU's future. Germany is shifting away from the vision of a federal Europe toward the French model of exercising international policy. This does not mean that Germany seeks independence on the international arena. The vision of a federation is waning, as the EU is increasingly heterogenic due to its enlargement, and the post-war elites who considered integration, as Chancellor Helmut Kohl put it, to be a matter of war and peace, are exiting the political scene. Poland favours the vision of an EU as a strong community and is sensitive to any ideas of tuning the EU to the music played by superpowers. Nevertheless, there is still much room for shared interests and dis-

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[7] "Poland and the future of the European Union", Radosław Sikorski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Berlin, 28 November 2011 r. http://www.msz.gov.pl/files/docs/komunikaty/20111128BERLIN.

[8] Opinions of this sort were formulated by German experts on Poland, when asked by PAP to evaluate the Polish Presidency. See: *Niemcy o polskiej prezydencji: Polska strażnikiem jedności w Unii Europejskiej* http://forsal.pl/artykuly/578986.

integration is not in the interest of Germany or Poland. What matters is making the functioning of the EU more efficient.

Thirdly, the crisis in the Eurozone induced Germany's partners to approve of Germany unofficially taking over the managerial role in the area of corrective actions. The question is whether in this context Germany, which is more and more of an apparent EU leader, is actually interested in tightening the partnership with Poland and to what extent Poland is an attractive EU partner for Germany. What most certainly matters here is the strategic aspect: Poland is an important ally in establishing all kinds of coalitions of Member States to carry out projects in line with Germany's interests. One might wonder whether cooperation with Poland is useful and necessary for Germany, both in the areas of its European and foreign policies. This question awaits a coherent answer. It seems that until now Berlin has primarily valued Poland's assets in the dimension external to the EU, though Poland is an increasingly interesting partner in EU affairs owing to its positive approach to Eurozone reforms and, in that respect, being a model EU Member State interested in stronger EU integration.

THE POLISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU COUNCIL AND THREE (UNEQUIVALENT) AREAS OF TIGHTENING STRATEGIC COOPERATION

The Polish Presidency was like a converging lens focusing the Polish-German partnership's potential and limitations. It could be clearly seen that strengthening the cooperation of Poland and Germany covered corrective actions in the Eurozone, and challenges in the implementation of the EU Eastern Policy, i.e. settlement of relations between the EU and Eastern European states, i.e. with those that aspire to joining the EU – Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, without tarnishing EU relations with Russia as the latter, to a lesser or greater extent, considers those countries to be in its zone of influence. Closer collaboration of Poland and Germany also includes the Common Security and Defence Policy.

First and foremost, Germany had great expectations for Poland and its European involvement in the EU Foreign Policy. The cabinet of Donald Tusk has a good reputation and is perceived to be capable of stimulating European integration, as Polish citizens generally support the EU.[9] Poland's relatively stable economic and financial situation was also relevant, as reflected by Poland's inclusion in the group of the so-called Northern EU Member States that take care of fiscal stabilisation of their national budgets. In the face of the crisis, the government of Chancellor Merkel hoped that Poland, as an EU Member State aspiring to join the Eurozone, would support the corrective actions undertaken by the Franco-German tandem in the area of finance without much reservation and in contrast to the UK which fears fiscalisa-

[9] P. M. Kaczyński, *Polish Council Presidency 2011. Ambitions and limitations*, "Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies" 2011:3 op, p. 47.

tion of the Economic and Monetary Union. The inclusion of Poland, a candidate to the Eurozone, in the decision-making structures would reduce the impact of the UK on ten Member States which are not in the Eurozone and could disintegrate the opposition against the euro.[10] The issue of limiting Member States' budget sovereignty raises serious doubts in Poland. A major concern is that decisions taken in the group of the 17 Eurozone members will apply to Poland to a greater extent, and that Poland will be marginalised in the EU in result of the deepening of fiscal cooperation in the Eurozone. Despite such doubts, Poland's priority is to fix the EU and continue the European project. That is why while presiding the EU Council, Poland demanded to be included in discussions and structures where decisions on the future of the euro are taken, though it is not a member of the Eurozone.[11]

