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Jacek Reginia-Zacharski

UKRAINIAN ISSUES IN GEOPOLITICAL THOUGHT OF THE TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

ABSTRACT: Ukrainian lands in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have been in proximity of great geopolitical changes several times. During that time the Ukrainian nation – due to various factors – encountered a number of “windows of opportunity” for achieving the realization of dreams about independence and national sovereignty. The author identified in the period considered four “general moments,” of which two have been completed successfully. The first of these occurred in 1990–1991, when for the first time in modern history, Ukrainians managed to achieve a lasting and relatively stable independence. The second of the “moments” – still unresolved – are events that began in the late autumn of 2013. The process, called “Revolution of Dignity”, represents a new quality in the history of the Ukrainian nation, therefore, that the Ukrainians have to defend the status quo (independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty, etc.) but not to seek to achieve an independent being. The analysis leads to the conclusion that the ability of Ukrainians to achieve and maintain independence is largely a function of the relative power of the Russian state as measured with respect to the shape and quality of international relations.

KEYWORDS: Ukraine, geopolitics, geostrategy, Russia, Maidan, war, security complex

Ukraine’s geopolitical importance in the modern scientific reflection and views, which can be described as “colloquial,” seems to be pretty obvious (Moczulski, 2010: 312). The country, located in the basin of the Dnieper River, with wide access to the Black Sea, an important human and economic potential, and above all, being a special keystone between “East” and “West,” has been predestined to play an important geopolitical role (Al-Rodhan, 2009: 18–19). Perhaps these factors decided about quite evident in the past century phenomenon, the essence of which may be the formulated as the assertion that Ukrainian lands and affairs were gener-

ally regarded as the object of the game between the global powers (Moczulski 1999: 707–708). Ukrainian efforts to conclude aspirations for subjectivity were relatively rare and only rather briefly had a chance of appearing in world politics. These unique situations were associated with deep turbulence in the international configuration/model of the distribution of power, which could occur as a result of the struggle/war on an enormous scale. In the twentieth century this “window of opportunity” appeared mainly during and after the First World War. During another collective conflict – the Second World War, the Ukrainian lands in effect only slightly marked the occurrence of opportunities for their own independent existence. It was primarily due to the fact that the Soviet Union achieved the status of a superpower. This justifies a conclusion that the great military conflicts created a chance for Ukraine only when they led to a significant weakening (or temporarily collapse) the possibility of Russia’s geopolitical influence. The turn of the 80’s and 90’s of the twentieth century is an emphatic confirmation of this observation. The disintegration of the Soviet (Russian) empire and related geopolitical impotence was not the result of an open armed struggle, however, it led to the effective use of the arising opportunities for the implementation of political, national and state identity Ukraine (D. Arel, B. A. Ruble, 2006: 227–229). It is worth highlighting that all three cited attempts (after all, even during the Second World War Ukrainian nationalist elites made some effort to achieve a state or quasi-state identity) were calculated to achieve the effect of the entrance to the geopolitical game on the principles of being an independent and sovereign player.

The nature of the events which took place in Ukraine in the 2013 and 2014 was definitely different. First of all, the Ukrainian state was sovereign, so in terms of international law and order one cannot talk about “the struggle for independence,” but rather about its defense. In addition, it should be noted that the geopolitical processes, particularly related to the flows of power in the world, the quality of particular centers and the directions of the change were very dynamic and turbulent in that time (Al-Rodhan, 2009: 93–94). It would be a truism to say that the world at the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century is far different from the world at the end of the previous century (Brzeziński, 2007: kindle edition), however, it is necessary to capture these differences, particularly in the context of Ukrainian lands. The main factor influencing was the realization of the postulate of subjectivity of Ukraine (perhaps the first time from the

settlement of Pereyaslav). It is reasonable, therefore, to emphasize that the turn of the century was marked by a more effective coming out of the Russian State from a period of time referred to as “the Troubles” (*Smuta*), which was characterized, on the one hand, by internal weakness, but mainly in the field of deep impotence of the international game. “Putin’s” Russia is a country that dynamically and successfully has returned to the group of major players in the world, both in the individual as well as collective formulas (even in a heavily promoted, but still a bit “spectral” concept of BRIC or BRICS). It can be assumed that the process of coming out from the geopolitical collapse of the Russian Federation has intensified in response to the “color revolutions” in the former Soviet Union – “Rose” in Georgia (2003), “Orange” in Ukraine (2004–2005), and “Tulip” in Kyrgyzstan (2005). The first two especially proved to be dangerous from the perspective of the Kremlin, as they led to a profound geopolitical reorientation of foreign policy regarding Georgia and Ukraine (Olchawa, 2009: 117). The Russian Federation took a strongly negative position against these changes. Of course one cannot recognize that, until 2003, the Russian Federation favorably looked at emancipation trends in the area of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The lack of decisive action and rather modest tools held by the Kremlin were results of self-consciousness of relatively weakness rather. On the other hand, Georgian and Ukrainian aspirations were considered in Russia as formulated within acceptable limits. The situation was changed in 1999–2004 due to the admission of countries from Central Europe to NATO and the European Union (Wilson, 2005: 21). As a result, the “strategic culture” of the West came into direct contact with the boundaries of the area defined by the Russian Federation in the mid-90s of the twentieth century as strategically important “near abroad” (Cordesman, Al-Rodhan, 2006: 112) (Shoemaker, 2014: 90). It was a significant fact that since 2001 the United States – properly seen as the main actor in organizing the security architecture of the transatlantic space – were involved initially in wars in Afghanistan (since 2001) and Iraq (since 2003). Since 2009, the foreign policy of the United States, through the announcement of the “reset” in relations with the Russian Federation and “Asiatic Pivot,” transferred the center of gravity from European theater to Asian issues. It has opened a lot of space for the activity of Russian politics. In fact, this period can be moved to the mid-2008, when the US Congress was dominated since 2007 by Democrats (110 seats), and was strongly supported by the growing chances of Barack Obama to become the

next President of the United States. Those factors allowed Russian strategists to assume a possibility of deep revalue in the foreign policy of the United States in the close future (Olchawa, 2009: 183). Necessary tools for the new and active policy of the Russian Federation were secured due to the high prices of energy and lucrative arms contracts. It is also worth noting that in the first case, Russia led a fairly open policy calculated to monopolize certain markets, or at least their domination. It was possible according to an aggressive policy in the energetic markets, as well as events in the world (the “Arab spring,” the war in Syria, and so on.) That situation is still maintained, ensuring the Federation has effective tools for activities designed to rebuild their geopolitical zone of influence. It seems that the process was started about 1999 (although, as mentioned, some attempts were made earlier – but were not successfully completed due to the relative weakness). Since 2008, the “gathering of the Russian lands” entered into a much more intensive phase (Al-Rodhan, 2009: 111). The Caucasian war of the 2008, however, made it clear that the use of armed force for the realization of geopolitical objectives in specific regions does not entail unacceptable political costs. Far more – the full geopolitical success was reached by Moscow politicians only after some time. Replacing the cadres of Georgia led the state – as it seems – to resignation from pro-Western course. The ongoing game in 2013–2014 towards the geopolitical future of Ukraine is another piece of Russian actions that result is to be the redefinition of geopolitical space in the Eurasian region.

The uniqueness of the recent situation in Ukraine in comparison with previous (twentieth-century) openings of “windows of opportunity” should not obscure the existence of a certain continuity in geopolitical trends. Even more, the current situation should be seen as firmly rooted in the contexts of the past and referring to them (Burdzy, 1995: 39).

Ukraine in Geopolitical Concepts in the Years 1917–1945

For a long period modern geopolitics – from the appearance of such reflection in contemporary political thought – was dominated by Europeans and European issues (Moczulski, 2010: 72). This resulted directly from the situation of the architecture of international relations and the world’s politics on a macro scale in the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. The United States

based on its own (incidentally, geopolitical) doctrine, persisted in durable splendid isolation, as Asian countries were the subject of the political game, or just woke up to the power. Europe, therefore, remained the only active center for the formulation of political thought with global aspirations, or those of supra-regional dimension. This phenomenon should also be associated with the fact, being acknowledged by many researchers, of the menial and ancillary role of geopolitics as a tool for the description and projection of the political situation at the level of decision-making. The ancillary can also be seen in the sphere of motivation (and hence ideology) of the major world powers (Moczulski, 2010: 393). At the turn of the century, Europe seemed to be, and actually was, the center of creation and the point of the reference of the main mega-trends in world politics. The scope of relations between the European powers determined the overall state of tension in international relations (Moczulski, 2010: 253–254).

The Russo-Japanese War was an exception, but even then, this competition was perceived as an element representing the position of the Russian Empire in a European game. It can also be said that the defeat in the war restored full Russia's interest in European issues. These few remarks, though do not exhaust the problem, unless they sufficiently explain the phenomenon of the Europe-centric nature of geopolitics – at least until the end of the 1930's (Jean, 2004: 47).

Another, no less important consideration ought to be made, which is that, although the region of the Central and Eastern Europe was not the theater of immediate struggle, it was a keystone of geopolitical thinking in this period (Moczulski, 2010: 83). Crises and conflicts that took place before 1914 should be seen as peripheral clash or actions undertaken for the purpose of increasing the potential in the face of the expected confrontation in the main theater – Central and Eastern Europe. It will not be an exaggeration to say that modern European politics (and thus the world) began after 1871. After that moment, European centers of power were finally created and began to struggle for power in a certain political dimension. Since this time goes back to deep German-French antagonism, which dominated European politics for several decades. While the conflict between the Republic of France and the German Empire had a dominant meaning, whereas strategic decisions in the European melting pot were conditioned by the quality of the relationship on the axis between Berlin & St. Petersburg (Moczulski, 2010: 502–505). Close cooperation or alliance between the

empires, would generate the political quality, which would not compete any other European power. In turn, a sharp conflict – at least at first glance – would block potential German aggression to the West. Such a chain of relationships dominated European geopolitical thinking for more than a half century. It also clearly exhibited the importance of the Central European region, as the area of the clash of interests or area of possible cooperation. Quite soon one more element came to the calculation: in the case of open German-Russian conflict, the area of Central and Eastern Europe would be the scene of warfare, waged by the two giants (Moczulski, 2010: 519). Thus, the research on the nature of geographical conditions as well as the study of a complex mosaic of ethno-cultural and political took on a special significance (Dima, 2010: 8–9).

One of the first coherent and comprehensive geopolitical concepts was formulated at the threshold of the twentieth century by Swedish geographer and Germanophile, Rudolf Kjellén. Although the Professor of Gothenburg and Uppsala, first was dealing with cases of the political and cultural condition of a state (Moczulski, 2010: 7–9), he later focused on the conditions of the Western European chain of dependencies (Kjellén, 1915). After all, the ongoing events of the Great War the East Europe region caught his attention. Kjellén claimed that the German-Russian borderland (whether it is better to speak about Slavo-Germanic *limes*) was a natural theater of clashes (Moczulski, 2010: 508–509). It was a significant factor determining the nature of both areas – on the one hand, the industrial center with limited raw materials and permanent import demand, from the other: lands rich in raw materials – primarily food (Ukraine) and the infrastructure unable to process and consume them. Kjellén's assumption that the “border” conflict between Russia and Germany had a much broader context – it had vested interests across the globe, was also important. In the general scope of his geopolitical reflection, the geographer recognized the naturalness of the existence of three ‘pan-regions’: American, German, and Japanese (Moczulski, 2010: 591–520). The *sine qua non* condition for the realization of this model in his opinion (regard to contemporary reality it is difficult to disagree with this view) was victorious war against Russia, which he saw as a part of a global war. In such conditions, the CEE region would be, on the one hand, “the prize,” and on the other hand, the main theater of war. Reflection related to the Kjellén's concept, but also present in almost the entire reflection on contemporary politics should be raised here: international relations often have been seen at the level of “great

space” (Powers), and their shape as the result of the game between them. It has naturally led to reductionist assumptions in terms of the number of subjects in the ongoing political game (Jean, 2004: 97–101). The “strongest organisms” were surviving at the expense of smaller and weaker ones. In such an intellectual atmosphere the position of the regions had to be brought at most to play the role of the object or area of clashes. This fascination of Darwinism was also evident in the views of the other “geopolitician” of the turn of the century, Friedrich Ratzel. The ground for his deliberations was the thesis of the naturalness of conflicts and clashes between political territorial organisms (states). Ratzel acknowledged a tendency to expand their areas of ownership and influence in the spatial dimension (Raumsinn) as an inherent feature of international politics. The international environment of the game was considered as a “zero-sum,” where profits naturally determined the size of losses of the opponent (Moczulski, 2010: 8). In Ratzel’s concept, Central Europe and its structure became both the center and the reason for expansion. Ratzel pointed out that the fact of the overpopulation of Germany, unprecedented anywhere else in the region, naturally tended to expand and extend the living space. Commenting the significance of the geographical factor for the behavior of nations, he remarked that “in Africa, Germans and French are not as hostile to each other as in Europe.” Another reflection – basic for Europe – was the naturalness of the phenomenon of variation of political borders, which in his opinion were marked by the stigma of artificiality. Axes of communication and boundaries generated in this way played much greater role in the relations between states. The boundaries, therefore, for Ratzel were a function (or effect) of the movement in international relations. Taking for consideration a dynamic of the borders the feature of territoriality of participants in the international game should be considered as naturally variable. On the other hand, the German thinker perceived attachment of states to their ownership, what made the conflicts between nation-states a regular part of the world order.

A novelty in comparison to other concepts relating to international issues, posting Germany in the limelight, was a postulate of direct expansion due the vector along the south direction – and therefore, to the Balkans and Turkey. The Central European region took on a new dimension, yielding to the extension of the Southern dimension. It is tempting to reflect that, for Ratzel, the southern parts of Europe constituted a sort of “geopolitical vacuum” marked by a clash of different influences, but which was not finally

“developed.” The traditional direction of German expansion – East – also was present in the concepts of the German geographer. He recognized, however, as a better tool for realization of geopolitical objectives on this direction a wide spectrum of economic measures (soft economic expansion). For the first time in modern geopolitics, the political thought of Friedrich Ratzel so clearly outlined the relationship between the objective and the costs of implementation of the goals. Ratzel had not renounced the concept of conquering the East – but he considered an account of profits or losses (Moczulski, 2010: 498–499). These estimates led him to believe the strategic direction of the Balkans would be less expensive and – in the long term – more promising. One can risk saying that Ratzel only creatively developed the structure proposed by Kjellen – through expansion into the Balkans and Turkey to achieve control over the Black Sea straits and thus economically subjugate Russia. He returned to the thinking about Central and Eastern Europe in terms of the subject of international games between the superpowers.

The works by Kjellen and Ratzel reflected the international tension, which ultimately led to the outbreak of the Great War. In the discourses from the period the need to focus on the problems of Central Europe was evident. Expression of two researchers cited above, as well as many others pointed to the fact that this region was in the focus of international relations theorists (Moczulski, 2010: 502). It resulted in the development of the concept of *Mittel-europa*, which – although originally German – dominated the thinking of the fate of continental Europe in the conceptions developed in other countries. It will be natural to draw attention to special interest, which those questions raised in the UK. The idea of *Mitteleuropa* was inextricably linked with the figures of Friedrich Neumann and Ernst Jäckh (Wolff-Powęska, 2000: 217–220). Of course, their ideas were heavily contaminated with the rhetoric of war, however, the image that emerged from them was characterized by a coherent geopolitical vision. The starting point was the observation of conflict in continental Europe, or more precisely in its central part, between three major political programs: English, Russian and German. Vector, which was the resultant of these three forces directed towards the south (the Balkans and the Black Sea straits), but still remained connected with the initial field of clash – the areas of south of the Baltic Sea. The proposal, which pulled out of the above assumptions contained the call for efforts to build a “great space” (strongly argued by Ratzel). Europe remained impaired because of the competition between natural centers of power, such as Russia,

the British Empire and the United States. Perceptions of Central Europe in the terms of “territorial poverty” and exposition of the huge population density gave complementary arguments in favor of expansion and construction of a new geopolitical quality under German hegemony, which should be called a “European great space” with a power center located in Germany, Austria-Hungary, and today’s Central and Eastern Europe. It is worth emphasizing, that concepts of Mitteleuropa were not based on assumptions of direct conquest. These solutions were impractical due to the homogeneous national character of the German state, whether in relation to the Habsburg Empire to the inability of increasing the number of full-fledged entities in dualistic monarchy. The solution – especially expressed by Neumann in the pages of “Mitteleuropa” (Wolff-Powęska, 2000: 216), was to create a network of quasi-independent states, entirely dependent on the center of power in Berlin (Reginia-Zacharski, 2004: 98–101). Finally, the goal to be achieved on the basis of “gravitation” was actually addition the whole of Central Europe – mainly in the southern dimension. German successes such as the seizure of the Polish Kingdom (and the Act of November 5, 1916.), two peace treaties signed at Brest-Litovsk in 1918 (with the Ukrainian People’s Republic and a month later with Bolshevik Russia), and at the end with Romania (May of 1918) seemed to create the possibility of the realization of these intentions. The first peace of Brest seemed to be the moment when the Ukrainian question for the first time appeared as a geopolitical phenomenon (Wheeler-Bennet, 1968: passim).

The breakdown of the Great Powers of continental Europe made the concepts gained in importance recognizing the important role the so called “Members of the sea world” – the United Kingdom and the United States. In particular, the first state has become the land on which they grew a concept, which dominated during the interwar geopolitical structures (actually it is present geopolitical discourse today). This state of affairs was relatively easy to explain. Countries of the former “central block” had not even started to lick their wounds after defeat in a global conflict. France, at best, opted for maintaining the great anti-German coalition – often “geopolitical” reflection generated at the ground boiled down to use phrase: *Boche salaire* (Reginia-Zacharski, 2004: 209). With respect to the United States, the situation was slightly more complex. The two major trends clashed on American soil. On the one hand, the Democrats and US President Woodrow Wilson spearheaded global thinking rooted in the paradigm of political idealism, whose “embodiment”

was to be the League of Nations (Sierpowski, 2000: 98). At the other end, Republicans were declaring the need to return to isolationism under the conditions of the Monroe Doctrine, in the current time based on the military and strategic considerations – mainly, Admiral Mahan.

The British found themselves in a defensive position. Back in January 1919, the situation has forced diplomacy of the His Majesty's Government to come up with a common front with the United States to the idea of the League of Nations. Immediately after completion of the Paris Peace Conference the British, probably, to their surprise, found themselves in the position of the main defenders of the league system. Thus, the British acted in a role much less comfortable for them, due to the fact that in 1920 the US Congress rejected the ratification of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which thus meant a deprivation of one of the five main pillars. It could therefore been not surprising that recurrent political views, referring to realistic paradigms, received a large dose of sympathy among British policy makers. One of the major geopolitical schools, also influential in the contemporary world, emerged from the concept of John Halford Mackinder. Geopolitical foundations of the model were outlined before the outbreak of the Great War in the speech and article from 1904 titled "The Geographical Pivot of History" (Mackinder, 1942: *passim*). The core of belief of the British geographer was made in the convincement of existing of the objective center of political power, which he initially called a "pivot area." These areas were to be laid in the depths of the Eurasian continental mass, coinciding roughly with the sovereignty of the Romanov Empire. The axis of the Mackinder's concept became a theorem about the existence of a conflict between civilizations of Land and Sea (Mackinder, 1942:). The world for the most of the time was determined by the continental center of power, however, technological development has caused (or rather allowed) the creation of a new center of power, which should be called transoceanic. Mackinder localized this new quality in the "outer crescent" – an arc extending along the left edge of the Atlantic, the northern areas of South America, southern Africa, Australia and the Pacific. According to Mackinder, there was the tension resulting from the clash of global influences between the centers of power and that defined the dynamics of global change. It is worth of noting that, sketched structures occupied a prominent place another element – the "inner crescent," comprising Western Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and South East Asia (Mackinder, 1942: 24). This area was

to be by Mackinder both the stake, as well as the area where the fight was conducted. Importantly, Ukraine was placed by the British in geocultural Europe and in parts of demonstrating the ability of state-building (Mackinder, 1981: 118). It is worth noting that the main determinant in this case remained physical geography – especially the great rivers. The eastern “border” of Europe was marked by the basin of the Volga and the Don.

Characteristically, the region of Central and Eastern Europe was unlisted by Mackinder as a political factor, took up to the fact that the area has not acted as an entity (even as an object) international games. The British Empire among its principles at this time had placed Europe on one of the last positions. The abovementioned part of the continent was not really present in the English political thought. But the time had come.

The important factor in the initial Mackinder’s concept was drawing attention to Europe as an entity of the global game. The global approach opened a new discourse in geopolitics. Another novelty was an indication of the complementarity of the “pan-regions” in the world (Mackinder, 1942: 98). Relations between them were first shown by the British geographer, as a dynamic environment with the potential of constant change. One can venture the thesis that in Mackinder’s concept for the first a tendency to manifest “history” in terms of intercontinental play games based on the principles of interdependence appeared, which today would be defined as a model of the interaction network.

The end of the Great War and the need to build a new world was not without influence on the design concept of Mackinder. One can probably even say that the conditions that followed 1918 were, on the one hand, the challenge, and on the other hand, created a “training ground” for the possibility to put into practice the political reasons stemming from geopolitical objectives. In these interesting times Mackinder undertook to modify his earlier views. The result was announced in 1919, in “Democratic Ideals and Reality” (Mackinder, 1942: passim). The starting point was the inclusion of appearance in the geopolitics of a new quality – the new states of Central and Eastern Europe. The core concept of the conviction has been done, which still sounds like a canon in geopolitics: “*Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island controls the world*” (Mackinder, 1942: 194). While the location of the center of the potency of global power did not change significantly compared to earlier views of Mackinder, is actually the Central Europe had

become a “tip of the balance” in the concept from 1919 (Petersen, 2011: 17). The region was a natural link between the potential and the technological possibilities of its use – between Russia and Germany. Such thinking in a political reflection of the British was not a specific novelty. Even during the Great War in the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office emphasized the threat to the balance of world power, which may had resulted from a possible merger of the two geopolitical regions and their potentials (Reginia-Zacharski, 2004: 300). Both the Bolshevik Revolution and the result of the Great War slid a threat. Some events such as the signing the Treaty of Rapallo (1922) argued the validity of such concerns.

Mackinder’s concept took on a new dimension, and the opinion of particular importance the Central European region received the new justification (Moczulski, 2010: 499). The tenure conflict between “civilizations of the sea” and “peoples of the land” seemed to be permanently present in the concepts of the British geographer. However, it has to be accepted that, in contrast to the modern Russian supporters of the idea of Eurasia (Petersen, 2011: 97), Mackinder did not mark any firm boundaries East and West. According to him, lines that ran between Western and Eastern Europe due to the dynamic structure of international relations, had a naturally variable character. It seems reasonable to notice that, in 1919, Mackinder was in Central and Eastern Europe and observed the area which he saw as a line of the distinction (Mackinder, 1942: 188). Hence, he repeatedly expressed an opinion of importance of the region. The result of competition for this part of the world had decisive meaning for the position of Europe in the whole global structure. In short, the fate of Central and Eastern Europe was going to decide the character – “land” or “sea,” for the entire continent.

While in the conceptual phase of “building of the New Europe” might seem to be based on the concepts of John H. Mackinder, the realities of international policy and issues of “balance of power” became the keys to the new world and European order designed in Paris in 1919 (Rommer, 1988: *passim*). In practice, Central and Eastern Europe were not ruled by anyone. Located between Russia/USSR and Germany, they remained relatively weak, and were called mainly by British politicians – but after all, not only – “season” states. In general, the implementation of the British policy of “balance of power” on the continent can be explained by the rivalry between London and Paris. No one can deny the validity of the theses,

however, it should be realized that in the contemporary geopolitical situation extension of sovereignty over the region of interest was not feasible for any of the Western powers. The implementation of such a postulate of the prevailing realities could only be achieved with significant presence of the military factor. Neither France nor the United Kingdom, however, at this time had the executive capabilities, as they did not show the necessary political will, as they concerned the region of Central Europe.

In the 1920's and 1930's, geopolitical thought was being dominated by German concepts, which found its fullest expression in the works of the Munich Institute of Geopolitics and especially views of Karl Haushofer. He remained a great supporter of organizing the world in large areas of strategic interaction, which he called "pan-regions." Central and Central-Eastern Europe was in the European pan-region, the essence of which was the German-Russian cooperation, and actually a combination of the potentials of both (Gray, 1987: 187). In this way, a huge continental power, which can be called Eurasia, would be created. The core factor shaping the thought Haushofer was that the experience of the First World War, strengthening the conviction about the importance of historical coexistence of Germany and Russia (Moczulski, 2010: 19). Haushofer recognized that the reasons for the war, which caused the disaster of both Empires, remained bilateral unreasonably and adversely constructed alliances. Haushofer acknowledged that the optimal course of events would be peacefully developed cooperation and creation of a new geopolitical quality. The absence of the possibility of such a scenario allowed for solution to power – the conquest of Germany by Russia, or (which of course was preferred) of Russia by Germany (Gray, 1987: 158). The realization of these opportunities seemed to be possible in the light of the signing of the Rapallo Accord in April 1922, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (Hitler-Stalin) in August 1939. The German-Soviet War, which began in 1941 shattered the implementation of these concepts. A separate issue is to assess the possibility of their fulfillment, when one consider that both parties treated mutual alliances as *ad hoc* solutions, calculated to develop a better position before the final confrontation. For these, a primary consideration is the fact that none of the adopted scenarios anticipated any geopolitical role for the nations of Central and Eastern Europe and did not respect their aspirations. The geopolitical rivalry of the giants was based mainly on the dogma of the concentration of the power. Taking into account the

aspirations to independence of smaller nations did not fall within the possible scenarios.

This confirms the considerations reported in the introduction, according to which Ukrainian aspirations to independency could find their own “window of opportunity” stamping in situations of the drastic decline in the power of the main regional players – mainly Russia (then the Soviet Union) and, to a lesser extent, Germany. The years of 1917–1945 fully confirm this account. Supported by Germany (and, to a lesser extent, Austria-Hungary) Ukrainian nationalist movement and affords for the independence turned out in 1918 to be illusory. The government of Pavlo Skoropadsky, in practice, brought the German occupation (Reginia-Zacharski, 2004: 91). After Germany’s defeat in World War I, it was pretty soon established that Ukrainians were not able to defend their statehood. Pressured on one side by the Anton Denikin and the Armed Forces of South Russia (Previously, the Volunteer Army), and on the other by Bolshevik forces, the Ukrainians finally were defeated. An attempt to transfer the idea of Ukrainian statehood to the left banks of the Zbruch River, implemented in 1920, and based on Polish military capabilities ended in another defeat for Ataman Symon Petliura. The counter-offensive of Bolshevik troops very seriously threatened the very survival of the Polish Republic (Reginia-Zacharski, 2004: 255). The involvement of other powers – France and Great Britain – during this period it is difficult to be seen as serious. Besides, the Ukrainian card itself was considered by politicians of both Western powers solely in terms of playing it in the political relations with other, more significant players. But this does not mean that the Ukrainian lands were considered to be negligible. The political analysis of the years 1917–1923 strongly emphasized the qualities of Ukrainian lands, both from the short and medium perspectives (e.g. calling the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, as “bread-peace”), as well as strategic. In the opinion of George Nathaniel Curzon, Mackinder, and even Jozef Pilsudski, Russia without Ukraine would be returned to in her history and geopolitical meaning to the seventeenth century. It seemed that for quite a long time Russia’s power on the Baltic Sea was significantly weakened. The independence of Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and especially Poland and Finland in the north, resulted in a significant weakening of Russian influence. Any “loss” of Ukraine would create a similar situation in the south, cutting off Russia from the vast Black Sea coast. Loss in maritime policy in the opinion of the Curzon, in a quick way would lead to falling of Russia among the key players in world politics, and

would be the factor for deepening a degenerative trends and – as a result – the probability of decay (Reginia-Zacharski, 2004: 249). The conclusion drawn from this line of thinking was based on the belief that no Russian authorities could agree on such a solution, and each will seek to prevent such scenario, thereby positioning itself as extremely hostile to ideas of Ukrainian independence. Almost identical conclusions could be drawn from a conversation between Mackinder and Pilsudski held in Warsaw, in the autumn of 1919. Pilsudski, announcing future Polish military activity in the direction of Ukraine, presented it as an action to weaken Russia, and as a result to strengthen the geopolitical position of Poland. The British Commissioner recognized the legitimacy of such reasoning, although was quite pessimistic about Polish (or Polish-Ukrainian) opportunities. Mackinder was rather in favor to promote the concept of supporting a “white Russian” option. Ultimately, the struggle for the geopolitical shape of the region was resolved in the years 1921–1923 to disadvantage of Ukrainian aspirations. Ukrainian lands were in several political organisms. The lion’s share accounted for the Bolshevik Russia, and since 1922, the Soviet Union. It seems that one of the main reasons for this development of affairs was the lack of ability of self-identification of Ukrainians themselves as a nation-state. With the relative weakness of the external factors they were not able to fully exploit the quite impressive potential. The conclusion of the State Union between Western Ukraine (*Halychyna*) and the Ukrainian People’s Republic in January 1919 from the very beginning had remained only on paper. Finally, it could be emphasized that with some exceptions (Poland), policy makers, and above all, societies and nations were tired of struggles and atrocities of war, so the West was not ready to accept any costs for remodeling the geopolitical shape of Eastern Europe. There is a noticeable decrease in its permanent influence in 1919 and 1920 about the need to “calm” may indicate the fact that the first trade treaties with Bolshevik Russia were concluded by the “western world” a few days after the signing the peace treaty in Riga. As a result of these factors Ukrainian lands east of the river Zbruch for a few decades were (with the exception of a brief period of German occupation) in the hands of the Soviet Union (Reginia-Zacharski, 2004: 325).

Another armed conflict, which swept through Europe in 1939–1945, despite the hopes of some Ukrainian circles, did not open any “window of opportunity” for the idea of an independent Ukraine. As soon as in 1939, almost all the lands which Ukrainians previously

aspired came under Soviet control (Chodakiewicz, 2012: 178). It is also worth noting that Soviet occupation prompted some political circles from Dnieper basin to create an unusual concept, having resulted in the recognition of the “Independence Day of Ukraine” – 17th September, the day the Soviet attacked the Polish lands. Finally, the result of the Second World War, reinforcing the global status of the Soviet Union, brought a significant change in the geopolitical architecture – all Ukrainian lands came under one dominion, but of course there was no question of independence. Although Soviet diplomacy managed to achieve some “facade” settlement, such as finding the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic as one of the founding members of the United Nations with its own representation in the General Assembly, those moves were dictated by the strategic interests of the Soviet Union. The border of the USSR was established on the so called “Curzon Line,” south leaned against the Izmil region, previously belonging to Romania. The agreement between the Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Republic on 29th June 1945, transferred the Carpathian Ruthenia to the USSR. At the same time the Soviet forces conducted a brutal and widespread action to combat the pro-independence movement in Ukraine (Marples, 2002: 146, 179–182).

The Decline of the “Cold War” and the Emergence of an Independent Ukrainian State

The period of 1945–1991 actually did not bring significant changes to the geopolitical situation of the Ukrainian lands. Dependence on the Kremlin was to become deeper and deeper – it is worth recalling that the Kiev Military District was the biggest, strongest, and best-equipped administrative strategic unit of the USSR (Brzeziński, 2007: k.e.). In the 1960s, on the 300th anniversary of the signing of the Pereyaslav Contract, the USSR included the Crimean peninsula. However, in reality, for the Soviet Union this did not really matter, but in a strategic dimension significantly raised the meaning of the sub-region, which became a major element of the Black Sea. The closeness of the Kerch Strait, which largely determines the interception of communications of the Azov Sea to the Black Sea, should be emphasized (Chodakiewicz, 2012: 469). And finally, there was a question of a naval base in Sevastopol, which can be described as basic “window on the world” in the

region in the military dimension. As it has been mentioned earlier, in the period of the Soviet Union the importance of such a redefinition of Crimea “belonging” remained illusory, as it posed a political potential, which after 1991 became a real and significant factor in determining the model of distribution of power in the region (Chodakiewicz, 2012: 448–449). The last decade of the existence of the USSR marked the noticeable revival of the Ukrainian issue, primarily in the field of internal Soviet relations. In fact, even in 1970’s, following the Helsinki Accords, Ukrainians began the process of national redefinition (Brzeziński, 2007: k.e.). They were trying to take advantage of the provisions of the Constitution of the USSR in the late 1970’s to justify the secessionist aspirations.

Some geopolitical concepts from the time of the Cold War properly “bypassed” the Ukrainian issue, treating it (and the territory of Ukraine) as a component of the Soviet question in general (Gray, 1987: 169–171). In his *Geography and Politics in a World Divided*, Saul B. Cohen placed the region of Central and Eastern Europe (including Ukraine) in the Eurasian Continental World, and more specifically in the part of the Heartland and Eastern Europe, with permanent Soviet domination over the region (Cohen, 1973: 83–84). In his later works, however, Cohen pointed out the importance of Ukraine to the strategic interests of Russia (Cohen, 2003: 216). He recognized that in the Soviet period, this issue remained “dormant” (Cohen, 2009: 214–215). In his views of the 1960s, Cohen saw potential of changes in geopolitical systems, recognizing this sphere as characterized by “explosive” dynamic.

The very first symptoms of the collapse of the USSR in the 1980s and 1990s were strongly marked in the Ukraine. The significance of this “movement” was even more important towards the fact that the challenges appearing on the political horizon led to the creation of a “tactical” (if not “operational”) cooperation between the dissidents, often strongly raising aspirations for independence and nationalist views and the Ukrainian communist activists. In trying to explain this exotic “alliance,” one cannot ignore the importance of motivation, marked by the desire to express their own identity, deeply rooted in the Ukrainian elites of different provenance (Burdzy, 1995: 111). However, it seems that its main component was the belief of the end of a geopolitical formula and the desire to define the new activity in shaping the political and economic reality. The August Declaration of Independence (1991) was adopted in the face of a possibility of the civil war, which appeared in connection with the “Yanayev *coup d’état*” (Gupta, 2010: 154–155).

A referendum on independence held in December was, on the one hand, a consequence of this step, but also a response to the actual disintegration of the Soviet Union structures (Burdzy, 1995: 113).

It can also be assumed that among the Ukrainians there lasted a kind of “race” in which the Communist elites with Leonid Kravchuk at the head were about to “step ahead” and to define trends of the changes. Controlling a political process after emancipation of Ukraine gave a chance for ultimately political (and even physical) survival.

In the terms of foreign affairs the course taken by the Ukrainian decision-makers can also be seen as a kind of “preemptive move.” From the perspective of the evident failure of Gorbachev’s concept of Union of Sovereign Republics and the declaration of independence taken by the majority of the Soviet republics, in 8th December 1991 in Wiskule, representatives from Russia (Boris Yeltsin), Ukraine (Leonid Kravchuk), and Belarus (Stanislau Shushkevich) signed the agreement appointing to the life the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (Russia and the Commonwealth, 1997: *passim*). Soon after, on 21st December in Almaty, the subsequent Soviet republics acceded to CIS (Gupta, 2010: 71–73). It can be assumed that the process of defining CIS in geographic dimension lasted until 1993, when the position of Georgia and Azerbaijan was finally clarified (Chodakiewicz, 2012: 389). It soon turned out that the actual role of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the concepts of co-creating states was not commonly accepted (Russia and the Commonwealth, 1997: *passim*). By the mid-1990s, it was clear that Russia recognized the CIS as a platform for the reintegration of the post-Soviet area. The 1993 was the key – Russia adopted Constitution of the Federation, began the first Chechen war, which was a clear signal that attempts to further depletion of its territory as a result of irredentism would met with a firm and brutal response (Eberhardt, 1996: 207). In the autumn in Moscow, with use of tank guns the “debate” over the shape of the system of the Russian Federation was settled – the presidential model had won. Two years later – in 1995 – Russia was in a different situation. All armed conflicts ongoing in the former Soviet Union had been “frozen” (in one case, Tajikistan, there was a real and lasting solution), a regime of Alexander Lukashenko was installed in Belarus, representing the course for rapprochement with Russia, which was reflected in the signing of the agreement on the creation of the Union of Russia and Belarus, and later the Union State (Jaworsky, 1995: *passim*). In Georgia, after the fall of Zviad Gamzachurdia, as a result of the

civil war, the new president Eduard Shevardnadze also called for a tightening of cooperation with the Russian Federation. Georgia was under pressure of three “frozen” conflicts – in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Adjara (in the first two, incidentally, as “peacekeepers” stationed Russian soldiers) (Jaworsky, 1995:). The XIV Army, later transformed formally Operational Group of Russian Forces played similar role in the detachment of Transnistria (also called Trans-Dniestr or Transdnestria) from Moldova (Chodakiewicz, 2012: 221–222). Similar examples of tools to maintain the effect can be multiplied. From the Kremlin’s perspective, three Baltic republics – Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia – seemed to be “lost,” although for the latter two Russian minority in size between 1/4 and 1/3 have posed quite a significant destructive potential for the future (Eberhardt, 1996: 191–192).

In such a situation it is not surprising that in the mid-1990s in the Russian Federation quite clearly articulated tendencies “re-integration” emerged. The political expression of those tendencies was the decree of President Yeltsin, in whose words about the “near abroad” were used (Buzan, Waever, 2004: 418–420). Influential Russian newspapers and magazines commonly made reference to “when the Soviet Union will be resurrected” (Petersen, 2011: 79–80). In the middle of the 1990’s, Nursultan Nazarbayev announced a project of creation of the East European (Eurasian) Union (Libman, Vinokurov, 2012: 186–188). It would be naive to assume that the conception was the product of original thinking of the President of Kyrgyzstan. It should rather be seen as explicated concepts emerging in the Kremlin. Since then the increasing popularity of the concepts of Eurasia can be observed, represented by Alexander Dugin (Sykulski, 2013: 353). They were particularly marked by geopolitical vision and a large dose of mysticism, however, formed as a base for the formulation of specific political programs (Russia and the Commonwealth, 1997: *passim*).

