

The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative from the Polish Perspective

Dominika Choroś-Mrozowska

Ph.D., Cracow University of Economics

Faculty of Finance and Law

Department of Economics, Cracow, Poland

e-mail: mrozowsd@uek.krakow.pl

Abstract

China announced its initiative of the so-called New Silk Road project for the first time in 2013. Although its extent, concept or even its current name (The Belt and Road Initiative, BRI) have changed on a number of occasions since then, it cannot be denied that this is one of the most important challenges currently being undertaken in the world.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe, of which Poland is a part, may have a significant meaning in this concept due to their strategic location. The countries of this region began their co-operation with China under the so-called “16 + 1” format, and this took place prior to the announcement of the BRI. This opens up new perspectives for Polish-Chinese trade relations in respect of the BRI initiative and the “16 + 1” platform.

The aim of this study is therefore to present the most important effects of the conducted research, the assumption of which was the comprehensive identification of the Chinese BRI initiative and the consequences of its implementation for Polish-Chinese trade relations. The presented analysis assumes that BRI will have a significant impact on Polish-Chinese trade patterns. This is particularly important in the context of the huge trade deficit that Poland has been recording for years in its trade with China as well as the deepening asymmetry, which has been characteristic of the exchange.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative, “16 + 1” platform, import, export, trade deficit, FDI

JEL: F000, F100, F130

Introduction

China announced its initiative of the so-called New Silk Road project for the first time in 2013. Although its extent, concept or even its current name (The Belt and Road Initiative, BRI) have changed on a number of occasions since then, it cannot be denied that this is one of the most important challenges currently being undertaken in the world. The global dimension is characteristic of the BRI. It has already consociated 65 countries with almost 70% of the world's population, nearly 55% of the world's GNP and 75% of global resources. Meanwhile, the list of countries willing to join is still open, which means that its range may be even more extensive in the future.

The development of economic co-operation within the BRI framework includes building a network of land roads connecting Central Asia with Eastern and Western Europe. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe, of which Poland is a part, may have a significant meaning in this concept due to their strategic location. The countries of this region began their co-operation with China under the so-called "16 + 1" format, and this took place prior to the announcement of the BRI. This opens up new perspectives for Polish-Chinese trade relations in respect of the BRI initiative and the "16 + 1" platform.

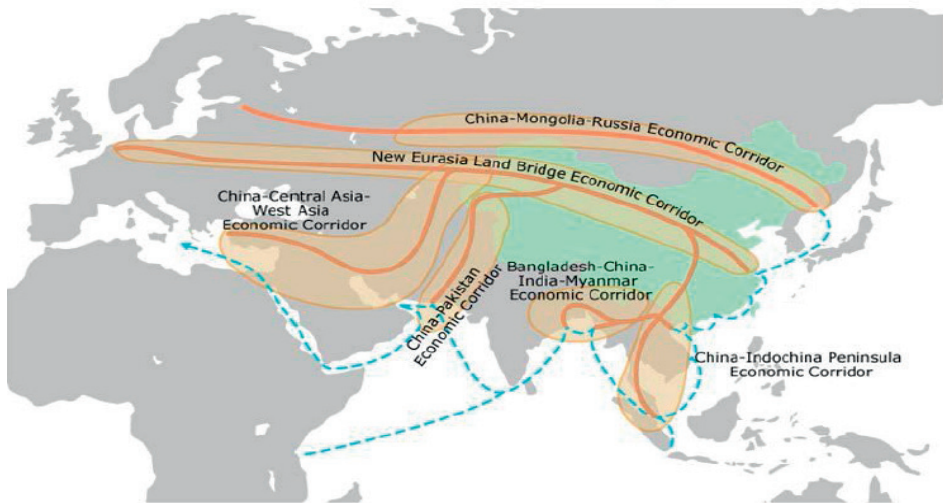
The aim of this study is therefore to present the most important effects of the research conducted, the assumption of which was the comprehensive identification of the Chinese BRI initiative and the consequences of its implementation for Polish-Chinese trade and investment relations. The presented analysis assumes that the BRI will have a significant impact on Polish-Chinese trade patterns. This is particularly important in the context of the large trade deficit that Poland has been recording for years in its trade with China as well as the deepening asymmetry, which has been characteristic of the exchange.