Polish politicians wanted the Presidency to be conducive to tightening Polish-German cooperation. However, numerous limitations hindered the implementation of the partnership scenario. Structural disparities are still there and mainly in the area which is now the most urgent issue in the EU. Poland is not part of the Monetary Union, and the sovereign debt crisis implies the risk that the EU will be divided into groups of various speeds. It ought to be strongly underlined that for Poland, this entails the risk of being pushed out from the main stream of European integration and thus its limited role in the EU. Therefore, Poland took intense diplomatic steps, including the mentioned speech of the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs in Berlin, to support German initiatives aimed at saving the Eurozone, and to include Poland in the discussion on the directions and scope of corrective measures and reforms. That effort was partly successful. Chancellor Merkel, at the Bundestag, and then at the EU summit crucial for the saving of the Eurozone, declared Germany's readiness to support Poland's inclusion but without the right to vote.[12] Later, on 11 January 2012, Eurozone members decided to exclude non-Eurozone members from negotiations on the "fiscal union" around a single table (Poland's negotiating proposal was called "participating-non-voting") regardless of those EU Member States' aspirations to adopt the common currency.[13] In essence, the issue was whether or not Eurozone members should hold their exclusive meetings. Moreover, during its Presidency, Poland confirmed its pro-European approach by taking concrete initiatives. Poland tried to mediate between finance ministers from the Eurozone and the remaining Member States[14] and to initiate further remedial measures in the area of finance.

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[10] *Raport Grupy Kopernika nr 21* (Dieter Bingen, Darmstadt; Kazimierz Wóycicki, Warsaw), December 2011, p. 2.

[11] *Nowy traktat euro – otwarty dla wszystkich*, 3.12.2011. http://biznes.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/572201; *Sikorski: nasz interes – być w grupie decydentów, zanim przyjmiemy euro*, 5.12.2011. http://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/artykuly/572743.

[12] *Merkel: Polska może przyłączyć się do nowego paktu stabilności euro*, 2.12.2011. http://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/artykuly/571890.

[13] T. Bielecki, *Kopenhaga to nie Warszawa*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" 12.01.2012.

[14] *Co zawiera "sześciopak" zatwierdzony we Wrocławiu*, 13.09.2011. http://biznes.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/548422.

Generally, Poland's involvement in this area was judged successful. As a result, this was to strengthen Poland's position in the EU and make Poland listened to while debating the future of Europe.[15]

Another reason inclining Germany to pursue long-term cooperation with Poland is of **geo-strategic** character and concerns Poland's location and its **political aspirations** in Eastern Europe. From Germany's perspective, these aspirations are ambivalent and generally hamper the convergence of Poland's and Germany's interests in Eastern Europe. Earlier on, Poland's specific geo-political interests were considered to be a ballast encumbering any possible cooperation and that referred to Poland's involvement both in the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine and support for Georgia during the Russia-Georgia War of 2008.

Generally speaking, Poland and Germany share a common interest in developing EU relations with Eastern European states.[16] The main stake in this strategy is to stabilise varied political systems and their democratisation, and to strengthen economic relations. Of course, Poland and Germany differ in their understanding of their own involvement in Eastern Europe, and thus the involvement of the EU there. The partially divergent interests of both partners in the area of the Eastern Policy can be easily spotted. It needs to be underlined that at the same time the Eastern Policy is the area where Polish-German cooperation opportunities within the EU are most visible.