From this perspective, the initiatives of deepening and widening integration within the Commonwealth of Independent States can be seen as a soft scenario of the “gathering of the Russian (actually post-Soviet) lands” (Łomiński, 1997: 19). From the beginning of the creation of the CIS and its institutions Ukrainians tried to keep the distance from such scenarios (Buzan, Waever, 2004: 419). It was mainly accented in the military cooperation dimension – Ukraine was rather assertive to the “Tashkent Pact.” Ukrainians the longest, until 1994, tried to play the “nuclear card” (Eberhardt, 1996: 12–13).

In this gameplay, Ukrainian authorities managed to achieve a half of the success in the form of a Budapest Memorandum from December 1994 (Olchawa, 2009: 355), in which Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom guaranteed the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine in exchange for the transfer of nuclear arsenals into the hands of Russia and the resignation of the (admittedly dubious) nuclear status and accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear (Burdzy, 1995: 88). The most complex and difficult issue in geostrategic relations with the Russian Federation remained the question of the status of the naval base in Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet (Eberhardt, 1996: 215–216). In 1997, both states came together to settle these matters by 2017, and as a result of the signing, there was an agreement on the division of the fleet and lease part of the city for twenty years (Russia and the Commonwealth, 1997: *passim*). The two countries signed the documents defining their relationship with NATO in 1997 (Pavliuk, 1999: 85–86). In the case of Ukraine, it was a document setting out the principles of the Distinctive Partnership. Simultaneously Ukraine was strongly involved in regional initiatives, alternative to the Russian vision of reintegration. The most important was the establishment in 1996 the Organization for Democracy and Development, which from next year to function as GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova) – a multi-faceted consultative forum bringing together countries with a less than favorable relations with Russia. This political formula was in 1999 extended to Uzbekistan (GUAM became GUUAM). It is also worth of noting that just this year illustrated the serious crisis in the functioning of the CIS. The Treaty on Collective Security of CIS – founding the “Tashkent system” (Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan and since 1993 – Georgia and Belarus) was contained in the May of 1992 (Russia and the Commonwealth, 1997: 7–8). After the expiry of the five years of existence, in April 1999 only six countries (Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan) decided to prolong the cooperation (Protocol to extend the Treaty on Collective Security CIS) (Russia and the Commonwealth, 1997: *passim*).

In the dimension of foreign policy the Ukrainian decision-makers sought to pursue a policy based on the rather nebulous concept of “multi-vector.” The core of the doctrine was the assumption that it was possible and preferred to maintain equal relations with all international actors – individual as well as collective. Thus, the

Ukrainian “opening to the West” (European Union and, to a lesser extent, NATO), was accompanied by the desire to maintain good relations with Russia and other regional initiatives (Chodakiewicz, 2012: 389). It seems that the Ukrainians opted for entering into the integration processes in different directions so “shallow” that it would not limit the possibilities of action on the other theaters. A test for such trends was the attitude to the CIS. Ukraine treated the organization as a formula for a “velvet divorce.” The management of the post-Soviet “bankruptcy estate” substantially constituted a great challenge; therefore this function of the CIS seemed to be quite natural. But pretty soon it became clear that restricting the organization’s mission to the only sphere did not get the acceptance of Russia. Operations in a multi-vector formula were possible only in a situation where none of the real or potential centers of power of global or regional program did not formulate a policy in counter to Ukrainian plans. In other words, the “multi-vector” could be realized only under conditions of weakness or lack of interest for Ukraine from those centers. It would seem that Russia immersed in a deep internal crisis was not able to block Ukrainian pro-Western aspirations (Buzan, Waever, 2004: 417). Europe and the United States were far from sending clear signals to Ukraine, recognizing that supporting pro-Western policy of this country would be read in Russia as a hostile action. “West” (primarily the European Union), set to “building friendly and non-confrontational” relations with the Kremlin at all costs and to avoid of drawing scenarios of events that could trigger negative Russian reactions (Buzan, Waever, 2004: 418). At the beginning of this century, it was not uncommon to find declarations of the EU officials, like Romano Prodi, stating that “the Ukraine will never access to the EU” (Samokhvalov, 2007: 17). According to a possible strengthening of Ukraine’s cooperation with NATO and eventual accession to the Alliance it should be noted that – apart from the obvious reluctance of the Russian Federation – the deep shadow laid on the possibilities of achieving those goals (Chodakiewicz, 2012: 411). First, until 2017, a part of the Ukrainian state of particular strategic importance (Sevastopol) remained outside of its authority. Secondly, research conducted in the Ukraine public opinion, shown that as long as the prospect of the EU membership has enjoyed considerable popularity, NATO was seen as an opponent and the strengthening cooperation with the Alliance as way to aggregate deterioration in relations with Russia (Samokhvalov, 2007: 17–18).

Ukraine and Russia after the “Orange Revolution” – Growing Tension

It seemed that the Orange Revolution permanently changed the orientation of Ukraine to being pro-Western (Wilson, 2005: 176). The formal dimension of such a “reformatting” could provide even a total and final rejection by the state ruled by Viktor Yushchenko, and the concept of the Common Economic Space, which led to its collapse in 2006. Ukrainian-Russian relations deteriorated even during the “Revolution” and after that looked like that would not soon to be improve. A new prime minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, played an interesting role in relations with the Russian Federation (Samokhvalov, 2007: 19). On the one hand, she was seen as an icon of assertiveness towards Russia, and even anti-Russian, on the other hand, she was the driving force behind the building of new economic spheres. Pretty soon there was to begin the process of decomposition of the “orange” camp, which in the next five years – after the imposition of the effects of the deteriorating state of the economy – lost a significant amount social capital received at the turn of 2004/2005. The Ukrainian-Russian relations was also shadowed (and perhaps primarily) by the gas-related issues that have also not been an easy subject (Chodakiewicz, 2012: 456). The increase of the tension occurred by the spring of 2005, when Gazprom tried to lead to raise gas prices for Ukraine to \$160, paid per 1000 m³. In response, Kiev raised the price for transit of Russian gas. Conflict (hereinafter “gas war”) (Ebel, 2009: 9–10), escalated throughout 2005. In December, to stiffen the positions (Gazprom called for an increase the price of gas to the level of \$220–230 per 1000 cubic meters, while Kiev was willing to pay \$80), the Russians announced the suspension of gas supplies to Ukraine on the 1st January, 2006, which became a reality. The resumption of supplies and transit through Ukraine admittedly came after four days, when on the 4th January a preliminary agreement was signed by Russia and Ukraine, but the first edition of the “gas war” was revealed by the fact that the energy crises had at least regional significance (Ebel, 2009: 44). More than a dozen European countries have seen decreases in the supply of “blue fuel” range from a dozen to more than 40%. As the culmination of the crisis fell on the middle of winter, some reactions of the countries affected directly and indirectly by its consequences were nervous. The majority of affected governments and societies were hostile to the authorities

in Kiev. Further openings of the Ukrainian-Russian “gas conflict” followed in subsequent years – fall 2007 and winter 2008. It seemed that in November of 2008, a lasting settlement was achieved. In fact, a long-term arrangement between Gazprom and Naftogaz was signed. It did not take long – at the end of the year, the conflict entered into a new phase, the sharpest and most painful of all. On 1st January 2009, Gazprom completely blocked the supply of gas to Ukraine, while ensuring that continuity of supply for European countries which were dependent on transit through Ukraine was to be maintained. Six days later it was proved to be untrue. Reducing the gas pressure in transmission infrastructure led to significant declines – some European countries even longer receive raw Russian, other recorded declines in the level of 70–90%. The Slovak authorities have decided about the implementing a state of emergency for the economy. The European Union, despite attempts to mediate between Ukraine and Russia for 9th January, was not able to control the situation (Wilson, 2005: 171). Only after 10 days of acute crisis, an agreement was signed in Moscow, which has reduced tension and at least temporarily ensured the stability of supply (Ebel, 2009: 12–13).

It is difficult to fully assess the consequences of this crisis for the economy of Ukraine. In the opinion of some analysts, there is even the term “disaster” (Wilson, 2005: 158–159). In the political dimension, one can talk about the price the “orange” suffered for the balance of the years 2005–2009. The presidential elections (first round in January, the second February of 2010) were won by Viktor Yanukovich. The second round, which faced Yulia Tymoshenko gave a result of 48.95% to 45.47% (Chodakiewicz, 2012: 304–305). These results complemented the image of the “end of the Orange Revolution,” and clearly dominated by the Party of Regions. That meant a reactivation of pro-Russian tendencies in Ukraine, although the new government still declared the readiness for implementation of scenarios of “soft integration” with the European Union. This time was also marked by a significant change – December 9, 2010, in Moscow, the presidents of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko and Nursultan Nazarbayev signed the Declaration on the Establishment of the Single Economic Space (SES) and the agreement on the rules for the functioning of this structure. SES had become operational from 1st January 2012 and, according to the Russian announcement, was to lead to the establishment of the common market (the four freedoms: flow of goods, services, capital, and labor) on the model of the European

Communities. The first signs of a desire for inclusion into the formula soon appeared from the new authorities of Ukrainian state. Due to previous trends, the start of accession negotiations by the Ukrainians to SES would be tantamount to freezing in the direction of European integration policy (Cooper, 2013: 24–26).

In 2010, new provisions for the Black Sea Fleet base in Sevastopol were defined. According to the agreement signed on 21st April 2010, in Kharkov, duration of stationing of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation in the Crimea was extended after 2017 by 25 years, until 2042 with an option to extend it for a further five years. In strategic terms, it meant a permanent placement of Ukraine in the Russian area of influence. It's difficult to imagine the deepening cooperation with NATO in the situation of "limited sovereignty" of a part of the country. Of course, these factors accounted for foreground determinants defining the geopolitical position of Ukraine, but it should be considered that the general change in the region occurred after the Caucasian war of August 2008. Russia then made it clear that when faced with a deep geopolitical redefinition it would not hesitate to use military force. In addition, the price that the Russian state has paid for the use of troops against the integrity and independence of the sovereign state has proved to be negligible. In fact, from this period comes pretty grim joke that the reward for the strike in the direction of Tbilisi by the Russian 58 Army will be awarded by an excursion to Crimea. An agreement held in Moscow, announced as a great success of the French Presidency of the EU, was honored by the Kremlin in part, for which again the Russian Federation did not suffer any consequences or punishment. In 2009, the new American administration led by Barack Obama announced a "reset" in relations with Russia, declaring at the same time moving American geopolitical priorities into the Far East. It seemed that the world has entered the era of the new geopolitical order. American policy since the 1940s was based on the paradigm of the "Peninsular power" (Rimmland) proposed by Nicolas Spykman (Spykman, 2008: 177). The core of the postulate – a strong presence in Europe, has been profoundly redefined. In addition, between 2008 and 2010 "a coalition of Central European nations," built largely on the basis of a group of countries whose leaders were present in Tbilisi in August 2008 on the appeal of the Polish President, was under the process of dismantling (Chodakiewicz, 2012: 534). The death of Lech Kaczynski was a visible end of the project, as was illustrated by a list of participants in the funeral.

Another factor on the international scene appeared – the Eastern Partnership. Initiated in 2008, formally launched at a summit in Prague in May the following year, the Partnership assumed closer EU cooperation with Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. Although, from the very beginning, the economic dimension of the relationship was exposed, the initiative has undoubtedly also had an important political meaning (Szczepiak, 2012: 104). The initiator and *spiritus movens* of the project has been the Republic of Poland, enjoying the support of a Sweden. They gave some geopolitical overtones to the Eastern Partnership, especially by articulating the principle of communitarianism at the regional interests. The hopes reported in Warsaw and Stockholm to transform this initiative into a defined EU policy failed. Regardless of these observations it should be emphasized that the Partnership established a fairly permanent platform for maintaining an open dialogue with the option of integration. The breakthrough was to be a Partnership summit, which was scheduled for the end of November 2013 in Vilnius.

The period of years 2010–2013 can be described towards Ukraine as an attempt to return to the concept of “multi-vector” in its foreign policy. Its implementation, however, ultimately proved to be impossible. The main reason was the significant tightening poles of power – above all Russia. After the war against Georgia the Russian Federation was repeatedly sending signals that it would not allow any moves or transformations of its own strategic boundaries of influence. Despite the declared willingness to deepen cooperation with the European Union authorities in Kiev were aware of the growing pressure from the Kremlin and tried to avoid decisive solutions. Some evidence of this can be the mentioned forcing of Ukraine to extend the contract towards the Black Sea Fleet earlier than it would as a result from the adoption of the 1997 agenda. Russia used other spoilers. In addition to the gas and oil as tools of pressure on Kiev, the Crimean issue returned. The problem of the peninsula mostly inhabited by Russian-speaking population and people clearly declaring the Russian nationality was often put among the “hot” issues in bilateral relations (Dima, 2010: 17). Any pro-Western inclinations of Ukrainian society became the object of attack of the forces concentrated on the Eastern Ukraine, with particular emphasis on the Donbass region. The public attitudes in addition to the complex of ethnic issues were affected by constantly deteriorating economic situation. It particularly concerned the huge state’s economic sector. In 2013, Ukraine had to repay about

\$10 billion of debt. As a result, the Ukrainian foreign exchange reserves declined from 31.8 billion dollars in early 2012 to approx. \$20 billion at the end of 2013, and as a consequence of the difficult financial situation of the country have generated unsolvable problems with the settlement of payments in the public sector and the expected withdrawal of the necessary reforms. By the end of 2013, Ukraine failed to properly implement any of the projects for the prospect of independence from Russian energy supplies. Traditionally, the tension in this area was enlarged in the winter and autumn months.

A significant part of Ukrainian society desired opportunities to improve their living standards, the economic situation and the functioning of the state which have been seen as possible from the perspective of association with the European Union. Negotiations on this subject started already in 2007, but the initialing of the agreement was not until five years later. In 2012, the position of the EU decision-makers, however, made the signing appropriate accords impossible. This matter was postponed to the third summit of Eastern Partnership and warranted by the progress in reforms in the three sectors – implementing progress on political and economic reforms, ensuring the democratic standards of the electoral system, and stopping of the persecution of political opponents. This last issue in 2013 took a particularly severe course in keeping in custody and penal colony former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who became a symbol of political persecution. Despite the enthusiasm and hopes connected with the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, the Ukrainian position was not clear. Yet on the 21st of November the Ukrainian government decided to “suspend preparations for signing the Association Agreement,” justifying it by the interests of national security. Anyway signals that Kiev may withdraw from the Association Agreement began to appear a few weeks earlier. The fiasco of the process of associating of Ukraine with the European Union, however, caused some surprise for the European political elites, which could be explained by a weak orientation in the seriousness of Russian pressure on torpedoing any pro-Western aspirations of Ukraine. Russian threat of sanctions, as well as entry into a much more “assertive” standards toward Kiev economic and financial policies, on the other hand, were balanced with the promises of economic support in case of suspension of the pro-European course. This politics fell on fertile ground in Ukraine. Viktor Yanukovich in the perspective of presidential elections to take place in 2015 decided to take course to immediate and *ad hoc* leverage the Ukrainian economy. From this

perspective, the Russian offer was characterized by a usability and functionality (Shoemaker, 2014: 288–289).

Russia, as written above, after achieving success in the “near abroad” in the form of suppressing almost all of the emancipatory movements in the region could not agree for any signs of erosion its own geostrategic zone.¹ At the third summit of the Eastern Partnership, only Moldova and Georgia decided about the initial Association Agreements with the EU. Armenia was considered to be more likely to fall in line with Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus (a customs union within the Common Economic Space). Yanukovich’s decision actually was a breakthrough in the EU’s eastern policy, and the Vilnius summit brought feelings of failure and disappointment.

While the reaction of the concerned countries was predictable, the events in Kiev, as well as their development were a real surprise. Yet on the 21st November at the Independence Square serious protests began against postponing the signing of the agreement with the EU. From the 24th November, opposition groups joined to the protest – primarily Batkivshchyna (Fatherland), UDAR, and Svoboda (Freedom). Attempts to force the authorities to suppress “Євромайдан” resulted on 30th November in the eruption of conflict on an unpredictable scale – at the peak on the Maidan 800,000 people gathered. The movement affected also some other cities, in large part from the radical western Ukraine. In mid-December, the issue of signing an association agreement seemed a foregone conclusion. Yanukovich’s team announced a definitive move away from this concept, and the authorities of the European Union withdrew from the project of returning to negotiations. At the beginning of 2014, the situation around Євромайдан significantly tightened, turning into an almost regular fight for the heart of the capital. Clashes and attempts of takeover the power by opponents of the government occurred in many towns in western and central Ukraine. Throughout January and a part of February, tension grew and the mediation efforts undertaken by representatives of the EU did not bring any significant results. Some attempts to solve the crisis, taken by the political forces in Ukraine, remained equally fruitless. Political leaders of the opposition – Vitaly Klitschko, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, and Oleh Tiahnybok became the faces of the protest. But one cannot ignore

¹ Even Georgia, since October 2012 under Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili and since the autumn of 2013 under President Giorgi Margvelashvili, has not been seen as reluctant towards Russia.

the fact that in late January and February 2014, the Євромайдан grew into an independent political force, and any findings, which were made in the formula government/political opposition had to be verified on the Maidan.

Євромайдан and the Aftermath

The second half of February was characterized by a tightening of the positions, which resulted with escalation of the fighting and increased number of victims. The peak of the tension occurred between 18th and 22nd of February. The regime forces took the assault of crushing the Maidan – within a day and a half according to official data dozen people were killed in Kiev. A few hours of “truce” did not led to any findings and on the 20th February fighting erupted in the capital again – the Ministry of Health reported that during the clashes that day 75 people were killed and 567 were injured. The other areas of the country at that time were refusing the obedience to the regime; barricades were formed in many cities and the new administration was spontaneously created by the local initiatives. In Kiev, negotiations between Yanukovych and the envoys of the EU – the foreign ministers of Germany, France, and Poland were in progress. Negotiating positions were supported by the announcement of personal and general restrictions, and sanctions containing freezing foreign accounts of the officials and a ban on arms trade with Ukraine. A short time earlier sanctions were imposed by the United States and Canada. On the 21st February, a breakthrough in talks between opposition, EU diplomats, and President Yanukovych was achieved. After all-night negotiations, some important provisions were adopted: limitation of the rights of the President to those from the Constitution of 2004, the creation of a new government within 10 days and early presidential elections that would be held no later than in December 2014. The agreement did not stand the test of time – the mood in the city went much further than the agreed conditions; in many parts of the state mandate of the president and the government was finally rejected. In such a situation the night of 21th and 22nd February, Yanukovych with a group of closest collaborators decided to flee, first to the east of Ukraine, then to Russia. On 22nd February, Viktor Yanukovych was dismissed from his post, and Oleksandr Turchynov was appointed as the interim head of state the next day. Three days later, a new government was

established, with Arseniy Yatsenyuk as Prime Minister. In spite of that, it seemed that the revolution enjoyed the ultimate success, the country was in a disastrous situation. It soon turned out that the new authorities had to face the next challenge, which was irredentism and Russian aggression. The first blow went to the Crimea. In regard to this region, Russia used a specific strategy of war, leading the aggression in sometimes called, for lack of a better term, in a “subliminal” way. The activities consisted, on the one hand, the support of local elements hostile to the Ukrainian state, as well as providing military equipment and trained soldiers, who, however, did not use any of the Russian state emblems, as well as carefully hid their identity. Accompanied by parallel intensive Russian propaganda and diplomatic activity aimed at showing a total lack of links of the Russian Federation with the events on the peninsula. Admittedly, ethno-social conditions definitely favored contesting and deconstruction of Ukrainian sovereignty over Crimea. The vast majority of its inhabitants are ethnically Russian, having a Russian identity and consciousness (Arel, Ruble, 2006: 117). The Russian military presence in the Black Sea bases and the special status of Sevastopol had also great importance. Ukrainian forces finally, after the turmoil and crisis, the current form of statehood and political system in the Crimea, found themselves in a precarious situation. This can partly be explained by disloyalty to the Ukrainian state of the part of the population and a large group of military. Another factor was that for various reasons the new Ukrainian authorities have not decided on taking a firm stand against the forces supporting the detachment of the Crimea. For a similar, though slightly more complex reasons Western countries did not react in definite manner. Even during the Crimean crisis in some Western countries (mainly Germany) in the media quite often appeared voices questioning the legitimacy of the Ukrainian rights to Crimea, both in terms of historical and legal arguments, as well as geopolitical conditions. From the 25th February, the situation in Crimea looked worse. In growing numbers well-armed and trained people whose uniforms were devoid of any markings were dispatching from Russia to the peninsula. Although there was little doubt about the fact that they were Russian soldiers, FR authorities claimed that Russia had no involvement in this crisis. During conferences Putin sought to ridicule both the presence of the Ukrainian state in the Crimea, as well as Western countries involvement. Some attempts to carry out on-site inspections, undertaken primarily under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, proved

to be ineffective. International observers were not allowed to enter to the territory of the peninsula. Meanwhile, on the spot unmarked Russian units took over additional objects of strategic importance (on the 28th February Belbek airport in Sevastopol and border outposts around the city were occupied). The Ukrainian authorities claimed that up to the beginning of March the number of Russian soldiers in the Crimea reached about 6000, eight military transport aircraft Il-76, ten helicopters Mi-8 and Mi-24 and about 30 armored vehicles BTR-80. Parallel action in other parts of the peninsula resulted by taking over the Ukrainian military bases and vessels. The position of the Russian Federation expressed was on the 1st March 2014, when the Commission of Defense and the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Federation Council, and later the entire Federation Council unanimously adopted an appeal to the President to use of the Russian armed forces on the territory of Ukraine. Protests of the “international community” remained quite weak, and did not brought any measurable effects. The process of “swallowing” of the Crimea was continued. According to Ukrainian estimates on the 7th March numbers of Russian forces in the Crimea exceeded 30,000. From mid-March through the Kerch Strait from the Russian soil by the ferry connection significant quantities of heavy military equipment, raw materials (fuels) as well as elements of the energy infrastructure were constantly being delivered.

On the 16th March irredentists held a “referendum” in the area of the Crimean peninsula. According to the “official” results 96.77% of voters were in favor of the reunification of the Crimea with Russia. The turnout was projected at over 80%. The Verkhovna Rada of the Crimea adopted a resolution on the independence of the Crimea with the support of 85 deputies. The next steps were relatively easy to predict – the announcement of the creation of the Republic of Crimea and the transformation of local autonomic authorities into the State Council of the Republic of Crimea. Five days later, Vladimir Putin signed the act of ratification of the Treaty on the Adoption of the Republic of Crimea to the Russian Federation and annexation was thus completed. For many analysts, a very probable scenario after the annexation of Crimea by Russia was the extension of the Russian aggression to specific regions of Ukraine bordering the peninsula from the north. This was due to two reasons – first, it seemed a natural desire to create a land corridor between the Crimea and the Federation, on the other hand – the lack of security for the vitally important supplies by land (Crimea depended from the north even to the extent of drinking water), caused quite

a difficult estimate as to the cost of logistical support of a “new Russian territory.” It might seem that the fate of the “Mariupol corridor” and the Kherson circuit were a foregone conclusion. However, a few weeks before the presidential elections announced for the 25th of May, in Donbass (Donetsk and Lugansk) revealed less clearly supported initially, then almost openly by Russia, forces of “separatists” (irredentists – more precisely) started the riot. In practice, they consisted of the Russian saboteurs, local leaders of the Russian minority and certainly sizeable in the size of the criminal element. About the 20th of May, in practice, these forces took control of significant areas of Donbass – first of all the major cities. A few days before the election, the Ukrainian authorities have begun “anti-terrorist action,” which has been in fact a counteroffensive in the direction of Lugansk and Donetsk. Heavy fighting with growing involvement of Russian military entered into a chronic phase. In late August and early September irredentist forces opened another front – the attack was conducted by Novoazovsk in the direction of Mariupol. It seemed as a returning the scenario predicted in March. At this phase of the conflict, there has been undeniable evidence of the involvement of regular combat units of the Russian army. Reactions of the European Union and NATO remained (and remain) inappropriately weak in relation to the threat. The North Atlantic Alliance Summit held in September in Newport, Wales, did not bring virtually anything concrete. Undoubtedly, the warm welcome of President Petro Poroshenko could not replace the unequivocal statements of support and announcement direct aid. The European Union was even more naive – a truce in eastern Ukraine achieved in Minsk, became the pretext for the announcement of the withdrawal of sanctions against Russia. As for the ceasefire – it is not a secret that its conclusion was not to work out a firm and durable compromise. On the one hand, Ukrainian forces have been exhausted and unable to conduct serious military operation. Another aim was the desire to free soldiers closed in the encirclement near Ilovaisk. In the political dimension Poroshenko tried to make an impression in Newport that he is not a leader of the country in a deep defensive. The Russian side did not respect the truce, leading rocket fire on selected objects, and developing offensive intended to achieve a permanent foothold on the Sea of Azov, which was confirmed by the Ukrainian sources on 10th of September (Komsomolske was taken between the 6th and 9th of September, and therefore during the after signing the “ceasefire agreement”). The direction and the intensity of further military operations by forces of the Russian

Federation with the cooperation with them rebels remains an open issue. It seems that the minimum scenario is to create a permanent land corridor to Crimea and the possible extension of facilities for the peninsula to Kherson. Although there are no data on the costs incurred by Russia towards absorption and management of the peninsula, they must be considerable. Lowering these through a permanent land connection seems to be a “logistical priority.” A maximalist variant on the southern direction can assume an advance to the west, resulting in the cut off Ukraine from the Black Sea, and finally getting to Transnistria. In the short term, the second scenario does not seem to be easy for two reasons. The first is its high cost-absorption, both in financial terms as well (actually mostly) the political. Secondly, the creation of such seaside “belt” would result in forming the area susceptible to impact Ukrainian forces and activities for destabilization, which would generate significant costs. It seems that from the Russian perspective the condition to achieve the maximal outcome (the corridor to Transnistria) would be destroying, or at least a radical weakening of the Ukrainian center of power and Ukrainian military capabilities. Even the breakdown of the regular forces of the Ukrainian state would not guarantee peace in such a “belt.” Therefore, achieving the decomposition of the Ukrainian state seems to be the best solution for Russian strategists. The concepts of “federalization” – officially proclaimed by irredentists from Donetsk and Lugansk, serve this purpose and will be supported by the Russian Federation. It is worth noting that since the first half of September in the Russian narration and media significantly often guests the term “Noworosija” (New Russia), which shows the ideological layer of Russian geostrategic intentions.

On the basis of Russian doctrinal and strategic documents of the last several years one can note a strong increase of the importance of coercive and strictly strength attitudes. The nature of the reform of the armed forces of the Russian Federation allows, assuming that the plans of building flexible but a strong recourse of military tools designate the way of achieving political goals. Modern amphibious assault vessels “Mistral,” contracted in France, are one rationale for requesting intention to secure the Russian Federation free and wide access to the Black Sea. The possibility of the revision of the 2010 agreement towards Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet base in Crimea, which after the “victory of EuroMaidan” could be predicted, was one of the major themes of the Kremlin decision about the necessity of detachment of the peninsula from the

Ukrainian state. Organizing and supporting the insurgency in the eastern Ukraine and the transfer of activities to the northern coast of the Sea of Azov is to some extent a consequence of the decisions.

If the above inferences are correct, the probability of escalation of objectives and moves of Russian politics should be seen as extremely high. The quite sluggish responses of the European Union and NATO countries do not seem to be sufficient to stop the aggression. On the other hand, sanctions against Russia and retaliate actions triggered a chain of actions and reactions by opening the potential for escalation of international tension.

The one of the possible scenarios is the continuation of the aggression and “playing” for erosion of the Ukrainian state. The aim of Russian Federation, actually already present among the strategic options, could be Republic of Moldova, or at least create a “corridor” to Transnistria. Then Ukraine would lose not only access to the Black Sea, but also control over the mouths of the rivers Dniester and Southern Boh. Russia would also control the mouth of the Dniester. The geopolitical and strategic benefits arising from such a scenario are obvious for the Russian Federation. But again, its implementation and consolidation would only be possible with the destruction of the Ukrainian statehood. It is also worth noting that in this perspective, Russia’s activity in the direction of the Baltic (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) should be perceived as an informational “diversion,” calculated on a temporary distraction from the real course of action. From the short or medium perspective – at least. Coming back to the coast of the Baltic Sea could be the next step.

Conclusions

Considering Ukrainian issues in the context of the game of powers in “time” and “space” it is tempting to make a general account. Since 1654, any chance of implementation of Ukrainian aspirations for independence and sovereignty are primarily the function of the ability to maintain “Russia far from Ukraine.” As for the trend is actually little doubt: for centuries optimal from the perspective of Moscow (or St. Petersburg) scenario was to keep land in the basins of the Dnieper and Boh under direct control. Any “softening,” “autonomy,” “federation” or any other formulas dependence resulted only from the reduction or absence of the possibility of achieving full set of goals by the Russian center (Buzan, Waeber, 2004: 422).

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Przemysław Żurawski vel Grajewski

UKRAINE 2014 – THE END OF THE SECOND EUROPEAN *BELLE ÉPOQUE*

ABSTRACT: This article is devoted to the roots of the developments that have taken place in Ukraine since Autumn 2013 and up to the Russian invasion. It stresses the historical differences between Ukraine and Russia, presents the international milieu of Ukrainian independence in the years 1991–2013, and ends with a description of the nature of the Maidan revolution and the pan-European challenge created by the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The main thesis is that the struggle for Ukraine ends the post-Cold War epoch marked with an illusion of eternal peace in Europe and with the groundless hope for Russian imperialism to expire.

KEYWORDS: Ukraine, Russia, Poland, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Yanukovich, Maidan revolution, European Union, NATO, appeasement, war

Barbara W. Tuchman has described the end of the first European *belle époque* (1871–1914) in *The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World Before the War, 1890–1914* and *The Guns of August*.¹ The second European *belle époque* started in 1989 with the second European “Spring of Peoples” that liberated the eastern part of the continent from the Soviet/Communist yoke and while being born was marked with an illusion of “the end of history” by Francis Fukuyama (Fukuyama, 1989: *passim*). It is, however, being terminated now with the “Guns of August” the sound of which is being heard in eastern Ukraine. Thus, the title of the book by Tuchman fits well as a symbol of the end of both the *belle époques* – 1914 and 2014. There is no simple analogy between 1914 and 2014. Even Today, Russia itself wants rather a revision of the post-Cold-War international order and the wars it is ready to fight are more a tool

¹ *The Zimmerman Telegram* completed the trilogy on the subject.

to achieve that aim than the aim itself. The tool will be used if necessary as Moscow still hopes rather to terrorize their neighbours and the West and to deprive them of their will to resist Kremlin's expansionism than to confront the victims of such Russian policy openly and to defeat them on the battlefield. There is no military spirit among the European nations and their mood recalls the one that produced the appeasement policy of 1933–1939 and not the one that produced war in 1914. There is however a substantial difference between 1930s and today's situation too. Then, the revisionist camp in Europe was composed of Germany, the USSR, and Italy and was supported by smaller states that lost in World War I (Hungary, Bulgaria) (Juhás, 1979: 356), and at least two non-state nations of the time: Ukrainians and Croats (Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2013: 99–107). There is only one fundamental revisionist power in Europe today – Russia. Germany and France do not want to return to the Cold War scale of the American domination in the continent, and therefore contest the US leadership on different occasions and are very lenient with Russian aggressions, but still, one can hardly call them “revisionists.” Hungary still mourns their Trianon tragedy and one can speculate to what an extent its attitude towards Russian revisionism is shaped by that fact any continuing, active participation of Budapest in the reshaping of the political map of Europe according to the patterns it was following in 1938–1941 is highly improbable. On the other hand, the main pillar of the present European stabilization – the US military power and its prestige – had been absent from Europe before 1941 which is not the case today. The US, however, is challenged now by the rising problems in the Far East and Middle East, and its stabilizing impact on Europe may be negatively impacted by events in Iraq, Syria, Iran, or China (Shambaugh, 2014), or Korea, Taiwan and in the East China Sea (White, 2014) etc., or with some of those problems combined.² The Malaysian aircraft shot down by Russians over Ukraine is not an equivalent to the *Lusitania* (Preston, 2003; Protasio, 2011: 200–201).³ It has turned the attention of Europe to the conflict in Donbas but it has not awoken the spirit of revenge. In spite of all those obvious differences there is one fundamental

² The Chinese threat is overestimated still its perception is a real factor in American policy planning.

³ The ship sink by German U-boat on May 7th 1915 – the event contributed very much to convince the American public opinion for the US to enter the World War I.

similarity between the two *belle époques* in question – the existence of the illusion of the improbability of a serious war in Europe. This illusion was over in 1914 and is over now too. The monster of history is back on the scene.

There is however another historical analogy: this time the one between mental situation of Germany after 1918 and that of Russia after 1991. Russia lost the Cold War in a manner unconvincing to the man in the street just like Germany lost WWI. Do we see the “Weimar Russia” (van Herpen, 2013: 6, 8, 13–170) just being turned into the “Russian Third Reich”? The “humiliated power” that has no respect for the dignity of other nations and who believes in its own international position and power has been destroyed by “internal and external treason” and a plot, while its army had never been defeated in the field – is it a description of Germany in between the wars or Russia of today? The “treason of civilians” (Mikhail Gorbachev and Eduard Shevardnadze as the Russian equivalent for Philipp Scheidemann and Mathias Erzberger⁴) (Diest, Feuchtwanger, 1996:186–207; Hunt, 1958: 355–371), a lot of Russian ethnic minority scattered all over the former Russian/Soviet Empire and the lack of consent to accept the fact that not necessarily all the ethnic Russians should live in the Russian State combined with the mystical semi racist ideology of ‘russskiy mir’ – “Russian world” inhabited by “Russian peoples” (Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians), resembles strongly the Nazi myth on the Nordic-Teutonic community of the Germans and other Germanic peoples. There is a similarity between the European policy of appeasement both in the 1930s towards the Third Reich and since 2008 towards Putin’s Russia.

Whatever the previous experiences of the border between the peace and the war in Europe are more similar to the current developments – those of 1914 or the ones of 1930s. – one thing is clear: the war in Ukraine having been started by Kremlin is a turning point in the European history – it ends an époque – one of the best Europe has ever had in her history. The odds for the future of the world seemed to be splendid at the beginning of the twentieth century – the most bloody one in the human history. They were the same at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Ukraine is not well-known in the West. The best book on the country and its people published in English in the last years (not by

⁴ German politicians blamed for proclamation of Weimar Republic on November 9th 1918 (Scheidemann) and the acceptance of the Compiègne armistice on November 11th 1918 (Erzberger) – so called *Dolchstoßlegende* (stab-in-the-back myth).

accident) has been entitled *Ukrainians an Unexpected Nation* (Wilson, 2009: 392; Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2013: 69–71). Thus, in order to understand the importance of Ukraine, it is not enough just to present the ongoing developments at the banks of the Dnipro River.⁵ One should be aware of the history of the country which is neither “Southern-Western Russia” nor the “nest of Russian history” – at last not more than ancient Rome is a birth place of France or Spain. Zbigniew Brzeziński has described Ukraine as a pivotal state (Brzeziński, 1998: 41). Napoleon named Poland “a keystone of the European roof” – of course having said Poland he meant the only one that was imaginable in his times – i.e. the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that means Poland together with Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus. Those lands that are situated roughly speaking between the Dvina and the Don Rivers in the East, the Oder River in the West, the Baltic Sea in the North, and the Black Sea and the Carpathian Mountains in the south.

No one in Europe remembers that the Russian army started its march to the West in 1792 by crossing the Dvina and the Dnipro Rivers to invade the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth just after the Constitution of May 3rd 1791 (the first in Europe and the second one in the world after the American one) had been adopted in Warsaw (Butterwick, 2005: 695–731). In 1798 Suvorov’s army reached Switzerland and in 1814 the Russian troops entered Paris. Russia would have never done that without the French Revolution and the subsequent wars in Europe at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Europe of today is stable and peaceful. Who knows what will be tomorrow. Will Catalonia and Scotland declare independence? Will the Eurozone survive? Will the US maintain its capacity to guarantee the military security of the new NATO member states while being involved in the rising problems in the Middle East? What about the abovementioned problems of the Far East and the Washington engagement in Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Philippines, what about China? Will the Germans and the French be good Europeans like they used to be last 50 years ago? Does the West exist as a political entity that existed during the Cold War times? Are the “new” NATO and the EU member states treated by the “old” westerners as a part of that enlarged West (Kuźniar, 2014)? The Newport NATO summit (3–4.09.2014) has proved it is

⁵ All the Ukrainian toponyms in the text were spelled in a transcription from Ukrainian and not from Russian therefore Dnipro and not Dnieper, Kyiv and not Kiev etc.

not necessarily the truth.⁶ Central Europe without NATO's substantial military infrastructure, and without numerous American troops on the spot, remains a second category grey zone of security. Who is deterred by the US bases in Germany and Italy? Are those countries threatened with any foreign military invasion? No one in Europe (except for Ukrainians) is ready to die for Donbas. Will anybody be ready to die for article 5 of the Washington Treaty if Putin's "green men" appear in the Baltic States or Poland? These are the questions we ask ourselves over and over again here in Central-Eastern Europe. Ukraine fights for her freedom and integrity against the empire well-known to all the peoples in the region therefore it fights not only for her freedom still for our own too. What is Ukraine – the country that tries "To build a barrier...To slow down the giant, Who wishes to bring chains to the world?" (Delavigne, 1831).