The study was based on the most important publications in the subject area and statistical data of the Central Statistical Office and the National Bank of Poland. The added value of this consolidation is to supplement the BRI analysis gap in the context of the Polish economy. The most important conclusions from the analysis are summarized in the last part of the article.

Poland and the Belt and Road Initiative – a literature review

Due to the fact that the BRI is still a relatively new concept, there are few studies on it (both in the Polish and foreign literature). This particularly applies to those focusing on its consequences for individual countries involved in the initiative. Among the studies describing BRI from a more technical side, taking into account its territorial range, sources of financing or infrastructure, see Hin and Che (2016), or Wong, Booker and Barthe-Dejean (2016). Many analyses focus on issues such as the Chinese

motives behind the implementation of the BRI as well as opportunities and threats related to its implementation (Cohen 2015; Kratz 2015; van der Leer and Yau 2016; Wijeratne et al. 2017). Some of the researchers are also interested in the impact of this initiative on the geopolitical situation in selected regions or in the world, including Zepp-LaRouche (2014), Bondaz (2015), Kaczmarek (2015), and Pantucci and Chen (2015). There are also studies in which an attempt was made to determine the impact of the BRI on the European Union, including works by authors such as Gieger (2016), Garcia-Herrero and Xu (2016) and Zuokui (2017). One of the latest studies on the topic of the BRI, in which the authors undertake to determine the opportunities offered by this initiative for the European Union and EU-China cooperation, is a paper by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) by Ghiasy and Zhou (2017). This study analyzes the above issues with regard to security aspects. The authors state that this initiative gives the EU an opportunity to pre-empt a negative geopolitical and geo-economic competition with China. There are also studies by authors such as Majman (2015), Pavličević (2016), Szczudlik (2016), Góralczyk (2017), Jakimowicz (2017), and Jingjing (2018) which focused on the BRI's influence on the region of Central and Eastern Europe. However, there are no complete analyses of the impact of RDI on the Polish economy. Only a few authors have taken up this subject: Zuokui (2017), Bachulska (2017) or Pendrakowska (2017). The main conclusions from these analyses will be presented in a later part of this study.



Map 1. Geographical Coverage of the BRI

Source: HKTDC Research, <http://china-trade-research.hktdc.com>

Planned for 35 years, the Belt and Road project includes the construction and modernization of network links between China and the European Union – a significant part of which will run through Poland. According to a document titled “Vision and

Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road”, the BRI covers six major land corridors (“the Silk Road Economic Belt”) and one maritime corridor (called the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”). This was published by the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce of the PRC in March 2015. The following map shows that Poland, due to its strategic location, was incorporated into the New Eurasian Land Bridge Economic Corridor, which is a railway line connecting eastern and western China (the provinces of Jiangsu and Xinjiang) with Rotterdam in the Netherlands, Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus.

Significantly, Poland was one of the first EU countries to engage in the Belt and Route Initiative in 2013, when the first railway connection between Łódź and the Chinese city of Chengdu was opened. In September 2013, the first container connection was opened between the city of Suzhou and Warsaw. This shortened the transport time in relation to the sea by half (up to 14–16 days).

Recent projects, such as the extension of the Łódź–Chengdu railway connection to Xiamen (Fujian province) as part of a pilot free-trade zone (simplified customs procedures are applied there), and the request to the Ministry of the Economy to include the Łódź terminal in the Łódź Special Economic Zone, are examples of the results of co-operation under the BRI. It is also planned to build multimodal logistics hubs in Łódź and Małaszewicze (a large trans-shipment port) on the Polish-Belarusian border. This second investment lies on the Zhengzhou–Hamburg railway route operated by PKP Cargo (Szczudlik-Tatar 2015, p. 2). Projects carried out under the BRI also include plans to establish a trans-shipment hub in Polish Pomerania, which would serve as a logistics center on new trade routes (Bachulska 2017, p. 175).

There are numerous agreements signed between the two countries on Poland’s activity in building co-operation under the BRI. The most important of these are as follows: (<https://beijing.mfa.gov.pl>, data from 7.12.2018):

- June 20, 2016, Warsaw: MoU on a joint plan for bilateral cooperation.
- June 20, 2016, Warsaw: joint declaration on the establishment of a comprehensive strategic partnership.
- November 25, 2015, Beijing: MoU between the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and the Polish Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego.
- November 26, 2015, Beijing: MoU on the joint promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative.

