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*Blyzniak O.A., National University of Ostroh Academy***THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP IN POLAND'S FOREIGN POLICY**

The eastern dimension of the EU policies was implemented under the European Neighborhood Policy. Eventually, the southern and eastern dimensions emerged as well. Poland joined the discussions that arose in the light of these changes and took a clear position on the need to establish and implement an effective eastern policy of the European Union regarding the countries located to the east of its borders. Poland initiated the Eastern Partnership with the support of Sweden and tried to form a group of its supporters in the EU. At first, such an interest of Poland in its eastern neighbors was motivated more by its geographical proximity and significant historical and economic ties, but today, security has become the dominant factor. As the ideologue of the new format of relations with the EU, Poland offered the countries under the Eastern Partnership a quite ambitious cooperation project. However, such plans of this country did not always find support in the EU. During its Presidency of the EU Council, Poland managed to do much for the implementation of the Eastern Partnership. Notably, the second Eastern Partnership Summit was held in Warsaw. The implementation of the Eastern Partnership produced different views on this project in the political establishment and common citizens of Poland varying from delight to criticism. Despite some difficulties, Poland continues to view the eastern direction of its foreign policy as its priority and the one that requires its intervention, support, and resources. Taking into account the current challenges and threats, Poland is particularly interested in the stable predictable and neighborly relations with the countries of the Eastern Partnership. Thus, Poland seems to be guided by the need to ensure its own safety. The cooperation with the countries under the Eastern Partnership is strategic and refers to the national interests of Poland.

Keywords: *the Eastern Partnership, Poland, the European Union, integration, foreign policy*

The formulation of the problem. Among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that have declared their intentions and started the integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures, Poland clearly stated its position concerning the need to establish and implement an effective Eastern policy of the European Union (EU). At first, this desire of Poland was dictated more by the geographical proximity and historical and economic ties, but now security has become the dominant factor. Therefore, the eastern focus of Poland's foreign policy is directly related to the national interest and, consequently, is a subject of scientific interest of a wide range of researchers.

The analysis of studies and publications on the presented issue. The research of Dariusz Milczarek and Olga Barbarska is devoted to the problematic formation and implementation of the EU's Eastern policy. Mariusz Maszkiewicz has analyzed the issue of Poland's Eastern policy, its concepts, and interpretations. A Polish researcher Tomasz Stempniewski is conducting an extensive research on the proposed topic. An important contribution to the research of the issue has also made by Ukrainian scientists, including Olha Shapovalova, Oksana Dobrzanska, Volodymyr Manzhola, Tatyana Sydoruk, and others.

The setting of objectives. Despite the aforementioned political discourse, there is a need for further research of the priority policies of Poland and the EU regarding its eastern neighbors that would include the study of the new challenges and threats that Europe is facing today.

The purpose of the article is to examine the contribution of Poland to the development and implementation of the Eastern Partnership program as well as the factors that influence the country's interest in its eastern neighbors.

The presentation of main material. Poland entered the EU in 2004. The countries that were the candidates for the entry to the EU at the same time with Poland included the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Poland began to actively form a support group of its eastern neighbors. Among the aforementioned states, this country demonstrated the greatest interest in its eastern neighbors, which was influenced by the following factors:

- economic (interests in trade, investment, energy, labor market, etc.);
- political (eastern politics is a matter of national interest of Poland);
- security (being a neighbor with the post-Soviet space dictates the need to ensure security and stability in Central and Eastern Europe and Poland, in particular);

- historical (great historical ties between the countries, competence regarding areas of social life);
- status (Poland's desire to become an expert in eastern policy and the main advocate for the countries under the Eastern Partnership);
- cultural and other factors.