The Country and its History

Ucraina est omens divisa in partes tres – one could start an essay on that country with that famous sentence travestied from *De Bello Galico* by Julius Caesar. It would be a far reaching simplification however to see the country as divided into a Western part (Vohlynia, Eastern Galicia, Transcarpathian Ukraine, Northern Bucovina), a Central one (Eastward from the USSR western border of 1939 up till Chehryn line east-southwards from which the former "Wild Fields" – the steppes of the Black Sea started – the land that had remained uninhabited till mid-eighteenth century) and the Eastern-Southern part of the country (Donbas, Azov seaside and the Black Sea coast the areas that used to be the mentioned former steppes). The country is both divided and united simultaneously. Till the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the

⁶ NATO has offered practically no material support for Ukraine (*NATO leaders pledge support to Ukraine at Wales Summit*, Web: 04 Sep. 2014 20:49, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_112459.htm) and respected Russian zone of special interests in new NATO member states by refraining from the creation of any new serious military bases or facilities on their territory and by refusing the deployment of any standing substantial military forces there. *Wales Summit Declaration, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales*, Press Release (2014) 120, Issued on 05 Sep. 2014, Web: 05 Sep. 2014 16:21, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm?selectedLocale=en.

very name Ukraine (*Ukraina* – in Polish and Ukrainian means *the end, an edge or a borderland*) was a geographical and not an ethnic nor political term. It was used since the sixteenth century as a common name for the three former voivodships (districts) of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – Kyivian, Braclav, and Chernihiv. Only at the dawn of the twentieth century the Ukrainian historian and then president of the parliament of the Ukrainian People's Republic, Mykhaylo Hrushevskyi, popularized the term Ukraine and Ukrainians (and not indigenous – Rus' and Rusyns or based on Latin – Ruthenia and Ruthenians – having been used till then) as an ethnic and political one for all the lands of the Ukraine of today (Грушевський, 1913–1936).

Ukraine is in some sense like England with its 1000 years of history and the United States with its 200 years combined in one country. The “England” is that part of Ukraine that has been inhabited since the Middle Ages, and which constituted the bulk of the populated lands since the beginning of the history of Kyivian Rus' (or Kyivian Ruthenia)⁷ till the end of the seventeenth century. The “United States” is former “prairie” – the uninhabited steppes that started south east from the mentioned Chehryn and were limited from the south by the Black Sea and the Azov Sea while in the East they are divided by the Ukrainian border now still geographically they ended “nowhere” reaching in fact to the Pacific Ocean in Manchuria. Those opened lands and borders that could not be effectively guarded in the condition of the technical civilization prior to the late eighteenth century were the homeland of kozaks – originally the self-defense of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's borderland (the country that was invaded every spring by the Tatars from Crimea), and then a military structure being partly a kind of “pirates” of the steppes, and partly the irregular forces mobilized by the state in the case of war. That part of Ukraine was lost by Poland in the years 1648–1686 still finally conquered and effectively controlled by Russia of Catherine II – Sofie Anhalt Zerbst not earlier but by 1775.

What is western and central Ukraine now (“England”) had been a center of Kyivian Rus' and then with Kyiv itself become a part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth or in minor parts went under

⁷ The term Kievan Russia or Kievan Rus used in the western historiography has been adopted under the influence of the Russian imperial version of history according to which the medieval state of the eastern Slavs with its capital in Kyiv (Russian Kiev) was the first “Russian” state. It is obviously false.

Hungarian (Subcarpathian Rus⁸) (Magocsi, 1978, *passim*) or Moldavian (Romanian) sovereignty (Northern Bucovina). The Crimean Peninsula was the center of the Tatar's Khanate and like South Bessarabia – Budiak were both under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. This was all changed step-by-step since 1654 when Russia started to conquer those lands first from Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth then in the eighteenth century from Ottoman Empire and then in the years 1939–1945 from Poland, Romania, and Hungary/Czechoslovakia. As a result, the “prairie” was settled by Ukrainians only when having been already conquered by the Russian Empire – i. e., since the mid-eighteenth century and then additionally populated with many Russians especially as a result of the disaster of the Great Famine (1932–1933) that had “purified” the lands from millions of Ukrainian peasants (Dolot, 1985: 231; Мицик, 2003–2004: 295, 441). The country was additionally ethnically reshaped as a result of a side effect of the Stalinist industrialization that attracted to those lands millions of workers from all over the USSR. The Great Famine, the Bolshevik terror, and the collectivization of the 1920s and 1930s were the experience of the Central and Eastern Ukraine, while the Western part was saved from all that by virtue of not being a part of the USSR till 1939. The Western part of the country, Eastern Galicia, Transcarpathian Ukraine, and Northern Bukovina had never been under Russian rule until World War II, and had preserved its Central European character under Polish or Habsburg rule and a dominant Greek-Catholic population (unlike in Russian/Soviet part of the country with the orthodox denomination as the only legal one). Another western province of the country – Volhynia – was taken from Poland and annexed by Russia in 1795, and since then forcefully Russified as all the other Ukrainian lands within the Russian Empire, so it is dominated by the Orthodox Church. Still its Western part belonged to Poland between 1919 and 1939. Thus, it was not as deeply “Sovietized” as the territories eastward from the pre-war Polish-Soviet border, and had no experience of Soviet genocide by starvation that was the fate of the territories to the east.

There is some separatism in Transcarpathian Ukraine inspired both from Moscow and from its Canadian and US based diaspora⁹

⁸ Subcarpathian/Transcarpathian Ruthenia/Rus/Ukraine has 13 names given to it by the people and state possessors of the land.

⁹ The main western based center of that idea is concentrated around Paul Robert Magocsi – a well-known historian of the region.

(The Persistence of Regional Cultures ..., 1993; Magocsi, 1993) Ca. 200 thousands of ethnic Hungarians in the region constitutes the local border majority just at the frontier with Hungary. The Hungarians are quite numerous in the main cities of the province too.¹⁰ The consecutive Hungarian, Austro-Hungarian, and Czechoslovak political affiliation of the country, as well as the Greek Catholic denomination of the Ukrainian population and Roman Catholic or Calvinist one of the Hungarians places it in the western cultural space and Central European and not Russian political tradition.

Northern Bukovina first belonged to the Moldavian Principality – one of the two so called Danube Duchies (the other being Valachia) that in the mid-nineteenth century united into the Romanian Kingdom. Prior to that they were the fiefdoms of the Ottoman Empire. Less lucky Moldova as a result of the Turkish-Russian wars lost Bukovina for Habsburg Monarchy in 1775 and Bessarabia (the bulk of which is known as Moldavia of today) for Russia in 1812. Between the world wars both the provinces belonged to Romania (Żurawski vel Grajewski, 1995: 56–67; Balcerak, 1980: 3–15) and were taken from her in 1940 as a result of the Nazi-Soviet Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of 1939 and the military disaster of France in June 1940 that had reassured Stalin on the lack of any risk of such an action. Northern Bukovina and Southern Bessarabia were incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR and thus then inherited by the independent Ukraine (Kastory, 2002: 193–219).

Ukraine fought fiercely for her independence in the years 1918–1921 against the “White” and the “Red” Russia, Poland, and Romania. The former “Russian Ukraine” – proclaimed the Ukrainians People’s Republic (22nd January 1918) with Kyiv as its center and fought its war for independence against Russian imperialism regardless of its colors (“White” or “Red”) and finally allied with Poland in 1920. The former Habsburg province of Eastern Galicia proclaimed another Ukrainian state (Western Ukrainian People’s Republic) with Lviv as its center. The city of Lviv (Polish Lwów, Austrian – Lemberg, French – Leopoldis) inhabited at that time by the Polish majority, rebelled however in a Polish national uprising against the newly created Ukrainian state, and thus started its war against the reconstituted Polish state (1st November 1918). The two

¹⁰ The percentage of Hungarians in the main cities of the province according to 2001 census is: Uzhorod/Ungvár – 7.03 %, Mukachevo/Munkács – 9.64 %, Berehovo/Beregszász – 55.87%. *Distribution of the population by native language, Zakarpatska oblast*, (All Ukrainian Population Census, State Statistics Service of Ukraine).

Ukrainian states confederated (22nd January 1919) and then broke up their union. For the Western Ukrainians Poland was the main enemy, for the eastern ones – Russia. Divided and attacked from all angles, the Ukrainians lost their war for independence in spite of the Polish efforts to build a Kyivian Ukraine as a bulwark against Russia. Thus, within the Versailles system, Ukrainians constituted the largest nation without its independent state in Europe and were pushed into the revisionist camp dissatisfied with the post-World War I European order. This resulted in the Western Ukrainian-German collaboration before and during the war, and in a bloody action aiming at the extermination of the Polish civil population of Vohlynia and Eastern Galicia conducted by the Ukrainian guerrilla (UPA – Ukrainian Insurgent Army) in the years 1943–1944 – when those lands were being occupied by Germany (Siemaszko, Siemaszko, 2000: *passim*).

Moscow traditionally tried to Russify the newly conquered regions. It abolished the Greek Catholic Church and imprisoned its priests in the Gulag. The bitter guerrilla resistance lasted in the Western Ukraine till 1956 and won UPA the distinction of being heroic fighters for national freedom. The image of UPA still divides Poles and Ukrainians. For Poles, it was a criminal organization responsible for genocide of the men, women, and children in the south-east territories of occupied Poland, and for Ukrainians, it is an army of freedom fighters against the totalitarian USSR.

Stalin's unification of Ukraine in the years 1939–1945 was based on the Soviet conquest and ethnic as well as on social-class-struggle theory based purification (the annihilation of all potential class enemies of communism) of the new lands incorporated into the Ukrainian SRR. The victims of that action were both non-Ukrainians (Poles, Czechs, Germans, Romanians) as well as non-Soviet Ukrainian leaders and population. Massive killings, imprisonments, and deportations shaped the Ukrainian SSR that enriched with "Khrushchev gift" of Crimea in 1954 (the Peninsula conquered by Russia in 1783 (Podhorodecki, 1987: 267–277), and finally ethnically purified by a Soviet-type – genocidal deportation of Crimean Tatars of May 18th 1944 (Chazbijewicz, Olsztyn: 97–110) survived till the end of the USSR. The independent Ukraine proclaimed in 1991 came into being in the territorial shape resulted from history. Ethnic purifications of the World War II in the Western part of the country had annihilated the physical base for Polish-Ukrainian conflict that had been poisoning the relations between the two peoples since the late nineteenth century. The memory of the bloody past

still exists in Poland and in five out of 25 districts of Ukraine still the Poles and the Ukrainians no more share the same motherland, which used to be the case of the struggle prior to 1947 and thus the real reason for conflicts of 1918–1919 and 1939–1947 is over. Russia tries to play on the memory of them, as it does as far as the other historical animosities in the region are concerned, but still these are not the ghosts of history that shape contemporary Polish-Ukrainian relations. Nevertheless, the Russian state tries to revive them hoping for the destruction of the regional co-operation and solidarity of the “limitroph” states threatened by Kremlin’s imperialism.¹¹ Taking that into consideration the reconciliation between Polish and Ukrainian elites and the fact that Poland was the first country in the world that recognized the independence of Ukraine in 1991 (Canada was the second one) and both the Maidans – the one of 2004 and that of 2013/2014 enjoyed a great popular support in Poland is one of the most important socio-psychological, and thus political, victories of both nations positively shaping the Polish-Ukrainian relations in spite of the bloody past.

¹¹ Russian historical policy coordinated by Foreign Ministry and supervised by the president is concentrated on two main goals – glorification of Soviet/Russian participation in the second part of the World War II (while being rather silent on the period 1939–1941) and on the nourishing of the memory of the conflicts between Poles and Ukrainians, Poles and Lithuanians, Poles and Belarusians, Ukrainians and Romanians, Hungarians and Slovaks etc. There are special associations, web sites and periodic issued or sponsored by Russian Federation dealing with that task. For the examples of such Russian historical propaganda see: Фонд “Историческая память” <http://historyfoundation.ru/index.php> or Журнала российских и восточноевропейских исторических исследований, <http://histudies.ru/>. For the examples of official state prepared materials see: Деятельность ОУН-УПА из документов НКВД-МГБ СССР раскочечено в 2008 году, Информационные материалы, Дипломатия России от посольского приказа до наших дней Историко-документальный департамент МИД России, http://www.idd.mid.ru/inf/inf_01.html or *Комментарий к официальному материалу МИД АР, распространенному в Брюсселе в апреле 2009 г. среди стран-членов НАТО «О латвийском добровольческом легионе СС»*, Историко-документальный департамент МИД России, 10-06-2009, <http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-arch.nsf/932b471b7dc29104c32572ba00560533/941db813df91a9fec32575d1002b1ce4!OpenDocument>.

Ukraine in Europe in the shadow of the EU’s “Russia first policy”

The *belle époque* started in 1991 with the collapse of the USSR. Poland soon associated with the European Communities and thus with the newly created EU soon.¹² The other countries of the region did the same except for Belarus, who did not want to, and Ukraine and Moldova who tried but were still rejected by Berlin and Paris who did not want “to irritate,” “to humiliate,” or “to isolate” Russia (Bielecki, 2000: A1-A5; Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2001: 179–214). Thus, in spite of the first pro-European offensive of the Ukrainian diplomacy (1998–1999) led by Ukrainian foreign minister Borys Tarasiuk, the project of a European Ukraine failed as a result of the “Russia first” policy adopted by the EU, and as the outcome of the incompetence, corruption, and inertia of the Ukrainian state itself. Ukraine signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU and simultaneously resigned from its nuclear status in 1994. The PCA was put into force in 1998 and was never fully implemented.¹³ The EU-Ukraine debate was to a large extent dominated by the Chernobyl power station problem till 2000 when the facility was finally closed under EU pressure (Monitoring Foreign and Security Policy of Ukraine, March 1999: 38–39). No more Ukrainian problems have ever seriously occupied the minds of the European politicians except for the Poles till 2004.

The “big bang” of the European Union enlargement of 2004 was combined with the second wave of the NATO enlargement and with a profound breakdown within NATO and inside the EU caused by the American-led war in Iraq (since 2003). Three out of four strategic political goals of Poland had been achieved: liberation from Soviet/Russian domination, NATO membership, and EU membership. Only the political westernization of the Eastern

¹² *Układ europejski ustanawiający stowarzyszenie między Rzeczpospolitą Polską, z jednej strony, a Wspólnotami Europejskimi i ich Państwami Członkowskimi, z drugiej strony, sporządzony w Brukseli dnia 16 grudnia 1991 r., (Dz. U. z dnia 27 stycznia 1994 r.), p.1–169.*

¹³ *98/149/EC, ECSC, Euratom: Council and Commission Decision of 26 January 1998 on the conclusion of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Ukraine, of the other part, EUROPA, EU law and publications, EUR-Lex – 31998D0149 – EN, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/;ELX_SESSIONID=LTL5JPvDytYkyYKh91QyFj1VftTzJhXLcvyzTCcxcgWpJJHw86gJl-701004031?uri=CELEX:31998D0149.*

Polish neighbourhood remained as the only one to be accomplished. On the other hand, in spite of some differences beneath of the strategic level, the near-unanimous support Poland had enjoyed from her western partners in the previous decade was over. The strategic community of Polish and German interest expired. It was Germany, not Poland that had changed its traditional pro-American foreign and security policy having been conducted till 2003 since Konrad Adenauer times. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder proclaimed his *Deutsche Sonderweg* (German special way) policy (Adamski, 2005) oriented towards Russia, and aimed at the reduction of the US domination in the security structure of Europe (Malinowski, 2009: 363–390; Miszczak, 2012: 229–245 and 306–341). This could not be supported by any responsible Polish government.

The reform of the voting system in the EU Council (first proposed in the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union) provoked next clash between Poland and the leading European powers, thus deepening the division produced by Polish (Central European) support for American-led war in Iraq. Polish activity in Europe based on the accession process had been over and the new one had been blocked by the two conflicts with Berlin and Paris mentioned above. In such a situation the Orange Revolution and the Polish support for it brought Poland back into the game. It was the Polish and Lithuanian presidents' efforts that brought Javier Solana to Kyiv. The real importance of that fact was limited still the impression in Poland and in Europe was significant – Poland led the EU Ukrainian policy for a while. The EU reacted poorly, however, and the “Orange” camp compromised itself in the few years following the Maidan of 2004.

Nevertheless, Poland tried to attract the EU and NATO attention to its eastern neighbors, and particularly to Ukraine. NATO seemed to be a less complicated structure to be addressed, however, Kyiv membership in it was politically more difficult to be promoted as a goal of Ukrainian foreign and security policy both due to the post-Soviet mentality of a large part of especially eastern Ukrainians, and secondly due to the bitter opposition of Russia the West did not want to annoy (Ukraina bliżej Zachodu, 2005). The first attempt was made as early as 1995 when Poland and Ukraine created a common peace battalion then used in former Yugoslavia (Grygolec, no 6: 78; Krzastek, 2002: 284–303; Malendowski, 1998:

158–163).¹⁴ After 2004, when Spain had withdrawn her troops, the Ukrainian contingent constituted the second largest force in Polish led multinational division Center in Iraq. This however was terminated soon by the withdrawal of the Ukrainian troops that had been promised to Maidan by then newly elected president Victor Yushchenko (Kolasiński, 2008: 255–292). The climax of pro-NATO Ukrainian offensive took place in April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest and ended with failure. In spite of Polish, Lithuanian, and Romanian support, the US confronted with Franco-German opposition proved not to be able to push the Membership Action Plan for Ukraine (and Georgia). The decision was postponed until the December summit and the postponement once publicly declared triggered Russian invasion on Georgia that has ruined the entire project (Asmus, 2010: 187–240).

As far as the EU dimension was concerned, Warsaw tried to finalize her first large eastern initiative (*the EU Eastern Dimension*) at the turn of 2002 and 2003 when Poland had still been merely a candidate country to the EU and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was just being born (Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2004: 67–89). The Polish initiative failed, however, mainly due to the Mediterranean lobby opposition. The second Polish (and Swedish) project was launched in 2008–2009 in a context of the Russian aggression on Georgia. The initiative is known as the Eastern Partnership (EaP).

The announcement of the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean by the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy on 13th August 2008 (Barcelona Process, 2008:1–13) created a good climate for the regionalization of European Neighborhood Policy – and the Russo-Georgian war create a demand for the EU “to do something” for its eastern neighbors. The negative goals that motivated the main players, however, hidden deeply in the diplomatic rhetoric, determined the shape of the initiative. The Polish-Swedish action could have relied on German support since Berlin was interested in slowing down French ambitions that were based on drawing attention and attempting to direct the majority of EU funds to the Mediterranean basin – i.e., to the areas outside of the German scope. German

¹⁴ For more information consult: *Drive to set up Joint Battalions or New Defense Cooperation Philosophy, CACDS*, <http://www.niss.gov.ua/mac/cacds/archive/Jan/0122d.html> and *POLUKRBAT, Jednostki wojskowe, Wojsko Polskie*, http://www.jednostki-wojskowe.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=360&Itemid=26.

support for the Eastern Partnership initiatives had therefore more instrumental than strategic meaning. It was a will to build a counterbalance to the French initiative to limit it, yet not for the real intention to open the EU towards the East that motivated Germany. The other “big actors” had no interest in the project whatsoever. When the EaP was accepted at the first EU-EaP countries summit in Prague (7 May 2009), the president of France, along with the prime ministers of Great Britain, Italy, and Spain, were absent at the meeting. The only top-level representative of a large EU member state was German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The biggest concern of the German representatives, supported by the Dutch, was that the invited neighboring countries were not called “European partners” (this could have been interpreted as approving their ambitions concerning future membership in the EU) but as the Eastern-European partners. Additionally, this happened according to German preferences.¹⁵ The summit in Warsaw (29th–30th September 2011) ended up with failure. No one of the partner countries had supported the Polish prepared declaration on Belarus that boycotted the meeting (Kłysiński, 2011), and as far as the western leaders are concerned the absence of the French president as well as the prime ministers of Britain and Italy seemed to become traditional (Szymaniak, 2011).¹⁶ The Eastern Partnership poorly financed and politically neglected by the leading EU powers seemed to die at the end of 2011 with the EU attention overwhelmingly attracted by the eurozone crisis (Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2012) and the Arab revolutions. That situation lasted till mid-2013 when Russian pressure on EaP partners country combined with unexpected and unwilling cold relations between Berlin and Moscow, caused by the Cyprus bank system crisis that painfully hit Russian oligarchs, revived the initiative.

¹⁵ *Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit Prague, 7 May 2009*, Council of the European Union, Brussels, 7 May 2009, 8435/09 (Presse 78), p.5. See as well: *Niemcy a Partnerstwo Wschodnie*, “Best OSW”, nr 18(93), 13.05.2009, p.12. For more about the Eastern Partnership see: *The Eastern Partnership in the Context of the European Neighborhood Policy and V4 Agenda*, ed. by I Albrycht, Kraków 2010, pp.64. <http://www.europeum.org/doc/publications/enp.pdf>.

¹⁶ See as well: *Na szczycie Partnerstwa Wschodniego Merkel i Barroso; zabraknie Sarkozy’ego*, Wiadomości, “Gazeta Prawna”, 28 września 2011, http://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/artykuly/551415,na_szczycie_partnerstwa_wschodniego_merkel_i_barroso_zabraknie_sarkozy_ego.html. and: *Szwedzki MSZ: Efekt szczytu Partnerstwa Wschodniego “gorszy niż oczekiwano”*, EurActiv.pl, 4.10.2011, <http://www.euractiv.pl/prezydencja/artykul/szwedzki-msz-efekt-szczytu-partnerstwa-wschodniego-gorszy-ni-oczekiwano-002984>.

Russia had just humiliated the US in Syria which boost Kremlin's imperial mood that combined with an image of the decadent West – the EU confused with the eurozone financial crisis and the United States led by a weak president who is not able to enter any real confrontation – resulted in the next stage of the Moscow's zone of influence policy, this time focused on the EaP countries that had just been offered a perspective on the EU association. The respective decisions on association were expected to be taken at the upcoming Vilnius summit so Russian action started in the summer 2013 and aimed at preventing them. Armenia – surrounded by her traditional enemies – Azerbaijan and Turkey and looking for Russian protection, capitulated first, and withdrew from the negotiations with the EU.¹⁷ Belarus neither wanted nor had been invited to association talks as well as Azerbaijan (Ananicz, 2013). On the other hand, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine continued the negotiations with Brussels and soon faced Russian counteraction. Kremlin's brutal pressure on Ukraine resulted in the withdrawal (21.11.2013) of president Victor Yanukovych from the already agreed the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement that was expected to be signed at the Vilnius EU-EaP summit. The decision triggered the second Maidan and thus the revolution.

The Vilnius summit (28th–29th November 2013) proved to be an exceptional one. Unlikely the previous summits in Prague and Warsaw this one was attended by all the leaders of the EU member countries. The association agreements with Georgia and Moldova were adopted, but still the one with Ukraine that had been already agreed upon earlier was not signed. Some minor agreements on visa regime liberalization (Azerbaijan) cheap airlines accession to the air space of the contracting parties (EU-Ukraine) and conflict regulations (Georgia) were signed too. These were, however, the solutions that soon were proved to belong to the epoch that is about to end. Governments and diplomats influence reality but it would be an illusion to think they alone shape or control it. The rare still powerful actor entered the scene – the nation – this time it was the Ukrainian one and changed the situation.

¹⁷ The Presidents of Russia and Armenia, Władimir Putin i Serzh Sargsyan met in Novo Ogariovo near Moscow (3.09.2013) and announced the decision on the Armenian accession to the Custom Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan and the will to create the Euroasiatic Economic Union. This was ipso facto the resignation of Armenia from the association with the EU.

“The Guns of August”

Protests started in Kyiv yet on 21st November with a student happening. While attacked by the riot police (30th November and 10th–11th December 2013) they turned into mature protest against the corrupted, oligarchic system. Then the Ukrainians – confronted with the set of new laws adopted by Verkhovna Rada (The Supreme Council – the Ukrainian Parliament) in an unconstitutional way (16th January 2014) – the laws directly “borrowed” from Russian “legislative acquis” – faced a dramatic choice – authoritarian dictatorship or revolution. They chose revolution. The first victims killed by the Yanukovych regime fell down in a symbolic place and on a symbolic day – in the Hrushevsky Street on 22nd January 2014 – on the Ukrainian national holiday – the Unification Day (the anniversary of the union between the Western Ukrainian People’s Republic and the Ukrainian People’s Republic proclaimed in 1919, which is simultaneously a day of the proclamation of the independence by UPR in 1918. Myhaylo Hrushevskiy was the first president of the UPR’s parliament. The climax of the street fighting took place 18th–20th February and took the life of some hundred victims. Still the revolution prevailed, Yanukovych escaped and the country politically again turned to the West.

Russian policy planning towards Ukraine suffers from imminent and incurable weakness. It is based on the Russian imperial myth, being promoted by a favorite Kremlin’s historical propagandist Alexander Dugin (Matt, 2014; Motyl, 2013), of mental unity of the Russian world (*russskiy mir*) – i.e. Russian, Belarusians and Ukrainians and of its Euroasian and not European nature. In Putin’s imperial rhetoric they are all “one nation.” According to that ideology Russian policy planners and socio-technicians try to plan their operations being addressed to Ukrainians in a way they do it while addressing Russians – if Ukrainians and Russians are “in fact one nation” as president Putin said (Fisher, 2014), they should react in the same way. Russian policy makers apparently think the socio-political tricks successfully applied by Kremlin while dealing with Russians should be equally effective in dealing with Ukrainians. The problem is that Ukrainians are not Russians, but Moscow imperialists cannot accept that “revolutionary” idea, and consequently, are not able to predict the reactions of the men in the street in Kyiv, Odessa, Mariupol, Donetsk, and Luhansk. The Maidan revolution and its success “took the Kremlin by surprise.”

The expected pro-Russian massive uprising in Donbas and the so called Novorossiia (the former Black Sea steppes) never happened and the Ukrainian state has not collapsed. The informal aggression of the “green men” – so successfully conducted in Crimea while the Ukrainian state, and especially its armed forces, had been still in a post-revolutionary confusion, went pretty badly when Russia tried to repeat it in Donbas and Odessa. It failed completely in the south and could be survived only due to the growing military and material support from Russia in the east. Thus Putin and his siloviks (78% of the Russian higher officials are former KGB or GRU agents) started the risky game leading to war (Kisielewski, 2007: 93). The annexation of Crimea covered the impression of defeat Russia had suffered as a result of the Maidan victory. It could be a good point for Putin to stop and consume the glory of a winner. Still “the appetite grows with eating”. The temptation was too big to resign from further steps. Thus the operation in the East started yet the Crimean model failed. Russian special forces and local criminals called “separatists” proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic and Luhansk People’s Republic officially aiming at the secession from Ukraine and the creation of Novorossiia. In fact the entire project was drafted as a tool to destabilize and then to dominate Ukraine winning it back to the post-Soviet zone of an autocratic or semi-autocratic, oligarchic system. The possible success of the Ukrainian democratization process started with Maidan, and the consequent economic development based on the deep and comprehensive free trade zone with the EU established in the EU-Ukraine association agreement, was the Kremlin’s nightmare. The success of Ukrainian reforms based on democratization and a profit-seeking economy¹⁸ would be a fundamental challenge for the stability of Russian political system. The so called “sovereign democracy” as Putin’s propagandists have labelled the authoritarian system build in Russia after 1999, would be undermined. If Ukrainians “are Russians” and if democracy without adjectives are built by them, and bring with it an increase of living standards, the thesis that such a system does not fit real Russians would be questioned. Whether Putin believes in a great Russian ideology or just cynically plays with it is of a secondary importance. His aim is to maintain his power and a hypothetical Ukrainian success – quite possible one

¹⁸ The Russian one is rightfully characterized as a rent seeking one which is the truth for all the post-Soviet area except for the Baltic States and Georgia – the latest since the rose revolution of 2003.

could undermine it. This is why Ukraine (like Georgia before) was attacked and must be turned back into the post-Soviet zone. Putin lost the opportunity to close the game as a winner after Crimea had been taken. The successful Ukrainian counteroffensive in Donbas threatened both the self-proclaimed “People’s Republics” with annihilation and this was something Moscow could not afford to. The result is known – an open (however a limited one and never officially declared) invasion of Russian regular forces on Donbas that stopped Ukrainian advances and threatened Kyiv with the further lost of territories. The possible Russian plan is to establish the territorial link to Crimea and Transdnistria thus completely cutting Ukraine off from the sea. This, however, means a full scale war.

Still the nature of the game is not that simple. Russia has armed itself intensively since 2006. Since February 2013, the units of Russian Army have been activated by surprise and trained in a numerous maneuvers the largest of which engaged 160,000 soldiers in 2013 (Wilk, 2013). It has not been done for fun. Great powers arm themselves quickly. A similar process took Hitler only six years (1933–1939). The wars won – Chechenia (1999–2005); Georgia (2008), and the conquest of Crimea – proved to the decision-makers in Kremlin that the use of military forces as a tool of foreign policy is effective. The policy that leads to success has a tendency to be repeated. If Ukraine is abandoned by the West (which is possible) will nourish the Great Russian imperial mentality. The EU is not a structure built to deal with military threats and all the diplomatic actions taken in its name is negligible in that dimension. Russia does not respect the EU and despises it. The weakness of NATO demonstrated at the Newport summit (4th–5th September 2014) where the alliance declared its respect for NATO-Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations of 1997¹⁹ declared its intention not to deploy permanent bases and serious military facilities in Poland, the Baltic States, and Romania and offered no real support for Ukraine, was a clear message sent to the Kremlin. The message is – “Go ahead and test our reaction.” The results are easily predictable and the conclusion is both simple and sad – the *belle époque* is over. *The Guns of August* and the appeasement of September reassure us we will see the next Russian wars in Europe soon.

¹⁹ *Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation*, signed in Paris, France, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_25468.htm.

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**THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ACTIVITY IN REGARD
TO THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE BEFORE THE 2014
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

ABSTRACT: Ukraine is the largest country that is included in European Neighborhood Policy. That is why the European Union should spotlight relations with this eastern partner, especially by foreign policy instruments like association agreement. The focus here is on the EU's involvement in the Ukrainian crisis in period from Maidan revolution at the end of 2013, which was occasioned by the rejection of the association agreement with the EU by President Viktor Yanukovich, and to the presidential election in 2014. The main issue is to evaluate the EU's scope to stabilize the political environment in the nearby neighborhood and eliminate threats, which are the results of war between Ukraine and Russia.

KEYWORDS: European Union, Ukraine, European Neighborhood Policy, association agreement, presidential election.

The European Union, as an autonomous participant of international relations, tries to play a role of a continental stabilizer, or a stabilizer of the world security system, which results both from the necessity of securing the interests of the whole organization, and also its individual states, in addition to protecting the organization's character itself. The position and attractiveness of Europe, which can be utilized in order to perform the abovementioned role, and also to express its position in the international system, was built on making the idea of creating a peace and prosperity zone come true and on refraining from enfeebling conflicts (Nye, 2007: 111). The question remains if in today's international relations the idea of such behavior has not altered into political anemia and lack of readiness to undertake any serious steps by the European Union.

These considerations on the Union's participation in the various individual dimensions of the international system are crucial for an appropriate analysis and an attempt to comprehend the present activities or stances of the EU concerning the dramatic events in Ukraine, which is not only the united Europe's neighbour, but also the country whose pro-European aspirations have literally been broken. Assessing the dramatic news on the situation in this country, one can attribute this term not only to the direction of its foreign policy, but also to the manner in which its statehood functions. The question remains if the position and actions undertaken by the EU can contribute to resolving a political stalemate and finding effective solutions for fulfilling the pro-European aspirations of Ukraine.

Speaking generally about the determinants shaping the relations between the EU side and the Ukrainian one (Rydlewska, 2005), one should emphasize their complexity and the extent of their complicated nature.¹ The second decade of the twenty-first century, demonstrated that the real possibility of a comprehensive unification of the Ukrainian market with the European Economic Area, and of consolidating Kiev's political aspirations concerning its integration with the EU, still exists. It refers to the negotiations and signing the Association Agreement between the interested parties, which would be connected with the establishment of a deep and comprehensive free trade zone. However, on 21st November 2013, Kiev's government took a crucial decision about suspending the decision about signing the Association Agreement at the Eastern Partnership summit during the Lithuanian presidency (*Fact Sheet EU-Ukraine Relations Brussels*, 2014: 2). The Ukrainian public opinion hoped that President Viktor Yanukovich would ratify it during the Vilnius meeting on 28th November, but it also did not happen. The participants in the talks expressed their optimism that eventually the Agreement would be signed and its conditions would be implemented.²

¹ The comparison that Ukraine is for the Western Europe countries like a suitcase without a handle, because it is hard to carry, but one does not want to get rid of it, is widely repeated. Such sayings perfectly reflected these relations on the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

² *Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, 28-29 November 2013*, Web: 11 April 2014 <http://static.eu2013.lt/uploads/documents/Programos_12/131129%20Vilnius%20Summit%20Declaration.pdf>, p.1;4 The stance of the EU structures to a large extent is based on the statement of the Council of the European Union from 10th December 2012, in which it expressed its willingness to sign the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, when Ukraine would

At the same time, Kiev's streets witnessed a popular movement called later the Euromaidan, which turned from mass demonstrations into an organized political power, which logistically occupied a significant area of the capital and became a factor stimulating the changes in the national authorities. It is worth stressing that the main motivation of the average Ukrainians participating in this event, no matter what their political sympathies and affiliations were, was opposing the establishment and hostile regime, riddled with corruption, taking care of their own interests and acting against the citizens themselves. Additionally, the strong element of stopping the integration with the EU, identified with the mythical Westernization of state structures and high standards of living, or with stimulating the process of multifaceted modernization, emerged. What is significant, in the EU's opinion, was the peaceful nature of the Maidan protest, (*Fact Sheet EU-Ukraine Relations Brussels*, 2014: 1–2) which is very important when taking into account the various interpretations and media coverage concerning the events in the centre of Kiev, including using violence by the militiamen and the protesters.³

Speaking about the entire EU Eastern policy, it is worth highlighting that underestimating the Kremlin's behaviour and its attempt to influence Eastern Europe's fate after the collapse of the bilateral system was a mistake. Before the conflict in Georgia, Kevin Ryan, an American journalist, portrayed Moscow's policy as "much barking, little biting."⁴ The Russian President preferred a game of provocation, whose final result was to be a confrontation. The

be able to carry out the terms of this document, see: *Council of European Union, Council conclusions on Ukraine, 3209th Foreign Affairs Council meeting, Brussels*, 10 December 2012, Web 4 June 2014 <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/134136.pdf>

³ According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs 16 policemen were killed, see: <http://mvs.gov.ua/mvs/control/main/ru/publish/article/989615>, 30.05.2014. The victims on the protesting side equalled approximately 104 people; it is hard to establish, because there exist various sources, reports on abductions, individual killings, *Cabinet to pay families of Maidan victims 100 living wages each*, Web: 30 may 2014 <http://24tv.ua/home/showSingleNews.do?cabinet_to_pay_families_of_maidan_victims_100_living_wages_each&objectId=426530&lang=en>

⁴ See: Ryan K. "Lots of Bark but Little Bite," *Moscow Times*, (Jun. 16 2008 00:00), Web 4 June 2014 <<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/lots-of-bark-but-little-bite/368284.html>>

clear example of such behaviour was influencing Armenia in order to block its signing the Association Agreement with the EU.⁵

The intervention in Crimea and holding the referendum on the status of this area on 16th March 2014 constitutes a quintessence of such a policy. It is worth remembering that the majority of the Tatars supported the integrity of the Ukrainian state, which manifested in boycotting this event by this ethnic group. It is very important for the perception of the falsified results of this pseudo-democratic enterprise, since the Tartar minority made up 12% of the community living on the peninsula (*Amnesty International Public Statement*, 2014: 1). On 3rd March 2014, during its emergency meeting, the Council of the European Union criticized the attack of the Russian military forces, which undermined the sovereignty and integrity of the Ukrainian state. Moreover, the European Council expressed the similar opinion in its statement of 6 March 2014 (European Council, *Statement of the Heads of State or Government on Ukraine*, 2014: 1). It was connected with the clear disapproval of the Russian Duma authorizing the utilization of its military forces on the terrain of Ukraine issues on 1 March. What is more, the EU side in its talks with the Russian Federation was supposed to aim at forcing it to respect the agreement concerning stationing the Black Sea Fleet from 1997 (*Fact Sheet EU-Ukraine Relations Brussels*, 2014: 3). Of course, there is no denying the rationality of such an approach and such an assessment of the existing conflict by Brussels, but the question remains whether such a negative stance was at all taken into account by the Kremlin in the further planning of its activities. In the author's opinion the style of conducting politics by the Russian policy makers indicates that in their activities they focus on Kiev's steps and the steps of the individual European governments, and not on the general documents, conclusions, etc. crystallized with the delay of the EU forum.

With the initial lack of will to carry out these basic political steps, it was known that the Russian Federation will meticulously aim at fulfilling its own strategic goals with scant regard for the reaction of the international surroundings, i.e. also European structures. That is why the European Union did not recognize the validity of the whole referendum process in Crimea and its results.

⁵ The negotiations concerning this document were already finalized in July 2013; however, Yerevan decided to start closer cooperation with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan in August 2013, see: http://eeas.europa.eu/armenia/index_en.htm, 01.06.2014

The basis for such an assessment was clear breaching of the Ukrainian Constitution and the determined efforts to further antagonize the situation inside the EU Eastern neighbour (*Fact Sheet EU-Ukraine Relations Brussels*, 2014: 3). The actual annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by Russia was criticized by the European Council on 20th March 2014, which indicates the unambiguous interpretation of the drastic events in the south of Ukraine by the governments of the EU member states. Additionally, the European Commission was to examine the legal implications of such actions by the Russian Federation and prepare immediate economic steps aimed at the annexed peninsula.