One of the key agreements for Poland was the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2015 between the state development bank, Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (BGK), and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), the largest bank in the world and present on almost all global markets. The aim of the agreement was to create a strategic partnership between the two sides and to support joint projects and further co-operation in various areas between Beijing and Warsaw. The MoU also defines the areas and forms of co-operation which constitute part of the BRI in-

initiative. It includes sharing experience and know-how in the co-financing of large infrastructure projects, the development of industrial parks or issuing guarantees for large enterprises.

The Polish-Chinese strategic partnership was strengthened during President Xi Jinping's visit to Warsaw in June 2016. This led to an agreement being signed for the joint formulation of a bilateral co-operation plan. It assumes the development of bilateral co-operation in 13 areas, such as infrastructure, industrial investments, trade, the energy sector, finance, transport and logistics, standards and certification, environmental protection, agriculture, cultural exchange and interpersonal exchange, and IT industry and think tank co-operation (Bachulska 2017, pp. 172–173).

However, no significant progress has been made in respect of the BRI in present times. Having said this, a further five agreements were signed between Poland and China at the Belt and Trail Forum which was held in Beijing in May 2017. None of these, however, were related to key issues in areas of infrastructure development or communication. Instead, they focused more on side issues such as tourism or water management.

When analyzing the impact of the BRI initiative on the Polish economy, it should be emphasized first of all that it is difficult to clearly specify which projects are directly related to this initiative. However, according to the report prepared for the European Parliament (Research for [...], 2018), the improvement of the transport network between China and the EU under the BRI will not only provide EU industry with better access to Chinese markets, but it will also increase competition. At the same time, all studies indicate that major changes are expected in those Member States that are better linked to the BRI framework – namely, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Austria. Therefore, it can be assumed that with the development of the BRI, trade is expected to intensify significantly.

In the case of these countries, the exchange carried out under the BRI will be much more important than in the case of countries not directly connected to the railway network, such as Cyprus and Malta, for example. However, this will depend more on specific industries developed within the BRI: in the EU or in China. However, it can be assumed that due to increased traffic caused by the BRI, the North Sea corridor (the so-called Baltic Core Network Corridor) will be an especially loaded transport corridor. In particular, this may burden the western section connecting Poland, Germany and the Netherlands, which is currently not sufficiently developed to manage such trade volumes.

Poland from the perspective of the “16 + 1” format

When analyzing Polish-Chinese co-operation within the BRI, it is worth mentioning that the initiative largely determines mutual relations with China and at the same time constitutes an element of support in the implementation of the BRI in Central and Eastern Europe. This was initiated in 2011 by China with a group of sixteen countries from the region, including Poland¹. During the first official meeting with the government representatives of these countries, in 2012, the “16 + 1” format was created between the Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) and China.

This format is characterized by a low degree of institutionalization, which is why the main decision-making roles are played by heads of states at summit meetings. In the case of China, co-operation within the “16 + 1” framework is aimed at strengthening its own position as well as promoting the Belt and Road initiative in the region. However, the government in Beijing is obliged to provide preferential terms of financing for investment projects implemented in the sixteen countries with the use of Chinese means of production. For the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, this is a way to strengthen bilateral relations with China. This co-operation creates opportunities for them, especially in light of the substantial money reserves available to China, which are willingly spent on intergovernmental (so-called Government-to-Government, or G-to-G) infrastructure projects and seed capital for start-ups. Chinese financial support has already allowed some of the sixteen countries to avoid possible breaches of EU restrictions on levels of allowed public debt. This capital, in the form of foreign direct investments (FDI) or portfolio investments, is the subject of competition among companies in Central and Eastern Europe (*Belt [...] 2016*). For this reason, the sixteen countries competing for Chinese support do not lead a common policy towards Beijing (Szczudlik 2016). This co-operation is also hampered by the fact that there are significant differences between the Central and Eastern European countries classified as “16 + 1”. Some of them belong to the EU and some do not; there are countries that belong to the euro area and those that are outside of it. Moreover, these countries differ significantly in terms of economic structure. On the other hand, their geostrategic potential (they lie between three sea basins – the Baltic, the Adriatic and the Black Sea) creates great opportunities and is a form of bargaining power in dealing with China.

