

JOANNA SIEKIERA
Uniwersytet Wrocławski
joanna.siekiera@prawo.uni.wroc.pl

The Eastern Partnership — the Polish platform for integration

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) is a unique programme of the European Union (EU) directed towards its neighbour states. Being part of the official Eastern policy, this historic opportunity was developed in accordance with the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The biggest enlargement in 2004, the so-called Big 10 or Big Bang Enlargement,¹ must have had an impact, both political and legal, on the further cultivation of the EU foreign relations. Those relations had to change in the first place towards the border states. The main difference, very often forgotten by many, between countries in the east and those in the south are indeed their historical, cultural and geopolitical connections to the European Members. Radosław Sikorski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, put the idea into these words: “The Eastern Partnership is an ambitious endeavour. It is bringing change to countries that are not just neighbours of Europe [North Africa, the Middle East — J.S.] — they are our European neighbours.”² The quoted politician played a significant role in the establishment of this form of cooperation. Being head of the Polish Ministry of State and actually representing its interests as the Member of the EU, Sikorski has initiated a platform for integration with countries in the east. The Polish input in this programme is so fundamental that it cannot be left unnoticed. The great immersion in Eastern politics by the government in Warsaw is clearly perceptible and, what is more important, strongly appreciated by the Eastern states. This has also been proven on many occasions; above all during the Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union in

¹ This colloquial term has been used in many popular science articles, as well as in press, inter alia A. Evans-Pritchard, “EU ready for Big Bang enlargement,” *The Telegraph* 19 October 2002.

² R. Sikorski, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, “Spurring on the European Project,” *New Eastern Europe* 2013 (IX), No. 4, p. 12.

the second half of 2011, as well as lately, during the 3rd EaP Summit in Vilnius in November 2013.

There are 16 states which are considered to be the EU's closest neighbours. The European Neighbourhood Policy was developed in order to ensure stability and security in the regions beyond the Union's borders. The other issue was to avoid emergence of dividing lines between Member States and the neighbouring territories. Here, it is worth recalling threats to security in the wide sense, such as illegal immigration, environmental degradation, terrorism, cross-border crime and distribution of energy supplies. Therefore, using the geopolitical criterion, ENP governs relations with the South (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia) and with the East (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine). Cooperation initiative was complemented and enriched by regional and multilateral scheme: the Black Sea Synergy,³ the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED)⁴ and the Eastern Partnership. The partners do possess a privileged position, which allows them to receive financial,⁵ macroeconomic and technical assistance, access to visas, etc. The non-EU Members, on their part, are committed to values written in the primary law (respect of human rights, democracy and the rule of law).⁶ What needs to be emphasised, is that this official form of cooperation focuses on promotion of sustainable democracy and economic growth rather than on potential enlargement of the European Union.⁷

Before the examples confirming the thesis that the EaP is the Polish flagship initiative are given, one has to pay attention to the history and the legal basis of the cooperation. Soon after the German idea of the ENP Plus⁸ was inaugurated during its presidency in the Council of the European Union, Poland along with Sweden started to work on a cohesive initiative addressed to six Eastern EU's neighbours. Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia were supposed to be assisted in their modernization and reforms. Such long-term and at the same time, far-reaching goal could be achieved only through close political integration and economic development. The first official proposal of this bilateral cooperation between the European Union and the partner countries was put forward in May 2008. Radosław Sikorski and Carl Bildt, Minister of Foreign Affairs

³ Launched in February 2008 in Kiev. More about this form of cooperation between the EU and the Black Sea countries: K. Henderson, C. Weaver, "The Black Sea Region and EU Policy: The Challenge of Divergent Agendas", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 2011 (Sep.), pp. 1148–1149.

⁴ Formerly known under the name of the Barcelona Process, relaunched in July 2008 in Paris. A. Salhi, A. Kern, "Financial market governance and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership," *EuroMed Journal of Business* 2011, pp. 253–271.

⁵ The overall budget for the ENP for the years 2007–2013 was over 12 billion EUR.

⁶ Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union (C 326/17).