In their declarations, the European leaders took into consideration undertaking further negative economic actions directed at the Russian market and entities; of course, if the Kremlin would not stop further destabilization of Ukraine. It is very difficult to determine how severe these actions can be and on what scale, what their real consequences can be and how strong the solidarity of the member in their implementation states will be. What is interesting, in the European Council's opinion, Russia's aggressive activities will result in worsening its multifaceted relations both with the EU and its individual member states (European Council, *Statement of the Heads of State or Government on Ukraine*, 2014: 2). Despite the fact that such an assumption is created by a body consisting of the heads of governments and Heads of State of the EU countries, the political practice showed something completely different, casting doubt on the significance of such statements and the essence of shaping EU foreign policy by its members.⁶

Nevertheless, the aspect of the dialogue between Brussels and Kiev, which in fact is responsible for the internal situation and selecting the direction of the Foreign policy, is very important. Arsenij Jaceniuk, the Ukrainian Prime Minister, who after dismissing Yanukovych from his position on 23 February 2014 held the most important office in the country, was a person accepted by the EU bodies (European Council, *Statement of the Heads of State or Government on Ukraine*, 2014: 1), which was very important in

⁶ In this aspect, it is important to analyze the relations between the Russian Federation and Germany, which currently are the main driving force of both the Euro zone and of the general European integration. The German Federal Republic is the main trade partner of the Russian side, which apart from the German investments endeavors to absorb the German model of organization and management, which is important for the revival after the collapse of the USSR.

the sphere of the diplomatic relations with this country and for the debate undertaken by Brussels concerning the development of the situation in its Eastern neighbour. Looking further, the EU bodies tried to observe functioning of the Ukrainian institutions such as the Supreme Council of Ukraine. The goal was to determine the political tendencies among the policy makers and to assess how the crisis affects the functioning of the political regime. Moreover, Catherine Ashton's meetings with the representatives of the main political powers on the Ukrainian political scene, such as the leaders of the Party of Regions and the former Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko (*Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the End of her Visit to Ukraine*, 2014: 1), may prove that the European Union endeavoured to play the role of an actual mediator or to formulate a balanced opinion on the existing internal situation of the Eastern neighbour. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that these were classical diplomatic contacts at the highest level, and not probing the situation in the conflict areas.

It was also an attempt to influence the actions of Kiev's government, also in the aspect of the internal affairs. In the EU's opinion, all the activities of the Ukrainian policy makers should serve to enact laws and to strengthen internal structures reinforce the authority of the state. Additionally, it is worth stressing that all the Russian actions are planned so as to destabilize the Western neighbour (*Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the Situation in Eastern Ukraine*, 2014: 1). The Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs maintained contact with the EU structures in order to communicate the emerging problems and suggesting the potential spheres in which the external technical assistance is expected. The subjects of the talks obviously concerned the security dimension and the activities of the Ukrainian security and policing services, i.e. the matters determining the protection of Ukrainian citizens (*Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the End of Her Visit to Ukraine* , 2014: 2).

The EU bodies were aware that the assistance in building stable and lasting social and economic institutions in the Ukrainian state requires multidimensional involvement by experts in the individual areas of this country's political and economic system (*European Commission's Support to Ukraine*, 2014: 7). That is why, on 9th April 2014, on the initiative of the European Commission, the support group for the Ukrainian government was established, whose main goal is to assist in all the reforms and decisions required for achieving the stabilization of the whole country (*Fact Sheet EU-Ukraine Relations Brussels*, 2014: 5). Looking very critically at the functioning

of such an expert body appointed by the European Union, one can state that in the present situation Ukraine needs military peace forces or allied forces and not EU clerks.

The signing of only the political part of the Association Agreement on 21st March 2014 constituted a significant political fact in the bilateral relations between Brussels and Kiev. Obviously, accepting further terms of the agreement and putting the conditions of the entire Agreement into practice when the sovereign Ukraine will be ready is supposed to be the next step. The intention of carrying out such steps was included in the statement of the European Council of 6th March 2014 (*European Council: Statement of the Heads of State or Government on Ukraine*, 2014: 3), so it gained the support of all the heads of governments of the member states, who in reality should aim at creating the political climate conducive to putting such a document into practice. The plan of implementing the Stabilization and Association Agreement was updated during the meeting of the Cooperation Council for the UE and Ukraine on 24th June 2013 (*Fact Sheet EU-Ukraine Relations Brussels*, 2014: 2). This indicates how big a shift took place in fulfilling pro-European ambitions of the Eastern neighbour, which had already had a set agenda concerning implementing the final resolutions of the Stabilization and Association Agreement, and then had to defend its statehood and its basic functions in order to still function as an independent international entity. What is more, in Herman von Rompuy's – the President of the European Council – opinion, the signing of the political terms of the Stabilization and Association Agreement should be treated as supporting the Ukrainian geopolitical ambitions (*European Council The President* 1). It was an important act of lending a hand to Kiev's government, giving it international legitimization in the international arena and showing the significance of the progress of talks concerning the abovementioned agreement. On the other hand, looking at the manner in which Ukraine had to await the possibility of conducting the talks on the Stabilization and Association Agreement granted by Brussels and of the defectiveness of the Common Foreign and Security Policy in terms of stabilizing the existing crisis, the fact of signing the Stabilization and Association Agreement in the limited version may not bear any real consequences.⁷

⁷ The terms of the *Partnership and Cooperation Agreement* from 1994 or the *Action Plan* from 2005 in the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy cannot constitute the adequate directions for the current relations between Brussels and Kiev, and outline the necessary frameworks of the reforms.

When assessing the whole Ukrainian political scene, we can observe that the tragedy of the situation mainly results from the lack of possibility to stop shedding the citizens' blood – also of those average citizens who just happen to live in the area of this acute conflict (Emerson, 2014: 1) – by the political leaders. So who and in what manner could cause the wave of violence to cease? Due to the nature of its decision-making process and its characteristic as an international entity, the EU decided to introduce sanctions. The first sign of such actions was the implementation of the personal restrictions on 3rd March 2014, introduced by the Council of the European Union. These restrictions concerned 18 people and were imposed for 12 months on the people who misappropriated the EU assistance funds, which had to be frozen (*EU Freezes Misappropriated Ukrainian State Funds*, 1). It is worth emphasizing that the process of expanding the list of the people affected by EU sanctions is constantly updated and supplemented. In turn, on 17th March 2014, the sanctions banning travel and freezing assets in the territory of the European Union were aimed at 21 people responsible for implementing the aggressive Russian policy against Ukraine. These punishments were then extended and included 12 other policy makers (*Fact Sheet EU-Ukraine Relations Brussels*, 2014: 3–4). And then, this list was expanded to 48 people on the basis of the decision of the Foreign Affairs Council of 14 April 2014 (*Council of the European Union, EU Strengthens Sanctions against Actions Undermining Ukraine's Territorial Integrity* 1).

During the Ukrainian crisis, the debate on the sensibility of utilizing the 2nd or 3rd level of sanctions and on the effectiveness closing itself to the Russian Federation, its citizens, its economic entities, etc. is being held. Commentaries appeared that argued if the EU wanted to be perceived as a real geopolitical player, it should rather concentrate on the real actions in the key political areas and on responding to the current events (Blockmans and Gros, 2014: 1). The US government behaved in a similar manner, and while it had earlier introduced the so called “reset” with relations with Russia, but the new existing situation required the reorientation of the current policy on its part.⁸ In practice, it concerned the

⁸ Additionally, the issue of the potential membership of Ukraine to the NATO structures is discussed, see: Goldgeier, J. “The ‘Russia Reset’ Was Already Dead; Now It’s Time for Isolation”: Web: 30 May 2014 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/02/the-russia-reset-was-already-dead-now-its-time-for-isolation/>>

ban on issuing visas, freezing financial assets, and also introducing trade restrictions. In turn, looking at the personal details of the people and entities affected by the sanctions, the CEO of Rosneft, Igor Siechin, or the financial institutions and companies linked with the energy industry (Satell, 2014), so important for the Russian economy, are worth mentioning.

The assessment of the effectiveness of the economic measures aimed against the political interests of the Kremlin should take the characteristics of today's financial structure on a global scale into consideration, as well as the fact if these restrictions will really be felt by the companies and policy makers. It is naïve to claim that the introduction of such sanctions and restrictions could really discourage Putin, or other Russian policy makers, from their aggressive actions. Nevertheless, such measures taken by the international groups are to result in the behaviour incurring the increase of the costs which will finally weaken the Russian economic system, and then its political regime (Satell 2014).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Russia had huge problems with the transformation from the economically backward economy to the economic modernization or the creation of an economic superpower (Matuszewska, 2010: 215). Thus, being cut off from the international financial system will constitute a real problem. As a result, the Russian economic entities had problems with repaying their credits and had to resign from the first public offerings, or had problems with selling their bonds. It translated into the escape of foreign capital and limiting their investments, which must have negatively affected the gross national income. Additionally, in the monetary area, the strong external pressure on the Russian ruble appeared, which caused increased inflation. These problems of the Russian economy also negatively impacted its perception by the credit rating agencies, which resulted in the further outflow of the capital and the relocations of the funds towards the risk analysis (Satell, 2014).

The meeting of the representatives of the USA, Ukraine and Russia held in Geneva on 17th April was the main platform of the international dialogue on the future of the Ukrainian state. The UE was represented by Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. In the EU's opinion, her actions should contribute significantly to the stabilization of the acute situation and to the response of the international community to the Ukrainian problem (*EU; US; Ukraine and Russia to meet on 17 April in Geneva* 1). The main subject was

to determine the obligations the involved parties should undertake in order to stabilize the situation in the area of the Eastern neighbour of the united Europe where the military conflict commenced. First of all, it was stated that in order to stop the violence and the use of broadly understood provocations, all the types of paramilitary groups should be disarmed and all the public buildings should be vacated by them, which would made it possible for the state administration to somehow function. Additionally, the necessity of the presence and need for the unrestricted actions of the OSCE observatory mission was emphasized. The mission should be responsible for controlling and monitoring the actions of the involved parties and putting all the Geneva decisions into practice (*Fact Sheet EU-Ukraine Relations Brussels*, 2014: 4).

Originally, the OSCE mission was supposed to be accepted both by the Ukrainian government and by the local communities, also in the areas which were in the crisis. What is more, the USA, Russia, and the UE announced their support for the actions of the international envoys and provide their support for them or send their own experts (*Joint Statement*, 2014: 1). However, the practice demonstrated that the Russian side preferred sending the organized military groups to conduct the propaganda actions and the political activists rather than to support any observatory mission. One of the solutions leading to stopping the conflict in the Ukrainian state can be another meeting in Geneva and potentially replacing the OSCE mission with the tripartite peace activities of the USA, Ukraine, and Russia. In a simplified version, the army, the police, etc. would work under three flags, which would increase the legitimization of such forces and improve their functioning in the conflict area. Nevertheless, such a solution, presented by the EU Ambassador in Russia, Michael Emerson, could be approved by all the involved parties.⁹ Additionally, carrying out such assumptions would be imperfect due to the size of the area which must be controlled and the willingness of the EU (as the real mediating party) to get involved.

⁹ Looking from a historical point of view, it would be the solution similar to the one functioning in Berlin in 1945, in which the vehicles patrolling the city had American, British, French and Russian signs. Demonstrating the example of the solutions from the occupation after World War II is in this case inadequate, if we compare the behaviour of Hitler and Putin, stimulated by the post-Weimar Republic syndrome, more information on :Johnson, P. "Is Vladimir Putin Another Adolf Hitler?" *Forbes* (16 April 2014): Web. 1 December 2014 <<http://www.forbes.com/sites/currentevents/2014/04/16/is-vladimir-putin-another-adolf-hitler/>>

The statement that the Ukrainian problem required the real stabilizing power without whose activities further dwelling on the identity and position of this country would not be appropriate seems trivial. In Steven Blockmans' and Daniel Gros' opinions, who represent the Center for European Policy Studies, the EU would be able to send its policing mission – EUPM – to the Ukrainian territory. The basis for such a step would be the official invitation from the government in Kiev and the final decision of the Council of the European Union (Blockmans and Gros, 2014: 2). The author relates the opinions of these two experts to highlight the possible EU activities in the problematic territory, reminding the readers that the united Europe had experiences in conducting such operations in different regions of the world, among them in the socially strongly antagonized societies of the Balkan countries such as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, or Kosovo.¹⁰ So, this is the instrument which is used and can easily obtain international approval, at the same time being the real proof of the EU involvement perceptible by the Ukrainians (Zięba 2011).¹¹

According to *Reuters*, in April 2014 the British, Swedish, and Polish sides together created the document with the suggestion of establishing the abovementioned policing mission in Ukraine, at the same time realizing that the idea of such involvement will be negatively assessed by Moscow. The organization of any coordinated activities on the territory of Ukraine should be based on the support of all the member states and the preparation for the strong criticism from Russia, which will accuse the Western countries of meddling in the Ukrainian internal affairs. In practice, this involvement of the experts was supposed to affect both the decisions of Kiev's government, and also functioning of the troops in the whole of the country. The content of the document prepared by London, Stockholm, and Warsaw was to be consulted with all the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU member states (Emmott and Croft, 2014).

It could be an added value, not only in the sense of the politics at the highest level, but also functioning of such a mission, or

¹⁰ EUPOL Proxima concluded on the territory of Macedonia; EUPM functioning in Bosnia and Herzegovina and EULEX KOSOVO functioning on the territory of Kosovo.

¹¹ Nevertheless, it is worth paying attention to the real determinants of the involvement of the EU countries on the Balkan territory. When describing the activities of the German economic entities in the former Yugoslavia, Eduard Husson used the term; economic soft-imperialism, which reveals one of the reasons of stabilizing this region by the EU countries.

rather reporting from it, would make all the capitals of the member states realize the essence of the Ukrainian conflict. If we look at only at the internal conditions in the EU, then the establishment of such a form of the involvement in the territory of Ukraine would be based on the resolutions of the Helsinki Headline Goal from 2010. One of its main assumptions was creating the possibilities for sending an adequate number of experts to the areas of the priority activities of the The Common Security and Defence Policy and supporting the established missions. Another important intention was creating the logistic and technical base enabling the carrying out of missions properly taking into consideration the necessity of creating an efficient system of public procurement, which in each case is a very challenging assumption when looking at the political reality in which a particular mission must function.¹²

As a counterbalance, it is worth adding that there exists a possibility of introducing the elements of policing cooperation within the OSCE mission, which partly would imitate the Georgian case.¹³ Undoubtedly, the activities in the sphere of the coordinated managing of the borders in cooperation with the Ukrainian border guard (Blockmans and Gros, 2014: 2) could constitute the further area of potential involvement of the EU experts. It is especially important in the case in which we observed that the Eastern border of Ukraine was no obstacle for the flow of the whole military units, equipment and supporting elements. Of course, assessing critically the assumption of commencing such EU activities, one can state that for integrating anything in this case one should have the border. Apart from that, it would be adequate to station the real repelling, or maybe pushing out, military forces here which would eliminate the potential threats and in turn would mean a little borderland war with the participation of the EU member states.

The abovementioned ideas of the grassroots operational and stabilizing involvement of the international community, including the EU side, should not be taken into consideration even in the

¹² In order to get acquainted with all the goals at which the EU aims, it is worth reading this document, which takes into account both the civilian and military dimensions of the Common Security and Defense Policy in practice, see: *Civilian Headline Goal 2010*, available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Civilian_Headline_Goal_2010.pdf, 28.05.2014

¹³ It is worth remembering that the involvement of the international forces there officially ended on 1st January 2009 and mainly Russia is to blame for it, see: P. Kościński, *Misja OBWE musi opuścić Gruzję*, 23-12-2008, available at: <http://www.rp.pl/artykul/238382.html>, 28.05.2014

theoretical sphere without the full comprehension of the self-propelling cataclysm in Ukraine. Of course, the EU highlighted the necessity of enforcing the law and meting out justice to all the perpetrators of the riots or other acts of violence which took place on the Ukrainian territory. Incidentally, it can be added that the Council of the European Union encouraged Kiev's government to appoint its own representative in the advisory team of the European Council (Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on Ukraine-Foreign Affairs Council Meeting*, 2014: 1). Of course, one can debate how effective the participation in this organization would be in solving the individual aspects of this conflict.

In political practice, the reactions and long-term behaviour of the communities in the east of Ukraine are the most important issue, which results from the total instrumentalization and falsification of the information about such sentiments (Emerson, 2014: 1). One question remains unanswered: will the radical attitudes automatically spread or will they need the further support from Russia? It is worth remembering that in the Lugansk District and in the Donetsk District there is a high percentage of Russian-speaking citizens, from 50% to 60%. In the superficial comparison, Kharkov and Dnipropetrovsk seemed to be areas with the smaller escalation of antagonisms. Therefore, the results of the referenda, of course affected by the utilization of propaganda and mass disinformation, were supposed to demonstrate the discontentment with the activities of the central authorities (Emerson, 2014: 1).

In the aspect of using force in the antagonized areas, one should not forget about the minority living in Ukraine. Due to its axiology and consolidating its activities as the promoter of humanitarian principles, the united Europe criticized the drastic breaching of the human rights, and also the victims from all the socio-political sides and options. Additionally, it appealed to the Ukrainian authorities to protect and respect the basic rights of their citizens (Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on Ukraine Foreign Affairs Council Meeting*, 2014: 1). This assumption gives rise to one paradox, because some part of the citizens of this state openly resigns from the Ukrainian affiliation, choosing the Russian option or trying to create independent separatist centres. The subjects of the ethnic or national minorities and of abiding by the international law are especially important in the Crimean peninsula, where the Tatars were subjected to the process of artificial assimilation from the very beginning of the Russian occupation. This process consisted

of using unambiguous persuasion, or even threats and physical repressions (*Amnesty International Public Statement*, 2014; 1).

Undoubtedly, the Ukrainian transit position for supplying energy raw materials to the whole of Europe makes this country geostrategically significant. The EU side realized that the energetic security, and the reasonable level of prices connected with it – both for citizens and industry – will determine the stabilization of the Eastern neighbour. That is why the EU announced its cooperation with Kiev's government in this area, which was supposed to be based on the financial support for the Ukrainian budget and attempts to diversify the supplies in the long-term perspective (*European Commission's Support to Ukraine*, 2014: 5), because otherwise these will only be temporary, short-term activities, similar to anti-crisis ones in their character, and not building any energetic alternative to the Ukrainian state. The EU announced assistance in the form of delivering energy to Ukraine through concentrating on the diversification of the sources of supply, modernizing the energy base and improving energetic transmission infrastructure (*European Council: Statement of the Heads of State or Government on Ukraine*, 2014: 4). Such optimistic assumptions and plans are in fact an answer to the vital interests of the whole of the European Union and its member states concerning the energy issues important both for the economic development and for the standard of living of the citizens in the united Europe. However, apart from the unclear aspects of planning or mentioning the necessity of undertaking such political and economic steps in times of crisis, no sensible EU actions in this area has been undertaken so far, which also results from not fulfilling the conditions included in the treaties. The case mainly concerns the raw materials dependency, which may translate itself to a partial collision in the particular sphere of contacts without any danger of a big-scale conflict (Matuszewska, 2010: 206). It can be simply depicted as exchanging the Cold War between the two blocks with a warm war between the contracting parties. Such diplomatic aspects are especially important when one looks at the tendencies concerning lowering the export of gas to the European countries and shrinking of the crude oil market, which in the future will mean \$100 billion yearly losses for the Russian economy. This constitutes over 5% of this countries GNP, which is very important in relation to the long-term and ambitious plans of Vladimir Putin, who aims at strengthening his country. As it appears, these plans may have very weak foundations (Satell, 2014).

In turn, when talking about the modernization of the energy system in Ukraine, it is worth remembering that the reform of this sector will be based on the principles of the Energy Community, to which this East-European country has belonged since 11th February 2011.¹⁴ One of the real activities increasing the investments in this sector are the activities of the European Investment Bank, which was involved in the project of the pipeline in Ukraine and should be implemented during the next three years. The initial cost of this enterprise amounts to €1.5 billion (*European Commission's Support to Ukraine*, 2014: 3). Returning to the current issue of the reverse supplies, the legal basis for such an activity is the agreement about the cooperation between the operators of the Slovakian and Ukrainian transmission systems from December 2013, which finally was not signed. In this case, the European Commission tried to lobby for approving this document and implementing its basic terms. Additionally, creating the possibilities of reverse supplies to Ukraine through Bulgaria and Romania, or also Croatia and Hungary, will be an important issue.

According to the European Commission, initiating a tripartite dialogue of the European Union, the Russian Federation and Ukraine in order to modernize the energy system of Ukraine will be an appropriate step from the middle-term perspective (*European Commission's Support to Ukraine*, 2014: 7). The author considers such an approach extremely optimistic or naïve, taking into consideration the condition of the transmission structures there and the huge scale of investments, and also technical and scientific support which must be utilized to effect real repairs and improvements in this sector. What is more, the Russian side experiences similar problems and it does not intend to sponsor such positive changes in its Western neighbour, which in the Russian opinion must stay in the Kremlin's zone of influence. The political reality shows that for making this assumption come true, in its external affairs Russia uses also the trade in and transmission of energy raw materials. It is worth remembering that the Ukrainian economy suffers from high energy consumption, and still feels the results of the errors made during the reprehensible privatization process, which is why the energy sphere there is so easily politicized. Apart from that the pressure exerted by financial or crime spheres, whose goal is

¹⁴ For detailed energy statistics concerning Ukraine see: http://www.energy-community.org/portal/page/portal/ENC_HOME/MEMBERS/PARTIES/UKRAINE, Web:14.05.2014

to control the energy and fuel sectors, must be taken into account. When analyzing these issues from the sphere of external markets, then this tense situation between Russia and Ukraine should not impact on the transfer or the prices of the energy raw materials in the short term perspective. Nevertheless, the intensity of the conflict blocks the prospective thinking about the investments in the development of the energy sector in Eastern Europe or in the Black Sea region. Such was the behaviour of, for example, Royal Dutch Shell, which suspended any activities concerning its oil tenement on the oil field Skifka on the Black Sea, although it does not mean complete losing interest in this area with hydrocarbons (“Key ways to trade oil and gas price movements on Ukraine tension”). The dependencies presented above demonstrate not only the complexity of the conflict between the Ukrainian and Russian sides, but also the challenges to the EU’s own security that it must face.

Continuing the economic theme and the theme of the involvement on the part of the EU, which in its nature is directed at such cooperation or assistance, it is worth stressing that fulfilling all the terms of the Association Agreement, among them the establishment of the complex and deepened free trade zone, will be the priority in the relations between the EU and Ukraine. €11 billion were given to Ukraine for the purpose of stimulating further reforms in the economic and political spheres in accordance with the decision of the European Commission of 5th March 2014. The financial resources are to be gathered from the funds of the EU and international financial institutions in the next few years. Basically, this money should be earmarked for the preparation of the Ukrainian structures to the participation in the abovementioned zone. That is why, on 14th April, the EU side decided to temporarily lift the customs duties for the Ukrainian export, which took place till 23rd April (*Fact Sheet EU-Ukraine Relations Brussels*, 2014: 5). Additionally, the EU executive body had another idea, which was the possibility of using the terms of the Association Agreement concerning the transportation of goods – for example, the reduction of tariffs on the basis of the future project of the Council of the European Union about autonomous trade means for Ukraine. Such a short term solution would be a one-sided step of the EU bodies – including the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament – responsible for approval of such political decisions, which could actually influence the Ukrainian economy (*European Commission’s Support to Ukraine*, 2014: 4).

One can, of course, ponder on how the realization of these decisions can really affect the Ukrainian economy, which feels not only danger and destabilization resulting from the political situation, but also suffers from the effects of the international crisis of 2008. According to introductory forecasts, building the free trade zone should result in the reduction of tariffs which will make it possible to save almost €750 million yearly in the companies from the involved sides (*EU-Ukraine Association Agreement*, 2013: 4). Additionally, it is worth noticing that the Ukrainian economic entities gained additional €500 million yearly, thanks to the lowered imports obligations on the EU Single Market. Apart from that, the Ukrainian agricultural sector derived benefits from the lowered customs duties on the agricultural products, among them those processed, which brought the profit of €400 million (*European Commission's Support to Ukraine*, 2014: 4). Nevertheless, when analyzing the terms concerning the free trade zone, one can notice the asymmetry in the obligations and goals of both the sides, which results from the extremely different levels of the development of the post-Soviet country and the European Union. It is the Eastern neighbour that should benefit from the opening of the EU market through the immediate lifting of the customs duties by the united Europe. In turn, the EU side must be aware that the same step in the economic policy will not be promptly taken by Ukraine.

Apart from the potential building of the common trade area, the current needs of the Ukrainian state and society must be taken into account in the present situation. The policy makers from this country mentioned the sum of \$35 billion which their country would need in the next few years (*Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the End of her Visit to Ukraine*, 2014: 1). Partly as a response to such information, at the beginning of March 2014 the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank planned to earmark €11 billion for Ukraine on a short term basis. According to the EU bodies, this resources should be interpreted as the proof of the active position of the European Union in the efforts to assist its Eastern partner in order to remove its political and economic problems (*European Commission's Support to Ukraine*, 2014: 4). When talking about any aid directed to Ukraine, it is theoretically worth separating the short term dimension, concentrating mainly on direct financial support and loans, from the long term activities, including the structural investments changing the economic face of this country. Without determining the right temporal sequence, no government is able

to properly distribute the resources which are in its possession, even if it administrates the entire country, and all the sectors work efficiently, which is not the case in Ukraine. This is why the short term issues that must be finalized immediately include the amounts due and the expenditures which must be paid immediately, and an attempt at complete reduction of the existing deficit. In turn, in the long term perspective, the appropriately planned investments – for example, those available thanks to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank – seem to be the most crucial ones (*Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the End of her Vvisit to Ukraine*, 2014: 2–3). As a result, in the next few years, Ukraine could obtain €1.6 billion from the EU budgeted as microfinance assistance loans, and €1.4 billion as the packet of assistance subsidies. In addition, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank were to earmark €8 billion. It is worth remembering that the Ukrainian side could also use the some of the sum of €3.5 billion available from the Neighborhood Investment Facility (*European Commission's Support to Ukraine*, 2014: 7).

The issue of the Ukrainian economy was also discussed during the Geneva summit, at which all the participating sides agreed to secure economic stability of the discussed country and earmark adequate resources for the purpose of effecting the joint decisions (*Joint Statement*, 2014: 2). The practice shows that the EU would be able to address the real assistance aimed at the structural reforms together with the support of the experts. In turn, the Russian Federation is willing to grant substantial loans, which in fact are nothing more than diplomatic usury, completely linking Kiev's decisions geopolitically.

What is interesting, the establishment of the mechanism of coordinating short term donors, working under the auspices of the European Commission, was supposed to be another form of maximizing the effects of the addressed economic assistance. It was connected with the assumption that such a tool of dialogue would constitute the platform serving the purpose of finding the balanced solution to the current Ukrainian problems concerning its further transformation (*European Commission's Support to Ukraine*, 2014: 4). However, the author thinks that such a plan would take part of its identity and position away from the Ukrainian side and its government, who should be responsible for the negotiations with the individual global financial institutions, the reasonable absorption of various kinds of resources, and also the determination of the needs

of its economy, state budget, etc. However, one should remember that the IMF and other global financial institutions have their individual procedures of granting assistance, but they mainly do it on the basis of independent assessment of a situation and on determining how significant resources can be addressed to Ukraine. Although the International Monetary Fund expressed its willingness to commence the dialogue with the new government in Kiev about the various planes of financial aid (*Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the End of her Visit to Ukraine, 2014: 2–4*), but these are the independent decisions of these organizations and the Ukrainian policy makers.

To a large extent, it depends on the actions of the authorities in Kiev and the direction they will choose, what the effects of the absorption of external resources, of conducting the foreign policy and of stabilizing the situation in the whole of the country will be. Nevertheless, the realization of any state reforms in Ukraine and doing it in all the political regions and districts was a real problem (*Joint Statement, 2014: 2*). From the short term perspective, it was quite important, because without preparing the administrative structures in the entire country, the abovementioned assumptions cannot be effected. To the High Representative's mind, the presidential elections held on the 25th May were supposed to be the key moment for the future of Ukraine. It is their course, their campaign style and obtaining social legitimization by the future Head of the State that will decide if implementing the constitutional reforms and solving a number of political and economic problems will be carried out (*Fact Sheet EU-Ukraine Relations Brussels , 2014: 4*).

Of course, some doubt could be cast on the sense of holding the presidential elections in the east of Ukraine due to the potential boycott on a grand scale (Emerson, 2014: 1). In the EU's opinion, the presidential elections should be witnessed by the OSCE observers, especially with the participation of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The Ukrainians from all the regions of the country and also the national minorities had to participate in these on equal terms, taking into consideration the international norms concerning the human rights and the civil and political rights, to abide by which Kiev pledged (*Fact Sheet EU-Ukraine Relations Brussels, 2014: 5*). Finally, Petro Poroshenko was the victor in the Ukrainian presidential elections, who already in the first round of voting obtained 54.7% of all cast votes (which amounted to 9.86 million votes) (Interfax-Ukraine "Results of presidential elections published in official press on June 3"). Just after this event, which

generally was conducted smoothly and according to the democratic standards, the Ukrainian side appealed to Russia to recognize the validity of the election results and to cease to destabilize the Eastern regions of Ukraine. In foreign policy, Poroshenko initially planned the meetings with the representatives of Berlin and Washington (Ukraine News One), in order to look for clear support from them – not only for his presidency, but also for the very existence of his state. What is important, as far as the relations of Ukraine with the EU are concerned, the president-elect announced that after swearing him into office he will aim at signing the economic part of the Association Agreement, building the free trade zone (Interfax-Ukraine “Poroshenko is going to sign economic deal with EU immediately after inauguration”). Undoubtedly, such announcements can be treated as an obvious example of sticking to the pro-European geopolitical course by the Ukrainian state after the changes of 2013/2014.¹⁵

However, one should emphasize, that during the summit between the EU and Russia in June 2013, the Kremlin mentioned the issue of the fears and dangers for the Russian interests connected with the establishment of the free trade zone between Ukraine and the EU on the territory of this East European country (Emerson, 2014: 2). Yet the author warns that it is strictly politicized and irrational Russian interpretation of this process liberalizing the trade. The Russian side fears not so much the domination of the entities from the EU countries, as primarily setting the standards making it impossible to use all the illegal economic and political games, in which the entities from the Russian Federation participated. Additionally, it is identical with Moscow’s opinion that the influence of the Western world will not manifest intellectually or morally, but geopolitically, at the same time invading the Russian area (Matuszewska, 2010: 199).

Therefore, Ukrainian issues should be perceived in the sphere of combat for influence between the two opposing integration centers. The EU was interpreted by the observers as a great oasis of stability surrounded by the world destabilization and able to incorporate next European countries, giving them this abovementioned state of peace and modernization. The attractiveness of European structures that were presented as building a “voluntary empire”

¹⁵ The full agreement was finally signed on 27 June 2014, see: Pifer, S. “Poroshenko Signs EU-Ukraine Association Agreement” *Brookings* (June 27, 2014 2:30pm): Web. 12 June 2014 <<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2014/06/27-poroshenko-signs-eu-ukraine-association-agreement-pifer>>

was indisputable in the past. However, the expansion of this liberal power and its significance lost its strength, and each expansion gave rise to new problems, which had to be dealt with for the sake of the entire integration process. The accession of the Central and East European countries should have resulted in their stabilization and a wide cooperation with the post-Soviet territories; however, such steps undertaken by Brussels has caused animosity with Russia (Kagan, 2009: 27).

The EU, if it finds the political will, should use this flaw or be prepared for such Russia's behaviour, which in the present geopolitical arrangement may assume the role of a "segment empire," trying to utilize all free space in the international system for the realization of its *raison d'état*. It mainly results from the lack of the appropriate tools reinforcing the position on the political scene, which forces the Russian side to wait for emerging opportunities for fighting for its interests, rather than to create its own opportunities (Matuszewska, 2010: 242). One can wonder if such a situation did not happen in the case of the Ukrainian pro-democratic uprising and turning President Yanukowich into a Kremlin tool.

The question remains if the participation of the USA, or NATO, is really necessary for stabilizing the Ukrainian crisis, both in the technological and diplomatic spheres. Posing such questions is connected with the sense of the tripartite dialogue and the position of the EU itself on the international arena, especially in its relations with the closest international surroundings. In addition, the events on the European continent should not be perceived as the separated subsystem of the world order, or rather as one of the elements of games at the level of the world political interdependencies, the example of which can be the attempt of the Western countries to solve the problem with Iran, with which Russia has multifaceted relations (Kagan, 2009: 228).

Summing up, one can reach the extreme conclusion that the Ukrainian issue should constitute an ultimate counterargument against any theses on the cooperation between the EU and Russia in their mutual neighbourhood, unless only creating diplomatic documents, without any reference to the political reality, is taken into account. The whole problem of Europe is finding a place in the geopolitical game in which it could win, but it is blocked by its own mistaken awareness. In turn, Russia wants and has to achieve a victory, but it cannot experience the lack of means to do it. One cannot hide the fact that only an actual military presence in the territory of Ukraine can stop the aggressive actions of the Russian

Federation. Creating unreal conceptions is in fact a pro-Russian activity, because it is that side which is a dynamic player trying to achieve the goals of its foreign policy, even if they are short term or flawed in their conception. It is worth remembering that for the addressees of the external activities of the EU (in this case the Ukrainians) the real effects of the actions and the relevance of the decisions taken by the EU bodies responsible for the international policies were the most important – not the voting procedures and the political steps. Apart from that, all responsibility for their eastern border rests on the Ukrainians, who at the turn of May and June 2014 started to openly fight with the alien forces or the artificially created separatist or terrorist groups. The EU must be ready for the real opening of Ukrainian ambitions, of course while remaining within the frameworks determined during the bilateral meetings or written in the European documents. From the perspective of one's own security, a united Europe must be aware that during the escalation of such conflicts, its real interests, as well as its borders that have still not been trespassed by foreign forces, must withstand the intensification of cross-border dangers. For example, even the weak reaction to the Arab Spring in 2010 showed that the Union is not prepared for the immediate and decisive response to events that could threaten its existence. Without creating such an ability, one will not be able to talk about the concrete results of the EU stance on the crises occurring within the security system.

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THE UKRAINE CRISIS AND SHIFT IN US FOREIGN POLICY

ABSTRACT: War in Ukraine and the Russian annexation of Crimea are the events that changed the US policy towards Russia. The events in Ukraine forced the United States to take a closer look at Eastern and Central Europe. The United States' policy during the Ukrainian crisis has been limited to sanctions and strong statements so far because in Ukraine there is an asymmetry of interests. Ukraine is much more important to Russia than to the United States. The United States may be willing to support the democratic and western aspiration of Ukrainians but will not risk a major conflict with Russia over it. However the crisis in Ukraine is not only about Ukraine or Russia. It is also about US credibility around the world. Both friends and foes are watching closely the American reaction to the situation. That is why the United States has increased its military presence in those NATO countries that share borders with Russia.

KEYWORDS: Ukraine Crisis, US Foreign Policy, Ukraine, Russia, NATO, European Security.

Introduction

In February 2014, the US Ambassador to Russia, Michael McFaul, announced that after two years his mission will come to an end. The resignation of McFaul is much more significant considering the fact that he was the main White House adviser on Russian policy and the author of the famous “reset” in relations between the United States and the Russian Federation at the beginning of Obama’s presidency (Baker, 2011). It is hard to find a clearer evidence that the reset policy has failed and that the Obama administration finally resigned it. Since the announcement of a “reset” by the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, relations between the two

countries have become more and more strained, and instead of the expected improvement we observed constant deterioration of bilateral relations. Asylum for Edward Snowden in Russia, the protracted conflict in Syria, and the construction of a defense missile shield in Poland and Romania are the most meaningful examples. However, the crisis in the Ukraine and especially the Russian annexation of Crimea, are the events that irreversibly affected the change in US policy towards Russia. For many years since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Europe and United States lived in the belief that in this part of the world everything is settled. The first sign that something is changed was war in Georgia in 2008. It was a sign that Russia would not accept the role western democracies prepared it for. The NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008 did not offer a Membership Action Plan to Georgia and Ukraine but alerted Russia because NATO made an unprecedented declaration that “those countries will become members of the alliance” (Asmus, 2010: 134). Ronald Asmus, one of the diplomats at the summit wrote in his book that: “British Prime Minister Gordon Brown leaned over to President Bush at the Council table and half-jokingly said: I am not sure what we did here. I know we did not extend MAP. But I am not sure we didn’t just make them members of NATO” (Asmus, 2010: 134). It was not long after the declaration at the summit when the war in Georgia started. Russia has shown the world that it is ready to use force to stop the ex-Soviet republics from joining the western organizations. Six years ago Georgia was involved in the conflict with Russia because it wanted to join NATO. Since 2014 Ukraine is involved in conflict with Russia because it wants to join the European Union. The events in Ukraine forced the United States to take a closer look at Eastern and Central Europe. Since the end of Cold War the region became important again and focused the attention of the United States.

Prelude to the Crisis in Ukraine

Ukraine gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. From that moment the process of building a modern national identity started. Ukrainians do not have a long history of having their own sovereign state. Ukrainians were one of the nations of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries and after the partitioning of Poland, became part of the

Russian Empire. After the end of World War I, Ukraine struggled shortly for its own state against Soviet Russia but it was defeated. Western Ukraine became part of Poland and Eastern Ukraine was included in the Soviet Union. The complicated history that is influencing the present divisions among the Ukrainians was described by Samuel Huntington in *The Clash of Civilizations*. Huntington wrote that:

The future conflicts will occur along the cultural fault lines separating civilizations. Western part of Ukraine grew up in the western civilization, while Eastern Ukraine in the Russian Empire and Orthodox faith (Huntington, 1996: 165-168).