Differences stem from the geographical location of Poland and security issues in general. Poland borders on an area which has different political standards and predictability and thus is exposed to cross-border risks to say the least. Germany is surrounded by friends; its neighbours are democratic states that are predictable and do not generate risky internal situations. It is the limited predictability of Eastern Europe that is troublesome for Poland. Poland is most exposed to that low predictability and its consequences, though new threats are of concern to the entire EU. These differences constitute the basis, as well as the manifestation of different security cultures of Poland and Germany.[17] Although Poland and Germany share the belief that military threats are non-existent or declining, their opinions on the gradation of risks varies. Germany believes that internal threats are most important. This follows from its concerns over uncontrolled migration, cross-border crime, terrorism and cybercrime. In Poland, the relevance of the above is not played down, but more attention is drawn to geo-political dimensions, i.e. threats related to the internal instability of Eastern European states, tendencies to marginalise weaker states of Eastern Europe in relations between the West and Russia, and the limiting of their political role. In

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[15] P. M. Kaczyński, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

[16] *Cf.* remarks of E. Kaca, A. Łada, *Jaka polityka wobec Rosji? Perspektywa Polski i Niemiec*, "Analizy i opinie", Institute of Public Affairs, no. 111, September 2010, p. 2ff.

[17] K. Malinowski, *Kultura bezpieczeństwa narodowego: koncepcja i możliwości zastosowania*, in: K. Malinowski (ed.) (2003), *Kultura bezpieczeństwa narodowego w Polsce i Niemczech*, Poznań, pp. 15-46.

Poland, its territory defence, ensured by NATO membership, is of much greater importance than in Germany, as Germany is surrounded by stable neighbours and is not directly exposed to the risks generated in Eastern Europe.

The second and probably most important factor is the relevance and place of Russia in Poland's and Russia's policies. This is most clearly visible in the area of energy security, where different approaches to Russia and different interests are most striking.[18] Undoubtedly, the objective of the Federal Republic of Germany is to have more impact on Polish ideas on the EU's Eastern Policy and their elaboration within the EU, i.e. Germany strives to harmonise Polish geo-political aspirations with Germany's views on the EU Eastern Policy. Until now, these goals have been divergent. Germany has been prone to support the Eastern Partnership project "owing to the changes in the previous enlargement strategy and the will to develop the capacity of the European Union to act beyond the EU", while Poland "perceived this initiative as a step toward the future eastern enlargement of the European Union".[19] Germany, however, has had some concerns about the Eastern Partnership programme so strongly promoted. Germany has worried that the Eastern Partnership will be interpreted by Russia as an attempt to exclude Russia from its privileged cooperation with the EU, to hinder the signing of the exclusive Pact for Modernisation and as an interference into Russia's sphere of influence. The basic reservation has been that among the Eastern Partnership states, there is no partner that could guarantee the success of the EU initiative. To provide an example, the agreement with Ukraine has been hampered by the rule of President Yanukovych, who has been in two minds about whether he should support the European orientation in Ukraine's foreign policy or sacrifice closer cooperation with the EU to stifle democratic opposition. Also the issue of the Arab revolution, which the EU planned to support with financial aid, worked to the detriment of any possible tightening of Polish-German cooperation in Eastern Europe. The government of Chancellor Merkel lacks sufficient involvement and interest in Eastern Policy issues, which hinders both the signing of the Partnership for Modernisation with Russia and the strengthening of the Eastern Partnership.[20] Recently, in Germany, prominent persons have spoken up about Germany's passive policy toward the Eastern Partnership. They have called for the tightening of cooperation with Poland as the state that is particularly interested in the project. The combination of Polish and German interests would reinforce the effectiveness of undertaken activities and would lead to winning other EU Mem-

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[18] B. Molo, *Znaczenie Rosji dla bezpieczeństwa energetycznego Niemiec*, in: E. Cziomer (ed.) (2006), *Nowa rola międzynarodowa Niemiec*, "Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe" no. 4 (III), Cracow, p. 237ff.

[19] J. J. Węc, *Relacje polsko-niemieckie w Unii Europejskiej*, "Przegląd Zachodni" 2010, no. 3, s.163. See also: M. Stolarczyk (2010), *Polska i Niemcy wobec polityki wschodniej Unii Europejskiej stosunków z Rosją w pierwszej dekadzie XXI wieku*, "Rocznik Integracji Europejskiej" (UAM), no. 4, p. 56.