⁷ P. Fontaine, *Europe in 12 Lessons*, Brussels 2010, p. 19; The website of the European External Action Service; http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/about-us/index_en.htm (21.11.2013).

⁸ M. Emerson, G. Noutcheva, N. Popescu, *European Neighbourhood Policy Two Years on: Time indeed for an 'ENP Plus'*, CEPS Policy Brief 2007 (March), No. 126, pp. 2–5.

of Sweden, presented the project at the meeting of the diplomatic heads of the EU Members.⁹ The Council meeting in Brussels, under the title *General Affairs and External Relations*, enthusiastically supported the idea, which allowed the initiative to develop in a dynamic way. After the unanimous acceptance of the Eastern Partnership by the European Council, further request was sent to the European Commission (EC) with a view to drafting the legal details. By the end of 2008, the EC found: “stability, better governance and economic development on the Eastern borders are of the vital interest to the European Union.”¹⁰ Furthermore, in its communication to the European Parliament, the Commission expressed the need for the intensification of bilateral relations of the EU with its partners in Southern Caucasus and Eastern Europe. What is more, the Union’s policy towards those countries was said to have to be unequivocal and proactive.¹¹ Since then, the ambitious EaP project became an essential part of the Brussels’ foreign policy.

The crucial point of integration of the European Union with non-EU members on the east side of the continent is close cooperation, regardless of the potential accession to the organization. An objective to become an EU member might be seen as the highest level of integration, nevertheless, it is not an obligatory, or even basic condition. Thus, expected transition to well-prosperous, democratic states ruled by law may be achieved in a more convenient way, in rate and scope appropriate for single partners.¹² The whole idea of the EaP can be summed up in four thematic platforms: common values, economic integration, energy security and people. While the flagship initiatives are divided into five sectors: boarded management, SME,¹³ electricity markets, environment and disaster prevention.¹⁴ It is worth emphasising that the Eastern Partnership has to be exercised in accordance with the European law. The European law in turn, being a regional branch of international law, has to meet all the international norms. One of the basic principles says that every action on the international arena depends solely on the state’s will. Therefore, one may assume that the integration of a particular partner depends on its interest, the planned form of cooperation and/or assimilation¹⁵ with the EU, as well as on future political vectors within the states.

⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *Eastern Partnership*, Warsaw 2012, pp. 9–11.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*; the lecture of Professor Ivar Raig from the Tallinn Law School, Tallinn 20.10.2011.

¹¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and The Council, Eastern Partnership, Brussels, 3.12.2008, COM(2008) 823 final.

¹² J. Protasiewicz, Inaugural Lecture on the Conference *Polish Eastern Policy 2013*, 19.10.2013 Wrocław.

¹³ SME stands for Small and Medium Enterprises.

¹⁴ J. Kobzova, *Europe’s Give and Take*; C. Bildt, “Towards a Reunited Europe,” *New Eastern Europe* 2013 (IX), No. 4, pp. 8–11, 21–28; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *Eastern...*

¹⁵ By assimilation, the author means here cultural assimilation, visible through shared values, such as democracy, legal protection of minorities, transparency, etc.

The 1st Eastern Partnership summit took place in the Czech Republic, in May 2009. The gathering of all EU Member States with six partner countries ended with the adoption of the Prague Declaration.¹⁶ Composed of 21 paragraphs, the founding document enumerates the main fields of cooperation, common values shared by both parties, funding and the perspectives for future integration.¹⁷ Nonetheless, the declaration along with subsequent acts¹⁸ does not have a legally binding character. It comes from the fact that EaP is not an intergovernmental organization nor other ad hoc institution established to influence the sphere of politics or ideology. There is a lack of compatibility between the Customs Union and the Association Agreements. The EU cannot make legally binding (that is official, final, and above all, implying international effects) agreements with partners which strengthen, at the same time, relations with Russia.¹⁹ For the purpose of avoiding the irrevocable legal effects, states decide on other forms of soft law cooperation. Memoranda of Undertakings (MoU) are *de jure* not binding sources of regional integration, as they do not have a valid nature.²⁰ It says in the Prague Declaration that “additional flexible instruments” must be introduced with the partner countries.²¹ One of the most relevant issues concerning the EU–Eastern states relations are trade, competition and energy independence. Those branches of national security are indeed of the highest interest of particular states.