In 2004, the EU proposed its eastern and southern neighbors a new format of relations called European Neighborhood Policy, the Eastern direction of which eventually evolved into the Eastern Partnership. Poland initiated the latter with the support of Sweden [12, p. 13]. Having become the EU member, Poland joined the discussion of the eastern dimension of the EU policies. By that time, two vectors have become clear: Polish and German [9, p. 95]. The latter focused mainly on relations with Russia while the Polish project concerned the countries of Eastern Europe. Poland successfully used the situation for its initiative when France offered the EU to support Mediterranean Union (the so-called southern direction). This country of «Old Europe» has been against the intensification of the relations with eastern countries for a long time. However, in exchange for the support of the southern direction, France was ready to support the eastern one. At the same time, Russia caused skeptical attitude towards itself when it first provoked the armed conflict in Georgia and then found itself at the center of the so-called gas crisis in January 2009. These factors were decisive in uniting Europe, and, in March 2009, the Eastern Partnership was launched for six countries: Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Poland as the ideologist of such format of relations with the EU offered the countries of the Eastern Partnership, the following:

- first, achieving the EU standards by the partner countries through the proposed financial projects supported by the united Europe;
- second, the signing of the association agreements;
- third, the establishment of free trade areas;
- fourth, the creation of simplified conditions for the movement of citizens and, in the future, the abolition of the visa regime;
- fifth, the support for civil society (Poland initiated the creation of the European Foundation for Democracy).

In addition, Poland believed the integration of the partner countries to the EU possible if those countries met the requirements. Finally, Warsaw offered cooperation in the education, science, and culture sectors and forecasted the development of cross-border cooperation. A special place was given to Ukraine (there was a possibility of its acquiring the EU membership in the future).

However, such ambitious plans of Poland did not always find support in the EU. The following prevented this process:

- the position of some influential EU countries (Germany, France);
- a weak and sometimes inconsistent policy of the partner countries of the Eastern Partnership;
- the ineffectiveness of the political elites in the post-Soviet countries, their corruption, and their belonging to the business community;
- Russia's political ambitions concerning the Eastern Partnership countries.

Consequently, not all ambitious ideas of the Polish-Swedish project were reflected in the final declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit (May 2009), in particular, the idea of the possibility of the full EU membership of the countries in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus [11].

Ultimately, the Polish project was significantly emasculated while the EU stated that the objectives of the Eastern Partnership should include the following:

- the development and maintenance of close neighborly relations and democracy;
- cooperation in the economic sphere (the establishment of an economic union between the parties and a free-trade area with the EU);
- energy security;
- visa liberalization;
- the reduction of the conflict in the region and prevention of any potential conflicts;
- the fight against illegal migration and corruption as well as cooperation concerning environmental protection [11].

In 2011, Poland held the Presidency in the EU Council. In the period of its chairmanship in the structure, Warsaw identified the support and promotion of the Eastern Partnership among the top priorities. Notably, the second Eastern Partnership Summit was held in Warsaw on September 29-30,

2011. Poland has spent its effort on the EU enhancing its cooperation with the EU partner countries, in particular, agreeing to include them in the EU common market, confirming the intention of establishing a visa-free regime, and enhancing cooperation in various sectors. Most importantly, the Warsaw Declaration included the increase in funding of the EU initiative and the completion of the negotiations concerning the Association Agreement with Ukraine [5, p.72]. As far as Georgia and Moldova were concerned, a compromise was reached concerning the free market. Poland initiated the creation of Business Forum of the Eastern Partnership, assisted in the organization of the 3rd Civil Society Forum, and hosted the delegations of such institutions of the Eastern Partnership as the Eastern Partnership Parliamentary Assembly (the Euronest) and the Eastern Partnership Culture Congress [5, p. 135]. During its Presidency of the EU Council, Poland organized a meeting of government officials, leaders, and experts aimed at sharing experiences in order to strengthen the sectoral cooperation.

However, the efforts of Poland were not used to the full extent by the addressees this time as well. Ukraine may serve as a great example. The ascension to power of Viktor Yanukovich and the arrest of Yulia Tymoshenko and Yuriy Lutsenko became the first factors to hinder the integration into the EU. As a result, Ukraine (and Armenia at the time) refused to sign the Association Agreement with the EU.

