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# **Selected Aspects of Polish-Mexican Relations on the Political, Economic and Cultural-Scientific Level in the 21st Century**

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Polish-Mexican relations on the political, economic, cultural and scientific levels have developed over the decades. The first political contacts between our two countries, after Poland regained its independence, were established in the 1920s. However, interstate contacts have not been developed on a larger scale. This was due, among others, to the fact that the Latin American countries did not occupy a priority position in Polish foreign policy neither before or after World War II. After 1990, Mexico became one of Poland's most important Latin American partners. The Polish-Mexican trade exchange has been growing systematically. In 2015, it exceeded USD 1 billion for the first time in history. In April 2017 the first, historic visit at the highest level of the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, took place in Mexico. It was a positive manifestation of the need to strengthen relations at the highest level and to testify the political will to intensify Poland's relations with Mexico. In the second decade of the 21st century, we can talk about a "new opening" in Polish-Mexican relations. This manifests itself in both political and economic as well as cultural and scientific contacts. This article shows the most important manifestations of Poland's relations with Mexico in the first and second decade of the 21st century with some references to previous years.

**Key words:** Poland, Mexico, Polish foreign policy, politics, economic relations

## **1. Determinants of Polish-Mexican relations**

Poland's relations with the Latin American countries were largely determined by historical events. At the time when the countries of this region fought for their independence, Poland, as a sovereign state, did not exist on the map of Europe. However, social relations had been initiated much earlier. At the turn of the 19th and

20th centuries, the mass emigration (mainly economic migration) of Poles to Latin America and the Caribbean (mainly to Brazil and Argentina) took place, the apogee of which was the so-called Brazilian fever (1890/1891). Mexico and Cuba often constituted only a stop on the way of Polish emigrants to the United States of America.

After the Second World War, from 1945 to the turn of 1989/1990, the nature of the contacts between Poland and Latin America was motivated mainly by political and ideological factors and dependence on the USSR.

As a result of political changes in Poland after 1989, there was a possibility to re-defining our country's policy towards the Latin American region. The main goals in Poland's Latin American policy in 1990 were to promote Poland in this part of the world, to create a network of diplomatic missions, and to build a formal and legal basis for political, economic, cultural and scientific relations. Some of those goals haven't been implemented firstly, because of other priorities in Polish foreign policy and secondly, because of the lack of sufficient political will on both sides.

The last decade of the 20th and the first decade of the 21st century, weren't constructive for the development of Polish – Latin American relations. Because of the period of systemic reforms in Poland, as well as the basic objectives of the foreign policy of the Republic of Poland (striving for integration with Western European structures – NATO and the EU) relations with Latin American countries were marginalized. In the 1990s there were also many political, economic and social changes so in the Latin American countries and their politicians weren't interested in improving relations with Central Europe or with Poland either.

When Poland became a member of the EU in 2004 Polish policy makers were obliged to create a "Strategy of the Republic of Poland for Non-European Developing Countries". In the Latin American region Polish government chose "the most important countries" for the Polish foreign policy and "important" ones. The most important countries were: Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, and important were: Colombia and Venezuela.

Poland maintains diplomatic relations with all 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. In this region there are 9 Polish embassies: in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, Cuba and (from May 2017) in Panama and one Polish consulate general in Curitiba.

However, it should be noted that there is untapped potential in Poland's relations with Latin America. In political dimension there are too few visits at the high and top level in bilateral relations with the most important countries. Polish policy makers do not use EU tools and mechanisms sufficiently to intensify our relations with Latin American countries (e.g. development assistance). There is also untapped potential in economic cooperation – trade exchange is too small (our export to Latin America constitutes only 1% of the total Polish export and Polish import constitutes 1.7% of the total Polish import).

Over the past three decades, Poland and Mexico have undergone systemic transformation, enabling macroeconomic stabilization. The economic development of these countries has increased, and stable and pluralist democratic systems have been established. Poland and Mexico are developing economies with high potential. The Polish economy is the seventh economy in the EU and the largest in Central Europe and ranks 23rd on a global scale. Since Poland's accession to the EU, Poland is the fastest-growing EU member state (cumulative GDP growth in 2004-2014 amounted

to 53%). The Mexican economy is the second largest economy in Latin America and the 15th in the world. Its growth in 2014 was 2.1% and was 1% higher than the average in Latin America. The structure of the Polish and Mexican GDP is similar. In the case of Poland: 3.2% agriculture, 32.9% industry and 63.9% services. In the case of Mexico: 3.5% agriculture, 34.8% industry, 61.7% services. Poland is the largest exporter in Central Europe while Mexico is the main exporter among Latin American countries. Both countries have a well-developed manufacturing industry. Other important and competitive sectors of industry in both countries are: aerospace, automotive and electronics. Mexico is the largest car producer in Latin America, while Poland is among the 10 EU countries with the largest car production.

Poland and Mexico play an important role in the regional context, both in the political and economic dimensions. Mexico is an active country in Central America as well as in the Pacific Alliance. In July 2015, Poland gained observer status in the Pacific Alliance, which may contribute to the increase of economic cooperation between Poland and Mexico and other member states of this group. Both countries belong to the OECD and participate in UN peacekeeping missions. Poland and Mexico have convergent positions on such international issues as: human rights, democracy and disarmament.

The main goals of the Polish Latin American policy in 2004-2018 included: striving to strengthen economic, political, cultural and scientific relations with Poland's main partners in Latin America (including Mexico) and establishing a strengthened dialogue with Mexico – the so-called “new opening in Polish-Mexican relations” (which was confirmed by Poland's observer status in the Pacific Alliance and the visit of Poland's President Andrzej Duda in Mexico in April 2017). At the same time, Mexico is on the list of markets recognized as priority by the Ministry of Development of the Republic of Poland.