Poland plays an important role in the “16 + 1” format, in which it is the host country for three of its mechanisms. These are the *Contact Mechanism for the Investment Promotion Agencies*, the *Business Council* and the *Coordinating Secretariat for Maritime Issues*. What should be emphasized is that all of these mechanisms are economic in nature.

The strong position of Poland against the background of other CEEC countries is also demonstrated by Chinese foreign direct investments. Out of the sixteen coun-

¹ The “16 + 1” format outside of China and Poland also includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

tries of Central and Eastern Europe, three of them – Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic – have received over two-thirds of Chinese FDI. Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia together account for a further 30% (Jingjing 2018). The mutual relations between China and the CEEC countries are also largely based on trade. Likewise, in addition to the dominant share of FDI accounted for by Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, these countries are also the three most important trade partners of China out of the sixteen, accounting for over 64% of the total value of all commercial transactions in 2015. However, the turnover did not grow as dynamically between 2011 and 2015 (an increase of 6.4%, from 52.9 billion USD to 56.3 billion USD) as FDI. This was particularly true of CEE exports to China, which increased only by 5.0% in this period, while analogous imports recorded an increase of 10.5% (*Belt [...] 2016*). These trends contributed to maintaining negative patterns of trade in the sixteen countries with China, which remained unsustainable. In 2015, China's exports were almost twice as large as its imports from the sixteen. This large trade imbalance has influenced the existing development model implemented under the Format "16 + 1", which is currently focused on increasing connectivity and increasing investments in infrastructure, such as railways, motorways, tunnels, bridges, power plants, electrical networks, industrial parks and logistics, seaports and airports. These activities bring results at first in the form of higher growth rate in turnover trade, which in 2017 amounted to USD 68 billion, where the average annual growth was estimated at 15.9% (Jingjing 2018). Simultaneously, with the growing Chinese demand for products such as metals, minerals, chemicals, and food and drinks from Central and Eastern Europe, one can expect a gradual shift towards a balancing mutual trade.

However, there are some allegations that the "16 + 1" format has had little impact on the progress in implementing projects under the Belt and Road Initiative. Experts are critical of the fact that, apart from the annual summits, little of the ambitious goals originally set have been implemented (Góralczyk 2017). It is true that several Chinese investment instruments have been created to finance infrastructure and energy projects in Central and Eastern Europe (the Budapest-Belgrade railway line, the Montenegro-Serbia highway, etc.) but there are still no signs of mutual co-operation, especially regarding the large trade deficit with China and how to limit it – a symptom common for all CEEC countries. Dragan Pavličević notes that there is growing frustration in China and the sixteen countries due to the lack of tangible effects of the "16 + 1" format. He emphasizes, however, that the portfolio of Chinese infrastructure and development projects, capital investments and acquisitions in the region has been growing (Pavličević 2016).

In respect of the above, therefore, the "16 + 1" initiative requires clearly defined objectives. It could be suggested that one of the main tasks for the CEE countries would be to use their strengths in order to facilitate increased access to Chinese markets and to remove barriers to trade. If the sixteen countries worked together to achieve these goals, they could further develop their relations with Beijing, while at the same time gradually reducing the asymmetries in mutual trade. This approach, through

increased trade, could also support the development of infrastructure in the region. The Western Balkans, for example, have currently become the key destination target for Chinese infrastructure investments. In addition, the Central Communication Port project in Poland² will also contribute to strengthening the region's development. Likewise, investments in new technologies and renewable energy sources with mutual commitment can also bring about mutual benefits to CEEC and China. However, in the absence of a clear vision, based on discussions and agreement across the sixteen countries regarding the actual goals of the co-operation, obtaining tangible results will be difficult.