The implementation of the Eastern Partnership has formed different views on this project among both the political establishment and common citizens in Poland. Thus, Poles opined that the Eastern Partnership was a promising and ambitious project, the implementation of which is worth spending considerable effort, including financial resources. There were also the opposite views, the essence of which lied with the belief that the Eastern Partnership was merely a part of the European Neighborhood Policy and it was nothing more than « a colorful and optimistic language of EU documents, which are not backed by appropriate resources allocated for the implementation of the proposed idea of the Eastern Partnership» [4, p.171]. The supporters of the Eastern Partnership included two most influential parties of the Polish Sejm: «Law and Justice» and «Civic Platform» Both political parties have expressed support for the integration intentions of the countries under the Eastern Partnership and approved the need for reforms in these countries. At least, that was the case before the latest elections to the Polish Sejm.

Poland held parliamentary elections on October 25, 2015, and the party called «Law and Justice» led by Jaroslaw Kaczynski won. The opposing party, «Civic Platform» was led by Eva Kopacz. In the spring of that year, the presidential elections were held as well, and the representative of «Law and Justice» party, Andrzej Duda, won. For the first time in the country, a one-party cabinet comprised of «Law and Justice» members was established while the dominant party in the parliament the same one; thus, the legislative and executive power became concentrated in the hands of one political force [1, p.1]. After the presidential and parliamentary elections, a number of factors appeared indicating that the support expressed by Poland concerning the Eastern Partnership would be declarative. The reason for that was that after the elections in 2015, Poland acquired the most anti-European parliament since at least three parties out of the five parties that formed it can be considered Eurosceptic [7, p.1]. The «Law and Justice» party, and especially its leader, does not always find and use diplomatic methods to their full extent or compromise, which is evident from the not entirely peaceable relations with Brussels. Therefore, the following question remains unanswered: Will Poland be able to lobby for the interests of the Eastern Partnership in the EU actively and effectively?

Though the «Civic Platform» party remains the largest supporter of European integration, it is gradually losing its position and is unlikely to actively influence the situation. The third influential political force in the Sejm is the party «Kukiz'15», the head of which is a rock musician Pawel Kukiz. It is considered the most skeptical toward the EU party. The party's candidates signed a special State contract pledging to strive for the independence of Poland from the EU among other things [7, p.1]. The famous Polish «People's Party» is not very encouraging either and despite their «respected political age» is losing voter support. The party has repeatedly drawn the attention of Poles to the losses in the agricultural sector because of the association with Europe and the negative impact of the EU's relations with Russia meaning the losses caused by the sanctions against Russia as well as the ban on importing goods produced by the EU initiated by Russia. The Peasant Party may use a somewhat skeptical attitude toward the EU to stay in the political arena and enlist the support of the ruling party

The «Nowoczesna» («modern») party may be counted as one of the supporters of European integration. It was elected to Parliament for the first time. Therefore, its main task is likely to be the

strengthening of its positions, although the party considers the preservation of Poland's pro-European course its priority.

This configuration of political forces in Poland exists today. The situation was aggravated by the large-scale political protests of Poles in late 2016. Therefore, it is difficult to predict what will happen to the Eastern Partnership project: will the project initiated and ardently supported by Poland continue to have the same support in the future?

Among the countries of the Eastern Partnership, Ukraine is of particular interest of Warsaw, despite a number of problematic aspects concerning common historical past, which surface from time to time, and the active work on the project continues. The evidence includes signing a joint statement regarding the results of the 9th session of the Parliamentary Assembly of Ukraine and Poland, which took place in Lviv on December 3, 2016 [10]. The parties recognized the important role of the parliaments of both countries in the development of bilateral relations and strategic partnership. Warsaw once again emphasized the illegality of the annexation of the Crimea and condemned Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine. Polish political leaders called for the coordinated policies of European states regarding the aggressor and for the continued sanctions against it. Polish diplomats supported Kyiv's need to restore its territorial integrity and to continue its integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

In addition, the parties declared the following intentions:

- to promote the issue of the historical past in order to enhance the atmosphere of friendship and historical reconciliation;
- to support the bilateral activities of Youth Exchange Council and provide the opportunity in the budget's framework;
- to contribute to the creation of Polish-Ukrainian Center for Cooperation;
- to focus on the prospects of the cooperation of the Carpathian region countries under the Eastern Partnership;
- to advise Customs and Border Protection to ensure collaboration of the checkpoints for citizens and transport to pass.