That is why the Ukrainian identity is extremely complex. However in a nationwide referendum in December 1991, 90% of Ukrainian citizens voted for independence (Lalpychak, 1991). It showed that Ukrainians are not so divided after all and they prefer to have their own state. In December 1994, the “Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances” was signed by Ukraine, Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. It was not a real formal treaty but more like a diplomatic document under which signatories ensured each other that they will respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine as an independent state (Memorandum on Security). The Budapest Memorandum was part of the denuclearization process of the former Soviet republics which were seen as not responsible enough and capable of having their own nuclear weapons. Ukraine agreed to give up its nuclear arsenal, which was third largest in the world at that time.

From the 1990s through 2004, the country was ruled by President Leonid Kuchma whose power was built on the strong support from a powerful groups of oligarchs. Those times can be characterized by widespread corruption, a weak economy, and little effort for economic and democratic development. The first decade of independence was lost for Ukrainians, who were disappointed as its aspirations grew. In 2004, Viktor Yanukovych won the presidential elections and was getting ready to succeed Kuchma. However, the opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko’s supporters started massive demonstrations claiming the election fraud and took to the streets in what came to be known as The Orange Revolution. The protesters started a blockade of the governments building and demanded another vote. The Supreme Court of Ukraine announced the re-voting and Yushchenko won. The Orange Revolution was

a success of the Ukrainian people demanding a change. Unfortunately after a while “orange political leaders” engaged in a conflict which paralyzed the reforms and disappointed the people for the second time. Soon it became obvious that little remained from the hopes and plans that initiated the Orange Revolution. In the next presidential elections voters decided that Victor Yanukovich should become new president. He won thanks to the support of the Russian-speaking parts of Ukraine in the east and south of the country. His rival Julia Tymoshenko, who was prime minister in Yushchenko government, got many votes in the Western Ukraine.

The new government showed a lack of concern for human rights and democratic reforms. It had a long record of using the judicial system for political revenge, which was symbolized by the imprisonment of Julia Tymoshenko. She was sentenced to seven years in prison for abuse of power while signing a new gas agreement with Russia. The corruption was blooming again and served Yanukovich’ family and associates. The parliamentary elections in October 2012 did not meet the international standards and were criticized by the OSCE Election Observation Mission Final Report (Ukraine Elections).

Yanukovich officially supported closer ties with the European Union but made it clear that the Russian Federation is still the most important partner with Ukraine. From the moment when President Putin announced the plan of creating the Eurasian Economic Union Ukraine was forced to play a very difficult balancing game, squeezed between two powerful organizations. Yanukovich tried to gain as much as he could both from the EU and the Russian Federation without making the decision about which organization Ukraine should be closer to. It was obvious that Ukraine cannot be part of both and staying outside was not an option in the long run. However the moment of decision came and Yanukovich could not hesitate any longer. Until the last moment before the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius (Eastern Partnership Summit), nobody knew what Ukraine’s decision would be. Finally, on 21st November 2013, President Yanukovich’s cabinet decided to abandon the agreement on closer trade ties with EU. Ukrainian MPs also rejected a bill to allow Yulia Tymoshenko to leave the country, which was one of the conditions of the EU. Soon Ukrainians gathered and protested against their president, accusing him of breaking his promise. When the president treated the protests as riots, the protesters demanded the resignation of Yanukovich, and the long lasting occupation of central Kiev’s square called *Maidan* started.

US Reaction to Anti-government Protests in Ukraine

From the beginning of the protest on *Maidan Niezaleznosti* in Kiev the Obama administration urged both sides to find a peaceful and democratic solution to the crisis. President Obama made his first public remarks at a press conference in Mexico on 19th February 2014. He warned President Yanukovich: “not to resort to violence in dealing with peaceful protesters.” He also stressed that: “our approach as the United States is not to see Ukraine as some Cold War chessboard in which we’re in competition with Russia. Our goal is to make sure that the people of Ukraine are able to make decisions for themselves about their future (Obama remarks on Ukraine at press conference in Mexico).” Besides the warning for President Yanukovich about the use of force, the statement was aimed at softening the possible Russian suspicions about the American motives in Ukraine. The White House supported the implementation of political settlement between the opposition and the government in Ukraine. On 21st February, with the help of EU political mediation, President Yanukovich signed a compromise with opposition leaders. However, the very next day the deal was broken by the *Maidan* movement. The protesters did not want any negotiations with the president who has blood on his hands. It was very difficult for the opposition leaders to ease the anger and remain in control of the crowds. Protesters took control of presidential administration buildings and president Yanukovich fled. The Ukrainian parliament named speaker Olexander Turchynov as interim president of Ukraine. Members of the proposed new government appeared before demonstrators, with Arseniy Yatsenyuk nominated prime minister. The elite Berkut police unit, blamed for deaths of protesters, was disbanded. The events met with an angry response from Russia claiming that the agreement had been used by the West as a cover for efforts to overthrow the legitimate president.

The American reaction to the collapse of Yanukovich was positive but cautious. In a statement released by the White House on 22nd February, the president expressed hope that the events could help to de-escalate the violence and be an opportunity to stabilize the political situation in Ukraine. The statement also said that: “United States will work with its allies, with Russia, and with appropriate European and international organizations to support a strong, prosperous, unified, and democratic Ukraine” (Statement by the Press Secretary on Ukraine, February 22, 2014).

US Help for the Newly Established Government

The new interim government in Ukraine started to work with the United States to secure financial aid as a priority for stabilizing the situation. The United States announced that it will work with its bilateral and multilateral partners to ensure that Ukraine has sufficient financing to restore financial stability and continue to growth. The United States declared to help the new government in Ukraine in the most urgent needs. Firstly, US Administration officials stressed that the IMF will provide the lion's share of the rescue package for Ukraine at about \$15 billion. The proposed aid package for the new Ukrainian government included \$1 billion in loan guarantees in order to help "insulate vulnerable Ukrainians from the effects of reduced energy subsidies." Any reduction in subsidizing energy is likely to be the most difficult condition of IMF loan for Ukraine. Secondly, the United States would provide technical assistance conducting free, fair, and inclusive elections. Thirdly, the United States offered help in combating corruption and recovering stolen assets. Washington would also send a team of experts to Kiev to work with their Ukrainian counterparts to identify assets that may have been stolen, identify their current location, and assist in returning those assets to Ukraine. Finally, the United States:

is preparing to provide technical advice to the Ukrainian government on Ukraine's WTO rights with respect to trade with Russia. At the same time the United States is ready to provide assistance and financing to help Ukrainian businesses find new export markets and adjust to trade pressures and to enhance energy efficiency, helping to reduce dependence on imported gas. (Fact Sheet: International Support for Ukraine)

On many occasions US officials showed their support and met with the new interim government of Ukraine after ex-president Yanukovich fled to Russia. Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk was a guest at the White House on 12th of March where he met with Obama who confirmed strong support for the democratic transformation in Ukraine and confirmed political and economic help from the US. On the 25th of May, the presidential election in Ukraine took place and Petro Poroshenko won. On 4th of June, President Obama met with the newly elected Ukrainian president in Poland. Obama confirmed during the meeting that USA will not accept the annexation of Crimea and declared that: "Ukrainian people made a wise selection in somebody who has the ability to lead them through

this difficult period. And the United States is absolutely committed to standing behind the Ukrainian people”. (Remarks by President Obama, June 04, 2014)

US Reaction to Russian Annexation of Crimea

Since the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis the United States has maintained that Russian actions are unacceptable both to the rules of the international order and to the hopes and aspirations of the Ukrainian people. On 3rd March 2014, President Obama said that: “the world is largely united in recognizing that the steps Russia has taken are a violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty.” The president also added that he understands the ties and interests of Ukraine and Russia, but “what cannot be done is for Russia, with impunity, to put soldiers on the ground and violate basic principles that are recognized around the world”. (Remarks by President Obama, March 03, 2014)

Both the US and EU have imposed sanctions on Russia as a consequence of the annexation of Crimea and the crisis in eastern Ukraine. The US published a list of individuals and companies hit by travel bans and asset freezes on 19th and 20th of March. The US extended sanctions on 28th of April (FACT SHEET: Ukraine-Related Sanctions). The EU has also issued its own list of sanctions. Most of the individuals on the sanction lists are prominent figures from the Putin’s inner circle. The sanctions are mild and did not influence the change in Russian policy, but the West declares it is ready to impose more sanctions if Russia continues its aggressive actions in Ukraine.

US Military Reaction and Help to NATO Allies

On the 17th of March the North Atlantic Council released the statement on the Crimea referendum: “We consider the so called referendum held on 16 March in Ukraine’s Autonomous Republic of Crimea to be both illegal and illegitimate. The referendum violated the Ukrainian Constitution and international law, and Allies do not recognize its results (Statement by the North Atlantic Council).” The NATO Council also decided to suspend all the practical civilian and military cooperation with Russia.

Although Ukraine is not a member of NATO it has a considerable contribution to the co-operation with the US and the alliance. Ukraine committed 1,700 soldiers to Iraq and lost 18 of them (Iraq Coalition Casualties). Small Ukrainian forces remain in Afghanistan to this day (ISAF: Key Facts and Figures). So far, the US help for Ukraine's Army is limited to sending non-lethal military aid, such as food rations and night vision goggles. On many occasions US officials underlined that they do not intend to send its own troops or military equipment to Ukraine. However, there is support for efforts to retake control of eastern provinces by the interim government in Kiev. The USA is not expressing any doubts about the Ukrainian anti-terrorist operation in the east of Ukraine, against the separatist supported by Russia. The question is whether Ukrainian forces will be strong enough to defeat all the separatists, who proved to be well-armed and able to shoot down the helicopters. Russia officially denies that there are Russian soldiers or Russian weapons involved. Just like it did before the annexation of Crimea.

Russian actions in the Ukraine triggered immediate response from the United States, which has increased its military presence in those NATO countries that share borders with Russia. The Americans sent six additional F-15 fighters jets and two KC-135 refueling tankers at Siauliai airbase in Lithuania within the Baltic Air Policing Mission and a dozen additional F-16 fighter jets with 300 personnel to Łask airbase in Poland. NATO also sent AWACS, the early warning aircraft to monitor the situation in the region. United States also fielded company sized units of paratroopers for exercises in the Baltic States and in Poland. The US sent about 600 troops from 173rd Infantry Brigade to Poland and the Baltics for training exercises. US Navy sent frigate USS Taylor to the Black Sea for the joint exercises with the Romanian Navy (Operation Atlantic Resolve).

Shift in US Foreign Policy

The United States' policy during Ukrainian crisis has been limited to sanctions and strong statements so far. First and foremost, Ukraine is not the most important partner for the United States. Ukraine is not essential for the USA, neither economically nor militarily. It is the European Union that has more at stake in the case of Ukrainian crisis, but the EU is even more reluctant to act against Russia in deeds not only in words. However the crisis in Ukraine

is not only about Ukraine or Russia. It is also about US credibility around the world. Both friends and foes are watching closely the American reaction to the situation. A weak American response can sow uncertainty in Taipei, Seoul, Manila, and Tokyo and seriously harm the so called "US pivot to Asia." By signing the Tripartite Agreement of January 14, 1994 the USA, UK, and Russia were obliged to support Ukraine in the event that its sovereignty, territorial integrity, or independence is threatened. Both UK and USA are not so eager to act against Russia on the basis of declaration they made twenty years ago in completely different international conditions. Then, during Boris Yeltsin's presidency the West lived in hope for a democratic Russia, closely cooperating with Europe and USA. Today, the United States is also entangled in cooperation with Russia in various areas such as logistical help for the US troops in Afghanistan, space cooperation or Middle East problems. It is important to understand how crucial the Ukraine is for Russia and how determined it will make Vladimir Putin to protect Russian interests even by force. The same cannot be said about the USA. It is not yet clear how far president Obama will go to support the Ukraine against Russia but we can assume that Russia will be ready to sacrifice more than USA or the EU when it comes to Ukraine. In the Ukraine there is an asymmetry of interests. The United States may be willing to support the democratic and western aspiration of Ukrainians, but it will not risk a major conflict with Russia over it. However, the Ukrainian crisis and Russian aggression can give NATO a reason to reorganize itself. The new situation in Europe gives the answer to the frequently asked question: is NATO really needed anymore? At its origin, NATO's goal, as famously stated by Lord Ismay, the first NATO Secretary General, "was to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down." The Ukrainian crisis revealed that in Europe 2014 almost everything is changed. Germany, with its strong economy and leading role in the EU are not down anymore. Russia, with its vast resources of gas and big investments in Europe, are not out anymore. The most important question is whether the US wants to stay in any longer. Berlin is looking at Moscow as an opportunity not a threat. German industry needs Russia and is not willing to place a new Iron Curtain between Europe and Russia. Mitchell Orenstein observed that: "as much as Germany has become disillusioned with Russia and would like to isolate it, it now finds doing so very difficult; Germany is inextricably linked to its eastern neighbor as a result of its geography and years of cooperation. A trade embargo or asset

confiscations would sting Germany more than any other European power.” (Orenstein, 2014: 37) At the peak of the crisis Siemens CEO Joe Kaeser met with Russian President Vladimir Putin and said that: “his firm is supporting a trusting relationship with Russian companies, wanted to honor longstanding business contracts and did not pay too much attention to ‘short term turbulences’ in its business planning” (Siemens chief says...).

After the annexation of Crimea, when Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski proposed stationing two NATO brigades in Poland, it was German Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who rejected the idea explaining that: “We shouldn’t give the Russians any cause for accusing us of breaching treaties (Spiegel).” Steinmeier was referring to NATO commitment from 1997 that there will be no large NATO troops in former Warsaw Pact member states. The German government seems to be more concerned that such a move would provoke Russia, as if Russia’s intervention in Ukraine was not provocative enough. The great game is about whether the United States will stay in Europe or will it let Russia and Germany to reconstruct it their way. If the US will decide to back off, it would mean that the fate of Eastern and Central Europe will again be decided by Russia and Germany and that does not bode well for the region.

In this new Europe, the Franco-German engine has been replaced by a Russo-German one: as the European Union moves eastwards, settling its future borders and borderlands, it is Germany and Russia that will decide who is in and who is out and under what terms. (Orenstein, 2014: 39–40)

Among the most important European countries not only Germany has problems with a tough stance against Russia. France shows no intention of canceling the controversial contract to supply Russia with Mistral-class amphibious assault ships, although both Poland and the US asked for it many times. The French government can publicly condemn Russian aggression in Ukraine, but it sees nothing inappropriate in arming President Putin. Eastern NATO members have reasons to be worried with German-Russian cooperation. In March 2014, Germany announced that it had suspended a major defense deal with Russia for an estimated \$165 million. Since 2011, Rheinmetall Defense has been building a modern combined land forces training, simulation, and evaluation center at Mulino, Russia. According to Rheinmetall Defense, the training center was supposed to be finished later in 2014. The Mulino center would have the capacity to train and evaluate up to 30,000 soldiers every year.

The German and French attitude towards Russia means that if the US really wants to stop Russia's aggressive policy it will have to spend more time and resources on helping Poland, Romania, and the Baltic States. President Obama's latest visit to Poland on 3rd and 4th of June marked the beginning of a new US approach to the region. The approach described and suggested by the founder of Stratfor, George Friedman:

If Germany and Russia continue to move toward alignment, then the countries between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea – what used to be called the Inter-marium countries – become indispensable to the United States and its policy. Of the countries, Poland is the largest and the most strategically placed. It is also the one with both the most to lose and a keen awareness of that potential for loss. Membership in the European Union is one thing to the Poles, but being caught in a Russo-German entente is another. They and the other eastern Europeans are terrified of being drawn back into the spheres of influence of one or both of their historic enemies. (Friedman, 2011: 133)

During his speech in Warsaw on the 25th Anniversary of Freedom Day, President Obama answered the growing concerns of Poles and other Central and Eastern European nations:

I know that throughout history, the Polish people were abandoned by friends when you needed them most. So I've come to Warsaw today on behalf of the United States, on behalf of the NATO Alliance to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to Poland's security. Article 5 is clear an attack on one is an attack on all. And as allies, we have a solemn duty a binding treaty obligation to defend your territorial integrity. And we will. We stand together now and forever for your freedom is ours. Poland will never stand alone. But not just Poland, Estonia will never stand alone. Latvia will never stand alone. Lithuania will never stand alone. Romania will never stand alone. These are not just words. They're unbreakable commitments backed by the strongest alliance in the world and the armed forces of the United States of America, the most powerful military in history. (Remarks by President Obama)

On the 3rd of June, at a press conference with Polish President Bronisław Komorowski, Obama announced the new initiative called European Assurance Initiative and that he will ask Congress for a billion dollars for troops rotations, training programs, and exercises that would increase American military presence in Central and Eastern Europe:

We'll increase the number of American personnel Army and Air Force units continuously rotating through allied countries in Central and Eastern Europe. And we will be stepping up our partnerships with friends like Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia as they provide for their own defense. I'm calling on Congress

to approve up to \$1 billion to support this effort, which will be a powerful demonstration of America's unshakeable commitment to our NATO allies. (Remarks by President Obama)

At the same conference President Komorowski announced: "Poland intends to increase the defense budget of our armed forces. Poland is going to increase the funding of the modernization of the Polish armed forces up to the level of 2 percent of the GDP." In this context, it is important to remember that many NATO partners do not spend 2% of its GDP on military, which is required by the Alliance. The Polish president supported the American calls to increase defense spending by Europe. The Polish president also said that Poland does not recognize any limits on the stationing of military forces by NATO countries in Poland. In fact, Poland is making efforts to have more US and NATO forces in its territory for a long time. This is because Poland has had a bad experience with treaties and guarantees only on paper. Poles know from history that declarations and speeches without real help are the greatest danger for their independence. During World War II, Poland was abandoned by their allies who were supposed to start a counter-offensive in case Germany attacked Poland. On the 12th of September 1939, when Poles were still fighting, the Anglo-French Supreme War Council in Abbeville decided to leave Poland without providing any help. Because of this tragic history, Poles are very suspicious and cautious. Polish Foreign Minister, Radosław Sikorski is well aware of the concerns of his nation:

Russia is testing the strength of the international system set up by the United States after World War II. She tested it in Georgia, which was an implied ally of the United States. She has now tested it in Ukraine. And I don't think we can discount the possibility that she will test it again. And therefore our security guarantees have to be credible, which is to say physically enforceable. (Baker, 2014)

If Poland is to play the role of the leader of the region to block the new Russian imperialism it must be sure of the commitment of the rest of NATO alliance to support it and that is why American military presence in the region is so crucial.

The declarations and announcements made by the American and Polish presidents about solidarity and freedom are completely the opposite of what the president of Russia says. Starting from 2005 when, in his annual state of the nation address Russia's President Vladimir Putin has described the collapse of the Soviet Union

as “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe” of the twentieth century. The end of the Cold War, won by the United States and NATO followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union is seen in the Central and Eastern Europe as blessing and marks the end of dark days in the history of the nations that live between the Baltic and the Black Sea. In a Russia led by Putin it is a disaster that ought to be reversed. The nostalgia for the Soviet Union among the Russians is bigger than the West expected. “Over the past months Putin’s approval ratings skyrocketed and 65% of Russians believe that Crimea and eastern Ukraine are Russian territory (Barbashin, Thoburn, 2014: 98–99). Kremlin propaganda really does work on Russian people and there is strong support for Putin’s policy. After the so called referendum in Crimea, Russian president and representatives of breakaway Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol signed a treaty and formally became the subjects of Russian Federation. After the ceremony Putin said that: “The people of Crimea clearly and convincingly expressed their will – they want to be with Russia.”

For Putin, the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 was great tragedy which left tens of millions of Russians outside the Russian Federation. Whether Europe likes it or not Putin is using the very same arguments that Hitler used in the 1930s. Putin wants to rebuild the Russian empire and now he found a pretext to intervene abroad. If the west is not determined to stop it there is plenty of countries where Russians or Russian-speakers can look for help from the Motherland.

If the United States wants to preserve the world order it has to start with supporting its weakest and smallest allies because they will be the first targets of the powers that want to change the status quo. Walter Russell Mead is pointing out these powers: “In very different ways, with very different objectives, China, Iran and Russia are all pushing back against the political settlement of the Cold War. Rather than challenge the status quo head on, they seek to chip away at the norms and relationships that sustain it”(Mead, 2014: 56). Of course both China and Russia are still not strong enough to stand against the USA and its allies directly but by systematic contesting and provoking the USA to act in many places around the world they are eroding the world order.

The revisionist powers have such varied agendas and capabilities that none can provide the kind of systematic and global opposition that the Soviet Union did. As a result, Americans have been slow to realize that these states have undermined the Eurasian geopolitical order in ways that complicate US and European efforts to construct a post-historical, win-win world. (Mead, 2014: 58)

The liberal world order is still to come because right now it is being questioned by the old nineteenth century balance of power. Mead concludes:

Obama came into office planning to cut military spending and reduce the importance of foreign policy in American politics while strengthening the liberal world order. A little more than halfway through his presidency, he finds himself increasingly bogged down in exactly the kinds of geopolitical rivalries he had hoped to transcend. (Mead, 2014)

The latest crisis is not about the Crimea or part of Ukraine. It is about undermining the norms and international law and discredit the United States in order to reshape the post-Cold War world and change it. The collapse of the system established under the leadership of the US could lead to instability and old threats to countries in Central and Eastern Europe. This makes these countries strong supporters of US presence in their region. It will require increased efforts on the part of those countries, especially military spending and the modernization of their armies. They cannot expect the US to invest in their security if they do not show their determination and willingness to make sacrifices. Central and Eastern Europe and the US have common interests. Through American technological and military involvement it can help to create a stronger sphere of security in the region and balance growing Russian assertiveness.

The crisis in the Ukraine can open new chapter in the US foreign policy towards Central and Eastern Europe. The US can change its cautious attitude for increasing the military presence in the eastern border of NATO and this is not the outcome that Vladimir Putin wants to see. The last thing Russia wants is more US and NATO troops closer to its borders. Maybe Putin expected that his moves will go swiftly just like during the Georgian War but this time it is different and long term military and economic consequences might be much more dangerous for Russia.

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Anna Kobierecka

THE SWEDISH PERCEPTION OF EUROPEAN SECURITY IN THE LIGHT OF THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE

ABSTRACT: The events in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea, and the Russian attitude towards Ukraine show an evident change in European relations. The escalation of conflict between Russia and Ukraine however does not affect only those two countries, but also those in the nearest vicinity. Especially in Scandinavian and Nordic countries change in social ambience can be observed. The aim of this article is essentially to analyze Swedish reaction to the Ukrainian Crisis, the change in Swedish attitude towards international security systems, especially NATO, and Swedish perception of its national safety.

KEYWORDS: Ukrainian Crisis, Crimea annexation, Swedish security policy, Swedish foreign policy

The recent events in Ukraine have made the world hold its breath. It obviously highlighted the fact that current international relations are undergoing deep changes, and that Russian ambitions concerning creation of a big and influential state are reviving. What is more, neither Europe nor United States are prepared or have the determination to respond to such actions undertaken by Russia. The unrest in Ukraine is also a turning point for this country itself. It can be a fresh start in their way towards Europe and European Union.

The first attempt to liberate Ukraine from Russian influence was undertaken by Ukrainians at the turn of 2004 and 2005. Unfortunately, the so called "Orange Revolution" did not bring the intended results. After Victor Yanukovych took the presidency in 2010, it was predictable that Ukraine would be gravitating towards Russia rather than European Union. The decision to reject the agreement negotiated by Ukraine with the European Union was the source of domestic conflict in Ukraine, which resulted in Yanukovych's abandoning Ukraine, the change of government, and ultimately, losing

Crimea to Russia. The instability visible in Ukraine is a threat not only for its own security, but could also result in destabilization in Eastern Europe or even on the whole continent.

All these events drew the attention of Europe and United States. The reactions of various states differed substantially, mostly due to diversified interests of the states within the region of Eastern Europe and Russia. In this article, the main interest will be focused on the case of Sweden and its reaction to the Ukrainian crisis. The reaction of this particular state is relevant mostly due to its close vicinity to Russia and its concerns over eventual further Russian aggression. What is more, although being a traditionally neutral state, Sweden is active in the field of international relations. Therefore, in case of significant events such as those in Ukraine, Swedish political leaders express their standpoint instead of remaining uncommitted. Sweden recently has been considered as third in the European Union's ranking of most influential countries in foreign policy and is a leader especially in aid contributions and defending human rights in Russia and Ukraine. Sweden turned out to be the leader in assisting the European Commission in suppressing Russia in its aggressive policy towards Eastern European countries. Sweden is also ranked third together with Germany among most impactful European states (*Sweden equals Germany in EU foreign policy sway*). Questions arise then: what influences the state's standpoint in foreign policy? what shapes its views on certain crisis? what are the actual possibilities of state's reactions such as introducing sanctions and what motivates the state to undertake certain actions? Therefore, it is worth considering whether actions undertaken by third side states are successful or have symbolic overtone only. The main hypothesis to be investigated is that Ukrainian crisis may have influenced the Swedish perception of European security and its own security aspects, especially in the context of NATO full participation.

The article is divided in two fundamental parts. First one is dedicated to the Ukrainian crisis itself. The most significant stages of the conflict are highlighted in this part with respect of international reactions and engagement in solving the crisis. Second part is dedicated to the core analysis concerning Swedish reaction to Ukrainian and Crimean crisis. Certain stages in the Swedish standpoint towards Russian engagement are visible in the analysis as well as shift in perceiving European security and Swedish attitude towards NATO and the general condition of Swedish militaries and defense capacities.

The research was based on the analysis of media and press reports occurring together with current events in Ukraine and Russia. This resulted naturally in conducting the research with the use of an interpretativist paradigm which allowed to interpret statements of the most important Swedish, Ukrainian, Russian and other European politicians. This paradigm was especially useful for following reactions of policy makers and changes in attitude towards the Ukrainian events. Relying on Swedish and international press articles all the needed data has been collected and analyzed. This led to certain conclusions concerning the reasons for such Swedish reactions and the background and context of Swedish anxieties concerning Russian intentions in the field of international relations and possible future steps heading towards further annexations.

Ukrainian Crisis

The Ukrainian society, at least this living in the western part of the country, for some time is visibly striving for integration with the European Union, mostly with hope of better economic and political condition as well as the warranty of democracy and liberty. Ukrainians assess their potential cooperation with European Union as more profitable than further coordination with Russia hoping for cheap loans and stock supplies. Meanwhile, President Yanukovych was much closer to Russia in his political views and aspirations. Therefore, the assumption that this oppositional expectations could result in a clash was very credible. In fact, Yanukovych's rejection of signing the Ukraine – European Union agreement on trade and cooperation caused the outburst (Grytsenko). His decision was motivated by Russian threat of limited deliveries of oil, gas, and other supplies (*EU door still open for Ukraine: Swedish MEP*). What is more, Yanukovych was politically dependent on Russia, which is supporting him and his regime.

The events began in November 2013 when the signature of an association agreement between Ukraine and European Union turned out to be endangered. Documents were supposed to be signed during the Eastern Partnership Summit but the Ukrainian side decided to withdraw. That was the reason why the first protesters appeared in Maidan demanding that the Ukrainian president sign the agreement (Kryzys Ukraiński). The probable reason for withdrawing from signing the agreement were the presumed losses

in Ukrainian-Russian trade, which were higher than potential profits from economic cooperation with European Union. It was obvious that the Russian reaction to this would result in a reluctance towards a new Ukrainian policy aimed at Western and European Integration.

Protest grew in strength rapidly spreading around the country, however, the epicenter of demonstrations remained in Kiev. Protesters demanded the immediate signing of the agreement and for keeping Ukraine on the pro-European course. After several days of silence, Yanukovich finally gave a statement on the 26th of November, in which he insisted that Ukraine is still heading towards the European Union and that he would do nothing that would stay in conflict with the society's will and expectations (*Kryzys Ukraïnski*). The situation changed dramatically on the 30th of November, when the manifestation was dispersed by Ukrainian police. It was a turning point when pro-European manifestations changed into anti-governmental ones.

At first, the protesters refused to undertake negotiations with the authorities. All the proposals of organizing a round table addressed to the opposition were rejected until the 9th of December, when Vitali Klitschko expressed on behalf of his oppositional Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform party readiness to negotiate. Four days later the talks were terminated after Yanukovich turned down all oppositional demands, among others signing the Ukrainian-European Union agreement and government's resignation.

Further confrontations between the protesters and the police took place in January. Authorities took actions towards tightening regulations concerning the functioning of the opposition that exacerbated the situation. There were some suggesting the introduction of martial law, however, officially the government claimed there were no such plans. It was during this time that the first casualties were reported. As a result, the United States announced the introduction of sanctions with the annulment of some Ukrainian officials' visas. Russia was removed from the G8 as evidence of the disapproval of United States and its allies towards Crimea's annexation (Smale, Shear). Also, NATO decided to suspend its practical cooperation with Russia in protest against Russian behavior towards Crimea (Croft, Siebold). A proposition from the authorities to include opposition into the government was turned down as Yanukovich refused to answer to the protesters' demands concerning, among others, reinstalling the constitution and withdrawing severe anti-protest laws (Polityuk, Zinets). Although Klitschko called

protesters to suspend their fights with Berkut, aggression still remained between the two sides (Rozejm na Maidanie). At the end of January the protests remained intensive, and therefore, the authorities were forced to yield some points. Laws limiting the opposition's activity were canceled and amnesty was announced (Kryzys Ukraiński). The situation changed rapidly from ordinary protests concerning the refusal to sign the above mentioned agreement into a widespread protest against the regime.

At the beginning of February, the European Parliament passed a resolution concerning the situation in Ukraine. It exhorted to searching for political solution of the conflict and announced financial support for Ukraine. During the night of the 20th–21st of February, President Yanukovych negotiated with opposition with the assistance of Polish, German, and French foreign ministers (Nocne negocjacje. Opozycja na rozmowach z Janukowyczem). After several rounds of negotiations Yanukovych agreed to earlier presidential elections, the re-enactment of the 2004 constitution, and the creation of national unity government. After talks with Yanukovych, foreign negotiators started the meeting with the opposition (Po spotkaniu Janukowycza z szefami dyplomacji Polski, Francji i Niemiec czas na rozmowy z opozycją). Meanwhile, the unrest escalated when police decided to deploy snipers and use live ammunition against the protesters (Tranvor). According to official data, 82 people were killed and 622 were injured of which 405 were hospitalized. Yanukovych, who has been accused for being responsible for killing massive civilians tried to escape to Russia (Po spotkaniu Janukowycza z szefami dyplomacji Polski, Francji i Niemiec czas na rozmowy z opozycją). In spite of his flight from the country, Yanukovych in his official statement voiced his opinion that he still was the Ukrainian President and highlighted the illegal character of the Ukrainian political revolution and the presidential elections planned for the 25th of May (Janukovych twierdzi, że jest prezydentem).

After removing Yanukovych from his position new temporary government was created. One of the leaders of oppositional Batkivshchyna – Arsenij Yatsenyuk – was chosen to be the new prime minister and Andrii Deshchytsia as Minister of Foreign Affairs, who previously worked as an ambassador in Finland (Ukraina ma rząd. Jaceniuk premierem). Yatsenyuk was one of the Maidan Nezalezhnosti's leaders, who signed the agreement negotiated by Radosław Sikorski – Polish Foreign Minister and Frank Walter Steinmeier – German Foreign Minister (Wachnicki). The composition of the new

government has been announced in Maidan, which had a symbolic tone (Nowy rząd Ukrainy). That is the place, where all the events started and where ordinary people fought for European integration and their political rights. The new Ukrainian Prime Minister was controversial due to his past. He reached senior positions in Ukraine owing to his good relations with Ukrainian oligarchs. He worked for Victor Pinchuk, son in law of the former Ukrainian President – Leonid Kuczma. In spite of being in favor of Orange Revolution in 2004, many perceive him as being dependent on Ukrainian establishment (Wachnicki). On the other hand, it is hard to find a politician in Ukraine, who has no bonds with influential Ukrainian businessmen. Therefore, such a past should not be disqualifying. Yatsenyuk announced that in his policy, European integration and signing the Ukrainian-European Union agreement would be priorities. At the same time, he highlighted that after taking the post, he would concentrate on fighting the risk of bankruptcy by introducing severe financial cutbacks (Ukraina ma rząd).

At the end of February, the first signs of separatist tendencies in Crimea appeared. Approximately 60% of Crimea's population is of Russian origin, while only 25% are Ukrainians. The rest of the population are Tartars (Jest decyzja w sprawie referendum na Krymie). Vladimir Konstantynov, chair of Crimea's Highest Council, announced that secession is possible because of the unstable situation in Ukraine (Ukraina się rozpada? Krym chce się odłączyć). Armed forces representing the interests of the population of Crimea of Russian origin began to occupy main offices of Crimea's authorities and hoisted Russian flags. Afterwards, same troops have occupied civil airport in Sevastopol. It was presumed that those were Russian troops in spite of no clear markings on their uniforms. Due to the unstable situation, the Russian Federation Council gave its permission to use the Russian army in Crimea. The argument used to advocate such a decision based on the need to protect the health and life of Russian citizens in Crimea (Kryzys Ukraiński). Taking into consideration the disturbing information about the presence of possible Russian soldiers in Crimea, a group of OSCE observes was sent to Crimea in order to control the situation. However, they were stopped by unidentified men in military uniforms (*OSCE observes barred from entering Crimea: Polish minister*). Alongside the stoppage of OSCE observers, many cases of the harassment of journalists' were registered. Also, a Swedish journalist and his cameraman were arrested by Russian militaries, who according to the journalist's statement were aggressive and threatening. This

was just an example of such violations – many foreign journalists complained about being harassed by Russian militaries and having their equipment stolen or confiscated (*Swedish TV team freed by Russian military*).

At the same time, Interfax announced that the Russian Black Sea Navy gave the Ukrainian army in Crimea an ultimatum, demanding that they surrender by the 4th of March at 05:00 under threat of using Russian forces to solve the Crimean problem. One of the scenarios taken into consideration is that such Russian behavior was just a way of escalating the problem through a show of strength. The fact is that Russian troops in small groups had been attacking Ukrainian soldiers for some time and most of the official bureaus had already been under Russian control.

Crimea's parliament decided about organizing a referendum concerning the future of this autonomous territory. Initially, it was decided that it should take place on the 25th of May, but eventually was proceeded earlier – on the 16th of March. Tartar leader Refat Chubarov called for a boycott due to its illegal character (Brenner). Before conducting the referendum, a Crimean independence statement was essential. The document has been adopted at an extraordinary session of the parliament with the result of 78 out of 100 members in favor of separating Crimea from Ukraine. The next step – referendum – paved the way for joining Russia (*Crimea parliament declares independence from Ukraine ahead of referendum*). The document was signed by the Chairman of Crimean Parliament Vladimir Konstantynov and Chairman of Sevastopol City Council Yuriy Doynikov (*Crimea parliament declares independence from Ukraine ahead of referendum*). In the referendum more than 95% of voters expressed their support for Crimea's joining Russian Federation (*Crimea parliament declares independence from Ukraine ahead of referendum*). Officially, Crimea became part of Russian Federation on the 18th of March, when Vladimir Putin signed a bill absorbing this territory into Russia (*Ukraine crisis: Putin signs Russia-Crimea treaty*), but the Crimean parliament had voted to join the Russian Federation a day earlier (Morello, Englund). International reaction to this was a strong condemnation both in Europe and worldwide. A referendum was commented as illegal and against international law. Therefore, further sanctions were introduced, among others, travel bans and the freezing of assets.

There are broad consequences to Russia annexing Crimea. For Ukraine, it means losing a significant harbor in Sevastopol, military units, and touristic important region. It also means an open

conflict with Russia. On the other hand, economically and politically Ukraine can gain from this loss. Crimea was not a self-sufficient region and was dependent on Ukraine's support: for example, in 2013, Ukraine paid 17.7 million euro of subsidies (Kościński, Zasztowt). What is more, pro-European Ukraine will not be impeded by anti-European Crimea. For Russia, annexing Crimea meant destabilization in the region and resulted in imposing sanctions. Most of the former Soviet Union's satellite countries have a Russian minority within their societies. What is more, Russia has been widely condemned by the international community. Only a few states decided to recognize the annexation of Crimea – Afghanistan, Venezuela, and Syria (Wachnicki). The case of Ukraine and Crimea can be a warning for other countries that the same scenario can also apply to them. One of the repercussions of annexing Ukrainian territory by Russia is also the suspension of both military and civilian cooperation with Russia within NATO. The decision was made on the 1st of April at the level of foreign ministers (*NATO stops military and civilian cooperation with Russia – NATO Council says*). After Crimea, the unrest has spread into other Ukrainian regions. The eastern territories are mainly skeptical towards European integration and European Union itself. On the other hand, their bonds with Russia are much stronger.

Swedish Reaction in Media – Shift in European Security Perception

Sweden's reaction to the events in Ukraine can be divided into several stages. The first comments occurred after the Ukrainian rejection of the agreement with the EU. The second phase concerned the period of social unrest. The third phase began after Yanukovich's leaving the country when it seemed that the crisis was over. The last one began after occurrence of separatist tendencies in Crimea.

Swedish reaction to the Ukrainian crisis occurred immediately after the first signals concerning the protests on the streets. In December 2013, when social unrest was slowly spreading, the Swedish Member of European Parliament Cecilia Wikström said that Europe cannot stay passive as being democracy's and citizens' rights guarantor (*EU door still open for Ukraine: Swedish MEP*). She also highlighted the fact, that for European states the support gained

from the EU together with all the economic, educational and social benefits is something obvious and undeniable. Ukrainian society wants the same. Therefore, the role of Europe is to provide further enlargements and extending the EU's support on less developed countries (*EU door still open for Ukraine: Swedish MEP*). The support expressed by Sweden and its politicians is not surprising, given the fact that this country is famous for respecting its human and citizens' rights as well as democratic principles in politics.