[20] S. Meister, *Deutsche Ostpolitik. Ist eine Partnerschaft mit Polen möglich?*, "DGAPanalyse kompakt" September 2011, No. 7, p. 5.

ber States for the cause, as well as winning the majority required to shape the EU's foreign policy.[21]

The gradual improvement of Polish-Russian relations, and especially the fact that Tusk's government searches for a more permanent *modus vivendi* with Russia, is assessed by Germany as conducive to better Polish-German cooperation in the area of the EU's Eastern Policy, and – in result – in the field of the Eastern Partnership, the project so dear to Poland. The same applies to trilateral cooperation within the German-Polish-Russian trio. As specified in the abovementioned Cooperation Programme of June 2011, Merkel and *Auswärtiges Amt* are interested in supporting this new "opening" in relations with Russia and in establishing joint trilateral cooperation platforms. In a nutshell, Germany is interested in including Poland in the dialogue with Russia, on condition that this will not interfere with the bilateral Germany-Russia agenda focused on energy and trade issues. The point is mainly to smooth out tensions and lessen Poland's mistrust in Germany's intentions and the scope of non-EU bilateral cooperation between Germany and Russia. Are Poland and Germany alone capable of delineating the EU's policy toward Russia? That is highly unlikely.[22] Germany might place less emphasis on sustaining its strategic partnership with Russia in the future once LPG technologies and prospects of shale gas extraction advance. The above developments might open Merkel's government to Poland's arguments concerning the establishment of a single energy market in the EU.[23]

Eastern Europe backslid in two dimensions: its democratisation and relations between states of the region and the EU. This lapse has had a destructive impact on the project of tightened Polish-German cooperation in the medium and long run. In consequence, this might result in the failure of Poland's Eastern Partnership initiative and, consequently, weaken Polish political assets in the EU. The issue of democratisation and drawing Eastern European states to the EU through the Eastern Partnership, as the binder and drive of Polish-German cooperation, would become obsolete. Symptoms of such an unfavourable configuration in the EU's Eastern Policy have surfaced with Ukrainian President Yanukovych despite the successful closure of negotiations. The EU's failure to sign the Association Agreement with Ukraine in December 2011, was due to the reservations of, *inter alia*, Germany[24] and ought to be interpreted as a serious weakening of the Eastern Partnership project and as a significant complication for Polish diplomacy abroad.

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[21] *Deutsche Außenpolitik und östliche Partnerschaft. Positionspapier der Expertengruppe Östliche Partnerschaft* (Markus Meckel, Georg Milbradt, Friedbert Pflüger, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, Rainder Steenblock, Rita Süssmuth, Günter Verheugen, Karsten D. Vogt), (ed.) I. Hahn, G. Schuch, "DGAPstandpunkt", Februar 2012, No.1, p. 2.

[22] M. Wojciechowski, *Polska i Niemcy ustawiają Unię wobec Rosji*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" 12.11.2001.

[23] J. Ćwiek-Karpowicz, *Nowy etap niemiecko-rosyjskiej współpracy energetycznej?*, "Biuletyn PISM" no. 79, 03.08.2011, p. 2.

[24] G. Gnauck, *Erst Freiheit, dann Geld. Wie soll die EU mit der Ukraine umgehen? Das Land wird immer autoritärer, aber es will ein Assozierungsabkommen der Union*, "Die Welt" 15.11.2011.