Polish-Chinese economic relations

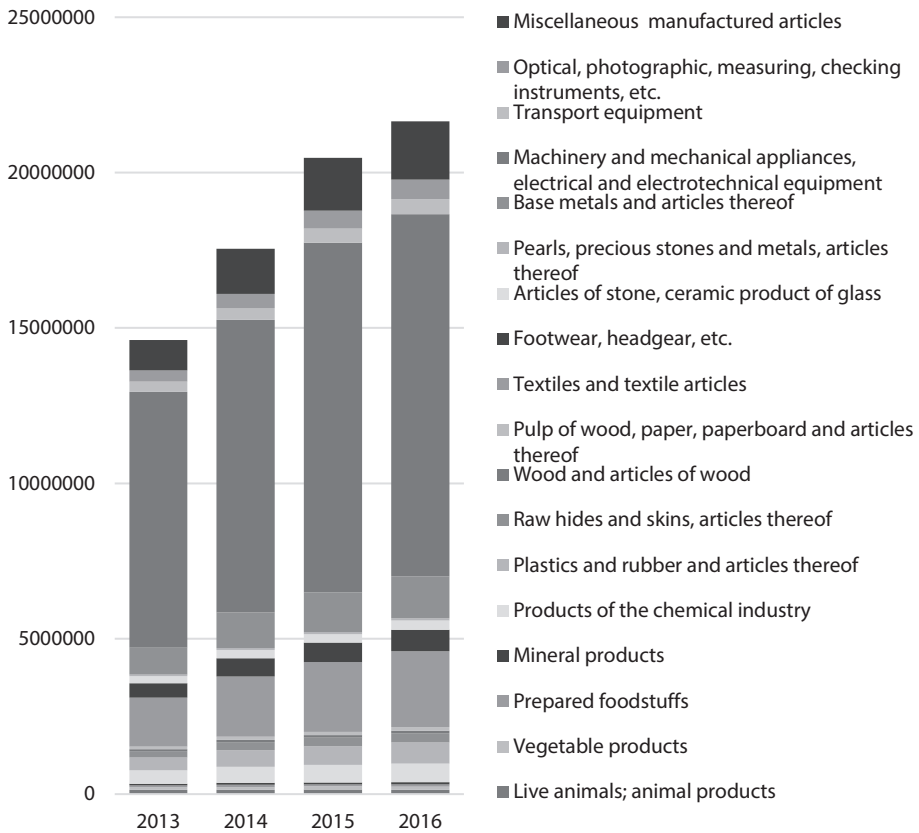
One should start by outlining the mutual economic relations and related problems when describing Polish-Chinese co-operation in the framework of the BRI. China is Poland's largest Asian trading partner and the latter is China's largest trading partner in Central and Eastern Europe. This is mainly due to the scale of China's exports to the Polish market. Poland has ranked second after Germany since 2014, and in 2017, China accounted for approximately 11.9% of Polish imports. However, the relatively low value of Polish exports to China (amounting to approximately EUR 2,054.4 million, equating to 1.01% of the country's exports) means that Poland runs a significant trade deficit with the PRC (on a ratio of 11.7 to 1). At the same time, the deficit with this market is about half of the total deficit in the group of all less-developed markets. The total value of trade between both countries amounted to over EUR 26 billion in 2017. During this year, however, Poland recorded a higher growth rate in its exports to China, amounting to 18.9% when compared to analogous imports, whose average annual growth was estimated at 11.2%. The increasing trade deficit with China amounted to EUR -22,945.7 million in 2017, which was over EUR 2 billion higher than in the previous year (Syntetyczna [...] 2018). The deficit is structural in character and only depends to a small extent on the global economic situation. Chinese products are competitive on the Polish market, mainly in terms of cost and price, which is a consequence of the huge, cheap labor resources in the country. There is also a noticeable imbalance in the development of new technologies and innovations between China and Poland where, in the case of the latter, there is still a lack of adequate capital and companies that could become innovators in the global market.

The following graph depicts changes in the share of individual product categories in Polish imports from China from 2013 (the year of the BRI initiative) to 2016.