Until 22nd of February, when Yanukovych was removed from power by the Ukrainian parliament, the unrest was unceasing. Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt many times in his official statements to the media accentuated that the Yanukovych's regime is responsible for all the violence and its victims (*Sweden pins violence on Ukrainian regime*). The same sentiment was repeated in February, just before Yanukovych's deposition. Carl Bildt pointed out that the Ukrainian parliament must be united in combating violence and repression towards civilians. At the same time, the Swedish Foreign Minister reaffirmed his total support for sanctions against the Ukrainian regime (*Ukrainian president has blood on his hands: Bildt*). Together with American sanctions, Sweden also voiced its disapproval for Russian behavior. In 2013, Renault Trucks Defense, owned by Swedish truck manufacturer Volvo, signed a contract with Russian Uralvagonzavod concerning development of a combat vehicle. However, the project was suspended as a result of the Russian annexation of Crimea (*Volvo halts Russia tank plan over Ukraine crisis*).

At the same time, the Swedish prime minister emphasized that the Ukrainian situation was mostly a case of political and financial crisis. He expressed his worries concerning corruption and financial condition of Ukraine. Therefore, the role of Europe is to support Ukraine especially in those fields, while NATO should not be that much engaged in solving the crisis (*Crimea not question for NATO: Sweden*). What is more, Swedish politicians unequivocally stated that Russian engagement in Crimea and their actions heading towards detaching the peninsula from Ukraine was an evident violation of international law and basic European principles of international security. The most demonstrable evidence for Russian intervention in Crimea was voting in the Duma for deploying its troops there in case of such a necessity. As a way of expressing Swedish support for Ukraine, Carl Bildt joined other European foreign ministers at the beginning of March to discuss the crisis (*Bildt: Russia is breaking the law in Ukraine*).

In spite of all positive attitude among Swedish politicians towards Ukraine, one unfortunate statement has been noticed by press. During an official speech on 2nd of March, the Swedish prime minister said that Russian involvement in Crimea could be understood due to the Russian majority living in this region. His statement caused confusion in the Swedish media and forced the Swedish prime minister to explain himself in *Godmorrön Sverige* TV show (*Swedish PM: Russian worries understandable*). The probable explanation for such an unfortunate statement is taking prime minister's words out of context, which is the most frequent excuse for political incorrectness.

In March 2014, Russians started their large scale Baltic Sea training, which concentrated over 3,500 servicemen of Russian Baltic Fleet in Kaliningrad (*Sweden plays down Russian Baltic operation*). The reception of such Russian activity widely distressed Europe. Organizing fleet training in the Baltic Sea has been perceived as a demonstration of power and potential Russian aggression in the case of more determined European reaction to Russian-Ukrainian relations. A Swedish expert at the Swedish Defense Research Agency claimed that the whole operation has been planned in advance and it is probable that has nothing in common with current Ukrainian crisis (*Sweden plays down Russian Baltic operation*). On the other hand, it is undeniable that such training can be used as a mean of propaganda and intimidation of the opponents. Such behavior is also thought as typical for the former Soviet Union, which was treating the case of security as a zero sum game.

Swedish reaction to Russian Baltic trainings, in spite of suggestions that they should not be connected to the Ukrainian crisis, was explicit. Extra air defense had been sent to the island of Gotland. Swedish Armed Forces' spokesman Göran Mårtensson highlighted that it was the state's duty to send aircrafts to protect Swedish territory and that constant monitoring of the situation in Ukraine was being conducted (*Sweden sends jets to Baltic after Russian move*). At the same time, the situation in Ukraine inspired a discussion among Swedish politicians concerning the condition of the Swedish army, its defense strategy, and army reforms. Armed Forces Supreme Commander Sverker Göransson claimed that the Swedish current strategy for building a professional army was successful and did not need any improvements. On the other hand, Jan Björklund the Swedish Deputy Prime Minister outlined that Sweden should be able to defend Götland island and therefore needs to rethink its own defense strategy (*Swedish military rejects call for new*

doctrine). Sweden plainly seems to be worried due to Russian intentions towards Ukraine. Sweden fears potential Russian aggression in ex-Soviet states – Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Götland Island as an important strategic location may become a tidbit for Russia. The entire situation also exhorts Swedish politicians to reconsider the idea of becoming a NATO member, not only partner.

In accordance to Swedish concerns, their troops joined NATO training exercise in the vicinity to Russian border. 1,400 Swedish soldiers took part in the training in the northern parts of Norway. Sweden perceives the training as a great opportunity to improve defense, especially in the light of the Crimean situation. Swedish colonel Jan Mörtberg said that no one expected Russia to enter Crimea, therefore it is possible that it will go further to the Baltic States (*Swedes train with NATO on Russian border*). Although training was planned earlier, similarly to Russian training in the Baltic Sea, it can be perceived as a deterrence tool which may cool Russian intentions.

Alongside the military training exercises, both Russian and NATO's, Crimea was prepared with the final date decided on the 16th of March. The general international response was explicit – the voting would be considered illegal. Swedish foreign minister – Carl Bildt also stated that referendum conducted under the threat of using violence and presence of Russian troops cannot be considered as fair and consistent with Ukrainian or international law (*Bildt: Crimea referendum illegal whatever result*). Russian political influence on the Crimean crisis and conducting the referendum were obvious and caused both international confusion and condemnation. Unfortunately, due to economic and trade links between states, there was no decided and explicit response to Russian behavior. The introduced sanctions and conducted diplomatic talks did not manage to restrain Russia from meddling with the Ukrainian internal situation. Together with the condemnation of Russian behavior, the Swedish prime minister expressed his support for potential Ukrainian use of force against Russian troops and separatists in order to restore peace. What is more, he ensured that Sweden in alike situation would use all measures to ease the unrest (*Sweden backs Ukraine to repel militias*).

After the referendum in which Crimea's population decided on separating from Ukraine and joining Russia, Sweden pledged a will to support financially new and democratic authorities in Kiev. Sweden together with Nordic and Baltic States expressed their readiness to help Ukraine. Anders Borg, Minister of Finance,

claimed that not only financial help is important, but it should also be supported with political reforms. The social unrest resulted in an economic crisis. In order to stabilize Ukrainian economy, Ukraine might need even up to \$30–35 billion for all the required reforms and transformations (*Sweden pledges urgent loans to Ukraine; Sweden backs bilateral aid to Ukraine*). The Swedish prime minister together with other politicians hoped that their readiness to provide help for Ukraine would encourage other countries to do the same. It is characteristic for Sweden that in such situations ruling parties as well as oppositional ones speak with a united voice.

The crisis in Crimea results not only in mobilizing European countries in the context of political and financial support. Most of the countries feel the threat for international peace, and therefore most of them mobilize their forces and demonstrate readiness of undertaking adequate steps. A survey in Finland had been conducted concerning creating military union between Sweden and Finland. The union would assume the possibility of mobilizing armed forces of both countries in case of a threat or crisis situation. Over 50% of Finnish population supported such an idea, which shows that Europe recognizes the possible Russian threat (*Majority of Finns back Swedish military union*). What is more, neither Sweden nor Finland are NATO members and therefore must undertake actions in order to care for their interests and safety. Taking into consideration poor Swedish facilities to defend themselves, participation in collective defense organization becomes a more frequent subject in political discourse.

Sweden decided to take the role of an initiator in international relations. Sweden would like to inspire other nations and politicians to undertake certain actions aimed at refraining Russia. After one of the foreign ministers' meeting, Carl Bildt outlined that all the states should stay united in being firm on international law and all the rules, which Russia had violated explicitly by annexing Crimea (*Bildt on Putin: What else is in his heart?*). Sweden and the international community fear the possible furthering of Russian claims. Taking into consideration later probable Russian support for separatists in eastern Ukraine those fears do not seem to be unfounded. The Swedish security service Säpo stated that Russia has intensified its espionage activity in Sweden and probably is including war preparations. More evidence of Russia's increased interest in Sweden has been conducted lately with simulated flight attacks on Swedish targets and attempts to recruit spies. This information was presented in the Säpo annual intelligence assessment

(*Russian plans for war on Sweden cause concern*). Although the plans of a Russian attack on Sweden seem to be unlikely, it is not absolutely out of the question.

Sweden is becoming increasingly interested in joining NATO. Almost 30% of Swedes would support joining this organization in comparison to only 17% in 2013 (*More Swedes want to join NATO*). The survey had been conducted between October and December 2013 when the crisis in Ukraine was not that intense yet, however the situation undoubtedly could have an impact on strengthening such attitude among Swedes. What is more, the current coalition announced that in case of winning in the upcoming elections more funds would be allocated to the military. The budget would be increased by 5 billion kronor annually starting in 2015 (*Sweden to beef up air force to counter Russia*). This decision is a change in the contemporary Swedish defense policy. 15 years ago the authorities decided on decreasing the military budget as no threat to Sweden had been recognized. Sweden as a neutral country did not see a need to foster its defense capabilities before, but the Ukrainian crisis showed that Sweden should enhance its defense capabilities bearing in mind the changing character of possible conflicts. In spite of taking precise steps aimed at ensuring Sweden's safety, as for example signals concerning the increase in military expenses, and reacting to Russia's behavior in relations with Ukraine, the ruling coalition reached lowest level of voters support since its creation in 2004, which seems to be surprising (*Government hits record low in voter support*).

Conclusions

The Ukrainian crisis showed that in fact we do not live in safe and stable times. International relations seem to be unpredictable and not always rational. It also showed discord in certain states' policies. The reactions of the international society seemed to be identical – Russian assistance for Ukrainian separatists has been condemned. But in fact the actual reactions differed substantially. The United States can be considered as most determined and firm in their reaction by applying sanctions on Russia. Mostly the reason for this is poor economic ties with Russia. The commerce between those two states is much less intense than between Germany or United Kingdom and Russia. Therefore, European countries decided

on taking a rather moderate attitude. Of course, some sanctions were introduced, however no categorical or forceful actions had been undertaken. It could even be said that politics and threats of undertaking more determined actions against Russia were only theater.

The Swedish reaction to the Ukrainian crisis was immediate. Similar to other western countries, Sweden condemned Russia and voiced its support for Ukrainian protesters. Apart from that, Sweden was one of the countries that were the first to propose diplomatic and financial support. What is more, it took action in the European Union arena to motivate other member countries to do the same. Swedish activity in this field is understandable. First of all, Sweden is in quite close vicinity to Russia. What is more, Swedish neighbors – especially the Baltic States stay in natural and historical Russian interest zone. Therefore, the fear of further Russian claims does not lack justification. Russia's behavior is an expression of power and strength in a Soviet style. It can mean that Russia will no longer respect international law or customs and will be marching further in their path towards regaining its old influential position of a world power state. Swedish interest in the Ukrainian situation and in deterring Russia is visible due to their poor military condition. Sweden would not be able to protect themselves only relying on their own army. For the same reason, Sweden would not be able to undertake any more determined actions against Russia. What is more, Sweden is not a NATO member and therefore, according to international regulations other countries, would not be obliged to protect it in case of aggression. Ukrainian crisis boosted the discussion concerning joining this organization and also changed the general social attitude towards this idea. In spite of the fact that the situation is becoming more stable, at least in terms of European ground, Sweden and other countries should stay alert. They have to take into consideration the scenario where international peace that lasts in Europe since the end of World War II may be breached.

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**“CANADA WILL NOT STAND IDLY BY ...”:
UKRAINE IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF CANADA**

ABSTRACT: Ukraine has always had a special place in Canadian foreign policy. Currently, Canada is deeply engaged in supporting Ukraine to restore political and economic stability and to implement democratic reforms. The Government in Ottawa has condemned Russian aggressive policy and the illegal military occupation of Crimea and has taken a variety of steps and initiatives since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine in 2014 including imposing sanctions, economic and military assistance, and supporting of NATO measures.

KEYWORDS: Ukraine, Canada, Canada-Ukraine relations, Canada's support for Ukraine, Canadian foreign policy, Canada-Poland relations

Introduction

The relations between Canada and Europe have always been very close due to demographic, cultural and language ties. Most events on the Old Continent had implications for Canada as Europe constituted part of Canadian political space. The conclusion of negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) by Canadian and EU leaders in 2014, made the link even better. Furthermore, the complicated situation in Eastern Europe, in regard to the Ukrainian crisis has made recent months exceptionally challenging for transatlantic relations and have deeply engaged Ottawa in European issues.

The aim of this article is to characterize and analyze the relations between Canada and Ukraine in recent years, focusing particularly on the situation in 2014. As more than 1 million people of

Ukrainian roots live in Canada, the territorial sovereignty and freedom of Ukraine is fundamental not only for international security in Ottawa's understanding, but for other reasons, including political and humanitarian, as well.

Canada and Ukraine – Historical Perspective

Ukraine has had a special place in Canadian foreign policy since it became an independent state in 1991. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Canada recognized Ukraine's independence as the first western country, the second after Poland, and the diplomatic relations between Ottawa and Kiev were established in 1992. Then, the Embassy of Canada in the capital of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Embassy in Ottawa were opened.

What makes the bilateral relations very close is the strong Ukrainian-Canadian community and historic ties forged through a few waves of Ukrainian migration to Canada. The community has its representatives formed in the Ukrainian Canadian Congress which "promotes linkages with Ukraine and identifies and addresses the needs of the Ukrainian community in Canada to ensure its continued existence and development for the enhancement of Canada's socio-cultural fabric" (*Ukrainian Canadian Congress. Web*). According to the 2011 Census of Population of Canada more than 1.25 million people of Ukrainian origins live in Canada what make them one of the largest ethnic groups there and the third largest Ukrainian community after Ukraine and Russia.¹

Political Relations

The first agreement of great importance, which named the relations as "Special Partnership," is the Joint Declaration on Special Partnership between Canada and Ukraine signed on 31st March 1994, renewed twice: in 2001 and 2008. The undersigned, among others, declared their intent to:

¹ 2011 Census. Statistics Canada. Government of Canada. Web. 20 January 2015. <<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/dt-td/Rpeng.cfm?TABID=2&LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GID=118296&GK=0&GRP=0&PID=105396&PRID=0&PTYPE=105277&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Temporal=2013&THEME=95&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=&D1=0&D2=0&D3=0&D4=0&D5=0&D6=0>>.

- develop their relations as friendly states based on special partnership
- develop close bilateral relations, especially in politics, economy, security, science, culture and environmental protection, based on the principles of equality and mutual benefit
- collaborate in the area of preventive diplomacy within the context of the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and its Cooperation Forum on Security Issues, as well as in the framework of NATO’s “Partnership for Peace” program
- favor international efforts aimed at controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction and achieving the nuclear disarmament of Ukraine under effective international supervision and verification
- continue mutually beneficial economic cooperation, including trade, based on reciprocity, non-discrimination and mutual benefit (*Joint Declaration on Special Partnership between Canada and Ukraine*).

Canada and Ukraine have signed various agreements and declarations in such areas as trade, technical development, defence, and mutual legal assistance. On 24th September 2009, the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs and his Ukrainian counterpart signed the Road Map of Priorities for Canada-Ukraine Relations which set out the priority areas for bilateral cooperation. This document announced future cooperation based on following principles:

- The friendship between the two countries stems from mutual understanding and the shared belief that democracy is the chief guarantor of security, prosperity and freedom, and that democracy must rest upon the rule of law and be supported by good governance.
- Cooperation on defence and security is a cornerstone to respond effectively to challenges to peace and security.
- Support for each other’s sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, including the right of every country to choose freely its own destiny in domestic and foreign policies, is a foundation of our bilateral relations.
- Wide-ranging cooperation between Canada and Ukraine contributes to the prosperity, well-being and security of the Euro-Atlantic area (*Government of Canada. Ukraine.gc.ca. Web*).

Since 1991, Canada has made significant effort in supporting not only Ukraine’s democratic transformation and political and economic reforms, but also its integration into international

institutions and structures (including Euro-Atlantic ones). It has been exceptionally noticeable since the Orange Revolution of December 2004 as Canadian election observers were sent to Ukraine to monitor and ensure free presidential elections in 2004 and 2010, and parliamentary elections in 2006 and 2007. The Canadian observation missions were sponsored by the Government in Ottawa through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development and mounted by CANADEM, non-profit agency working with the United Nations and other international partners due to advancing international peace and security (*CANADEM. Canada's Civilian Reserve. Web*). Last missions to observe Ukrainian parliamentary elections were named Mission Canada 2012 and Mission Canada 2013 and were reported in detail on the official website (*Ukraine Election. Mission Canada. Web*). In 2014, the Canadian experts of CANADEM joined the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Observation Mission of 26th October 2014 parliamentary elections in Ukraine.

Both countries work together in international organizations, such as the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and La Francophonie. Ukraine's accession to the World Trade Organization in May 2008 was warmly welcomed by Canada. Ottawa strongly supports the Ukrainians on their way to NATO membership and has provided language, staff officers, and peacekeeping training for Ukrainian military and civilian personnel within the NATO-Ukraine Distinctive Partnership.²

Commercial Relations

On the map of Priority Markets prepared within Canada's Global Markets Action Plan, Ukraine is marked as an emerging market with specific opportunities for Canadian business. Following statistics data, in 2013, the value of bilateral trade between Canada and Ukraine was over \$322 million. Canadian exports to Ukraine totalled \$210 million and among exported goods are mineral fuels and oils, fish and seafood, pharmaceuticals, meat, and machinery. In the same year, Canada's merchandise imports from Ukraine totalled \$112 million and included mineral fuels and oils, iron and

² See more: Embassy of Ukraine to Canada. Web. 22 January 2015. <<http://canada.mfa.gov.ua/en/about-ukraine/euroatlantic-cooperation/ukraine-nato>>.

steel products, fertilizers, and woven apparel (Government of Canada. Ukraine.gc.ca. Web).

According to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada official website, the value of Canadian investment in Ukraine is “commercially sensitive information” and the information on the value of Ukrainian investment in Canada is “not available” (*Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. Government of Canada. Web*). Ukraine is still a promising market and there is hope to expand bilateral commercial relations. In 1994, Canada and Ukraine signed the Agreement for the Promotion and Protection of Investments, the Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation in 1996 and the Agreement on Air Transport in 1999, renewed in 2014.

Furthermore, on 22nd September 2009, the launch of talks between Canada and Ukraine on free trade agreement was announced, which would benefit some Canadian economy sectors, and would provide the Eastern partner with better access to the Canadian market as a way to support Ukraine’s economic reforms. After five rounds of negotiations held between 2010 and 2012, on 26th January 2015, in Kiev, the Minister of International Trade of Canada Ed Fast and his Ukrainian counterpart, Aivaras Abromavičius, announced that the talks were renewed and both parties are “actively engaged in negotiations toward concluding a free trade agreement as soon as possible” (qtd. in: *Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. Government of Canada. Web*).

Canada’s Support for Ukraine in the Face of Crisis of 2014

It is a difficult task to analyze in detail all the steps and initiatives which Ottawa has taken since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine. Canada is deeply engaged in supporting Ukraine to restore political and economic stability and to implement democratic reforms. The Canadian government condemned Russian aggressive policy and the illegal military occupation of Crimea.

Sanctions

After Russia was isolated politically by its expulsion from the G-8 (the G-7 Summit took place in Brussels in June 2014 instead of the G-8 Summit in Sochi), other reactions to the situation in

Ukraine have included the imposition of economic sanctions and travel bans against Russian and Ukrainian individuals responsible for the ongoing crisis. In the spring and summer 2014, Canada, in close coordination with partners in the United States and Europe, introduced economic sanctions against a broad range of entities of various Russian sectors such as arms, energy, and finance (Russian banks). New export restrictions on technologies used in Russia's oil exploration and extractive sector were announced on December 19, 2014 ("Gazeta Wyborcza", 19th December 2014). All those measures caused economic instability in Russia, including high interest rates and a sharp drop in the value of the ruble, giving Western leaders hope that the Russians soon would demand a shift in foreign policy of the Kremlin. As Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, John Baird said:

Russians are paying for their leader's reckless aggression...The ruble's dive should be enough to give President Putin and his backers pause. If he wants to turn his economy around, he must pull out of Ukraine and he must return Crimea, and he must respect the international order that makes us a family of nations. (qtd. in: "The Globe and Mail," December 19, 2014)

Canada`s Commitment to NATO

Canada has played an important role in the Alliance since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine. Ottawa is providing reassurance to NATO members in Central and Eastern Europe by deploying Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) units and staff to promote security and stability in that region. After Russia's aggression against Ukraine Canada suspended all planned actions together with the Russian military. Twenty Canadian operational planners have been sent to NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Belgium to plan functions and monitor events in Eastern Europe. In May 2014, Canada deployed six CF-18 Hornet fighter aircrafts together with 200 support staff to Campia Turzii, Romania to conduct multinational training exercises as part of Canada's commitment to its NATO Allies (*NATO. Allied Command Operations.Web*).

In the same month, 50 Canadian soldiers were sent to Poland to conduct training together with the American and Polish allies and, in June, 125 Canadian soldiers participated in Saber Strike 2014, an exercise led by the USA in Poland and the Baltic Republics. In October 2014, HMCS *Toronto* joined Reassurance NATO

Operation to conduct training exercises and force integration activities in the Eastern Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea region. Of great importance is the fact that Canada is providing \$1 million to the NATO Trust Funds to support Ukraine in modernizing its armed forces. What is more, the NATO Centers of Excellence: Cyber Security, Energy Security, and Strategic Communications were provided with \$3 million (\$1 million for each) from Canada to help deter Russian operations in Eastern Europe (*Prime Minister of Canada. Stephen Harper. Web*).

Canada’s Direct Support for Ukraine

Ottawa strongly supports Ukraine’s efforts to stabilize its economy and promote economic and social development. During the first official visit to Canada of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, on 17th September 2014, the agreement on the provision of Canada’s \$200 million loan to Ukraine to promote economic and financial reforms was reached. Additionally, Prime Minister Harper declared \$3 million to support international partners in providing medical attention, food, safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter, emergency child protection, and emergency response and preparedness to help the Ukrainians living in areas affected by violence (*Prime Minister of Canada. Stephen Harper. Web*). It is also worth mentioning that in July 2014, the Minister of International Trade Ed Fast announced \$19.6 million of Canadian support for a seven year project Horticultural Business Development to train horticultural farmers to improve agricultural practices and help to develop Ukraine’s agricultural sector (*Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. Government of Canada. Web*).

Beyond its actions within NATO, Canada provides military assistance to support the Ukrainian Armed Forces. In August 2014, non-lethal military supplies were sent to Ukraine, such as: helmets, ballistic eyewear, protective vests, first aid kits, tents, and sleeping bags (“The Globe and Mail,” August 7, 2014). In November 2014, Canada donated further military gear which included tactical communications systems, ordnance-disposal equipment, tactical medical kits as well as winter coats and boots. On 8th December 2014, during his official visit in Kiev, the Canadian Minister of National

Defense Rob Nicholson, announced that Canada would send soldiers to Ukraine to train the military police there (“National Post”, December 8, 2014).

Canada’s cooperation with Poland

Due to the country’s geopolitical location, the situation in Ukraine is very important for Poland and its security. Facing the crisis in Ukraine, Canada and Poland began to cooperate closely and the good bilateral relations became even better. In 2014, the highest Canadian officials visited Poland: Prime Minister Stephen Harper in June, Governor General David Lloyd Johnston in October, the Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird in April and the Minister of National Defense Rob Nicholson in December. Most of the official statements during those visits concerned the situation in Ukraine and the perspectives of Polish-Canadian cooperation towards the events in the region. In this context, the fact of great importance is the Canada-Poland Statement of Principles for Coordinated Engagement on Ukraine, signed by John Baird and his Polish counterpart, Radosław Sikorski. This agreement is to guide cooperation in Canadian and Polish efforts to support democracy, human rights, economic growth, and the rule of law in Ukraine. Moreover, Baird declared that Canada would contribute \$9.2 million to joint Canadian and Polish projects that strengthen democratic development in Ukraine such as the Poland-Canada Democracy Support Program for Ukraine for the years 2014–2017 which will work with Solidarity Fund, and Support for Grassroots Democracy project of the European Endowment for Democracy for the years 2014–2019 (*Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. Government of Canada. Web*). Baird stressed that “Canada and Poland stand shoulder to shoulder in the face of Russia’s cynical aggression” and emphasized the importance of the partnership with Poland “on a coordinated approach in support of Ukraine’s future as a sovereign, unified and prosperous European state, free of Russian interference and threats” (qtd. in: “Gazeta Wyborcza”, April 24, 2014). After a call for NATO to establish a greater presence in Eastern Europe by the Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk during the meeting with Stephen Harper on 4th June 2014, the Canadian Prime Minister announced “the increased military cooperation between Poland and Canada”

what meant his country’s plans to send more soldiers to that region what would be executed e.g. in Saber Strike 2014 joint exercise in June (*Prime Minister of Canada. Stephen Harper. Web*).

Symbolic Gestures and Demonstrations of Support

In spite of all political, military, and economic measures mentioned above, of great importance are diplomatic and moral manifestations of support for Ukraine. The high-level meetings, which have taken place on a regular basis since 1992, in 2014 had an exceptional meaning. The first western official who visited Kiev in February 2014 and met with Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk and his new government was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada John Baird. The Canadian Minister of International Trade Ed Fast, who had led a trade and development mission to Ukraine in July 2014, came back to Kiev in January 2015 to discuss the progress of negotiations on a free trade agreement. In December 2014, Rob Nicholson the Minister of National Defense travelled to Ukraine to declare the intentions of the Government in Ottawa to continue bilateral cooperation to strengthen Ukrainian security and defense forces (*Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. Web*).

In March 2014, Stephen Harper was the first G-7 leader who visited Ukraine after the annexation of Crimea. On 7th June 2014 Prime Minister of Canada, as the first foreign leader, met bilaterally with Petro Poroshenko, the new President of Ukraine and attended his swearing-in ceremony (*Prime Minister of Canada. Stephen Harper. Web*). It was a symbolic moment which demonstrated Canada’s ongoing support for the Eastern partner. It reminds the inauguration of President Victor Yushchenko in 2005, when Governor General Adrienne Clarkson represented Canada at the ceremony sitting next to the President’s wife and wearing an orange scarf – the symbol of the Orange Revolution (“The Ukrainian Weekly” Archive. Web). On 17th September 2014 President Poroshenko visited Ottawa as his first non-European official trip where he discussed economic and social development promotion and a future cooperation with the members of Canadian government and gave a speech for both Houses of Canadian Parliament (*Parliament of Canada. Web*). Afterwards, he travelled to Washington, DC.

Furthermore, at 15th November 2014, at the G-20 Summit in Brisbane, Australia, Prime Minister Stephen Harper spoke his

famous words to Russian President Vladimir Putin: "Well I guess I'll shake your hand, but I only have one thing to say to you: you need to get out of Ukraine" (qtd. in: "The Guardian," November 15, 2014). Putin was to say that it was not possible as "we are not there" (qtd. in: PAP. Polska Agencja Prasowa, November 16, 2014; "Polska. The Times," November 17, 2014). Harper's "get out of Ukraine" was reported by most press agencies and news networks and gave him a label of a politician who was brave enough to express the aversion toward Putin shared by many leaders.

Conclusions

It is clear that Canada is going to intensify its actions if the Kremlin would not change its aggressive policy. As Stephen Harper stated in an opinion-editorial, entitled "Our duty is to stand firm in the face of Russian aggression," published in "The Globe and Mail" on July 25, 2014: "Russia's aggressive militarism and expansionism are a threat to more than just Ukraine; they are a threat to Europe, to the rule of law and to the values that bind Western nations. Canada will not stand idly by in the face of this threat" ("The Globe and Mail," July 25, 2014). Canada is the leader among the international supporters of Ukraine in its efforts to restore stability and implement necessary democratic and economic reforms. In the face of Russian aggressive policy, Ottawa has taken several steps to support the Ukrainian nation including imposing sanctions, and economic and military assistance. Supporting NATO measures regarding the crisis in Ukraine seems to be a kind of continuation of Canada's traditional peace keeping policy. In recent months, the foreign policy run by the Government in Ottawa has been more determined than it used to be some years ago. Currently, the situation in Eastern Europe is extremely important for Canada and Prime Minister Stephen Harper declares even deeper engagement of his country to restore stability and security in the region.

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Anna Patecka-Frauenfelder

**POLISH AND GERMAN PRESS REPORTS
ON COOPERATION BETWEEN THE FOREIGN MINISTERS
OF BOTH COUNTRIES IN RESOLVING THE CONFLICT
IN UKRAINE (FEBRUARY–JUNE 2014)**

ABSTRACT: Polish-German relations in the first half of 2014 were dominated by the Ukraine crisis. This study is an attempt to answer the question of how Polish and German press assessed the cooperation of both countries in resolving the conflict in Ukraine; to what extent the most widely read magazines associated themselves with the decisions of their politicians and the feelings of their own societies and how much understanding they showed for the arguments of their EU partner. The analysis focuses on the unprecedented mission of the Weimar Triangle foreign ministers to Ukraine in February 2014, which led to an agreement between the Ukrainian opposition and President Viktor Yanukovich. A turning point was the visit paid by Radoslaw Sikorski and Frank-Walter Steinmeier to St. Petersburg in June 2014. The next meetings agreed on by EU partners were held without inviting the Polish partner. In view of the speed of events in the selected time interval, the articles subjected to analysis were taken from the most widely read online editions of national daily newspapers in Poland and Germany.

KEYWORDS: Polish-German relations, Polish and German press, Weimar Triangle, crisis in Ukraine, Ukrainian-Russian conflict

Polish-German relations in the first half of 2014 were dominated by the crisis in Ukraine. Ukraine's rejection of the association agreement with the European Union (November 2013), the most serious anti-government grass-roots protests since 2004, the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and finally, the Ukrainian-Russian conflict proved to be the beginning of a sea change on the European continent. At the end of 2013, elections to the Bundestag took place in Germany, from which emerged a new coalition government, composed of the two largest parties

– the SPD (Social Democratic Party) and the CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union). The main leaders of this Grand Coalition declared their willingness to boost and standardize the European Neighbourhood Policy, in which the association agreement would continue to play a central role. Declarations by the leading politicians suggested a tightening of Polish-German cooperation within the Union. In the coalition agreement signed in December 2013, the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats assured Poland of their intention to cooperate closely on European and Atlantic integration and stressed not only that Poland, alongside France, was of priority importance for German foreign policy, but also pointed to their immediate eastern neighbour as an entity that would have a decisive influence on the shape of EU policy towards Russia. In his inaugural speech delivered on December 17th 2013, Germany's new Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier criticized Russia for exerting pressure on Ukraine and questioned the European Union's policy towards Russia, which ignored Ukraine's strong dependence on Russia (Fix, Gawrich, 2014: 2). Such declarations met the expectations of Poland, whose ambition was to act as Eastern European advocate and which conducted an active Eastern policy within the EU. Gaining the support of Germany was perceived as key to the success of the Community's initiatives (Patecka-Frauenfelder, 2014: 110–132).

The beginning of 2014 provided hopes for the optimistic scenario of a common eastern policy among EU partners. An example of cooperation at the highest level was the mission of foreign ministers from the Weimar Triangle to Kiev and the negotiations that concluded with an agreement between the Ukrainian authorities and the Euromaidan democratic forces in February 2014 (Łada, 2014). Another joint initiative of the Polish and German foreign ministers in June 2014, using the term the Kaliningrad Triangle invented that same year, proved ineffective in building an agreement with Russia. From the German point of view, the Normandy format, agreed upon in June 2014 as an interim solution among representatives of EU states and heads of governments, proved to be more 'pragmatic' (Buras, 2014–2015, pp. 15–17). The following article will attempt to answer the question of how the Polish and German press assessed the cooperation between foreign ministers in resolving the conflict in Ukraine. While the most widely read magazines associated themselves with the decisions of their politicians and the feelings of their own societies and showed understanding for the arguments of their EU partner, in the article analysis was limited to such events as Poland's and Germany's participation in the

negotiations between the opposition and Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich and the June visit of Radosław Sikorski and Frank-Walter Steinmeier to St. Petersburg and an attempt has been made to analyze the profiles of ministers in the press of the other country. The article does not include the contribution of Donald Tusk's broad diplomatic offensive during this period, (in late January and early February the Polish Prime Minister in the course of a few days met with the heads of the European Commission and the European Parliament, the French President, the German Chancellor, the Prime Ministers of the UK, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary in order to establish a common EU position on the Ukraine crisis) and Angela Merkel (telephone diplomacy, and numerous talks, primarily with the Russian President). No analysis was made of the comparisons in the Polish and German press in connection with the attitude of the German chancellor and the German foreign minister to the crisis in Ukraine.

In view of the dynamics of the situation in the selected time period, a qualitative analysis has been conducted of articles selected from the most widely read online editions of national dailies in Poland and Germany. Research material was provided by *Gazeta Wyborcza* (hereafter referred to as *GW*), *Rzeczpospolita* (hereafter referred to as *Rz*), *Dziennik. Gazeta Prawna* (hereafter referred to as *DzGP*), and *Nasz Dziennik* (hereafter referred to as *NDz*). In the case of the German press, the articles included were by journalists associated with such dailies as *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (hereafter referred to as *FAZ*), *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (hereafter referred to as *SZ*), *Die Welt*¹ and texts from the most popular German magazine *Der Spiegel*. In the latter's case, abandoning the rule of selecting daily newspapers is justified by the very high readership of this weekly, both at home and abroad. *FAZ* presents conservative-liberal views, *SZ* – liberal views, while *Die Welt* is a Springer owned daily intended for conservative readers. *Der Spiegel* is addressed to liberal-left readers. The above selection allows for a fuller picture

¹ The dailies referred to have for years enjoyed enduring popularity among German readers and are recognized as an important influential voice in Germany. Interest in these examples of the printed press translates into a high number of visits to web pages of these newspapers. Compare H. Pürer, J. Raabe, *Presse in Deutschland*, Konstanz 2007, p. 445; and the latest press readership survey on Internet portals, conducted by i.a. <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/13032/umfrage/anzahl-der-nutzer-von-online-tageszeitungen-in-deutschland/> (access: 07.03.2014).

of the opinions built in Germany. Taking into account the press for supporters of the left-wing party 'Die Linke' would require a significantly more thorough study. The dailies referred to have for years enjoyed enduring popularity among German readers and are recognized as an important influential voice in Germany. Interest in these examples of the printed press translates into a high number of visits to web pages of these newspapers (Pürer, Raabe 2007: p. 445).

German media reacted lively to the events in Ukraine, showing much sympathy for the Euromaidan movement. Ukraine – widely regarded as a 'blank spot' in the consciousness of German society – became an important subject and one eagerly sought by German-speaking readers. Germany's increased interest in the affairs of Eastern Europe was welcomed in Poland with hopes for EU forum implementation of Poland's scenario for building the EU's relations with its eastern neighbours. This was because up till that time, issues concerning the Union's Eastern neighbours had been viewed in German political and social discourse seen through the prism of relations with the Russian Federation, according to the principle of 'Russland zuerst' (Russia first). In the German public's consciousness, ever since the arrest of the Pussy Riot group, the increasing discrimination against sexual minorities and the Kremlin's crackdown on German non-governmental organizations active on Russian Federation soil, the attitude to Moscow had undergone a relative cooling. Poland hopefully reported this change in attitude to Russian President Vladimir Putin, still being cherished by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder as a squeaky clean democrat. The Polish press closely followed the elections and the formation of a new government in Germany. The rise of the Grand Coalition (CDU/CSU and SPD) was accurately predicted. In the Polish press much space was given to speculation about Germany's future foreign minister. It was assumed that in the event of an agreement between the two largest parties in Germany, this would be Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who had already fulfilled the function of head of diplomacy in the years 2005–2009 in Angela Merkel's first government, was a trusted colleague of Gerhard Schröder and the author of the 'Partnership for Modernisation' project with Russia (Guział, 2002, pp. 42–47)². For most Polish newspapers, the assumed selection of Germany's

² Andrzej Guział outlined the basic principles of German policy towards Russia following the change of government in 2005. The Christian Democrat and Social-Democrat German government established in 2005 treated Russia as a strategic partner in all dimensions.