The third domain favourable to the deepening of cooperation within the EU is the Common Security and Defence Policy. During its Presidency, Poland intended to promote issues related to that policy by developing common projects in close cooperation with Germany and France (the Weimar Triangle).[25] Another favourable circumstance was the Polish-French agreement on cooperation for the Common Security and Defence Policy of 2010 and the joint initiative of Poland, Germany and France on streamlining the Common Security and Defence Policy. The initiative was presented to High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy Catherine Ashton in December 2010.[26] Proposals of the Weimar Triangle were included in the High Representative's special report of July 2011 addressed to foreign affairs ministers of EU Member States. The position adopted by Poland during its Presidency suited Germany's expectations perfectly. Poland, by adopting the role of an inspirer of growth plans, had a chance to foster a framework for future progress.[27] Polish postulates concerned reviving the Common Security and Defence Policy as an EU security framework. Poland pragmatically approached the need to revise this initiative in the face of decreasing military budgets in Member States and new national challenges. There were three postulates: to establish permanent planning and command structures in the EU, to reform EU Battlegroups with the view to integrate civil-military operations, and "to pool and share" the resources.[28] Poland met Germany's expectations, as it supported the need to develop the Common Security and Defence Policy also in the civilian dimension, i.e. establishment of unified civil-military planning and conduct structures and its headquarters for managing EU missions, and what follows, making the actions of Battlegroups more civilian. Proposing the above, Poland drew closer to Germany's concepts of security by putting more emphasis on unburdening the *stricte* military dimensions and seeing the need for including civil components.

In reference to the Common Security and Defence Policy, the UK's position against the establishment of EU headquarters undermined Polish proposals. Moreover, the UK prefers its bilateral military cooperation with France. That is why France has become the weak link in Poland's plans of enlivening the Common Security and Defence Policy. This was revealed during the NATO's intervention in Libya in 2011, when France prioritised its bilateral cooperation with the USA and the UK within NATO structures. Poland and Germany did not participate in the Libyan NATO operation. There are disproportions in the military potential of Poland, France, the UK and Germany as well as different preferences concerning the purpose

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[25] K.-O. Lang, D. Schwarzer, *Das Weimarer Dreieck jetzt stärken und nutzen*, SWP-Aktuell 31, Juni 2011.

[26] L.-M. Clouet, A. Marchetti, *Ungewisse Zukunft der gemeinsamen Sicherheitsund Verteidigungspolitik. Notwendige deutsch-französische Reflexionen*, DGAPanalyse, September 2011, No. 6, p. 14.

[27] C. Major, F. Wassenberg, *Polens ambitionierte GSVP-Agenda*, "SWP-Aktuell" 34, August 2011, p. 4.

[28] *Siemoniak: inicjatywa Pooling and Sharing – polityką otwartych drzwi*, "Gazeta Wyborcza" 23.09.2011.

of the Common Security and Defence Policy.[29] While France and the UK prefer to advance some areas of military cooperation and joint military operations, Poland and Germany are interested in developing military cooperation mainly in non-combat fields, such as logistics and training as yet another tool for strengthening political cooperation. Also the German-French cooperation has weakened, which became clear if compared with the intensity of Paris-London cooperation. What is more, France expressed its disappointment with Germany's declining involvement in the CSDP.[30] In those circumstances, the chances that Polish ambitions would be fulfilled were very slim. The French-British bilateral cooperation stood in Poland's way right from the outset.

Although the Polish Presidency did not produce significant effects in the area of deepening its cooperation with Germany in the CSDP, its efforts were not completely futile. What the Presidency managed to bring about was the prospect of tightening military cooperation between the Weimar Triangle countries. In July 2011 Poland, Germany and France signed a declaration that the so-called Weimar Triangle Combat Group would reach its operational capacity in 2013 and joint Polish-German-French work on deepening the military and arms/equipment cooperation started.[31]

The next conditionality unfavourable to the tightening of cooperation between Poland and Germany was the lack of agreement between EU Member States on the shape of the Common Security and Defence Policy due to the UK's opposition. The UK was in favour of maintaining the primacy of national commands in the performance of EU operations and rejected the concept of establishing an EU command headquarters. Similarly, the lack of France's support weakened the initiative. At the end of the Presidency, Poland reported a lack of progress in the area of the Common Security and Defence Policy.[32] Poland did not succeed either in advancing the *sharing and pooling* idea or in redefining Battlegroups and establishment of the EU headquarters.[33]

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[29] *Cf.* R. Kempin, *Ohne Sicherheit kein Europa – Berlin und Paris müssen bei der GSVP kooperieren*, SWP, Berlin 31.10.2011.