As Graph 1 reveals, there were no significant changes in the structure of Polish imports from China during the period analyzed. The highest share took place

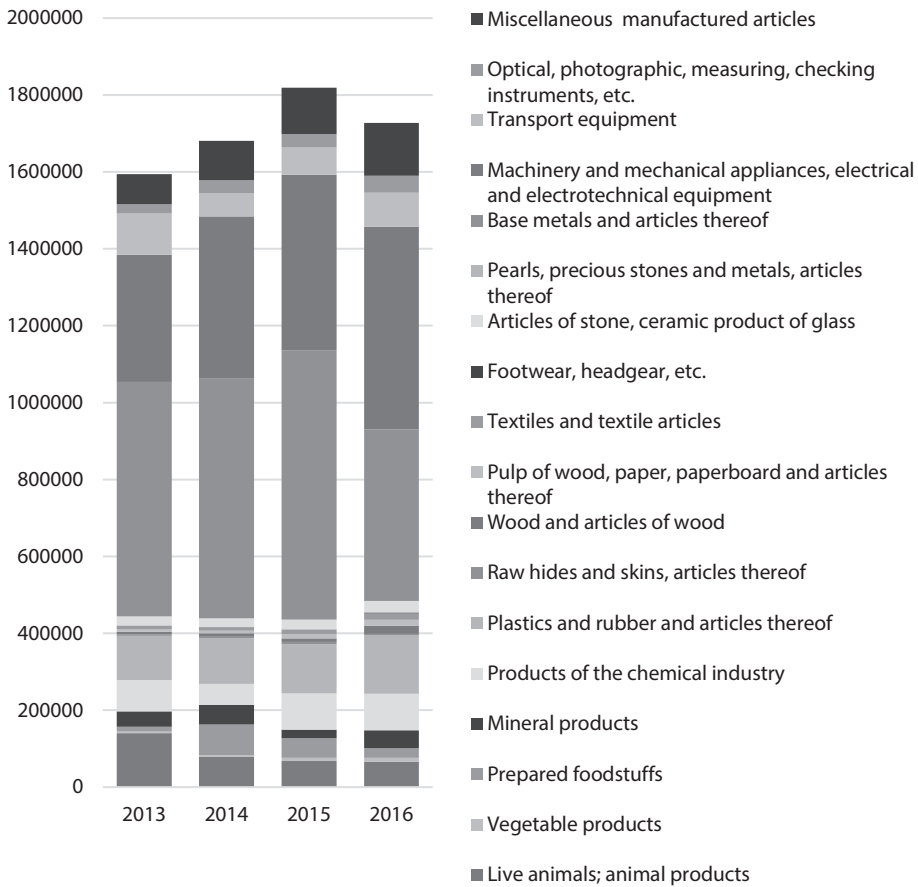
² The Central Communication Port (CPK) is an initiative to build a huge airport between Warsaw and Łódź, which may become a future shopping and logistics center. According to the assumptions, the airport will be able to compete with the largest airports in Europe.

in high-processed goods, such as machinery and mechanical appliances, as well as in electrical and electronic equipment (almost 54% in 2016). Items of importance in Polish imports from China are also raw materials and labor-intensive goods, such as textiles and textile articles (over 11%), base metals and articles (about 6%) as well as footwear and headwear, etc. (3%).



Graph 1. Polish imports from China in 2013–2016 by CN Sectors (EUR thousand)
 Source: *Rocznik statystyczny handlu*, GUS, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017.

In terms of Polish exports to China, the highest share could be found in the CN section: machinery and mechanical appliances, as well as electrical and electronic equipment. These accounted for over 30% of total outflows in 2016, representing a 9% increase on the year 2013. The second highest share of goods exported from this category included base metals and articles made of base metals, making up almost 26% in 2016. However, the share of the latter fell significantly during the same period, from 38% in 2013 (Graph 2). It should be emphasized that Polish exports to China are still dominated by unprocessed goods, especially copper, which is the main export product (the largest Polish exporter is the state metal monopoly KGHM Polska Miedź).



Graph 2. Polish exports to China in 2013–2016 according to the CN section (CN Sectors) (EUR thousand)
 Source: *Rocznik statystyczny handlu*, GUS, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017.