Foreign Ministry heads was initially a major cause for concern. Polish journalists did not share the opinion expressed in the pages of *DzGP* that one should not overestimate the role of Steinmeier who, according to that article's author, was not an overly influential figure in his party, and since the outbreak of the crisis, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had lost its former position (Woś, 2013). In analyses regarding the new composition of the German government, emphasis was laid on fears of German diplomacy returning to a pro-Russian strategy resulting from Steinmeier's Russian sympathies. Articles published in Polish national dailies, especially in *Rz* and *GW* highlighted in the greatest detail the process of Steinmeier's change in image. While at the turn of September and October *Rz* reprimanded the future candidate for the position of head of German diplomacy for too conciliatory an attitude towards the Russian Federation³, and *GW*, sharing those fears, confirmed that Moscow always worked well with the German Social Democrats (Radziwinowicz, 2013) then together with the progress in the formulation of a new government in Germany, opinions concerning Steinmeier became more complementary. In late October, Piotr Jendroszczyk of *Rz* wrote that the election of a Social Democrat would be good for Poland, because of his close ties with Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski (Jendroszczyk, *Berlin szuka pomysłu na UE*, 2013), and after Steinmeier's official nomination as head of German diplomacy, he assured readers that *Steinmeier is a politician who will not conduct a policy towards Russia over the heads of the Poles* (Jendroszczyk, *Trzecia kadencja podobna do poprzednich*, 2013). Bartosz Wieliński of *GW* echoed that despite Steinmeier's earlier commitment to the development of relations with Russia, his return *does not mean another era of blind love in Russian-German relations*. According to *GW*, a disappointed Berlin today does not trust Putin an inch and Russian-German relations are icy (Wieliński, *Berlin nie wierzy Putinowi*, 2014). Polish publicists referred to the words of the government's plenipotentiary for German affairs Władysław Bartoszewski, who explained in an interview with *Rz* that Steinmeier had learned a lot and in Merkel's office would conduct a balanced

³ In early October, RP quoted the *Die Zeit* weekly, in which the author drew attention to Steinmeier's pro-Russian attitude and his foreign policy conducted in 2005-2009 under Angela Merkel's first government. Steinmeier believed that the era of confrontation was over, and offered Russia help in its reforms. Osk, 'Die Zeit: Nowy MSZ może być zbyt przyjazny dla Rosji', 02.10.2014, based on: www.rp.pl, 02.10.2013, P. Jendroszczyk, 'Trudne negocjacje koalicyjne w Berlinie blokują UE', 03.10.2013., based on: www.rp.pl.

policy towards Russia (Wielński, *Berlin nie wierzy Putinowi*, 2014). Rz and GW emphasized the growing importance of Poland, which was hoping to appear as an expert in matters of policy towards the EU's eastern neighbours. Steinmeier's statement, made just after being sworn in, that he was going to Poland because, of all those in the EU, the Poles know Ukrainian specifics best was welcomed with a considerable degree of satisfaction, because it greatly contrasted with the opinions of Germans from previous years, when it was thought that the Poles were driven by anti-Russian phobias and therefore their opinions were worthless (Jendroszczyk, *Trudne negocjacje koalicyjne w Berlinie blokują UE*, 2013). GW and Rz wrote about a breakthrough in Polish-German relations (Wielński, *Berlin Warszawa – wspólna sprawa*, 2013; Czech, 20013).

Warsaw's enthusiasm did not escape the attention of the German press. Konrad Schuller, since 2004 the FAZ correspondent for Poland and Ukraine, noted that the key word for rebuilding Steinmeier's image was the word 'outrageous'. This was apparently how Steinmeier viewed the way the Kremlin exploited Ukraine's weakness, in order to prevent the signing of an association agreement with the EU (Schuller, 19.12.2013). *Just a small rebuke of Moscow* – continued the German correspondent – *was enough to rehabilitate the German foreign minister in Warsaw* (Schuller, 19.12.2013). In the same article the columnist pointed to a different model of thinking, which in his assessment differs from the new image of the head of German diplomacy forced by the media. An article entitled 'Gospodin Steinmeier' appeared in mid-December in the *Do Rzeczy* weekly. Its authors had no illusions concerning the intentions of the new minister of foreign affairs, considered him *a totally extraordinary Russophile, and a faithful comrade ready to support Russia even in spite of and to the detriment of Western interests*. They suggested that his return was a clear signal to the world and above all Putin, in which direction German foreign policy would lean in the coming years (Magierowski, Florek-Mostowska, 2014). The image of Steinmeier presented by the *Do Rzeczy* weekly reflected the feelings Polish right-wing conservative circles, whose initially hushed opinions emerged with strong accents in April 2014.

In the first quarter of 2014 the media in Germany also built a positive image of Polish-German relations. The country on the Vistula River grew to become an expert in all matters Ukrainian. The German press, in analyzes of the largest country in the Eastern Partnership quoted statements by Polish politicians, the main headlines of its dailies, and conducted FAZ-interviews with Bronisław

Komorowski (28.11.2013) and leading an EU mission in Ukraine Aleksander Kwasniewski (*Spiegel*-Interview By Jan Puhl and Christian Nee, 09.12.2014). Attention was drawn to Steinmeier's new view of Eastern Europe (Sattar, *Ein neuer Blick nach Osten*, 2014), and to the fact that Polish-German relations are good as they have never been before, which is proved i.a. by friendship between the German and Polish foreign ministers (Sturm, *Steinmeier lehnt eine Vermittlerrolle ab*, 2013).

Declarations of closer cooperation were soon to show their practical side. The EU's diplomatic mission to Kiev and the agreement concluded on February 21st 2014 used the formula of trilateral cooperation within the Weimar Triangle (Lang, /2014–2015).

The activities of the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Poland led to a compromise being struck. The press in Poland and Germany described the dramatic developments in Ukraine (the increasing number of people killed, snipers shooting at protesters, heavy street fighting, and the atmosphere of civil war) (dpa, 21.02.2014). The trip made by the ministers was seen as an act of last resort (Puhl, 26.05.2014) aimed at stopping the spiral of violence (Ehrenstein, Lehnartz, Kellermann, 22.02.2014) and ending the bloodshed. The press both in Poland and Germany also treated the purpose of the visit as a symbolic message that the EU speaks with one voice. Defects in the Kiev agreement were perceived (Maidan dissatisfaction, and lack of acceptance of the agreement by extremist forces acting among the demonstrators) (Parafianowicz, Potocki, 15.03.2014), but both stressed that the most important goal had been achieved. The determination and effort made by the EU Ministers in Ukraine was duly noted, but they rated the contribution of each of the ministers differently. The foreign policy commentator for *FAZ* declared that the mission by the heads of German diplomacy was the most important challenge that the Weimar Triangle had ever had to face. In his opinion, the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Poland did not hesitate to throw all their authority on the scales to save Ukraine from an almost certain civil war (Frankenberger, 22.02.2014). *Die Welt* clearly pointed to Steinmeier as the initiator of the diplomatic mission, who saw in the achievement of the mission a way to stimulate the Weimar Triangle. The conservative daily admitted that although Poland had always actively worked for an EU rapprochement, Sikorski had in recent days spoken very sparingly, while Steinmeier demanded sanctions against Ukraine (Ehrenstein, Lehnartz, Kellermann, 22.02.2014). *Der Spiegel* too attributed to Steinmeier the central

role in appeasing the conflict. Discussing the events in Kiev, the German magazine's columnist wrote about a trio of EU Ministers, who *mustered round* the head of German diplomacy, *urging* even their colleague Radoslaw Sikorski to interrupt his holiday in Innsbruck (Gebauer, *Der Marathon-Diplomat*, 2014). *SZ* agreed with the German press, which praised Steinmeier's diplomacy but stressed that an equally important role in the mediation process in Kiev was played by Radoslaw Sikorski, who contrary to relations in that Steinmeier allegedly had to convince him to cut short his vacation, was the first to decide to mediate in the talks (Brössler, *Reise ins ukrainische Chaos*, 2014, by the same author, *Albtraum Spaltung*, 2014). *SZ* wrote about Sikorski as *the most active of the active* also in the context of internal political disputes in Poland and the criticisms aimed at the foreign minister by the 'national-Catholic opposition', which attacked Sikorski for urging the Ukrainian opposition to accept the conditions of the compromise under threat of an increase in the number of victims and martial law (Brill, *Anteilnahme in Blau-Gelb*, 2014). According to *DzGP* publicists, Sikorski's words only aroused controversy in Poland, while the Western press considered them an expression of determination. In their opinion, Sikorski was well prepared, and the mission was successful (Parafianowicz, Potocki, 2014). The media which rebutted the charges against the head of Polish diplomacy included *Rz*. That broadsheet's columnist stressed that, regardless of one's attitude towards Sikorski, it should be admitted that he did a good job (pap, 21.02.2014) and helped negotiate an agreement (Słojewska, 2014). For *Rz* and *GW* there wasn't a shadow of doubt about the Polish foreign minister's dominant contribution. Wieliński of *GW* explained that EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton had asked Sikorski to organize a mission to Kiev. Contrary to suggestions concerning a different composition for this mission, Sikorski decided to *mount* a Weimar Triangle mission – with the foreign ministers of Germany and France (Wieliński, *Jak Sikorski negocjował w Kijowie*, 2014). Jan Haszczyński of *Rz* saw in the events in Kiev signs of a revival of Polish diplomacy, whose actions filled him with pride (Haszczyński, *Wielkie symbole Ukrainy*, 2014). *GW* and *Rz* cited the opinions of politicians and experts highly estimating the achievements of European, including Polish diplomacy, indicating that the Polish partner had to be counted with in matters concerning Ukraine. That which *GW* recognized as Poland's asset in the international arena, i.e. the cooperation of the Weimar Triangle ministers within the framework of EU diplomacy (Bielecki, Grochal, 2014), for *NDz*

journalists became an opportunity to demonstrate Polish policy's over-dependence on Community strategy, including the traditional Russian-German intimacy. On the pages of *NDz*, journalist stressed German diplomacy's care in maintaining close contact with Russia, for instance in the form of telephoning Putin with information about the intentions of the Weimar Triangle's foreign ministers (IK, PAP, 2014).

Analysing the period from February to May 2014 in order to evaluate the activities of the Polish Minister in resolving the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, much good will towards him can be seen in German media⁴. Focusing on the efforts of Frank-Walter Steinmeier, *Der Spiegel* dedicated an article to the Polish chief of diplomacy in its May issue with the telling title 'Mr. Perfekt aus Warschau' ['Mr. Perfect from Warsaw'], noting that Sikorski, known for his hard-line policy towards Russia, is – since the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis at the latest – playing a new role in foreign policy, and Ukraine has become his greatest mission. The article's author Jan Puhl showed that Sikorski, earlier than others, warned that the future of Europe would be decided in Ukraine. At the same time he criticized Germany, which, like many others failed to listen to his opinion, preoccupied with maintaining good relations with Moscow. It turned out that Sikorski was right, and now hopes that NATO and the EU will not continue to treat Russia as they have so far – with such timidity and uncertainty (Puhl, 2014). Marko Martin of *Die Welt* wrote about the great Europeans from Warsaw: Donald Tusk and the polyglot Radek Sikorski (Marko, 2014). Highly rated were Sikorski's chances of being awarded the post of the EU's Commissioner for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy after Catherine Ashton leaves office (Brössler, Brill, 2014).

⁴ In Germany, Radosław Sikorski was given good press, thanks probably in large part to Radosław Sikorski's Berlin speech to the German Society for Foreign Policy (November 28, 2011). Przemysław Zurawski vel Grajewski notes, however, that this speech delivered during the negotiations on the fiscal pact, although overestimated as to its pro German character (Polish Radio: '*Minister paid tribute to Berlin*', Wiadomości24 '*Sikorski paid his own special tribute to Berlin*'), was a clear manifestation of Polish support for German leadership in the EU and so too was it taken, not only in Poland but also in the German media. Grajewski also drew attention to the fact that Sikorski, referring to the state budgets and federal budget in the US, called for a communitization of Euro zone debts, which is at odds with the German government's position and the attitude of German public opinion. P. Zurawski vel Grajewski, 'Polska wobec przywództwa Niemiec w Unii Europejskiej', *Przegląd Zachodni*, 2014, s. 125.

Good press for the head of Polish diplomacy and such declarations of support do not coincide with the actual decisions that were of crucial importance for the Polish government and society: sanctions against Russia or NATO's strengthening on the eastern flanks of the Union. The unbending attitude of the Russian Federation proved the value of the Polish-German partnership. Response to the Crimean crisis (March 2014) revealed differences in perception, and as a result, in the positions of EU partners.

German journalists stressed that the Poles are watching the revolutionary upheaval in Ukraine like few other nations in Europe (Brill, *Anteilnahme in Blau-Gelb*, 2014). It was stressed that independence of the country on the Dnepr was treated by the Polish elite as a central point of geopolitics that guarantee protection against Russia (Schuller, 2013). According to German journalists, along with the Crimean crisis, traumatic memories returned to those living on the Vistula (Brill, *Traumatische Erinnerungen, höchste Nervosität*, 2014). They recalled that in Central and Eastern Europe, there is no greater trauma than an agreement concluded over the heads of smaller neighbours (Brill, *Rückkehr der Angst*, 2014), especially in Poland, at whose request a NATO summit was called in accordance with Article 4 (Busse, 2014). The German press quoted Sikorski, who at a meeting of EU foreign ministers compared Russia to an insatiable predator (Wittrock, 2014; Brill, 2014).

Activities in the international arena aiming to increase the participation of NATO (Wittrock, 2014) were contrasted by the German press with Steinmeier's *poised* attitude (Weiland, 2014). *FAZ* in the title of an article concerning the agreements between the foreign ministers of the Weimar Triangle on a common position towards NATO, stressed that Steinmeier ruled out Ukraine's entry to NATO. *Der Spiegel*, pointing out that Steinmeier's statement was full of uncertainty, accepted with relief a resounding 'no' for Ukraine's entry to the NATO pact (Weiland, 2014). *Die Welt* decided that Sikorski's statement concerning the stationing of military bases in Poland was made by the Polish minister *half in jest* (Jungholt, 2014). Although as a joke, except that an April fool's one, Sikorski was to make it in the context of information about the withdrawal of Russian troops, which filled Steinmeier with optimism. How vain proved the information in the title of a *SZ* article 'NATO disputes information about the withdrawal of Russian troops', where the German journalist explained Berlin's caution in terms of fear of further escalation and pointed to the German Social Democratic party, which in his opinion extremely sceptically approached the idea of increasing the military

presence in the eastern flank of the alliance (Roßmann, 2014). Discussions on differences in the approach to the Ukrainian crisis among the German coalition partners were also to be found in the Polish press. For Rafał Woś writing in the columns of *DzGP*, declarations by German diplomats concerning NATO were proof of the victory of the Steinmeier concept, which envisages a very high level of understanding for Russia and its vital interests in the countries of the former Soviet Union (Woś, Powrót Steinmeiera, 2014). Referring to Steinmeier's statement taking into account Russia wishes concerning the substance of the NATO declaration made during the 1997 summit in Madrid, Piotr Semka on the pages of *Rz* asked if Germany and Russia were still rivals or secret allies. In an article published in April 2014 entitled 'Alians czarnych orłów', the columnist pointed to the left side of the political spectrum hindering tougher action against Russia. In a polemic between journalists, Wiesław Wawrzyniak's wrote retorting the above opinion and as a counter-argument cited the harsh words directed by Steinmeier to those gathered at a conference of industrialists, namely that *there can be no double-tracking – a policy criticizing Putin and an economy doing business as usual, as if nothing had happened* (Wawrzyniak, 2014). GW defended Steinmeier, stressing that the foreign minister is faced with voices of opposition in his own party, which come from older generation Social Democrats who understand Russia (Wieliński, *Po co Sikorski i Steinmeier ryzykują podróż do Rosji?*, 2014). A decidedly negative assessment of Steinmeier's attitude was expressed by the rp.pl blogger Anna Kozicka-Kończakowska under the revealing title 'Kiniarz Steinmeier dla upupionych'. In her analysis, she cited the *extremely vulgar veto by the Germans (...) against US troops helping the Poles*, calling Steinmeier's position anti-EU and anti-NATO (Kozicka-Kończakowska, 2014). Frank-Walter Steinmeier is the most popular politician in Russia, wrote Anna Zechenter on the pages of *NDz*. This politician *so understanding of Putin* – continued the journalist – embodies everything that is valued in the Kremlin, especially the continuation of a friendly policy toward Russia focused on doing business without a word of criticism of the Russian authority. According to the author of the text, the citizens of Germany have been frightened by Russia, and have forgotten the images from Maidan and their own indignation at Putin. They are afraid of losing their jobs and a slowdown in their economic growth (Zachenter, 2014). Citing surveys of public opinion in Germany, according to which Germany refuses to strengthen NATO's presence, *Rz* wrote that the head of the German Foreign Ministry, questioning the stationing of

NATO forces in Poland, reflects the social mood in Germany (p.jen, 2014). *GW* argued that Steinmeier is not interested in a *dirty peace* that would satisfy German business circles and a large section of society. Confirmation that the German foreign minister does not want to come to an agreement behind the backs of his allies was to be a visit of the Polish and German foreign ministers with their Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov. According to *GW*, the ministers, aware of the risk and the impossibility of convincing the Russians to accept the EU position, wanted to show that the EU speaks with one voice (Wieliński, *Po co Sikorski i Steinmeier ryzykują podróż do Rosji?*, 2014). Wieliński believed that the Kaliningrad Triangle is a good formula for negotiations. On behalf of the EU, the most important representatives of old and new Europe travelled to enter into talks with Russia. It was explained that this was first and foremost in order to maintain communications and present what position the EU represents (Wieliński, *Rozbrajanie ukraińskiego kryzysu*, 2014). An *Rz* publicist argued convincingly that the initiative of both ministers is part of a much broader EU and US diplomatic campaign aimed at arriving at an agreement with Putin that will give the new president of Ukraine time to stabilize the country (Wieliński, *Rozbrajanie ukraińskiego kryzysu*, 2014). Filip Memches claimed that such thinking is more naive than realistic (Memches, 2014). According to *Rz*, it was the Russians who pushed for this meeting, who via Russian TV channels subordinate to the Government reported the visit of the Polish and German foreign ministers on the Neva in a tone of triumph (Bielecki, 2014). Also in the reporting by *NDz*, it was the Russians who reminded everyone of the scheduled meeting of the Trinity, and when it did come to a meeting, designated a business class hotel located in a side street as the venue for the proceedings. According to *NDz* columnists, the meeting between Sikorski and Steinmeier before the visit with Lavrov was short and ineffective. Indeed they failed to convince Lavrov, and the Polish foreign minister spoke about the *differences in sensitivity* between Germany and Poland (Falkowski, 2014). The purpose behind the meeting was defended by the German daily *Die Welt*, which recognized it as proof of Berlin's interest in close cooperation with Warsaw (Sturm, *Steinmeiers Diplomatie ohne Prunk und Protz*, 2014). According to that Springer-owned daily's publicist, thanks to the latest signals of a relaxation of tension, the meeting planned during the Munich Security Conference was not cancelled, but took place only after the first attempts to establish contact between Poroshenko and Putin, while the talks with Lavrov alone lasted three hours, which was considered

evidence that Russia was also interested in the meeting (Sturm, *Steinmeiers Diplomatie ohne Prunk und Protz*, 2014). As initiator of the meeting FAZ pointed to Sikorski, who sought a meeting with Lavrov, in order to show how much Warsaw was interested in avoiding a long-running conflict in Ukraine. The German press quoted the Polish minister who defended the idea of his visit by stressing that diplomacy *does not mean simply talking with those with whom we agree* (Sattar, *Das Lachen des Herrn Lawrow*, 2014). SZ interpreted Sikorski's desire to go as an attempt to get over his image as a politician hostile to Russia. In that newspaper's view, the minister made the decision despite the criticism and controversy in Poland. SZ has repeatedly drawn attention to the domestic political disputes and controversies that Sikorski's decisions and statements have elicited in Poland. Among other things, Sikorski's statement exhorting Ukraine to continue the dialogue with Russia (Brössler, Brill, 2014). Lavrov's laughter when Sikorski asked whether the situation in the Crimea would not be repeated was – according to FAZ (Sattar, *Das Lachen des Herrn Lawrow*, 2014) and *Der Spiegel* – to once again disappoint the head of German diplomacy, who prior to the visit thought he noticed signs of tensions easing (Gebauer, *Entspannungssübung im Ambassador*, 2014). SZ was not surprised by the result of the talks, which showed how risky the trip to St. Petersburg was. But was surprised that in view of the situation, Steinmeier saw *a light at the end of the tunnel*. In the context of Steinmeier's *optimism* expressed in his unchanging attitude towards Russia, German journalist Klaus Bachmann on the pages of GW summed up the German government's policy towards the Ukrainian crisis: *According to the grotesque logic of the German government and a large section of the media, Russia can do what it wants – can take Germans prisoner or release them, occupy Crimea or not, set fire to further Ukrainian towns or temporarily order a withdrawal of the separatists – and that is the only reason to 'make further diplomatic efforts' (the formula used by Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier), and until they bring results, lay aside sanctions until a later date* (Bachmann, 2014).

The June 2014 meeting in St. Petersburg was the last action performed in close diplomatic cooperation between the Polish and German foreign ministers. The next meetings within the framework of EU foreign policy took place without inviting the participation of the Polish partner. GW columnists interpreted Sikorski's absence at the Berlin meeting of the heads of foreign ministries from Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine (August 2014) as pushing Brussels and Poland out of the negotiations (Bielecki, Wroński, 2014),

thus weakening Europe (Wieliński, *Berlińskie rozmowy o ukraińskim pokoju. Dlaczego bez nas?*, 2014). *DzGP* wrote that the talks held in mid-August in Berlin were the first major success for Russia: it managed to marginalize the Weimar Triangle (26.08.2014). *Rz* feared that Berlin's broad diplomatic offensive to end the Russian-Ukrainian war intended to confirm Germany's dominant role in the central and eastern European region, to push the US out and maintain a strategic partnership with Russia (Rak, 2014). For the conservative *NDz* daily this is further evidence of the incapacity of the Polish government and a pathetic failure on the part of Polish diplomacy.

German press openly admitted that the Ukraine crisis had not only divided Polish-German partners but the entire West. The focal point in the differing positions was the approach to Russia. The press beyond the Oder pointed to the disparity between politics and the media on the one hand and German society on the other, which shows a lot of understanding for Russia (expressed i.a. in the pro-Russian tweets looking very much like propaganda controlled from Moscow). It pointed out that those media opposed to this way of thinking was accused of bias (Staib, 2014). The German public's attitude is confirmed by the results of public opinion surveys conducted in Germany, in which can be seen a clear drop in sympathy towards Russia and a sense of threat from Putin's policies. However, Russia remains a country highly valued by German citizens. The attitude of the Germans to the conflict may be explained by a fear of war and a conviction that, despite the declarations of politicians⁵ there is no need to increase Germany's responsibilities on the international stage⁶.

The end of 2013 brought disappointment to EU eastern policy, but also hope for a new quality built on Polish-German cooperation. The press in Poland and Germany responded positively to the strengthening of bilateral cooperation declarations, recognizing the potential in cooperation between their foreign ministers. The Sikorski-Steinmeier duo was written up as a spectacular, albeit short-lived success. The hopes of continuing close cooperation in the Weimar or Kaliningrad Triangle format in order to resolve the conflict in Ukraine were in the end not fulfilled. The Polish press accused Steinmeier of – taking advantage of the passivity of his

⁵ Compare Munich Security Conference (January 2014), in which representatives of the new government and the German president Joachim Gauck called for Germany's greater responsibility on the international stage.

⁶ Public opinion polls conducted by deutschlandtrend.de and the German demoscope centre Allensbacher Institut were taken into account.

Christian Democratic partner – becoming a driving force for a conciliatory policy towards Russia. Along with harsh criticism, there appeared attempts to justify the actions of the German Minister by the need to be guided by party loyalty, the feelings of society or the interests of the German economy. The German press duly reported the activities of the head of Polish diplomacy, personifying a hard line against Russia, but also perceived a policy aiming for an agreement with Russia even at the expense of criticism from his fellow countrymen. The press in both Poland and Germany pointed to a diversity of the causes for the difficulties in shaping EU policy towards its Eastern neighbour.

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Agata Włodarska-Frykowska

ETHNIC RUSSIAN MINORITY IN ESTONIA

ABSTRACT: The article examines the position of Russians in Estonia and their relation with ethnic Estonians. The author analyzes models of the society integration introduced by Tallinn after 1991. The results raise questions regarding language education in Estonia, the proficiency level of Estonian is getting widely known by Russians, but on the other hand, there is still a significant part of the population that cannot communicate in Estonian. Those who have a good command of Estonian tend to be better integrated and to coexist with both Estonians and Russians. Russians living in Estonia are supposed to be equally involved in social and political life of the state. The potential of all residents has to be effectively and considerably used, especially when the number of population is decreasing. The position of Russians in Estonia is a major domestic and bilateral issue in the relations with the Russian Federation.

KEYWORDS: Russians in Estonia, integration programs, language education in Estonia, Estonian society, Estonia after 1991, division of the Estonian society, democracy in Estonia

After annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russian Federation in March 2014 Ukraine has become in the centre of the biggest crises between Russian Federation and today's European Union since the times of Cold War. Therefore, it is a really noteworthy fact that the majority of the Crimean society is made up of ethnic Russians who are the majority of the population but with significant Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars. Apart from Ukraine there are other countries in Europe that were the members of the Soviet empire in the past and the number of Russians living there is quite high. The examples of those countries are the Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Today's international policy of the Russian Federation towards Estonia and two other Baltics States seems to be an element of the deliberate strategy and it can thought to be an analogous situation to Russians in the Crimea.

Moscow claims that has to take responsibility to protect ethnic Russians regardless their place of living. Additionally Russians living in Estonia follow Moscow's instructions supporting separatism and unrest in the country. Despite being a member in the European Union and NATO and an organizer of fully successful actions of society integration Tallinn has to be alerted and observes Putin's actions. For some countries in the European Union that Ukrainian crises can be seen as a pretty faraway one but there are countries as Estonia that feel it is knocking to their doors.

The Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania endured a lot of pain and hardship, from 1940 to 1991 this part of Europe was strongly dominated by Soviet Union. The Soviet and the following German occupation influenced the situation in the Baltic States and changed them dramatically. There counties were chosen as a place of migration by many Russians who were encouraged to settle down and start their work there. It was a direct reason why the number of ethnic Russians living in this area increased so dramatically by the time of the fall of the Soviet Union. In the early 1990s, the countries opened a new chapter in their history. From 1991, the Baltic States have made rapid progress in establishing both a democratic political system and a free market economy. Since regaining their sovereignty the Baltic States have to deal with the issue of national minorities and try to enrich their multicultural societies. In Estonia and Latvia, citizenship is determined by the citizenship of parents not by place. In Lithuania, right of the soil, not right of blood, was introduced and it helped to integrate national minorities groups with Lithuanian society (Best 2013).

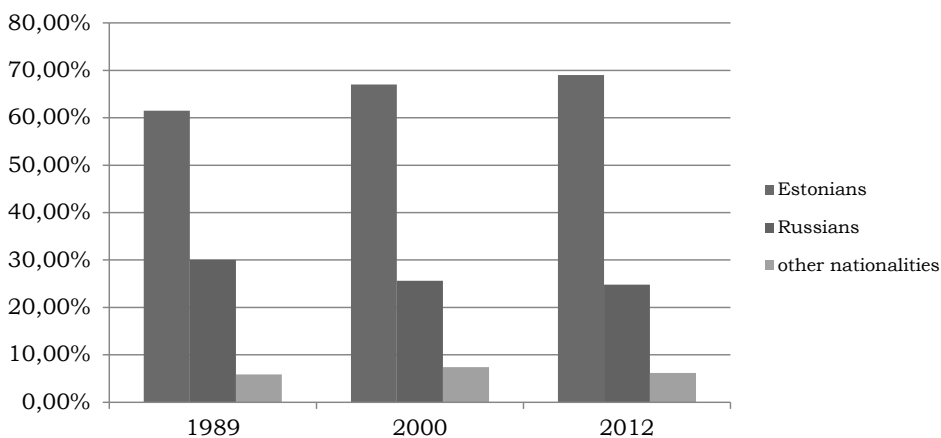
Table 1. Enumerated permanent residents by ethnic nationality and sex, 31 December 2011

Ethnic nationality	Males and females	Males	Females
Estonian	889.770	416.301	473.469
Russian	321.198	143.165	178.033
Ukrainian	22.302	10.531	11.771
Belarusian	12.419	5.258	7.161
Finnish	7.423	3.334	4.089
Tatar	1.945	869	1.076
Jewish	1.927	1.031	896
Latvia	1.716	726	990
Polish	1.622	659	963
German	1.490	795	695

Source: Population and housing census, <http://www.stat.ee>

Estonia is the smallest of the Baltic States taking into consideration the size of the country (total area: 45,226 km²) and the number of population (total population of Estonia – 1,294,455 permanent residents in 2013). In the early 1990s, the number of Russians living on its territory was 30.3% of Estonian population. Ethnic tensions increased due to citizenship and language requirements. It was a basic reason of disintegration in Estonian society. In 2000, the number of Russians decreased to 25.6% and today it is at the level of 24.8%. There are permanent residents of 192 ethnic nationalities in Estonia, based on the preliminary results of the 2011 Population and Housing Census but the biggest ethnic groups are Estonians and Russians that strongly determines the relations in the Estonian society. This ethnic division caused many problematic issues and disintegrated the county. Ethnicity and national minorities groups still stir emotions in the country. Russian people want to protect their heritage, language and culture, they demand equal rights and a fair chance for a good life in Estonia.

Chart 1. Composition of Estonian society 1989–2012



Source: Population and housing census. <http://www.stat.ee>

The number of Russians in Estonia has not significantly decreased simultaneously the number of ethnic Estonians has increased about 7%. Non-Estonians living in Estonia still seek their identity, their position in the Estonian state is not equal to the ethnic inhabitants of the country. Thus, the integration of the country into Europe and the global world is taking place, Tallinn aims at

creating one society that is open and multicultural. The integration of Estonian society has been introduced as one of the priorities and it is commonly regarded to be a two-way process. It means that involves both a majority and a minority in the country. The goal is to create a secure and agreeable coexistence based on mutual respect and understanding. The government's policy was to introduce integration programs that were expected to consolidate the society.

Estonian Models Of Integration

There are three possible models that can be distinguished in the case of Estonia. The standard integration process should be two-way action. The minority agrees to adopt and implement culture, tradition, and what seems to be the most significant language of a dominant group, meanwhile the majority group accepts and tolerate the cultural, traditional, and linguistic practices of the minority group. A form of integration is assimilation, non-dominant group agrees to accept and introduce cultural and traditional practices of the dominant group. Two-way action is not taken and any forms of cultural practices of the minority group adopted by the majority are not discernible. The third distinguished model is segregation. Both groups live separately and not accept each other's cultural practices (Laitin 2003). Apart from those three models of integration, a fourth model can be found: a model of constant conflict. Both dominant and non-dominant groups do not accept their own tradition and culture that consequently leads to conflict between those groups. Estonian society was very deeply divided and the rapid integration process was seen to be a chance to consolidate the members of the Estonian state. In 1997, the first integration program in Estonia was launched. It was the first step to start building one Estonian society. The range of this program was not very spectacular and in 2000 Estonian government managed to introduce the national Integration Program aiming at strengthening relations between Estonians and Russians in the country. There were several motives that can be numbered as a direct reasons of introducing the first Integration Program in the state. The party competition tends to change its program towards bigger integration and cooperation with the Russian speaking group that was seen as a good direction and gaining more supporters (Brosing 2008). Secondly, there was tremendous pressure from international organizations, the

European Union, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and other institutions that were strongly involved in Estonian policy. The High Commissioner on Ethnic Minority Affairs, underlined that *integration is a mutual process, where both language communities of Estonia should participate*. Rolf Ekeus underlines that dialogue is the key to further development of social cooperation and integration between dominant and non-dominant groups in the state. During his visit to Tallinn in March 2004, the High Commissioner encouraged the government of Estonia to take the integration process forward, expert assistance could be also provided by his office to speed up naturalization process and reduce the number of stateless residents, holding the alien's passports. *The key to further social integration is a dialogue*, underlined OSCE High Commissioner after his visit in Estonia. The third mentioned reason was the social, economic, and political integration of the state. Estonian nationalists were strongly against to further integration, previously it was believed that the emigration of Russians would be possible, and finally, they had to come to terms with the fact that Russian minority is a part of the Estonian society (Barany, Moser, 2005). The fourth reason that led to deeper integration was a desire of the politicians to provide a public good in the state. The linguistic and communicative integrations become a very important goal in the society. It was a crucial issue especially for all Russian speakers who could not communicate in the Estonian language. Social linguistic hegemony is thought to be a public good for each society. A Russian minority do not openly accept all forms of social assimilation, they prefer to adopt more integration patterns and be a part of the Estonian society.

The first national Integration Program in Estonia was launched in January 2000 till the end of 2007. It was the main strategy integrating the society of Estonia. The program included three levels of action. The first one was linguistic-communication sphere and its primary task was to spread the Estonian language to be considered and accepted as the basic communication tool in the state. The second level was named as legal and political sphere. The most important issue was to increase the number of people obtaining Estonian citizenship that was directly associated with their political rights and political participation that was limited since 1991. The third sphere was named as an economic integration strategy, and it was expected to increase the competitiveness and social mobility for all residents of Estonia. At the very beginning of 2008, a new integrated plan was introduced directly. The new integration program

was planned for 5 years, till 2013. The strategy presented the vision, principles and strategic basis for public institutions and other organizations involved in the main implementation processes in the state. The document was a continuation of the previous integration program and all spheres were compact. The strategy included the further development planes and also the state security policy principles. Adhering the fundamental European values was underlined to be very essential for the integration process. Estonia is a member of the European Union and authorities in Tallinn know that both domestic and European development of the country is significant. This is why the fundamental European values of democracy, rule of law, peace, individual right to self-determination, respect for human rights and cultural diversity were included into the integration program (*Estonian Integration Strategy 2008–2013*).

The Estonian language was also expected to become more popular with Estonian residents belonging to the minority groups as a common tool of public sector communication. One language gives the opportunity to be equally involved in social and political life. The long term objective of linguistic-communication sphere in the integration strategy is a situation of permanent communication in the official language by all permanent residents of Estonia. The Estonian state puts a huge impact on strengthening the identity and deepening the common understanding of the country among the permanent residents. Every person living in Estonia should have contribute in the life of the society and cultural differences should be commonly accepted in the democratic state under the rule of law. The potential of all residents has to be effectively and considerably used. Especially when the number of population not only in Estonia but also in other European countries is decreasing, people have to have opportunities for self-realization and be motivated to become an integrated part of the society. The key to successful integration is freedom of all residents, access to state education respecting the minority language, culture and history. The state has to provide to all permanent residents welfare and security, those methods will help to eliminate separation and exclusion among the members of one society. If ethnic and language barrier are reduced, the isolation of minority group will not take place. The second national integration program in Estonia was finished in December 2013, but it left the open door to further actions strengthening the ties between the residents. Multinational Estonia is still learning how to build one loyal society not divided and disintegrated.

In January 2014, Estonian Ministry of Culture launched a new integration strategy for the next six years. The main goals of the program emphasis multicultural development of the state and support for motional minorities in Estonia underlining that national minority groups living in Estonia are not identical. They have different needs, different expectations and different problems, it means that they cannot be treated according to one key. Residents with different cultural backgrounds have to be more familiar with culture and history of the country. The new integration program names the creation of a common, shared information space in the society involves further development and translation of television and radio programs and online portals (*Estonian Integration Strategy 2014–2020*). All integration strategies include similar goals, but the integration process involving Russian minority groups into Estonian society seems to be not so effective as it is expected to be. There are still groups of residents who are excluded from the rest of the society, mostly those whose command of the Estonian language is not good enough to communicate in Estonian.

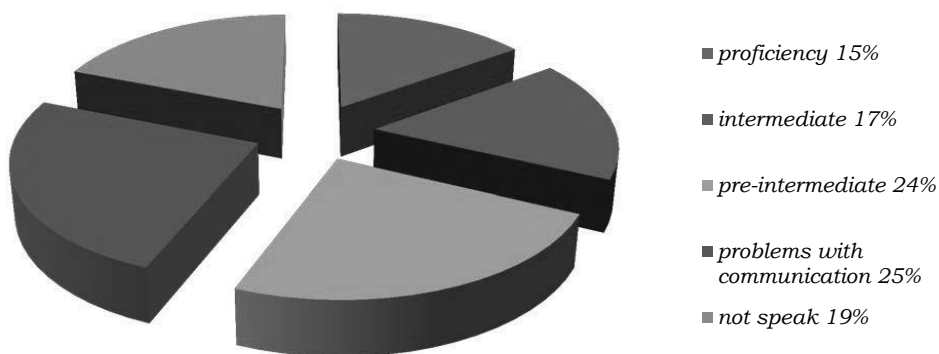
Estonian Language Education

Education is considered to be one of the central areas of social integration and it is strongly connected with the acquisition of the state language. Young people especially have to be included into society to become its members. Comparing the year 1989 with the present situation the number of Estonian residents speaking Estonian has increased significantly. At the very beginning of 1990s, only 15% of Russian speaking group could speak Estonian, not differentiating the levels of language acquisition. In the last few years, the level of Estonian language proficiency has remained stable among the adult population whose mother tongue is not Estonian and has increased among the young. It is also important to note significant differences in command of the state language from region to region. In 2005, in Tallinn, 16% of Estonian Russians, according to their own assessment, could not speak Estonian while in Narva this number was 62%, or four times as big. A better command of the Estonian language provides a number of benefits. Firstly, growth in the social capital of individuals belonging to different social groupings, as well as a decrease in social differences in Estonian society between Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking

residents, old and young residents, residents with higher and lower income. Secondly, cultural openness and tolerance among different ethnic groups living in the state has increased. Thirdly, greater enterprise and mobility among individuals, which is required if they and the state are to be competitive. And last but not the least is greater cultural awareness among the residents of the state as different ways of life develop and flourish in society (*Estonian Foreign Languages Strategy 2009–2015*). Estonia has introduced language strategies in the field of Estonian dedicated to its protection and further development among all residents. However, there is no national document dealing with foreign language policy as a whole. The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia and the Language Act are the most important documents including the general principles of Estonian language. Education laws and other acts regulate teaching and learning of languages for both primary and secondary language education. The Estonian language is recognized as the only official language in the state. The strategies introduced in the country promote development of multilingualism in the Estonian society. Non-Estonian residents of the state have been encouraged to study Estonian as a part of national programs and others activities introduced by the Ministry of Education and Research. Promoting the language skills of the residents of Estonia and ensuring the availability of language specialists in different areas of life requires national organization and coordination. The changes in the field of communication in official state language have been visible. Firstly the level of command of Estonian among the people whose mother tongue is not Estonian has improved on all levels. The number of people of who successfully pass the Estonian language proficiency examination has significantly increased. In 2007, 52% of the participants (133 people) successfully passed the basic level examination, the average result was 60.33 points; 43.45% of the participants (643 people) successfully passed the intermediate level examination, the average result was 57.89 points; 52.44% of the participants (472 people) successfully passed the advanced level examination, the average result was 61. Much better results were also found with the self-assessment of the command of the Estonian language in the age group from 15 to 74, good 22%; average 25%; poor 29%; none at all 24%. Secondly, contacts and communication between people with different mother tongues have increased. The other important issue that was thought to be solved was connected with differences in participation in civil society organizations and the public sphere between Estonian and Russian

speaking residents. The third important factor was information that was expected to receive not only in Estonian language but also in their native languages. Estonian television and radio stations offered programs that were transmitted in Russian language but hours of transition and topics were completely not attractive for the viewers (*Estonian Integration Strategy 2008*).