## 2. Selected aspects of Polish-Mexican relations at the political level

Mexico, alongside Brazil, Argentina and Chile, is one of the most important partners of Poland in Latin America. There are embassies and honorary consulates of both countries both in Poland and Mexico. There are seven honorary consulates of Poland, located in: Acapulco, Cancún, Monterrey, Guadalajara, Guanajuato, Tijuana and Tulancingo<sup>1</sup>.

In the 1990s of the twentieth century, the political relations between Poland and Mexico, although not characterized by high dynamics, were arranged correctly. The first high-level visit in our bilateral relations after the political changes in Poland in 1989, was the arrival of the Mexican Foreign Affairs Minister, Antonio Icaza, to Warsaw<sup>2</sup> in June of 1994. Four years later (in November 1998), on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Polish-Mexican diplomatic relations, a trip

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<sup>1</sup> Mexico has five honorary consulates in Poland in: Cracow, Gdansk, Poznan, Szczecin and Wrocław.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. Moloeznik. “Stosunki dyplomatyczne polsko-meksykańskie z perspektywy historycznej.” *Relacje Polska-Meksyk. Historia i współczesność*. Edited by F.V. Porras. Warszawa: CESLA UW, 2007: 130.

to Mexico was made by the Prime Minister of Poland, Jerzy Buzek. The visit was effective in formal and legal terms. A number of agreements were signed, including: the Agreement on the Prevention of Double Taxation and Income Tax and the Prevention of Tax Evasion and Avoidance of Fiscal Fraud, Visa Waiver Agreement, as well as other cooperation agreements in the fields of culture and science. The result of the visit was the appointment of the Mexican-Polish parliamentary group, to promote political rapprochement between our countries, in December of the same year, at a solemn session of the Senate of the Republic of Poland, in the presence of Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1990s, several meetings took place under the mechanism of the Polish-Mexican political consultations (e.g. in 1995 in Warsaw). Interstate agreements on various areas of cooperation were also concluded, including an intergovernmental agreement on air transport, which was signed in Mexico in October 1990.<sup>4</sup>

The takeover of power by President Vicente Fox in Mexico in 2000 has positively influenced the development and the revival of Polish-Mexican relations. It is worth emphasizing that Poland in the early 2000s was perceived in Mexico as a political and economic leader of Central and Eastern Europe and a country whose place and importance on the international stage would increase as the European integration process progressed.<sup>5</sup>

In the first decade of the 21st century, Poland's contacts with Mexico were quite intense. In March 2002, Marek Belka, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the Republic of Poland, travelled to Mexico (on the occasion of the Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey). In November 2002, Zbigniew Sobotka, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Interior and Administration was in Mexico. The purpose of his visit was to sign the Agreement on Combating Organized Crime and Other Crime, which took place on November 25, 2002 (entered into force in 2003).<sup>6</sup> On the occasion of the visit, talks were also held on cooperation in the field of military equipment<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, as part of the supplementation of the treaty base between our countries, Poland ratified the convention between the governments of the Republic of Poland and Mexico on the avoidance of double taxation in 2002.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For the first time, the Polish-Mexican parliamentary group was established in July 1992, and then reactivated several times during the next parliamentary term. From: M. Rynkowska. "Rola dyplomacji parlamentarnej w kontekście polsko-meksykańskich stosunków parlamentarnych." *Relacje Polska-Meksyk. Historia i współczesność...* 152.

<sup>4</sup> M.P. Moloeznik. "Stosunki dyplomatyczne polsko-meksykańskie z perspektywy historycznej" ... 130.

<sup>5</sup> P. Bogdziewicz. "Stosunki dwustronne Polski. Meksyk." *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej*, 2002: 229-230. The Polish delegation headed by the President of the Polish Chancellery, was present in 2000 at the swearing-in ceremony of the new president of Mexico, Vicente Fox. At the invitation of the President of Mexico, Lech Walesa also attended the ceremony. From: T. Lichota. "Stosunki dwustronne Polski. Państwa Ameryki Łacińskiej." *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej*, 2001: 256.

<sup>6</sup> A. Stachura-Świeżawska. "Stosunki traktatowe Polski." *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej*, 2004: 291.

<sup>7</sup> J. Perlin. "Stosunki dwustronne Polski. Państwa Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów." *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej*, 2003: 341.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem* 343.

It is worth noting that in 2002, another Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Mexico was opened in Acapulco.<sup>9</sup>

Another official visit in Polish-Mexican relations took place in 2003, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries. In connection with this affair, the trip to Mexico was attended by, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz head of the Polish Foreign Affairs Ministry, who met with President Vicente Fox and Mexican politicians. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland solemnly opened the sixth, Honorary Consulate of Poland in this country.<sup>10</sup>

A year later, in May 2004, at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Poland, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, an official visit of Mexican President Vicente Fox took place in Poland.<sup>11</sup> The visit was of special significance, because the previous one of the highest level from the Mexican side took place in Poland in 1963. The Mexican political delegation was accompanied by a delegation of business representatives who met with Polish entrepreneurs. The formal effect of the visit was the agreement concluded between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the United Mexican States on cooperation in the field of tourism (entered into force in December 2004).<sup>12</sup> The presidents of both countries also decided to set up a joint Commission under their auspices tasked with identifying factors hindering the development of bilateral cooperation, as well as clarifying the areas and directions in which Poland and Mexico could strengthen their economic contacts.<sup>13</sup>

The importance of Mexico in Poland's policy towards Latin America was to categorize that country into the group of "priority countries" (together with Brazil, Argentina and Chile) in a government document titled: "Strategy of the Republic of Poland for Non-European Developing Countries", in 2004. In this document, among the factors favoring the intensification of Polish-Mexican cooperation, there were some important issues pointed out: the economic development of Mexico in the early 2000s,<sup>14</sup> large oil and gas reserves and a stable political and economic system of that country. The importance of Mexico's cooperation with the EU was

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem* 342.