One of the main goals from a Polish perspective is to expand exports to China, though this runs into problems due to entry barriers. Polish producers face difficulties accessing the Chinese market due to strict regulations and bureaucracy. Polish companies do not understand and are not sufficiently schooled on the Chinese business environment. A further and related problem concerns the shortage of Chinese-speaking diplomats and simultaneous business advisors. In order to reverse the growing trade deficit, it is thus necessary to facilitate access to the Chinese market for Polish entrepreneurs. This can also be achieved by gradually changing the structure of exports towards higher quality and more technologically advanced products. For example, the types of products that China is particularly interested in and which Poland could supply are devices that counteract pollution. In addition to modern technologies, Poland also has great opportunities in the design and production of some traditional prod-

ucts, such as furniture (Zuokui 2017, p. 18). The country is also a world class exporter of high-quality yachts and motor-powered vessels. Some efforts are also being currently undertaken to introduce and/or expand Polish food and beverages into the Chinese market, though further success in these areas depends on government-level relations. Some success is already visible for Polish producers following the visit of President Xi Jinping in Poland in June 2016 and which led to the export of fresh apples. To increase the attractiveness of its products, Poland is positioned as the only EU country that has introduced three national food quality systems (e.g., the QAFP – Quality Assurance for Food Products).

An important issue from the perspective of mutual Polish-Chinese economic relations is also the direct flow of investment. Due to its strategic geographical location, Poland could prove to be an important market for Chinese investors. Its main advantages include the proximity of key partners in Western Europe, access to the sea, and convenient road and rail connections. Chinese companies praise the investment climate, access to local human resources and qualified personnel. One of their strategies is to seek-out access to technology. As such, Poland provides companies with opportunities to participate in public tenders (Bachulska 2017, p. 169). Investors can also launch their products with their own logo on the European market. Poland issues EU certificates, which enable companies to expand in Europe. It is worth highlighting the overall success of these incentives; Poland was the second largest recipient of Chinese FDI in Central and Eastern Europe in the period 2000–2016 after Hungary (Thilo and Mikko 2017, p. 10). According to NBP data, the inflow of Chinese investments into Poland increased from 75.7 million EUR in 2013 to 123.3 million EUR in 2016. However, higher volumes were recorded in 2014 (147.4 million EUR) and in 2015 (199.5 million EUR)³. (www.nbp.pl, data from 7.11.2018). It should be added, however, that these values are low when considered in the context of total inflows of foreign direct investment in Poland.

Chinese investment in Poland comes mainly in the form of mergers and acquisitions, but there are also greenfield investments. In terms of the latter, these are especially desirable from a Polish economic growth perspective, though only a few of these have been realized. However, while greenfield investments are more desirable, it is also important that such investments, as well as others, are of high quality and will also lead to the transfer of modern technologies and know-how. In this regard, Chinese investments mainly take place in production, finance, transport, telecommunications and small infrastructure projects. Among the sectors in which Chinese investments were located are electronics, electromechanical, machinery, distribution, ICT, energy, environment, infrastructure and banking (Seaman et al. 2017, pp. 109–117).

³ These data may be understated because the NBP does not take into account investment flows realized by Chinese companies registered outside of China.

Conclusions

The main aim of this paper is a description of the BRI initiative from the Polish perspective. This study also tries to identify the consequences that the BRI brings for the Polish economy. Both goals were not easy to achieve, especially since the declarations do not always correspond to real actions and intentions. An attempt to describe this initiative is difficult because it is not clearly specified which projects are directly related to this initiative. For this reason, the article is focused on the most important elements of the BRI initiative.

Due to its geographical location, Poland lies in the center of the BRI initiative in Central and Eastern Europe. Using its potential both to attract Chinese investments and to increase exports to China, it is potentially well positioned to become a BRI hub in the region. However, as of yet, the Chinese initiative has delivered little in the way of effects. Despite various types of declarations, in the case of Poland, there were no significant changes in the existing patterns of goods exchanged with China. It is worth emphasizing that Polish-Chinese trade still takes place mainly on sea routes. However, this concept is not public knowledge in a wider sense and unannounced, which is why it is difficult to expect it to be implemented to a greater extent.

It should be emphasized that the analysis shows that there are some potential barriers to mutual economic co-operation, which, if utilized, may potentially constitute a basis for co-operation. This concerns the substantial differences in the size, potential and structure of these two economies, as well as in terms of culture. The lack of a formal framework for mutual co-operation is also significant, which concerns both the Belt and Route initiative and the “16 + 1” format. One of the main problems in mutual relations may also concern the lack of convergence of common interests, especially in respect of investment. The Polish government prefers greenfield investments while Chinese companies are much more interested in acquisitions and access to procurement markets.