Chart 2. Declared knowledge of Estonian language among Russians in Estonia (2008)



Source: Estonian Integration Strategy, Tallinn 2008

The charts presents the number of Russians living in Estonia and their declared level of official state language. According to the chart only 19% of Russians living in Estonia do not communicate in the Estonian language. In comparison with 1991, the number of Estonian users increased, at the very beginning of the 90s only 14% of Russian minority group residents in Estonia declared knowledge of Estonian. More than 80% claimed that they are not able to communicate in that language.

Apart from such good results Estonian authorities continued their language development strategy. At the very beginning of 2011, a new plan was introduced. The strategy was planned for six years till the end of 2017 and it was regarded to be a strategic basic document of the Estonian language domain. The main target is to implement the plan that the Estonian language will meet all the language-use needs of the Estonian state and society. The strategy is supposed to be fully introduced by the end of 2017. The provision of the uniform strategic basis and uniform aims for the sustainable development of all the domains of the Estonian language is seen to be the key objective of further development. Many establishments

and institutions, the positions of which are crucial from the perspective of use and development of the Estonian language, took part in the preparation of the development plan: University of Tartu, Tallinn University, Institute of the Estonian Language, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonian University of Life Sciences, Institute of Cybernetics at the Tallinn University of Technology, Estonian Business School, Consistory of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, National Examinations and Qualifications Center, Language Inspectorate, Integration and Migration Foundation "Our People," Estonian Land Board, Estonian Public Broadcasting, Estonian Institute, Estonian Literary Museum, Mother Tongue Society, Estonian Terminological Society, Estonian- French Lexicographic Society, Võro Institute, Institute of Mulgi Culture, and others (*Development Plan of the Estonian Language 2011–2017*).

The main goal to develop and foster the Estonian language among non-Estonians is to create wider possibilities for all residents to cope with their Estonian-language proficiency both on the next educational level as well as at work. The planned actions involve creating a favorable atmosphere for the Estonian language learning and providing elementary knowledge of the Estonian language in non-Estonian kindergartens and schools. The first step includes teaching chosen subjects in Estonian and to increase the prestige of the Estonian language in non-Estonian-schools. What is more, developing and organizing further education for teachers of Estonian as a foreign language was seen as one of most important issues, working out relevant courses and curricula. The program is to support the use of language portfolios with models of bilingual education to continue the elaboration of language examination that corresponds to the language proficiency levels of the European Commission. Developing and applying the programs that contribute to drill language trends among all Estonian residents. Since 1991, the Russian language has consequently been thought as a foreign language. Russian residents state that their native language is marginalized and they are touched by linguistic discrimination.

According to the Estonian language strategy all age groups are included into Estonian language learning processes. The main target groups include pupils and students from children's preschool institutions, primary schools, secondary schools, students from institutions of higher education and young people in employment, in order to boost their levels of professional preparedness and to increase their mobility; working-age people who are interested in using language studies to reinforce the social position and level of

subsistence they have already achieved and older people for whom learning Estonian languages is designed to enable a better understanding of information and a greater level of participation in contemporary media space, politics, cultural life and organizations. High-quality Estonian language teaching must be guaranteed in different educational institutions throughout the country. The strategy is implemented by creating good conditions and equal learning opportunities. Inadequate language skills results in the social stratification and limit the right conditions for economic activity and labor mobility (*Estonian Foreign Languages Strategy 2009–2015*).

Conclusions

The integration of Estonian society is visible in many spheres including linguistic and cultural areas. Russians in Estonia are still trying to maintain their cultural and linguistic identity. Many, especially among the older generations, consider the diminishing of their language tantamount to the loss of equality. On the other hand, Estonians are also stressing their cultural and linguistic heritage, introducing new integration programs and language strategies. Russian residents are often seen to be disloyal to the Estonian state and are not interested in cultivating Estonian culture and tradition. The Russian language, tradition, and culture is regarded to be discriminated against and the voice of the biggest minority group in Estonia is not heard. The Estonian and Russian languages have to coexist in such a small country as Estonia. The question of the Russian language in Estonia is therefore not purely administrative. It points at two different problems, the first one regards the difficulties Estonia faces as a multicultural country, which needs to re-create and protect its own identity, and the second one is the difficulty of reaching agreement on the historical events of the twentieth century between two ethnic groups. The treatment of ethnic Russian residents continues to be a major issue domestically and bilaterally with the Russian Federation. Non-Estonians, especially Russians, allege occupational, salary and housing discrimination because of Estonian language requirements. Those who desire language instruction confront problems stemming from an insufficient number of qualified teachers, lack of funds, poor educational infrastructure and an examination process which some allege is arbitrary.

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Michał Kobierecki

RUSSIA AND ITS INTERNATIONAL IMAGE: FROM SOCHI OLYMPIC GAMES TO ANNEXING CRIMEA¹

ABSTRACT: The aim of the article is to analyze the change of the Russian Federation's international image in the light of two significant events: the Olympic Winter Games in 2014 in Sochi and the annexation of Crimea. According to the first hypothesis, one of the main aims for hosting the Olympic Games was to improve the international prestige of Russia. Shortly after the Olympics Russia increased its activity in Eastern Ukraine, which resulted in the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. Therefore the article is also aimed to investigate whether by annexing Crimea Russia squandered the possible positive effects of hosting the Olympics in terms of its international image.

KEYWORDS: International image of Russia, Olympic Games in Sochi, Annexation of Crimea, sport and politics

The Olympic Winter Games in Russian city of Sochi was the most important sports mega-event of the beginning of 2014. Shortly after, the world witnessed one of the biggest crises in European politics that resulted in the annexation of the Ukrainian Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation, although the events are still in progress. These two occurrences are completely oppositional in terms of international image of Russia. The Sochi Olympics were meant to improve the prestige of Russia worldwide. Russian involvement in the Ukraine on the other hand is regarded as undoing all of the efforts concerning hosting Olympic Winter Games.

Hosting a sports mega-event in most cases has strong political meaning and can be aimed to enhance a nation's prestige, praise its political system, promote tourism, and promote the country in

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general. The attempt to acquire prestige is typical for states regarded as not fully democratic. This was strongly an issue of for example Olympic Summer Games in Beijing in 2008. Therefore the first aim of the article is to analyze whether Russia intended to improve its international image by hosting the Olympic Games and whether it succeeded.

The second part of the article will concern the events in the Ukraine that resulted in annexation of Crimea by Russian Federation. Although the political crisis in Ukraine began before the Sochi Olympics, it appears that Russian involvement became heavier after the Olympic flame was distinguished in Sochi. Such a situation leads to certain doubts concerning the policy of Russia and its president Vladimir Putin. Obviously at the moment information about the true intentions and plans of V. Putin are uncertain. It appears though, that he did not want the political crisis to affect the course of the Games. Moreover, if the purpose of hosting the Olympic Games was to improve international image of Russia, than why did Putin decide to involve Russia in the Ukrainian crisis and to annex Crimea? Was it a planned strategy or an unplanned reaction to political unrests in Ukraine? The hypothesis to be investigated in this part states that by annexing Crimea, Russia squandered all the possible positive effects of the Sochi 2014 Olympic Games in terms of its international image.

The research will be conducted under the interpretativist paradigm which seems to be the most appropriate in analyzing such a complicated reality as the international perception of a state in respect to two important events: the Olympics in Sochi and the annexation of Crimea. The research encompassed studying of statements of high profile policy makers and journalist from various countries, in order to deduce the changing attitude towards Russia, which obviously required an interpretation of their words. Accordingly, the data was collected mainly by analyzing press articles and interviews. This enabled not only the main analysis of the change of attitude towards Russia worldwide, but also to determine the main objectives behind organizing the Olympic Winter Games in 2014 by the Russian city of Sochi.

Election of Sochi as the Host of the Olympic Winter Games 2014

The Russian city of Sochi was chosen as host of 2014 Olympic Winter Games on 4th July 2007, at the 119th Session of the International Olympic Committee in Guatemala City (*Sochi 2014*).

The election, according to The Olympic Charter, is constituted by two phases: the application and the candidacy, and takes place 7 years before the Games. The Session of the IOC elects the host city among the candidate cities – those applicant cities that were accepted to the latter phase of election by the IOC Executive Board (Olympic Charter 68–69).

In the case of the election of the host of the XXII Olympic Winter Games in 2014, there were seven applicant cities: Sochi (Russia), Salzburg (Austria), Jaca (Spain), Almaty (Kazakhstan), PyeongChang (Korea), Sofia (Bulgaria), and Borjomi (Georgia). All those cities were evaluated by the IOC Candidature Acceptance Working Group, which took into consideration such elements as: government support, legal issues and public opinion; general infrastructure; sports venues; Olympic village(s); environmental conditions and impact; accommodation; transport concept; safety and security; experience from past sports events; finance and overall project and legacy, with different weighting of different issues. All the results in each issue were evaluated mathematically in order to present the final results in a table (Report by the IOC Candidature Acceptance Working Group 9, 11–12).

Table 1. Results of the IOC Candidature Acceptance Working Group evaluation

Final Result

Applicant Cities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sochi								█	█		
Salzburg										█	
Jaca						█	█				
Almaty							█	█			
PyeongChang									█	█	
Sofia					█	█					
Borjomi				█	█	█					

Source: Report by the IOC Candidature Acceptance Working Group to the IOC Executive Board. XXII Olympic Winter Games in 2014, Lausanne 28 April 2006

On the basis of the IOC Working Group report, summarized by the table above, on 22nd June 2006 the IOC's Executive Board selected three applicant cities to be forwarded to the Candidature phase (*Sochi 2014*). Apparently the Executive Board must have taken into consideration the recommendations by the Working Group,

as three cities with the best evaluation have been forwarded: Sochi, Salzburg, and PyeongChang.

According to the procedure of electing the host city of the Olympic Games, once the candidate cities are selected, the IOC President appoints an Evaluation Commission, which studies the candidatures, inspects the sites and on that basis prepares a report for the IOC Members (Olympic Charter 69). In the report the Commission evaluates each candidate city in various categories, relatively similar to those from the first phase of the election. In this case they were as follows: Olympic Games Concept and Legacy, Political and Economic Climate and Structure, Legal Matters, Customs and Immigration Formalities, Environment and Meteorology, Finance, Marketing, Sports and Venues, Olympic Villages, Paralympic Games, Medical Services and Doping Control, Security, Accommodation, Transport, Media Operations, Olympism and Culture (IOC 2014 Evaluation Commission Report 10–28).

In the summaries each of the candidatures has been evaluated shortly in the key dimensions. Generally all of them were rated positively. Each of the bids had financial guarantees from national governments that were willing to cover any possible shortfalls of the budgets, as well as all three concepts of the Games were evaluated positively. In the case of Sochi, the Commission noted that the completion of the infrastructure projects was critical for the Games. Salzburg, on the other hand, was criticized for the presentation lacking details, number of hotel rooms slightly below requirements, underestimating resources required for security operations and low budget comparing to previous Olympics. Therefore Salzburg's bid seemed to be rated lowest. The Commission did not have substantial objections towards Korean bid, praised it for credible budget and noted, that the Olympic Games would contribute to peace and harmony on Korean Peninsula (IOC 2014 Evaluation Commission Report 67–72). Apparently the events before the previous Olympics organized by South Korea, especially the desire to co-host the Games by North Korea, did not raise any doubts towards PyeongChang's candidacy.

The election of the host city of the Olympic Games requires an absolute majority of votes. If no city gains the required number of votes, the one with lowest support is eliminated and the Members of the IOC vote again. In case of the election of the 2014 Olympic Winter Games Salzburg was eliminated in the 1st round, while Sochi

was elected by narrow margin in the 2nd round. The exact results have been presented below.

Table 2. Results of the election of the host of the XXII Olympic Winter Games in 2014

Round	1	2
Sochi	34	51
PyeongChang	36	47
Salzburg	25	

Source: www.olympic.org

As can be noted, the IOC Session seemed to have taken into consideration remarks of the Evaluation Commission. As was mentioned, the biggest objections regarded the Salzburg's bid and this candidate city was ruled out first. Korean city PyeongChang was in the lead in the first round, but eventually received four points less in the final voting. Worth mentioning, it was the PyeongChang that was seen as a favorite and the final outcome was rather unexpected.

From the very beginning Russian president Vladimir Putin was strongly involved in the idea of organizing the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, to that extent that he personally led the formal presentation during the International Olympic Committee Session in Guatemala City (Zakarhovich). He spoke about great location of the city – spring weather at the seashore and winter with guaranteed snow in the mountains, promised that Olympic cluster in Sochi would be completed on time and guaranteed that there would be no traffic jams (*Russia Awarded Its First Winter Games*). His personal presence was seen as a great benefit for the Sochi bid, similarly to the British Prime Minister Tony Blair supporting London's candidacy for the 2012 Summer Olympics. As one of the IOC Members Jean-Claude Killy evaluated the presence of Russian President, "The Putin charisma can explain four votes." He also noted, that Vladimir Putin "spoke English and French, what he never does" (Delany, O'Flynn).

The Russian bid was criticized for various reasons. Austrian Chancellor was supposed to have said after the election of Sochi, that "Salzburg didn't stand a chance....It was an economic and political power play...which indicates the way they want to go from now on, and this is wrong for the sport and for the IOC and Olympic Movement" (Zarakhovich). Despite the obvious aggrieved tone in this statement, it is true that in the aspect of financing it was hard

to compete with Sochi's bid – Vladimir Putin pledged \$12 billion for Sochi's development during his pre-vote speech in Guatemala City (Delany, O'Flynn).

Thus, it was decided by the International Olympic Committee Session that it would be Sochi hosting the Olympic Winter Games in 2014. It must be said that the IOC takes various criteria in selecting the Olympic Games host city, such as organizational capability, geographical (alternation of regions of the World), traditional and political (Kobierecki, *Polityczne implikacje* 102–106). It appears that currently, once the Olympic Games gained enormous popularity and an unquestioned status of a sports mega-event, the organizational capability is the most important factor for selecting a particular bid. Other criteria are rather supplementary. Sochi's candidature had strong financial guarantees given personally by the President of Russia Vladimir Putin and it must have been a great advantage. But the bid of Korean PyeongChang appeared as a choice just as safe in this matter. Accordingly, it appears that political aspect may have played its role as well. Sochi candidature was closely bound with Putin, so the final, unexpected decision could be derived from his personal image as a leader of Russia. The words of Jean-Claude Killy, cited earlier, seem to confirm this statement.

Sochi 2014 and its meaning for Russia

Once Sochi was elected as the host of the Olympic Winter Games in 2014, the preparations began. According to the plans of Russian organizers, the Olympics were to be the most extravagant in the history of Winter Games. The project included construction of high-speed rail line and a road between Sochi and the mountains (Harrison), as well as sports venues and two Olympic villages. Almost everything was to be built from scratch – 85 percent of the infrastructure needed, according to chair of the International Olympic Committee's coordination commission for the Sochi Games Jean-Claude Killy (*Most expensive Olympics in history*).

The Olympic Winter Games in Sochi are believed to be the most expensive in Games' history. Russian Ministry of Regional Development estimated it to have cost around \$42 billion (Karnaukh). However, according to calculations by various experts, the cost of preparing and hosting the Olympics in 2014 was \$51 billion, although it is very difficult to rate the expenditures precisely as the sums

have been artificially inflated by the private sponsors of the Olympics, according to Igor Nikolaev, director of a department in one of Russian audit groups (*Most expensive Olympics in history, Russia's \$9.4B road to Sochi latest in long line of Olympic boondoggles*). As he said, the private sector tried to qualify as much of their expenses as possible as the Olympic costs, which would later serve as their advantage in applying for instance for preferential tariffs (Gibson, *Sochi 2014*, Gibson, *Sochi Games*). After all the Sochi Olympics were a great aim and ambition of Vladimir Putin, so Russian companies involved in the Olympics wanted their contribution to appear as big as possible.

Sochi cost a lot more than other contemporary Olympics – London 2012 is believed to have cost \$13.9 billion, while China is believed to have spent \$43 billion on the Beijing 2008 Olympics (Gibson, *Sochi 2014*). It must be mentioned here, that summer Olympics are a far more complicated and far bigger event than the winter ones. The following numbers can serve as an example of such disproportion: in London about 10,500 athletes competed in 26 sports across 34 venues, whereas in Sochi there were around 2,800 athletes participating in 7 sports across 10 venues (*Sports, Sochi 2014 Venues, How many athletes and countries took part in the 2014 Games in Sochi?*, LONDON 2012).

There are various reasons why the Sochi Olympics were so expensive. Apart from the fact that they were meant to be the best in history, the whole concept of organizing a winter sports event in a basically subtropical city at Black Sea coastline was extraordinary, and costly at the same time. For instance in case of melting of the snow there were 450,000 cubic meters stored (Vaughan). What is more, it is believed that plenty of money has “disappeared in corrupt building contracts.” According to Russian oppositionists Leonid Martynyuk and Boris Nemtsov, up to \$30 billion have been lost because of “absence of fair competition, clan politics and the strictest censorship about anything related to the Olympic Games” (Gibson, *Sochi 2014*).

The key question here is what and how Vladimir Putin wanted to achieve with the use of the Olympic Games in Sochi? Putin himself in one of the interviews stated the aims of hosting this sports mega-event. The Russian president spoke about the need to build a tourist destination within the Russia, as the Russians are on the top of the list of nations traveling for holidays abroad; developing the South of the country in terms of infrastructure; establishing training facilities for Russian athletes. He also said, that through

the Olympics he would want the world to see “a new Russia, see its personality and its possibilities, take a fresh and unbiased look at the country,” which would help Russia to establish relations with its partners around the world (*I want Sochi Games to show the world a new Russia – Putin*). On another occasion Putin also said that he hoped Sochi would help “build bridges” (Rosenberg). These were obviously the declared aims only. It must be noted though, that Vladimir Putin did not hide that one of the key aims was to show Russia in a positive light, which means to enhance its international image. This seems typical for organizers of sports mega-events, regardless the political system of the hosting state. Still, it appears that the desire to build positive state’s image through sport is greater in non-democratic countries, similarly to the case of the Olympics in Beijing.

A question appears though, whether there were also other reasons for organizing the Olympics in Sochi? Observers pointed out various reasons, such as that the aim was to demonstrate both to the world and to Russians that Putin had restored wealth and pride to Russia and that Putin himself was frightened of nothing – to show that Russia was back and that stability had returned to Causacus, as Jeffrey Mankoff from the Center for Strategic and International Studies said (Rubin). As a journalist Mark Mackinnon stated, Putin’s dream is to see “Russia as once again a global center of gravity, indispensable on the world stage...the leader of a new bloc of nations – the Eurasian Union – with borders that look a lot like those of the Soviet empire, whose fall he has openly mourned.”

Considering the opinions of the observers and public statements of Vladimir Putin leads to a conclusion that the main aim of organizing the Olympic Winter Games in 2014 was to show Russia as a powerful, wealthy country and a regional leader. Putin is believed to have restored Russian pride, weakened by the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Sochi Olympics were then meant to show, as Putin said himself, the new Russia, strong again. The message was to be directed to Russians most of all, but also to the rest of the world.

Such use of sport, aimed to project the image of state, scholars describe as one of the dimensions of sports diplomacy, which can be perceived as a perfect channel of sharing state’s identity, values and brand (Pigman, Rofe). Sports diplomacy as a rule is directed towards the external actors, such as societies of other countries, but the case of Sochi Olympics appears to have had internal meaning

as well. Accordingly to what has already been said, the Games were meant, inter alia, to project the masculinist image of Russia, as a country powerful enough to restore the past significance of the Soviet Union. Obviously, such message was mostly directed to the people of Russia, as internationally this could be understood negatively, with the exception to societies that were already under strong Russian influence.

Putin's aim in organizing the Olympics was not only to show Russia strong, but also civilized. Prior to the Olympics, Putin even initiated a so called "charm offensive," within which he set up special protests zones on the outskirts of Sochi and declared amnesty for several high profile political prisoners such as Pussy Riot activists or Mikhail Chodorkovsky (Wiertz). Still, the power of Russia was probably the key issue.

This message was to be sent during the Sochi Olympics in various ways, each planned to show them as special. One of the first dimensions was the Olympic torch relay. Its tradition can be traced back to the 1936 Olympic Summer Games in Berlin and it is meant to promote such issues as peace, human rights, and democracy (Barney, Bijkerk: 253–254; Karamichas; Amelidou: 127), at least according to the objectives. On some occasions Olympic torch relay also had political connotations. This was especially an issue of the Beijing Olympics torch relay, when protests against China not respecting human rights and occupying Tibet occurred in various cities during the relay, such as Paris or London (Walker, Batty; Burns).

Russian organizers of the Olympics wanted their torch relay to be record-breaking, the longest ever for instance. The Olympic flame was carried to a few extraordinary locations, such as peak of Europe's highest mountain Mount Elbrus, the bottom of world's deepest Lake Baikal, and to the International Space Station (Walker, *Winter Olympics torch*). Lately, there is a tendency of achieving extraordinary places on the Olympic flame's route: for instance, the Chinese carried it to the summit of Mount Everest before the Beijing Olympics (Wong). At the same time, the Olympic torch relay is meant to present a country hosting the Olympics to the world in a desirable way. This was one of the purposes of Sochi torch relay. As Vladimir Putin once said, it was meant to "show the world Russia as she is and as we love her." Contrary to his intentions, the relay met Greenpeace activists protesting against drilling in the Arctic, gay rights protesters, had to be shortened in Dagestan because

of security reasons, whereas the torch itself got extinguished a couple of times (Walker, *Winter Olympics torch*). Still, it must be noticed that according to plans and intentions the Olympic flame relay was meant to show Russia in a good light, in other words, to enhance its international image.

It is typical that the organizers of sports mega-events desire to impress the world with the venues. For example, the organizers of the Beijing Olympics wanted to impress with Olympic Stadium “Bird’s Nest” and “Water Cube” where aquatic competitions were held. Sochi seems to have not had such extraordinary venues, however each of them was applauded by the athletes (Williams). It was similar with the opening ceremony, another element that makes it easy to promote the organizer worldwide. As in most such cases, it was planned to promote Russian culture and heritage, but according to most observers did not stand out from the previous Olympic ceremonies, especially comparing to London 2012 Olympic opening ceremony which was evaluated extremely well. On the other hand, the Games in Sochi faced many imperfections such as unfinished hotels (Dewey) that were affecting the overview of the Games.

As for the opening ceremony, there were also some political controversies concerning the Olympics in Sochi. As a matter of fact, the event was an object of a boycott by various politicians, who resigned from participating in it. This was especially caused by the law banning “gay propaganda” that was imposed in Russia. Therefore, a number of political leaders from various countries, such as Barack Obama, David Cameron, or Angela Merkel, decided not to participate in the ceremony (Walker, *Sochi Winter Olympics*).

Despite some minor imperfections, Russians succeeded in impressing the world with the use of the Olympics in Sochi. For instance, they managed to win in the prestigious Olympic medal table – a measure that considers gold medals won by a nation, than silver ones in case more than one team have won the same amount of gold ones, and respectively bronze medals. The table is called unofficial as the International Olympic Committee does not approve it, nevertheless in the contemporary world constructing it is so common that it is even published on the Olympic Games host’s website. In Sochi the top of this table was as below.

Table 3. Olympic Medal Table Sochi 2014

Rank	Country	Gold Medal	Silver Medals	Bronze Medal	Total
1	Russian Fed.	13	11	9	33
2	Norway	11	5	10	26
3	Canada	10	10	5	25
4	United States	9	7	12	28
5	Netherlands	8	7	9	24

Source: <http://www.sochi2014.com/en/medals>

The political use of the Olympic medal table is quite typical, although this applies rather to summer Games. Sports race with political meaning was typical for the Cold War era, but also in more contemporary world states wanted to show themselves as powerful by winning the Olympic medal table, for instance China during Olympics in Beijing 2008. At the same time, it is typical that the hosting country of sports mega-event desires to perform well on its own soil (Kobierecki, *Sportowy wymiar*: 37–87). Sports successes are regarded as proof of various characteristics of a country, including its power. Only big, wealthy, and powerful states are able to perform well in multi-sports events such as the Olympics, so it is partly similar to the organizational dimension of such events. Therefore, states that desire an image of strong and powerful often struggle to train as many good athletes as possible.

As can be seen in the table above, Russia succeeded in this dimension of the Olympics, although it did not achieve all the main athletic goals. Vladimir Putin did not hide that he hoped most of all for the victory in ice hockey, whereas the Russian team lost to Finland 3–1 in quarter-final and did not win a medal (Chadband). Despite this disappointment, Russian athletes performed really well in Sochi, considering that 4 years earlier during the Vancouver Olympic Winter Games Russian Federation finished 11th with only 3 gold medals (*Winter Olympics 2010*).

Despite a number of negative aspects such as the mentioned unfinished hotels or lack of some high profile world leaders on the opening ceremony, the Sochi Olympics were evaluated very positively worldwide. As one of the journalists stated, “things went surprisingly well from an organizational standpoint. The venues were state-of-the-art, buses were on time, and, most important of all, security held up and the Games were terrorism-free” (Kaufman). Sochi’s PR indeed was bad before the Games, but the Games in the end were

regarded as a success. The volunteers were especially praised for being helpful and kind (Walker, *Winter Olympic volunteers*). Another thing is whether Vladimir Putin actually achieved his goals by organizing the Olympic Games in Sochi? As was stated earlier, his intentions most probably involved showing Russia as strong and powerful again, both to Russians and to the world. He also wanted to show Russia as a civilized, developed, peaceful state, contrary to its aggressive perception derived from the Cold War times.

It appears that Vladimir Putin, despite a few mishaps, used the occasion of hosting the Olympic Games according to his intentions. By organizing a winter sports mega-event in a sub-tropical area for an astronomic sum of around \$51 billion he sent a clear signal to the world – that Russia is capable of anything. Few countries in the world would be able to devote as much for a sports event. Moreover, success of the athletes and enormous growth of medal won comparing to the previous Winter Olympics also was evidence for the power of Russia. The behavior of Russians working at the Games, the volunteers most of all, on the other hand worked as an evidence of the civilized attitude of Russia. This was additionally enhanced by Putin's steps before the games, such as releasing the imprisoned Mikhail Chodorkovsky. All of those facts testify for the hypothesis that Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games were successful in terms of enhancing Russia's international perception.

Russian Involvement in the Crimean Crisis

The political events known as the Crimean Crisis were pre-luded by the so called 2014 Ukrainian revolution, which needs to be described shortly. The whole situation started when President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich decided not to sign an association agreement with the European Union in November 2013, due to Russia's pressure as it is believed. Shortly after, tens of thousands Ukrainians began their protests in Kiev (Grytsenko). The number of protesters quickly began to rise despite attacks by the police, to reach 800,000 in early December. Soon Ukrainian President Yanukovich received support from Vladimir Putin, as Russia agreed to buy \$15 billion of Ukrainian debt and to reduce prices of gas that Russia delivers to Ukraine (*Ukraine crisis timeline*).

Since then the situation calmed down, but several hundred people remained on the Independence Square in Kiev and kept

protesting. The crisis got escalated again in the mid-January 2014, when Ukrainian parliament passed anti-protest law (*Ukraine parliament pushes through sweeping anti-protest law*). Soon the talks of the oppositionists with Ukrainian president failed and first protesters got killed during clashes with police (Polityuk, Zinets; Danilova, Karmanau). As a result the anti-governmental protests expanded beyond Kiev and protesters began to storm regional offices in cities of Western Ukraine (*Ukraine unrest*). The governmental side seemed to step back and the situation began to calm down again due to an offer of amnesty for all the detained protesters (Olearchyk). The clashes erupted again though on 18th February (*Ukraine: Deadly clashes around parliament in Kiev*). This time the situation got much more violent with plenty of people killed, especially on 20th February when police used snipers and live ammunition (Traynor). In this situation an agreement between Victor Yanukovych and the oppositional politicians was signed, according to which a national unity government was to be installed and the presidential elections were to take place by the end of the year (*Ukrainian president and opposition sign early poll deal*). Shortly after the president disappeared and the Ukrainian parliament removed him from his position. Olexander Turchynov was selected as an interim president, while Arseniy Yatsenyuk was nominated as prime minister on 26th February (*Ukraine crisis timeline*).

The Olympic Games in Sochi ended on 23rd February, at the same time when the political crisis in Ukraine was beginning to fade. Only a few days later unexpected occurrences began to be held in Crimean Peninsula, a territory that was transferred from Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic to Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954. Beginning from 27th February, armed men began to seize government buildings in Simferopol, the capital of Crimea (Salem, Walker, Harding). According to observers, the gunmen were in fact Russian soldiers with no badges on their uniforms, however it was not confirmed. Soon the Russian involvement in Crimea began to be even more evident, especially after Russia's upper house of parliament approved Putin's request to use Russian forces in Ukraine (*Russian parliament approves troop deployment in Ukraine*). Russian troops also appeared in Crimea, although they were in unmarked uniforms and did not admit being Russians, Vladimir Putin admitted in April that there were Russian soldiers operating in Crimea, even though he earlier claimed they were self-defense forces (Karmanau, Isachenkov). Involvement of Russia is evident then.

On 6th March, the local parliament of Crimea and city council of Sevastopol voted in favor of joining Russia and declared a referendum to be held 10 days later (*Sevastopol and Crimean parliament vote to join Russia, referendum to be held in 10 days*). The referendum, boycotted by various groups such as Crimean Tatars, was declared a great win by separatists. According to official results, 83.1 percent of eligible population voted and 96.77 percent were in favor of joining Russia. On 17th March, Crimean local parliament voted to break away from Ukraine and join the Russian Federation. This happened officially on 18th March when Vladimir Putin signed the treaty of annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol (Morello, Englund, Witte; Brenner; Smith, Eshchenko).

The background of Russian annexation of Crimea has been described shortly above. The occurrences raise a question concerning the rationale for such decisions by Vladimir Putin. Apparently, there seem to be two explanations. The first one concerns the majority of ethnic Russians among Crimean population. Such circumstances obviously may have led to Russian involvement. The second reason may be connected with political events in Ukraine prior to the Crimean Crisis. President Viktor Yanukovytch, who was in favor of close bounds with Russia instead of European Union, was ousted from the post. Such a situation resembles the one in Afghanistan in 1979. Ukraine floating towards the West meant the deterioration of the Russian area of influence. Putin, on the other hand, wants Russia to be strong. Showing such a Russia was one of the objectives of organizing the Sochi Olympics. Annexing Crimea could be seen as more proof of that by showing that Russia is capable of defending its compatriots. Moreover, Putin's aim in Ukraine most probably was, and still is, to destabilize the situation in hope of either spreading the country or making it float back towards Moscow.

Russian involvement in Ukraine may at the same time draw conclusions concerning the PR reasons for hosting the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi. As has been noted, a number of possible motivations can be listed, such as the desire to show Russia powerful and civilized, both to the people of Russia and to the world. Vladimir Putin ceased any further actions concerning Ukraine until the Olympic were over, probably in order to avoid political controversies during the event. Both occurrences seem to show Russia from the completely different perspective, but at the same time some commonalities between them can be seen. It may be assumed that if the main objective of Sochi Olympics was to show Russia powerful, then the key aim of the involvement in the Ukraine might

have been similar. In respect to such assumption there was no dissonance between the two events. Such prepositions implies however, that all other objectives of the Sochi Olympics, such as showing Russia in good light to international audience, were additional and minor only.

Russia's International Image after the Crimean Crisis in the Context of the Sochi Olympics

The occurrences in Crimea, as well as the latter approaches to destabilize the situation particularly in eastern Ukraine, led to vast criticism from the international community. Sanctions were imposed on Russia, however they are usually described as minor and encompassed mostly travel bans and assets freezes imposed on individuals and companies (*Ukraine crisis: Russian officials targeted by sanctions*). States, especially European ones, seemed to appreciate economical bounds with Russia and were uneager to cut them.

On the other hand, a completely new attitude towards Russia could be seen in statements of high profile international politicians or journalists, who condemned Russia and its president for the events in Ukraine. In fact, only a very few world leaders supported Putin in his policy towards Ukraine, such as Afghanistan's government, the president of Venezuela Nicolas Maduro, and Syria's president Bashar al-Assad (Wachnicki). Even Alexander Lukashenko, President of Belarus, close ally of Russia, said that Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea was setting a "bad precedent," although in the end he also recognized Russia's annexation of Crimea (*Belarus Says Russia's Annexation of Crimea Sets a 'Bad Precedent'*).

Apart from a few examples mentioned above, the vast majority of states condemned Putin. American President Barack Obama said, for instance, that Russia was no more than a "regional power" whose actions in Ukraine were an expression of weakness rather than strength (Borger). German Chancellor Angela Merkel called Russia's effort towards annexing Crimea "the imperialism of past centuries" (Parkin, Buergin). French President Francois Hollande said on March 18, that "Crimea's joining Russia is "unacceptable" and France will never recognize legality of such actions" (*President Hollande: France doesn't recognize Crimea's annexation by Russia*). Poland was especially harsh in criticizing Russia's policy concerning

Crimea and Ukraine in general. Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk commented it saying, that the international community cannot accept the annexation of Crimea and compared the situation to the Yalta Conference (*Annexation of Crimea by Russia? Tusk talks about the new Yalta*).

The new, negative perception of Russia can be interpreted not only from official statements of political leaders, but also from all sort of other controversies that appear. One of them worth mentioning concerns former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. He was criticized by the international media after pictures showing him embracing Vladimir Putin during his birthday party in Sankt Petersburg were published. Shortly after, German government distanced itself with Schroeder (Kirschbaum, Barkin; Glanfield). In this case the condemnation of Gerhard Schroeder was massive. Obviously, there are also other signs of negative attitude towards Russia after the Crimean Crisis. For example, in Poland some hotel owners refused to host guests from Russia (Otto). Although such situations are occasional, especially in the Western societies a change of attitude towards Russia is visible. According to survey undertaken by Gallup, 68 percent of Americans perceive Russia as “unfriendly” or as the “enemy” and these figures have grown recently – before the crisis such perception shared 44 percent, in 2006 only 20 percent (Swift).

It can be said that Russia and its president Vladimir Putin have been criticized and condemned by the world, especially by the West, in respect to the events in Crimea. However, it appears that the negative attitude towards Russia is not comprehensive and most of the states still give priority to economic benefits of trading with Russia. This could be clearly seen in the issue of international sanctions against Russia, which have been relatively soft and directed against single people instead of the whole country. The main steps included assets freezes and visa bans (*EU imposes new sanctions against Russia after Putin signs bill annexing Crimea*). Russia was also ousted from the G8 Group and NATO suspended cooperation with Moscow (Smale, Shear; Croft, Siebold). On the other hand, France did not resign from the \$1.66 billion contract to supply Russia with Mistral warships (Irish, Pennetier, Pineau), while Austrian company OMV has signed with Russia’s Gazprom a memorandum to build a spur from the South Stream pipeline to Austria (*UPDATE 2-OMV and Gazprom press on with Austrian branch of South Stream gas pipeline*). Such situations, which are not exactly rare, imply that although the critics towards Russia is massive and the

perception of this country has deteriorated after the Crimean Crisis, there has not been a deep and comprehensive change of the Russia's image so far.

Conclusions

Vladimir Putin did not hide the main objectives of hosting the Olympic Games in Sochi. They were aimed at showing both to the world and to its own citizens the new Russia, strong as it once was. They were also aimed to make Russia more attractive in establishing relations with other countries. Thus, the objective of hosting Olympic Winter Games was to enhance Russia's soft power. As it appears, Russia did succeed in achieving this aim. Although the Games showed Russia as not fully efficient, concerning to what extent the budget was exceeded and that the last works were being done just before the Games' opening, they also showed that no matter how big the obstacles are, the Russia's priority goals would be accomplished.

It remains a puzzle, why after achieving such difficult and expensive purpose as described above, Vladimir Putin decided to take a completely opposite step just as the Olympics were finished. By involving in the crisis in Ukraine and eventually annexing the Crimean Peninsula, he completely changed the way Russia was perceived abroad. All the positive emotions evoked by the Sochi Olympics were changed towards condemnation of Russian policy, although this change of attitude is not complete.

The answer to this puzzle is possible if it is assumed that showing Russia to the world as a civilized country (as the "new Russia") was only an additional aim, whereas the main objective was to project image of Russia as a powerful state, capable of fulfilling its goals and that the objects of such projection were the Russian people and possibly societies of the countries already under Russian influence. In compliance with such assumption, the purpose of annexing Crimea was at least partly similar to the Sochi Olympics objective – to project dominant self-imaginary of the Russian state.

Concerning the facts above, it appears that the hypothesis that by annexing Crimea Russia squandered all the possible positive effects of the Sochi 2014 Olympic Games is partly confirmed. Of course it did negatively change the perception of Russia, especially in the West, but concerning the fact that the main purpose of the

Games was to show Russia's strength, the annexation of Crimea was just another prove of that, at the same time showing the incapacity of the international community to prevent it. Still, it appears that the annexation was not planned before the political crisis in Ukraine.

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