Even though those six countries are sovereign states, this might not mean they are in charge of their external trade policies. The perfect example illustrating this bold thesis could be the activities of Ukraine. Skilfully juggling between Brussels and Moscow, the Ukrainian government is unwilling to make a final decision which direction to go in. The Western media use an immediate conclusion that the whole success (or failure) of the EaP would depend on Kiev’s acts.²² Being the largest and most important of the six partners, Ukraine is aware of its key

¹⁶ The official name of this document is Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit.

¹⁷ Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit, Prague, 7.05.2009, 8435/09 (Presse 78).

¹⁸ The author means here other post-summit declarations and other joint statements of the Foreign Ministers.

¹⁹ Š. Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, *Ambitions of EU and East Partners for the Vilnius Summit*, European Commission — SPEECH/13/477, Brussels 28.05.2013; R. Hernández i Sagrera, *Assessing the Mobility Partnerships between the EU and Moldova and Georgia*, the website of the Eastern Partnership Community: <http://www.Easternpartnership.org/publication/mobility-and-migration/2011-08-23/assessing-mobility-partnerships-between-eu-and-moldova> (21.11.2013).

²⁰ A. Aust, *Handbook of International Law*, Cambridge 2010, p. 53.

²¹ Moldova, Georgia and Armenia are enumerated in the Declaration in terms of MoU in energy issues. See Joint Declaration...

²² Charlemagne, “Playing East against West: The success of the Eastern Partnership depends on Ukraine,” *The Economist* 23 Nov 2013; Z. Najder, “Pojednanie, współpraca, życie obok siebie?” [Reconciliation, cooperation, living side by side?], *Nowa Europa Wschodnia* 2013, No. 2 (XXVIII),

role in the venture. The country fails when it comes to the issues of democracy and observance of human dignity, especially against the prisoners.²³ One of the conditions of a planned trade agreement with the EU is the release of the former Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko from prison, or at least letting her leave for medical treatment in Germany. As Carl Bildt said, parliament at the forefront of President Viktor Yanukovich keeps turning into an active dialogue with Kremlin to revive trade relations. Nonetheless, there are still some voices from Kiev about the need of integration with the EU, also through the creation of “tripartite commission.”²⁴ However, Ukraine has a close ally within the EU. Poland is considered to be one of its most loyal supporters.²⁵ Ukraine, treated as a buffer zone by the neighbours,²⁶ and economically dependent on other post-Soviet states, became a tasty morsel for three actors; Russia, the EU and Poland. Due to historical connections, but mainly because of maintenance of the Polish dominant role in the East-Central Europe, Warsaw seeks to tighten relations with Ukraine.²⁷ The leading point in the cooperation is undeniably the gas supply issue.

There is still strong political connection between the Kremlin and Ukraine and Belarus. According to Russian experts, the Eastern Partnership was created as the EU response (roughly saying: prevention) to spreading influences by Moscow on the territory of post-Soviet republics.²⁸ As it was already pointed out, the success of the EaP depends to a great extent on the Ukrainian politics. The Western observers, including Polish ones, expected Kiev to sign the Association Treaty during the 3rd EaP Summit in Vilnius. But it did not happen. The meeting took

pp. 9–13; E. Vucheva, *EU neighbourhood policy divisions exposed*, available on the EU observer website: <http://euobserver.com/foreign/24685> (22.11.2013).

²³ See J. Siekiera, *Godność człowieka w Europejskiej Konwencji Praw Człowieka i Kartce Praw Podstawowych w kontekście akcesu Ukrainy do Unii Europejskiej* [Human Dignity in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the context of Ukrainian Accession to the European Union], The Ukrainian Nationwide Conference *The Human Being between Power and Authority*, 27–28.04.2012, the Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv.