What is important is that China has promised to build a completely new rail network as an alternative to cargo ships. For Warsaw, the real benefits of joining the new transport network and communication – the BRI (if it is ever created) – would result in the creation of national logistic centers facilitating the export of Polish goods to China. The advantage of this type of infrastructure would also be additional workplaces. However, it is important that these investments primarily favor the development of Polish exports.

Investments are one of the main areas of focus on the bilateral agenda. While Chinese investments implemented under the BRI are significant in the case of Poland, there are no infrastructure projects such as those recognized as one of the main goals of mutual co-operation implemented under the BRI. Since the Belt and Route initiative was announced, Chinese investors have declared that their investments should be treated as BRI activities. Most of them, however, are still mergers and acquisitions and not greenfield investments desirable from the Polish perspective. In order to at-

tract such investments, however, appropriate legal, marketing and infrastructure solutions should be prepared, such as special economic zones or industrial parks.

The Beijing authorities have announced greater control over the flow of capital from the country, which is manifested even in postponing some investment projects. This may be another difficulty in implementing R & D projects in the future. In the case of Poland, co-operation with China may be crucial, especially since in 2020 its inflow of EU structural funds will end and it will have to find other sources of capital to finance infrastructure projects. This is particularly important in light of the ambitious plans to improve infrastructure, as well as to accelerate industrialization in the country (these goals are an important element of the strategy of responsible development, the main 25-year Polish economic strategy and development), creating new jobs, as well as reviving and improving the transport network. The Polish government is trying to attract Chinese investors, but not at any price. What is crucial for the Polish economy is not money but technology and know-how. Co-operating with China should, therefore, be based on a partnership, not the total control of the Chinese partner throughout the investment, which is entirely financed by it. The Polish government declares that investment projects should be implemented carefully with the predominance of Polish capital. Not every Chinese investment can be financially beneficial for Poland, especially when it is perhaps implemented by Polish companies or using Polish resources and means of production. Therefore, some regulations were introduced to verify foreign investments and to protect the more strategic sectors of the Polish economy. They are all of a general nature but are used for some Chinese investments.

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Streszczenie

Chińska Inicjatywa Pasa i Szlaku w perspektywie polskiej

Chiny w 2013 r. po raz pierwszy ogłosiły inicjatywę tzw. Pasa i Szlaku (z ang. *Belt and Road Initiative, BRI*). Mimo, iż od tego czasu jej zasięg, czy nawet sama nazwa ulegały wielokrotnym zmianom, nie można jednak zaprzeczyć, że jest to jedno z najważniejszych wyzwań podejmowanych obecnie w skali globu. To, co jest charakterystyczne dla BRI, to właśnie jej globalny wymiar, która już teraz zrzesza 65 państw zamieszkałych przez prawie 70% światowej populacji, w których wytwarzane jest prawie 55% światowego PNB oraz znajduje się tam ok. 75% globalnych zasobów surowcowych. Jednocześnie lista państw chcących się do niej przyłączyć nadal pozostaje otwarta, co oznacza, że w przyszłości jej zasięg może być jeszcze bardziej rozległy. Rozwój współpracy gospodarczej w ramach BRI ma być realizowany m.in. poprzez budowę sieci dróg lądowych łączących je z Azją Centralną oraz Wschodnią i Zachodnią Europą. Kraje Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, w tym Polska, ze względu na swą strategiczną lokalizację mogą mieć istotne znaczenie w tej koncepcji. Wraz z BRI otwierają się więc nowe perspektywy również dla polsko-chińskich relacji handlowych. Celem niniejszego opracowania jest więc próba opisanie tej trudnej do zdefiniowania inicjatywy, jak i zidentyfikowanie konsekwencji, jakie niesie ona dla gospodarki polskiej. Jest to szczególnie istotne w kontekście ogromnego deficytu handlowego, jaki Polska od lat odnotowuje w wymianie handlowej z Chinami oraz pogłębiania się charakterystycznej dla tej wymiany asymetrii.

Słowa kluczowe: Inicjatywa Pasa i Szlaku, format „16 + 1”, import, eksport, deficyt handlowy, BIZ