<sup>10</sup> K. Szczepanik, A. Herman-Łukasik, and B. Janicka. "Ameryka Północna i Południowa 1918-2007." *Stosunki dyplomatyczne Polski. Informator*. Vol. 2: *Ameryka Północna i Południowa 1918-2007*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Askon, 2008: 128.

<sup>11</sup> During his visit in recognition of his gratitude to President Aleksander Kwasniewski for his involvement in the dissemination of Polish-Mexican relations, the Polish president was awarded the Mexican Order of the Aztecs. See at: S. Dorocki, P. Brzegowy. "Zarys polsko-meksykańskich stosunków politycznych i gospodarczych w XX i XXI wieku." *Polska-Ameryka Łacińska. Historia – polityka – gospodarka – kultura*, edited by M. Drgas, J. Knopek. Toruń: Dom Wydawniczy DUET, 2014: 169.

<sup>12</sup> A. Stachura-Świeżawska. "Stosunki traktatowe Polski." *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej*, 2005: 367.

<sup>13</sup> "Wizyta oficjalna Prezydenta Meksykańskich Stanów Zjednoczonych z Małżonką." *Prezydent.pl*, 14 May 2004. Web. 7 November 2017. <http://www.prezydent.pl/archiwalne-aktualnosci/rok-2004/art,257,wizyta-oficjalna-prezydenta-meksykanskich-stanow-zjednoczonych-z-malzonka.html>.

<sup>14</sup> In 2000 Mexico recorded the highest growth rate in Latin America – 7.1%. In the years 2001-2002, the Mexican economy was experiencing a recession caused by a deterioration of consumption in the US and a drop in oil prices. In 2003, however, GDP growth was at 1.3%. For 2004 GDP growth was projected at 3.6%.



emphasized<sup>15</sup> (including the Free Trade Agreement between Mexico and the EU providing the liberalization of trade in agricultural and fishery products by 2010, and introducing a system of preferences in the field of services, protection of intellectual property, arbitration and various forms of commercial activity). The importance of the traditions of Polish-Mexican political and economic contacts as well as cultural and scientific co-operation, which underpins the further development of relations on many different levels, has also been emphasized.

According to the government document, factors that hinder the development of Polish-Mexican relations include: the country's high debt (in 2003, the foreign debt amounted to USD 80.6 billion), as well as the deteriorating state of internal security (as an example the increasing number of kidnappings and organized crime). It was emphasized that, despite a stabilized political situation in Mexico, the outbreak of social unrest in the Chiapas province is increasingly likely.<sup>16</sup> Among the factors hindering mutual trade, unspecified disagreements over veterinary regulations were highlighted (detailed sanitary checks on Poland's milk powder, contributing to increased costs and prolonged delivery periods, and apperception of Poland by Mexico as a BSE-endangered country and foot-and-mouth disease).<sup>17</sup>

The membership of the Republic of Poland in the EU structures has increased the attractiveness of Poland as a reliable and economically stable partner for cooperation. The perception of our country has also changed. The Latin American countries began to perceive Poland from the perspective of the role it plays in the EU and its potential impact on decisions concerning Latin American countries. After Poland's accession to the EU, the policy towards Latin America intensified. The first Polish Strategy for Non-European Developing Countries was created, in which Mexico was considered as one of the main partners of our country alongside with Brazil, Argentina and Chile. The Polish-Mexican trade exchange also increased, and in 2015 exceeded USD one billion.<sup>18</sup> The possibility of meetings and dialogue in the multi-lateral forum has also increased through the participation of both countries in the EU-Latin America and Caribbean summits.

The updating and modernization of the Economic Partnership Agreement and Political Coordination and Cooperation between Mexico and the European Union is an important condition for strengthening economic ties and cooperation between Poland and Mexico.

Strengthened political relations between Poland and Mexico contributed not only to parliamentary cooperation, but also to the multilateral forum (especially the EU, the OECD, the UN,<sup>19</sup> and the Pacific Alliance, which Poland has been observing since July 2015).<sup>20</sup> Poland and Mexico presented concurrent views on

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<sup>15</sup> As part of the accelerated liberalization of trade, by the end of 2002 tariffs were abolished for further industrial goods that were supposed to be eliminated by the EU in 2003, and by Mexico in 2007 (for example, EU pharmaceuticals and Mexican-made cars).

<sup>16</sup> Chiapas is located in the southern part of Mexico.

<sup>17</sup> *Strategia RP w odniesieniu do pozaeuropejskich krajów rozwijających się*. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> More on this subject in the section devoted to economic relations.

<sup>19</sup> Poland supported Mexico in the Security Council elections.