²⁴ R. Olearczyk, P. Spiegel, “Ukraine freezes talks on bilateral trade pact with EU,” *The Financial Times* 21.11.2013; “Ukraine delays vote on freeing former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko,” *Deutsche Welle* 19.11.2013, available on the website: <http://www.dw.de/ukraine-delays-vote-on-freeing-former-prime-minister-yulia-tymoshenko/a-17239604> (22.11.2013).

²⁵ E. Vucheva, op. cit.

²⁶ M. Shmelova, “Wielowektorowość w polityce zagranicznej Ukrainy: próba bilansu” [Multivectorality in the Ukrainian Foreign Affairs: An attempt at a balance], *Sprawy Międzynarodowe* 2008, 2 (LXI), pp. 31–51.

²⁷ In describing the Polish input into the Ukrainian–EaP relations, Charlemagne from *The Economist* goes even further: “Radek Sikorski and Carl Bildt ... have put their reputations on the line”, idem, op. cit.

²⁸ More about the Russian attitude to the EaP: A. Balcer, “Last Call for the Eastern Partnership,” *New Eastern Europe* 2013 (IX), No. 4; D.P. Jankowski, P. Świeżak, *Bezczynność kosztuje* [Idleness costs], *Nowa Europa Wschodnia* 2012 (XXVI), No. 6; H. Szlajfer, “Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia (jako akronim) i Rosja. Kilka refleksji” [The Centre-East Europe (as an acronym) and Russia. A few remarks], *Sprawy Międzynarodowe* 2008 (LXI), No. 2.

place on 28–29 November 2013. Even though Poland has been showing its support by both politicians as well as ordinary people, the president Viktor Yanukovich postponed *sine die* the association with the EU. This, in turn, has effected in a wave of protests of pro-European Ukrainians.²⁹ The geopolitical role of Warsaw in the conflict might stay stable. As Jerzy Buzek, the former Polish Prime Minister and the President of the European Parliament said; “the gates to the EU are still open for Ukraine. Nonetheless, we [Poland — J.S.] must respect the sovereignty of the Ukrainian Nation, who will decide whether and when it would join the European Union. Our role is only to serve as an adviser.”³⁰

Poland is very proud of its friendly, stable, and trust-based relations within the region. After the political and economic transition in 1989, the main international success was Poland’s accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on March 12, 1999 and the European Union on May 1, 2004. As the process of building democracy and free market might have been considerably difficult without the external help, Poland is aware of its role model for the six states of the Eastern Partnership. This, so to speak, respect among those states was additionally established during the presidency of Lech Kaczyński, who brought himself into the Georgian Five-Day War³¹ and the Ukrainian Orange Revolution.³² It has to be underlined that the Republic of Poland pursues integration across the whole continent, not only among the EU members. The objective is to built “lasting prosperity in Europe as a whole.”³³ The EaP is a unique initiative to help those six states with the same problems which Poland had tackled. Here, one must compare the common issues after the collapse of the Soviet Union, concerning: fragile governments, unresolved conflicts, social and economic illness, deficit of democracy and, often underestimated, weak civil awareness. Poland along with the Visegrad Group can pave the way and show the Western states how to set the highest, European standards. Due to the solid harmonization of law, promotion of

²⁹ The place of peaceful anti-governmental strikes in Kiev was called *EuroMaidan*, which began on the night of November 21, 2013. The global public opinion was shocked after the violent suppression of pro-EU protestors. On the Ukrainians’ will to join the EU after the *fiasco* of the Vilnius Summit: N. Blome, G.P. Schmitz, “Summit Flop: EU Needs New Russia Policy after Ukraine Debacle,” *Spiegel* 29 November 2013; O. Goncharova, “*EuroMaidan* rallies in Ukraine (live updates),” *Kyiv Post* 7 December 2013; I. Traynor, “Ukrainian protests show the European Union still offers hope to some,” *The Guardian* 1 December 2013.

³⁰ The statement of Jerzy Buzek for the Polish News TVP1, 7.12.2013.

³¹ Also called Russia-Georgia War or South Ossetia War, which took place in August 2008 (from 7 to 16 of August). The military conflict ended with Russian political success, but at the same time, two republics (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) achieved a more autonomous status.