On the eve of the signing of the joint statement, the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko visited Poland. The meeting took place in Warsaw on December 2, 2016. The parties discussed the issues related to security, common historical past, and ethnic communities living on the territories of both countries and emphasized the priority of good-neighborly and friendly bilateral relations [3]. The result of the negotiations included the recognition of the need to enhance and expand bilateral cooperation as well as the confirmation of good will giving a joint assessment of the common events of the past among other things.

In 2016, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration of Poland formed the list of national and ethnic minorities to support. The lion's share of the funds (approximately UAH 100 million) was planned for Ukrainians [15].

Poland's support of the Eastern Partnership was evidenced with the delegation of the funds from the Fund's Foreign Aid. This Fund in cooperation with the International Solidarity Foundation aids the areas affected by the antiterrorist operation in Ukraine. The fund allocated over PLN 1 million, and half of that amount was spent on repairing damaged schools and their equipment. Moreover, PLN 50,000 was spent on supporting the center where children from Donbas spend their holidays [8]. Most importantly, it was Poland who chose the objects for funding taking into account the state of educational and training institutions and the number of refugee children who attended them. Such initiatives allowed repairs the schools Kamyane, Studenok, and Oskol.

Furthermore, Poland has been helping Ukraine financially since the beginning of the war opting for various forms of assistance. They include the delivery of clothing, medical supplies, food, hygiene and other products to the front. In 2014, the Multinational Military Brigade was created composing of the representatives of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Poland, and Lithuania (LytPolUkrbryh). The international military formation, two out of three members of which are the members of NATO was established to enhance the relations between the countries, the exchange of military experience, and technical developments in the military sphere as well as to support and improve the security in the region. Presently, the brigade, which is stationed in Lublin, includes 18 Ukrainian soldiers. In December 2015, during the meeting of Defense Ministers of Poland and Ukraine in Kiev, the Polish counterpart

Antoni Macierewicz said that «Ukraine is a strategic partner of Poland and its absolute priority» [6]. At the same meeting in Kiev, the Defense Ministers of Ukraine, Poland, and the Baltic states signed the agreement on enhancing cooperation in the military sector.

Another meeting of Defense Ministers Antoni Macierewicz (Poland), Stepan Poltorak (Ukraine), and Juozas Olekas (Lithuania) is scheduled on January 25, 2017. The event is to be held in Lublin, and it is planned that the leaders will discuss a number of pressing issues, including the security situation in the region and the political-military cooperation of the countries [6]. It is believed that the meeting will help to enhance military cooperation between the three countries and attract additional technical, information, and material resources, which is significant in the light of the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine.

In addition, Poland supports a number of other projects associated with various spheres of life. Concerning the cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian non-governmental organizations, there are more than 10 different projects that apply to the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia, and even West Africa. The aims of the created funds, forums, and institutes include the following:

- to attract investments for the development of local communities;
- to promote the knowledge and positive image of Poland's eastern neighbors and the EU;
- to monitor the migration issue, support volunteering;
- to support educational projects, spread the ideas of democracy and democratic institutions;
- to develop international cooperation;
- to increase the public's access to new information technologies, to enhance education;
- to promote cooperation in the sphere of culture, etc. [2].

Such organizations include the Forum of Young Diplomats (Warsaw), the Foundation Education for Democracy (Warsaw), the Casimir Pulaski Foundation (Warsaw), Stefan Batory Foundation (Warsaw), Robert Schuman Foundation (Warsaw), the Foundation Institute for Strategic Studies (Krakow), the Eastern Initiatives Institute (Krakow), and several other groups [2].