<sup>20</sup> Apart from Mexico, in the Pacific Alliance, Chile, Colombia and Peru are also included. Poland is an observer of this grouping since July 2015.

important issues of the international agenda (such as human rights,<sup>21</sup> democracy and disarmament).<sup>22</sup>

In the years 2012-2017, the frequency of bilateral meetings was slightly smaller, but there were several important visits. In October 2012, Deputy Minister Beata Stelmach went to Mexico, accompanied by a delegation of representatives of the Polish administration, Parliament and Polish businessmen.<sup>23</sup>

In the first and half of the second decade of the 21st century, talks continued under Polish-Mexican political and economic consultations. It should be noted, however, that such meetings did not take place at regular intervals, which reduced their effectiveness.<sup>24</sup>

In April 2015, Mexican Foreign Affairs Minister José Antonio Meade Kuribreña paid a visit to Warsaw. During the meeting with the head of Polish diplomacy, Grzegorz Schetyna they talked about new opportunities for cooperation and the intensification of political, economic and cultural relations (including those at the local and academic level). The need to strengthen the instruments of political cooperation, such as the mechanism of regular consultation and cooperation in international fora, has been emphasized. In this regard, it was important to take further action by the Polish government to gain the status of an observer state in the Latin American regional grouping, the Pacific Alliance (Grzegorz Schetyna handed a letter of intent requesting Poland to grant such a status to Minister José Antonio Meade Kuribreña).<sup>25</sup>

In December 2015, a political consultation took place in Mexico at the level of the Directors of Foreign Affairs Ministries, during which the decision to initiate enhanced Polish-Mexican bilateral dialogue was confirmed.<sup>26</sup> The last, 10th round bi-

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<sup>21</sup> For example, Poland and Mexico have consulted their positions on the issue of human rights in Cuba. See at: P. Bogdziewicz. "Stosunki dwustronne Polski. Meksyk" ... 229-230.

<sup>22</sup> The percentage of general convergence noted in the context of the votes of Poland and Mexico over the resolutions of the 69th United Nations General Assembly was 64%. Decolonization (100%) and Middle East (80%) were the issues with the highest degree of convergence. In the least, the opinions of the states overlapped in development (38%). Mexico supported the adoption of a project submitted by Poland for the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on the Destruction of Its Inventories. In addition, both countries cooperate to implement the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative.

<sup>23</sup> A number of companies participated in the mission, including: mining, pharmaceutical, transport, green technology, food, consulting and metal. From: "Wiceminister Beata Stelmach z wizytą w Meksyku." *Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych RP*, 2012. Web. 7 November 2017. [http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/polityka\\_zagraniczna/inne\\_kontynenty/ameryka\\_lacinska\\_i\\_karaiby/wiceminister\\_beata\\_stelmach\\_z\\_wizyta\\_w\\_meksyku;jsessionid=CB196CFFD37853189625EEC75C4A2FBF.cms2](http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/polityka_zagraniczna/inne_kontynenty/ameryka_lacinska_i_karaiby/wiceminister_beata_stelmach_z_wizyta_w_meksyku;jsessionid=CB196CFFD37853189625EEC75C4A2FBF.cms2).

<sup>24</sup> Meetings in the framework of the political consultation mechanism take place alternately – in Warsaw and Mexico City. Starting in 1999, nine meetings took place in: 2001, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2014 and 2015, the last of which took place in Mexico City.

<sup>25</sup> "Minister spraw zagranicznych Meksyku w Warszawie." *Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych RP*, 24 April 2015. Web. 12 November 2017. [http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/wiadomosci/minister\\_spraw\\_zagranicznych\\_meksyku\\_w\\_warszawie](http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/wiadomosci/minister_spraw_zagranicznych_meksyku_w_warszawie).

<sup>26</sup> "Polsko-meksykańskie konsultacje polityczne." *Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych RP*, 9 December 2015. Web. 12 November 2017. [http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/polityka\\_zagraniczna/](http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/polityka_zagraniczna/)

lateral, political-economic consultation at the level of deputy ministers took place in November 2016 in Mexico City. The deputy head of the Polish Foreign Affairs Ministry, Robert Gray, emphasized that Mexico is an important political and export partner of Poland in the Latin American region and expressed hope for a strategic partnership of our countries in the future.<sup>27</sup>

The first, historic visit by the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, in Mexico in April 2017, was a positive manifestation of the need to strengthen relations at the highest level and to testify the political will to intensify Poland's relations with Mexico.<sup>28</sup>

During the three-day visit of the President of the Republic of Poland in Mexico, held on April 22-25, 2017, the head of the Polish State met with his Mexican counterpart, Enrique Peña Nieto, as well as with the president of the capital city Miguel Ángel Mancera, and also attended a solemn session in the Senate. Andrzej Duda, inaugurated the activity of the Polish Agency for Investment and Trade and participated in the bilateral Economic Forum. The President of the Republic of Poland also met with representatives of the Polish diaspora at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Mexico.<sup>29</sup> The main objective of the visit of the President of the Republic of Poland in Mexico was to support Polish business, the Polish economy and Polish companies that could open up to the Mexican market.<sup>30</sup> During Andrzej Duda's visit in Mexico, the presidents of both countries signed a Joint Declaration, "Towards a Strategic Partnership Between Poland and Mexico".<sup>31</sup> The document, signed by the Heads of State, was divided into three complementary parts: political

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<sup>27</sup> "Podsekretarz stanu Robert Grey wziął udział w konsultacjach politycznych w Meksyku." *Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych RP*, 11 November 2016. Web. 12 November 2017. [http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/polityka\\_zagraniczna/inne\\_kontynenty/ameryka\\_lacinska\\_i\\_karaiby/podsekretarz\\_stanu\\_robert\\_grey\\_wzial\\_udzial\\_w\\_konsultacjach\\_politycznych\\_w\\_meksyku.jsessionid=9F6CD5636F9E8A6B39223C7B243ACF00.cmsap1p](http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/polityka_zagraniczna/inne_kontynenty/ameryka_lacinska_i_karaiby/podsekretarz_stanu_robert_grey_wzial_udzial_w_konsultacjach_politycznych_w_meksyku.jsessionid=9F6CD5636F9E8A6B39223C7B243ACF00.cmsap1p).