³² The Orange Revolution took place from late November 2004 to January 2005. It is the series of political protests following the Ukrainian presidential election in 2004. The winner, Viktor Yanukovich was accused by the protestors of voter intimidation, massive corruption and direct electoral fraud.

³³ R. Sikorski, *Spurring...*

values and Polish technology of transition,³⁴ the EaP countries might grow stronger.

Culturally, historically and economically, Warsaw is perceived as one of the Central-Eastern European capitals.³⁵ Polish aim was to ensure relations with individual Eastern neighbours, not only emphasising political and economic integration. Strong social and human dimension was underlined from the beginning. Another factor was the fear of building a new wall across the continent, after the Big Bang Enlargement. Poland put many efforts into showing its neighbours along with the South Caucasus the positive aspects of the Polish accession in 2004. The membership in the European Union could have caused, and eventually has, effective changes in the Eastern countries. Therefore, Warsaw engaged itself in preparation, implementation and execution of a strategy called the Eastern Partnership. It was a Polish idea to bring together all Foreign Ministers of the EU and the EaP countries under the informal forum, called the Information and Coordination Group.³⁶ The forum collaborates with non-EU states, which are at the same time interested in supporting the EaP, such as the United States, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey or Canada. Some of the members are ready to finance initiatives, some prefer to actively join other projects. The Polish government decided to allocate a large sum of foreign aid to the EaP goal.³⁷

Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union, from July 1 to December 31, 2011 made the Eastern Partnership a key point in the scheme. Dr. Katarzyna Piskarska from the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) enumerates Eastern policy priorities of the government in Warsaw. Keeping NATO's and the EU's doors open for the EaP states, supporting people-to-people and civil society contacts in the east part of the continent as well as internationalizing national Eastern Policy³⁸ are of the highest rank. Besides the 2nd EaP Summit in Warsaw (29–30 September), the very first and innovative EaP Business Forum (BF) in Sopot and EaP Civil Society Forum in Poznań were organized. The EaP BF was established to increase and present recommendations of trade communities for the future development of this integration, particularly in business and economic dimensions. The Forum provides a platform for establishing business contacts, sharing experience and discussing venture opportunities, as well as joint

³⁴ The term was used to describe a political and socio-economic transformation in Poland after 1989.

³⁵ There are some voices for perceiving Poland as member of the group of the Northern countries due to our economic posture; *ibid.*

³⁶ The initial name was the Group of Friends of the Eastern Partnership.

³⁷ Only for the years 2010–2011, around 100 projects of the EaP were implemented using the Polish funds; I. Reig, *op. cit.*; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *Eastern...*

³⁸ By means of The Common Foreign and Security Policy, as way to the East; K. Piskarska, *Eastern Partnership as the Flagship Initiative of the Polish Presidency*, available on the website of the Polish Institute of International Affairs: www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=9161 (23.11.2013).

projects of public and private entities, still within the Eastern Partnership.³⁹ Civil Society Forum, in turn, helps with developing firm democratic structures and bigger participation of civil society. This unofficial platform is divided into five groups, dealing with different problems: 1) democracy, human rights and stability; 2) economic integration along with the EU legislature; 3) environment, climate and energy; 4) contacts between people; 5) social dialogue and labour policy.⁴⁰

Even though, after two days of the Warsaw Summit and several other events, there was no significant breakthrough. The parties had hoped to definitively agree on visa liberalization and future enlargement guarantees. Nonetheless, the most perceptible advantage of the EaP gathering was the openness of the programme on spheres other than political. Business and civil society areas are constantly being improved. Deeper cooperation through widening its scope and involving more and more actors probably seems less spectacular but definitely more effective.⁴¹