In the framework of the cross-border cooperation with Ukraine and Belarus, Poland acts through the established Euroregions, “Bug” and “Carpathian,” and supports partnerships. This form of relationship is consistent at the local level for partnership since the agreements are reached between Polish and Ukrainian provinces that are located on the border line and cover Volyn, Rivne, Ternopil, and Lviv oblasts as well as the cities within those units. In fact, Ostroh is in the partnership with the sister cities Sandomierz and Bierun. The positive impact of such transactions is not only the continuous exchange of experience in local governing but also the increase in local revenues and investments in the region.

Poland is actively involved in various educational programs; in particular, it promotes, finances, or provides co-financing of competitions and scholarship programs for pupils, students, and post-graduate and doctoral students. Only in 2010-2011, about a hundred different projects were realized in the countries under the Eastern Partnership [13, p. 39].

Poland is directly funding the following scholarship program for the Eastern Partnership countries:

The Stefan Banach Scholarship Programme (humanities, natural sciences, engineering, agriculture, veterinary sciences, economic, theology, law, and other disciplines);

The Ignacy Lukaszewicz Scholarship Programme (relatively the same range of problematic areas);

The East European Studies Scholarships in the University of Warsaw [14].

In addition, the Polish side provides the funds for such programs as Stanislaw Tolpa Scholarship, Lane Kirkland Scholarship as well as for the foundations Semper Polonia and Gaude Polonia.

Thus, the projects supported by Poland suggest that the Eastern Partnership remains an important area of Warsaw's foreign policy. When comparing Poland to the other EU countries in terms of resources and the level of its assistance to the partner countries, it becomes clear that these costs are significant and concern many spheres of life in the countries under the Eastern Partnership. Traditionally, Poland's priority is Ukraine.

Conclusion. Having integrated into the EU, Poland has not only initiated the establishment of the Eastern Partnership but also tried to form a group of its supporters in the EU. Gradually consolidating its positions, the country began to use its influence to support this project. There are a number of factors, including history, status, and economy, that influence such interest of Poland in the countries located to

the east of its borders. Given the current challenges and threats, Poland is particularly interested in the establishment of stable predictable and neighborly relations with the countries of the Eastern Partnership. One can say that today, Poland is guided by the need to ensure its own safety. The cooperation with the countries under the Eastern Partnership is strategic and refers to the national interests of Poland. Poland attaches a special importance to the relations with Ukraine. It seems that the Eastern Partnership is Poland's offspring that has been born, developed and continues to receive praise and love. This project receives much criticism as well, even from Poles. However, despite some difficulties, Poland continues to consider the eastern direction of its foreign policy a priority, which requires the country's intervention, support, and resources. Moreover, as it was rightly put by M. Maskiewicz, the Eastern Partnership became the «product with a Polish trademark» [4, p.22].

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Близняк О. А. Східне партнерство у зовнішній політиці Польщі

Стаття присвячена внеску Польщі у формування та реалізацію Східного партнерства. Проаналізовано причини зацікавленості Польщі країнами, що розташовані на Схід від її кордонів. Визначено особливості польсько-шведського проекту Східного партнерства та фактори, які не дозволили реалізувати його у повній мірі. Прослідковані позиції впливових польських політичних партій та їх вплив на реалізацію Східного партнерства у сучасних умовах. Досліджено польсько-українську співпрацю, як пріоритетну, у рамках вказаної ініціативи ЄС.

Ключові слова: Східне партнерство, Польща, Європейський Союз, інтеграційні процеси, зовнішня політика.

Близняк О. А. Восточное партнерство во внешней политике Польши

Статья посвящена вкладу Польши в формирование и реализацию Восточного партнерства. Проанализированы причины заинтересованности Польши странами, расположенными к востоку от ее границ. Определены особенности польско-шведского проекта Восточного партнерства и факторы, которые не позволили реализовать его в полной мере. Прослежены позиции влиятельных польских политических партий и их влияние на реализацию Восточного партнерства в современных условиях. Исследована польско-украинское сотрудничество, как приоритетную, в рамках указанной инициативы ЕС.

Ключевые слова: Восточное партнерство, Польша, Европейский Союз, интеграционные процессы, внешняя политика.