<sup>28</sup> "Będzie historyczna wizyta Andrzeja Dudy w Meksyku? Szczerski: 'Prezydent podjął decyzję, że będzie chciał tę pierwszą, historyczną wizytę odbyć.'" *Wpolityce.pl*, 22 October 2016. Web. 12 November 2017. <http://wpolityce.pl/polityka/312826-bedzie-historyczna-wizyta-andrzeja-dudy-w-meksyku-szczerski-prezydent-podjal-decyzje-ze-bedzie-chcial-te-pierwsza-historyczna-wizyte-odbyc>.

<sup>29</sup> During his speech addressed to the Mexican Polish diaspora, the president of Poland emphasized the importance of their activities to promote Polish culture in Mexico, including one taken up by the Polish school established in Mexico City where children can learn Polish and use the collection of the Polish library.

<sup>30</sup> The president pointed out that outside of the EU market, exports are more difficult, as they are more risky markets, but, he added, "at the same time, they are huge, where a lot of countries are dynamically developing and investing there". President Duda not only encouraged Polish entrepreneurs, but also declared his support in this regard. See at: "Drugi dzień wizyty w Meksyku." *Prezydent.pl*, 24 April 2017. Web. 14 November 2017. <http://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wizyty-zagraniczne/art,160,drugi-dzien-wizyty-w-meksyku.html>.

<sup>31</sup> The Polish side expressed its gratitude in this declaration for the support given by Mexico to the Polish candidature for a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2018-2019.



dialogue,<sup>32</sup> bilateral trade and investment<sup>33</sup> and cooperation in education, culture and technology.<sup>34</sup>

The result of the visit was the signing of a number of agreements, which foster closer cooperation, such as the Executive Program for the Education and Culture Cooperation Agreement for 2017-2021,<sup>35</sup> the Declaration on mutual cooperation between the Minister of Development and Finance of the Republic of Poland and the United Mexican States Minister of Economy in order to set up a High Level Working Party on Economic, the Cooperation agreement in export credit between Export Credit Insurance Corporation (KUKE) of the Republic of Poland and the National Bank for Foreign Trade and Bancomext (the aim of which is to promote bilateral trade and investment flows and opening the Trade Office of the Polish Agency for Investment and Trade in Mexico), The cooperation agreement between the Polish Agency for Investment and Trade and the Mexican Agency for Investment Promotion ProMéxico and the Cooperation Agreement between the Polish National Chamber of Commerce (KIG) and the Mexican Chamber of Foreign Trade, Investment and Technology (COMCE).<sup>36</sup>

During his speech at the Polish-Mexican Economic Forum, the President of the Republic of Poland stated that the Polish side is particularly interested in cooperation in such areas as: electromobility, IT and communication technologies, green economy, as well as pharmacy and biotechnology. He also emphasized the need to deepen mutual investment cooperation.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> In the section devoted to political relations, the Polish side asserted its support for the modernization of the legal framework for cooperation between Mexico and the EU. It has also been agreed to increase coordination in multilateral organizations such as the UN and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in areas such as: human rights, UN reform, peacekeeping operations, disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, sustainable development and climate change, as well as the implementation of joint analytical projects in Central America and the Caribbean. See at: "Wspólna deklaracja 'W kierunku partnerstwa strategicznego między Polską i Meksykiem'." *Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Meksyku*. Web. 14 November 2017. <http://www.meksyk.msz.gov.pl/resource/f1f57624-680c-4c84-9ffd-ee563305ccba:JCR>.

<sup>33</sup> In this issue President Duda assured that Poland recognized Mexico as a non-European high priority market. It has been pledged that the links between the private sectors of both countries will be strengthened, as well as encouraging Polish and Mexican entrepreneurs to participate in business and investment projects, including trade missions, fairs and exhibitions.

<sup>34</sup> Both sides have declared a strengthening of cooperation in education and culture. For this purpose a Conference of University Presidents of Poland and Mexico was planned to be organized in Warsaw. Support was also given to strengthening cooperation between universities, including the exchange of students and researchers, and the implementation of joint research projects, as well as cooperation in the field of sport and tourism. In this context, it was important to confirm Mexico's participation as a partner country of the World Travel Show 2017, the most important tourism fair in Poland.

<sup>35</sup> "Wizyta w Meksyku wpisuje się w dyplomację gospodarczą prezydenta." *Prezydent.pl*, 20 April 2017. Web. 14 November 2017. <http://www.prezydent.pl/kancelaria/aktywnosc-ministrow/art,668,wizyta-w-meksyku-wpisuje-sie-w-dyplomacje-gospodarcza-prezydenta.html>.

<sup>36</sup> "Wspólna deklaracja..."...

<sup>37</sup> "W Meksyku widzimy szansę na rozwój dla polskiego biznesu." *Prezydent.pl*, 25 April 2017. Web. 14 November 2017. <http://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi->

The visit of the President of the Republic of Poland in Mexico was an important impetus to the intensification of bilateral relations, confirming the declared “new opening” of Polish-Mexican relations and growing importance of this country in Poland’s policies towards Latin American countries..

The growing importance of Mexico in Poland’s Latin American policy was also reflected in the conference: “Strengthening the Dialogue Between Poland and Mexico: A New Opening in Bilateral Relations”, organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Mexican Embassy in Poland, in September 2016 in Warsaw.<sup>38</sup>

More than seventy representatives of government, science, business and non-governmental organizations participated in the conference, as well as Mexico’s ambassador to Poland, Alejandro Negrín.