Despite the large input into the EaP, Poland has elaborated other mechanisms oriented at the Eastern neighbours. One can adjust the Polish Card and the Polish Aid to the platform of integration established by the government in Warsaw. The latter one was initiated in 2008 by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It aims at direct involvement of Poles in the developing countries, as much as the spread of knowledge about the problems there among the Polish society. The most crucial activities undertaken by Polish volunteers which have to be mentioned are the installation of the water pipes in Moldova, ecological and civil education in Kazakhstan, first aid course in Azerbaijan and medical attention over the incurably ill children in Armenia. Year by year, the funds donated to the Polish Aid have been increasing.⁴² Other integration projects, which other Polish Ministries have joined, are the scholarship programme for the students and young scientists from the EaP countries,⁴³ the summits of the Ministries of Transportation,⁴⁴ and

³⁹ Brochure of Europejskie Forum Nowych Idei [European Forum of New Ideas], *Eastern Partnership: Opportunities for Business*; 30 September 2011, Sopot, Poland.

⁴⁰ The website of the EaP Civil Society Forum; <http://www.eap-csf.eu/> (25.11.2013).

⁴¹ L. Jesień, "Priorytety prezydencji Polski" [The Priorities of the Polish Presidency], *Sprawy Międzynarodowe 2012 (LXV)*, No. 1; A. Meszaros, *The Eastern Partnership — Is There Life After the Polish Presidency?*, available on the EastBook website: <http://eastbook.eu/en/2012/01/material-en/news-en/the-Eastern-partnership-%E2%80%93-is-there-life-after-the-polish-presidency/#> (23.11.2013).

⁴² Department of Development Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, *Polska współpraca z partnerami z Europy Wschodniej, Kaukazu Południowego i Azji Środkowej* [The Polish Cooperation with Partners from Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia], Warsaw 2008.

⁴³ The program of the Scholarship of Stefan Banach; the website of the Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange: <http://www.buwiwm.edu.pl/oferta.pdf> (26.11.2013).

⁴⁴ The website of the Polish Ministry of Transportation: www.transport.gov.pl/2-46f38651b-b49e-p_4.htm (27.11.2013).

the list of environment protection projects introduced by the Ministry of Environment.⁴⁵

The Polish Card was established on the strength of the act from 2007.⁴⁶ The Card was a legal response to the request of Polish Diaspora (Polonia) for a stable proof of their national identity. The subject scope of those who are able to apply for such document, was limited to citizens of the 15 post-Soviet republics.⁴⁷ Not having Polish citizenship, Poles in the East can finally benefit from the status of the Polish resident. The Polish Card initiative aims at meeting the needs of over a million people declaring their affiliation to Polonia in the East. Such help implies adaptation and implementation of new procedures, which always have to be in accordance with national and European law.⁴⁸ But the main aim here is similar to that of the Eastern Partnership; close integration on the people-to-people level.

The Western developed states have finally started to perceive the Eastern nations as a potential partner rather than just a poor neighbour which needs financial and political aid. One benefit for the EU members is preventing the threat of continent division.⁴⁹ Such division was undoubtedly the reason of countless wars in Europe. Secondly, single money transfer will not solve the complex problems within the Eastern states. Earlier, billions of Euros were sent through the Eastern borders. Unfortunately, this was not enough.⁵⁰ In order to keep and accelerate the current rate of the EaP implementation, the degree to which Brussels and the partner states are motivated to engage in the partnership ought to be clearly defined. The European Union should support, as well as acknowledge the Western aspirations with the purpose of deepening the mutual understanding and making the EaP more effective. The Eastern states recognize and accept those commitments standing ready to embrace the historic task.⁵¹

The Republic of Poland, as a Central European state and member of the European Union possesses a geopolitical strength to develop regional cooperation with

⁴⁵ The website of the Polish Ministry of Environment: http://www.mos.gov.pl/artykul/2521_partnerstwo_wschodnie/9065_partnerstwo_wschodnie.html (27.11.2013); A. Fundakowska, *Poland's Development Co-operation and the Eastern Partnership (2009–2010)*, Warsaw 2011.

⁴⁶ The Act on Pole's Card [Ustawa o Karcie Polaka] from 7th September 2007 (Journal of Laws 2007 No. 180, item 1280).

⁴⁷ Those are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan; J. Siekiera, *Karta Polaka jako instrument pomocy Polonii w Europie Wschodniej* [The Polish Card as an Instrument of the Polish Aid in Eastern Europe], Acta Erasiana, Wrocław 2013.