[30] L.-M. Clouet, A. Marchetti, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[31] The work resulted in drafting the report titled *Weimar Defence Cooperation – Projects to Respond to the European Imperative* which was prepared jointly by the Polish Institute of International Affairs, the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik and the Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques [Marcel Dickow, Hilmar Linnenkamp, Jean-Pierre Maulny/Marcin Terlikowski] http://www.pism. pl/publikacje/raporty/; see also: *Weimar triangle: How the defence cooperation would play out*, Defence Dataline Group 02.12.2011 http://www.defenceiq.com.

[32] J. Hale, *Poland Plays Down Pooling and Sharing Expectations*, "Defense News" 7 November 2011 http://www.defensenews.com/index.php.

[33] *Eksperci surowo oceniają prezydencję*, PAP, 28.12.2011 http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/raporty/polskie-przewodnictwo-w-ue/49834...

CONCLUSIONS

The importance of Poland as a valuable and important partner of Germany was visible in Germany's declaratory policy. Merkel's government attempted to underline the significance it ascribes to the partnership with Poland. An important factor contributing to the good climate in German-Polish relations was the pro-European attitude of the Polish public opinion and the Civic Platform and the Polish People's Party's coalition government. Poland counted on Germany and hoped that its support would facilitate closer cooperation at the EU forum and, possibly, to co-shape some EU policies. Tightening the bilateral political cooperation and supporting Germany in implementing corrective actions in the Eurozone or, in other words, a successful Polish-German collaboration and supporting the leading role of Germany, from the Polish perspective not only was an expression of Poland's general foreign policy objectives; there was a concrete expectation as well. Poland hoped that the Federal Republic of Germany would grant Poland its badly needed support during negotiations on the 2014-2020 EU financial perspective in the area of energy policy and climate issues. This support should be treated by Poland as a confirmation of Germany's intentions concerning cooperation for European integration.

However, from the perspective of Germany, Poland's significance during its EU Presidency was limited due to a few factors:

- Poland is not a member of the Eurozone;
- Germany prefers close cooperation with France at the expense of Polish postulates regarding Poland's participation in shaping remedial measures within the Eurozone;
- divisions in the EU and the emergence of two-speed economy;
- unfavourable situation in Eastern Europe, i.e. the standstill in democratisation processes in Belarus, lack of a clearly pro-Western and pro-European course in Ukrainian politics and democratisation backslide;
- tendency of France and the UK to play together in the EU to strengthen independence of their military projects and actions and their conditioned willingness to participate in the European project, i.e. that they retain the autonomy of their powers in the EU.

Should an unfavourable constellation of interests emerge or one that would underline differences and obstacles, it is likely that Germany's involvement in transforming its close political cooperation with Poland into a close multifaceted partnership would be lesser. The hopes are that it will be at least similar to the German-French partnership. An important task of Germany is to persuade France to get more involved in French-German-Polish trilateral cooperation. Although Poland belongs to a different category of EU Member States, the Presidency demonstrated that Poland feels highly responsible for the fate of the EU.

ABSTRACT

The Polish Presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011 was determined by the context of relations with Germany. Poland's significance to Germany as a valuable and important EU partner was perceptible in the friendly declarations of Merkel's government. One of the crucial elements of this encouraging atmosphere was the pro-European attitude of the Polish public opinion and the ruling PO-PSL coalition. Poland relied on Germany's support to engage in closer cooperation on the EU arena and possibly even create EU policy in certain areas. However, during the EU Presidency, Poland's significance for Germany was limited by the following factors: Poland stays outside the Eurozone; Germany prefers close cooperation with France at the expense of Poland's postulates on participation in shaping remedial measures within the Eurozone; divisions within the EU and the emergence of a two-speed economy; unfavourable situation in Eastern Europe viz. lack of progress in the democratisation of Belarus and of clearly pro-EU orientation of Ukraine accompanied by regress in democratisation of this country; a tendency on the part of France and the UK to individually reinforce their military role within the EU.