As emphasized at the conference, both Poland and Mexico undertake activities to strengthen their international positions in the second decade of the 21st century, as well as their role as a leader influencing regional development. This is one of the arguments for strengthening the cooperation of our countries. It is also noteworthy that Poland and Mexico are developing economies<sup>39</sup> with a similar GDP structure.<sup>40</sup>

Inaugurating the event, the Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Marek Ziółkowski emphasized that Mexico is one of the main recipients of Polish exports in Latin America (in 2015 the value of Polish exports to Mexico amounted to USD 654 million). The Deputy Minister also reminded that in July 2016 Mexico was recognized by the Government of the Republic of Poland as one of the five so-called Prospective markets for our country, where Poland will lead the intensive promotion of its economy over the next three years.<sup>41</sup>

It is also important to carry out regular political and economic consultations, at the level of deputy ministers or heads of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It would be beneficial to strengthen the parliamentary dialogue by establishing or reactivating the Poland-Mexico friendship group in the Polish parliament<sup>42</sup>, and by inten-

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prezydenta-rp/wystapienia/art,194,prezydent-w-meksyku-widzimy-szanse-na-rozwoj-dla-polskiego-biznesu.html.

<sup>38</sup> The event was combined with the distribution of publications prepared by the Foreign Ministries of our two countries, titled: “Recommendations for enhancing relations between Poland and Mexico” (Spanish: *Recomendaciones para el fortalecimiento de la relación entre México y Polonia*).

<sup>39</sup> Poland’s economy is the seventh economy in the EU, while the Mexican ranks second among the countries of Latin America and the 15th place in the world. It is worth noting that the growth of Mexico’s economy in 2014 was 2.1% and was 1% higher than the average growth in Latin America and significantly higher than other economies in the region. From: *Recomendaciones para el fortalecimiento de la relación entre México y Polonia*. Ciudad de Mexico: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Instituto Matías Romero, 2016: 40.

<sup>40</sup> In the case of Poland it is: 3.2% of agriculture, 32.9% of industry and 63.9% of service, and in the case of our Mexican partner: 3.5% is agriculture, 34.8% industry and 61.7% service.

<sup>41</sup> “Wiceminister Marek Ziółkowski o wzmocnionym dialogu polsko-meksykańskim.” *Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych RP*, 29 September 2016. Web. 14 November 2017. [http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/wiadomosci/wiceminister\\_marek\\_ziolkowski\\_o\\_wzmocnionym\\_dialogu\\_polsko\\_meksykanskim](http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/wiadomosci/wiceminister_marek_ziolkowski_o_wzmocnionym_dialogu_polsko_meksykanskim).

<sup>42</sup> Such a group already exists in the Mexican Congress.

sifying parliamentary cooperation in regional and multilateral fora (such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union or the Mixed EU-Mexico Parliamentary Committee).

### 3. Selected aspects of Polish-Mexican relations at the economic level

Since the mid-1980s, various measures have been taken to increase Polish-Mexican trade and diversify its structure (for example: the proposal to build a glass factory in Mexico was signed; in 1988 a cooperation agreement was signed on the production of switchboards in 1999, INTERVIS Mexicana SA, a distributor of tools in Mexico, was established. Despite these and other initiatives, trade between Poland and Mexico (which used to be one of Poland's key partners in Latin America) in the 1990s was small and there was a systematic decline in Polish export to that country.<sup>43</sup> A positive sign was the Convention on the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Income Tax Avoidance which was concluded between Poland and Mexico in 1998.<sup>44</sup>

In the 1990s, the following dominated in the commodity structure of Polish exports to Mexico: chemicals, metallurgical products, mechanical devices and tools, food products and textile products. Polish imports from this country consisted mainly of tropical fruits. In the first half of the 1990s, there was a decrease in Polish imports from Mexico, which was related to the introduction of a system of customs preferences by Poland, which caused a significant reduction of customs duties on the imports of agri-food products from the beneficiary countries (Mexico was not in this bunch). It was only in the second half of the 1990s that there was an increase and diversification of imports from Mexico to Poland.<sup>45</sup>

A revival of Polish-Mexican economic cooperation has been observed since 2001. Poland, for the first time in a few years, has reached a trade surplus with Mexico. The value of bilateral trade in 2001 amounted to USD 188 million (an increase of 34% over 2000), of which Polish exports amounted to USD 104 million (62% increase compared to the previous year), while imports from Mexico amounted to USD 84 million (an increase of 10% over the previous year).<sup>46</sup> In 2001 Mexico was the third trading partner of Poland from Latin America (the first one was Brazil and the second Venezuela). Also the first Polish investments in that country took place in 2001.<sup>47</sup> During the session of the Senate of Mexico in 2001, Senator Czesław Pogoda, Chairman of the Mexican-Polish friendship parliamentary group, stressed that Mexico is a trading power in the Western Hemisphere, and therefore, Poland should be interested in strengthening economic and cultural ties with this country.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> R. Smyk, A. Grudziński. "Stosunki gospodarcze Meksyk-Polska." *Relacje Polska-Meksyk. Historia i współczesność...* 95. For example, in 1998, the value of import of Polish goods from Mexico amounted to 4.8 million USD, while the value of exports was 19.7 million USD.

<sup>44</sup> S. Dorocki, P. Brzegowy. *Zarys polsko-meksykańskich stosunków politycznych i gospodarczych w XX i XXI wieku...* 174.

<sup>45</sup> R. Smyk, A. Grudziński. "Stosunki gospodarcze Meksyk-Polska..." ... 94.

<sup>46</sup> P. Bogdziewicz. "Stosunki dwustronne Polski. Meksyk" ... 230.

<sup>47</sup> B. Zakrzewski. "Stosunki dwustronne Polski. Państwa Ameryki Łacińskiej." *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej*, 2002: 326.