⁴⁸ R. Sikorski, The Rapport of the Consular Service in 2012.

⁴⁹ Division in the political, religious, cultural and historical sense.

⁵⁰ Speech by Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in: *The Eastern Partnership Conference: Towards a European Community of Democracy, Prosperity and a Stronger Civil Society: Post-Conference Report*, Warsaw November 2011.

⁵¹ Speech by David Bakradze, Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia; *ibid*.

the East. The legal, political and, many often, diplomatic activities of the Polish government are being undertaken regardless of the official EU borders. By creating a strong, coherent and competitive continent, Poland uses its past for the common, better future. Warsaw invites the others, which are in a very similar position, to that of Poland before 1989, struggling with the same transition issues. This way of practising diplomacy is to a high degree a desired feature in both national and international politics. “We succeeded, and so can you!”,⁵² said Radosław Sikorski, the inventor of the whole project. By means of the European Partnership, the Polish Aid, the Polish Card and other projects, Poland might become a key player, who would lead the nations of Europe towards tight integration.

The Eastern Partnership — the Polish platform for integration

Summary

The Eastern Partnership is an official programme of the European Union within the eastern strategy according to the European Neighbourhood Policy. Eastern European states, including Caucasus, can count on Brussels’ support in enforcing far-reaching reforms, regardless of their will to become EU members.

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are the six states which participate in this very ambitious endeavour. The basis of cooperation is not legally binding; it is comprised of soft law acts. Thus, expected transition to well-prosperous, democratic states ruled by law might be achieved in a more convenient way, in rate and scope appropriate for single partners.

Poland is very proud of its friendly, stable, and trust-based relations within the region. Warsaw became a role model for those six states. The initiative came from the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Radosław Sikorski. Year by year, the programme has been extended. The Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union in 2011 made the EaP the flagship initiative.

Due to Poland’s vital input the Eastern Partnership is considered to have achieved success in both political and economic dimensions. With the aid of the Western democratic states, the Eastern countries are able to accomplish stability, security and welfare.

Keywords: Eastern Partnership, Polish foreign affairs, Polish Presidency, policy towards the East, Eastern Europe

Partnerstwo Wschodnie — polska platforma integracji

Streszczenie

Partnerstwo Wschodnie jest oficjalnym programem Unii Europejskiej, realizowanym w ramach Europejskiej Polityki Sąsiedztwa. Państwa Europy Wschodniej oraz Kaukaz mogą liczyć na daleko idącą pomoc z Brukseli, bez względu na akcesję do tejże organizacji.

Armenia, Azerbejdżan, Białoruś, Gruzja, Mołdawia i Ukraina to sześć państw, które uczestniczą w tym ambitnym staraniu. Podstawą kooperacji są jednak akty niewiążące (*soft law*). Dzięki

⁵² R. Sikorski, entering the 2nd Eastern Partnership Summit in Warsaw, 29 September 2011.

temu, oczekiwana przemiana w dobrze prosperujące, demokratyczne państwa prawa może być osiągnięta w dogodny sposób, w tempie i zasięgu odpowiednim dla każdego partnera.

Polska jest bardzo dumna ze swoich przyjaznych, stabilnych i opartych na zaufaniu stosunków w regionie. Warszawa stała się wzorcem dla omawianych sześciu państw. Inicjatywa wyszła od polskiego Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych Radosława Sikorskiego. Z roku na rok program rozkwitał. Polska Prezydencja w Radzie Unii Europejskiej w 2011 r. uczyniła z Partnerstwa Wschodniego flagową inicjatywę.

Dzięki ogromnemu wkładowi Polski partnerstwo osiąga sukcesy zarówno na poziomie politycznym, jak i ekonomicznym. Z pomocą Zachodnich demokracji, państwa ze Wschodu są w stanie osiągnąć stabilność, bezpieczeństwo i dobrobyt.

Słowa kluczowe: Partnerstwo Wschodnie, polska polityka zagraniczna, polska prezydencja, polityka względem Wschodu, Europa Wschodnia