<sup>48</sup> M.P. Moloeznik. "Stosunki dyplomatyczne polsko-meksykańskie z perspektywy historycznej" ... 131.

In the period of the last decade of the twentieth century and the first years of the 21st century, until Poland's accession to the EU, the best year for mutual trade turnover was 2003, when it exceeded USD 200 million (an increase of USD 51 million compared to the previous year). There was also an increase in the value of Polish exports to the Mexican market, although the trade balance was negative and amounted to USD -48 million.

**The value of Polish-Mexican trade turnover in 2004-2016 (in million USD)**

Year	Export	Import	Turnover	Balance
2004	89.3	120.2	209.4	-30.9
2005	81.1	178.1	259.3	-96.9
2006	120.8	203.6	324.5	-82.9
2007	148.6	280.2	429.0	-131.6
2008	254.6	392.3	646.8	-137.7
2009	155.8	222.6	378.6	-66.8
2010	267.3	296.7	564.3	-29.4
2011	432.4	359.5	792.0	72.6
2012	566.3	344.1	910.4	222.0
2013	523.6	371.0	894.8	152.7
2014	496.9	420.6	917.2	76.3
2015	654.4	550.0	1 204.5	104.4
2016	531.1	536.3	1 067.4	-5.3

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland, Information Portal. Author's own list.

After Poland's accession to the EU, our country was automatically covered by the EU-Mexico Free Trade Agreement, which abolished the existing barriers to trade. In 2004, Mexican President Vicente Fox signed a memorandum of understanding on expanding economic exchanges during his visit to Poland. In addition, a tourism co-operation agreement was concluded.<sup>49</sup> The result of the president's visit was the establishment of a group of Polish and Mexican economic experts, in order to identify the sectors where there are opportunities to increase bilateral trade.<sup>50</sup> In addition, in 2004, a cooperation agreement was signed between the National Chamber of Commerce (KIG) and the Mexican Trade Council (COMCE).<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> S. Dorocki, P. Brzegowy. "Zarys polsko-meksykańskich stosunków politycznych i gospodarczych w XX i XXI wieku" ... 174-175.

<sup>50</sup> M. Żurawska. "Polsko-meksykańska wymiana handlowa w okresie prezydentury Carlosa Salinas de Gortari oraz Vicente Foxa." *Polska-Ameryka Łacińska. Historia – polityka – gospodarka – kultura*... 220-221.

<sup>51</sup> In COMCE there is a Polish-Mexican Committee of Entrepreneurs, whose task is to support the cooperation of Polish and Mexican companies and to work for the

As can be seen from the data presented in the table, the value of trade between our countries in four years – from 2004 to 2008 tripled. Both the value of Polish exports and imports to Mexico steadily increased. The record-breaking for the first decade of the 21st century was 2008, when the value of trade turnover amounted to USD 646.8 million, of which Polish exports amounted to USD 254.6 million and imports USD 392.3 million. In the next, 2009, there was a significant decrease in turnover (to USD 378.6 million), which is explained by the swine flu epidemic in Mexico<sup>52</sup> and the escalation of the economic crisis in the world, among the others. By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, Poland recorded a negative trade balance with Mexico, which reached its highest level in 2008 (USD -137.7 million) and the lowest in 2010 (USD -29.4 million).

Starting from 2011, until 2015, there was a trade surplus with Mexico, which reached its highest level in 2012 – USD 222.0 million. Since 2010, Polish-Mexican trade has regained its former dynamics – the value of trade increased and doubled between 2010 and 2014.<sup>53</sup> So far, in the second decade of the 21st century (until the end of 2016), the historical result of trade was reached in 2015, when the value of mutual trade exceeded USD 1 billion. Polish exports amounted to USD 654.4 million and imports amounted to USD 550.0 million, while maintaining a positive balance for Poland, which amounted to USD 104.4 million. In 2016, the high level of trade was maintained (it exceeded USD 1 billion, although it was slightly lower than in 2015), although the value of exports and imports decreased. For the first time since 2010, there was also a slight negative Polish trade balance with Mexico (USD -5.3 million).

The percentage of imports and exports in Polish-Mexican trade, compared to other foreign partners in both countries, is not very high, respectively it is maintained at 0.27% and 0.26%. Mexico's participation in the Polish trade with Latin America is about 13%.<sup>54</sup> Poland was the 32nd largest trading partner in Mexico in 2015, 9th amongst EU countries and the first in Central and Eastern Europe. Mexico, in 2015, occupied the 46th position among Polish partners on a global scale.<sup>55</sup>

The commodity structure of Polish exports to Mexico has for many years included: vehicles and car parts, aircraft, vessels and associated equipment, electrical and mechanical equipment for recording and receiving sound, coke, chemical products, machinery and products of the machinery industry, groceries, milk powder, alcohol, tobacco, casein, paper, furniture, plastics, and base metal products. The structure of imports from Mexico is similar to the structure of Polish exports to this country

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development of mutual economic relations. See at: "Stosunki gospodarcze Polski z Meksykiem i Ameryką Środkową." *Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Meksyku*. Web. 14 November 2017. [http://www.meksyk.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca\\_dwustronna/ekonomia/ambasada\\_rp\\_w\\_meksyku\\_340/?printMode=true](http://www.meksyk.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca_dwustronna/ekonomia/ambasada_rp_w_meksyku_340/?printMode=true).

<sup>52</sup> Due to the influenza AH1N1 epidemic, the think-tank debate scheduled for May 2009 has been canceled by Mexico. Similarly, as planned for autumn 2009 visit to Poland by the Mexican economic delegation. "Notatka informacyjna o polsko-meksykańskich stosunkach handlowych i gospodarczych." *Ministerstwo Gospodarki*. Web. 16 November 2017.

<sup>53</sup> "Polsko-meksykańskie konsultacje polityczne..."...

<sup>54</sup> "Stosunki gospodarcze Polski z Meksykiem i Ameryką Środkową..."...

<sup>55</sup> "Handel zagraniczny Polski w styczniu 2016 r. (wg wstępnych danych GUS)." *Ministerstwo Rozwoju*. Web. 16 November 2017. <https://www.mr.gov.pl/strony/aktualnosci/handel-zagraniczny-polski-w-styczniu-2016-r-wg-wstepnych-danych-gus/>.



and predominates in it: electronics, automotive (car and spare parts) and food products (especially peppers and fruits).<sup>56</sup> They additionally include: digital machines and processors, data transmitters, medical supplies, telephones, machines, PVC articles, copper, fiberglass, cowhide, protective clothing, electric shavers and razors and alcohol.<sup>57</sup>

Poland's relations with Mexico in terms of trade, investment, economic competitiveness, agriculture and fisheries, the environment, as well as consumer protection, transport and energy, are set out in the Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement signed in 1997 with elements of the FTA (Free-Trade Agreement) between Mexico and the EU.<sup>58</sup> The economic agreements concluded between Poland and Mexico include: the Air Transport Agreement (signed in October 11, 1990), the Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement (concluded in November 30, 1998), the Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation in Income Tax and Prevention of Tax Evasion (signed on 30 of November 1998) and Cooperation Agreement on Tourism (concluded in May 14, 2004).

In the second decade of the 21st century, various measures were taken to intensify bilateral economic cooperation. For example, in May 2010, a business mission of Polish entrepreneurs arrived in Mexico, and it was organized by the National Chamber of Commerce (KIG). In June 2012, a Polish-Mexican trade and investment seminar was organized in Warsaw at the initiative of the Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency (PAIiIZ) and the ProMéxico office (Mexican counterpart of PAIiIZ), in cooperation with the US Embassy.<sup>59</sup> At the turn of September and October 2012, a series of economic and promotional events were organized in Mexico under the name of "Polish Days in Mexico". At the same time, a government delegation came to Mexico, under the chairmanship of the Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beata Stelmach.<sup>60</sup> During the visit of the Polish delegation, the first Polish-Mexico Economic Forum was held in the capital of Mexico, titled: "Poland. The Gate to Europe".<sup>61</sup> It is worth recalling that Mexico was also on

<sup>56</sup> M. Żurawska. "Polsko-meksykańska wymiana handlowa..." ... 221.

<sup>57</sup> *Recomendaciones para el fortalecimiento...* 47.

<sup>58</sup> The document came into force in relation to the trade in goods in 2000, and in the case of services in 2001. From: "Notatka informacyjna o polsko-meksykańskich stosunkach gospodarczych." *Ministerstwo Rozwoju*. Web. 16 November 2017. [https://www.mr.gov.pl/media/24568/Meksyk\\_07\\_2016.pdf](https://www.mr.gov.pl/media/24568/Meksyk_07_2016.pdf).

<sup>59</sup> The event was attended by representatives of a number of Mexican companies, including Gruma (the world's largest producer of corn flour and tortilla) and the Entrada Group (offshore consulting services). See at: *ibidem*.

<sup>60</sup> The delegation was accompanied by a mission of 15 Polish entrepreneurs, representing various sectors: mining (Orlen Upstream, PGNiG, Lotos Petrobaltic, Famur Group), pharmaceutical, transport, green technology, food, consulting and metallurgical. There were also representatives of institutions supporting Polish exports, such as Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (BGK) or Export Credit Insurance Corporation (KUKE). "Wiceszefowa MSZ w Argentynie i Urugwaju zachęcała do interesów z Polską." *Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych RP*, 12 April 2013. [http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/msz\\_w\\_mediach/wiceszefowa\\_msz\\_w\\_argentyinie\\_i\\_urugwaju\\_zachecala\\_do\\_interesow\\_z\\_polska\\_\\_depesza\\_pap\\_12\\_04\\_2013](http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/msz_w_mediach/wiceszefowa_msz_w_argentyinie_i_urugwaju_zachecala_do_interesow_z_polska__depesza_pap_12_04_2013); "Notatka informacyjna o polsko-meksykańskich stosunkach gospodarczych" ...

<sup>61</sup> The name of the Forum proves that Mexico regards Poland as a country that can facilitate its entry into other European markets. The seminar was co-organized by the Embassy of

the list of the five prospective markets for Poland, created for the period 2017-2019 by the Ministry of Development of Poland.

As far as the Polish investments in Mexico are concerned, until June 2015, 53 companies with Polish capital were registered in this country.<sup>62</sup> They include "Nowy Styl", a furniture company from Krosno, (sale of office swivel chairs)<sup>63</sup> and a factory producing fumigators. Polish investors are interested in the construction of Polish assembly plants for fumigation in this country. Increasing Polish investments in the services sector, especially in the hotel sector, is also planned. On the Mexican side, the most important investment in Poland was the acquisition of the RMC Group in 2004, which owned several cement plants in our country and was a manufacturer of cement and construction materials by the Cemex company (Cementos Mexicanos). Cemex is currently the third largest cement producer in the world.<sup>64</sup> Another Mexican company present in Poland is NEMAK, a manufacturer of automotive spare parts of the Mexican group ALFA. In 2006, NEMAK purchased the Polish TK Aluminum company for USD 71 million. The third Mexican company in Poland is KATCON, which in 2009 bought Delphi, a Polish automobile manufacturer of car exhaust gas systems and catalytic converters in Błonia (near Warsaw).<sup>65</sup>

In 2015, Maflow, a member of the Boryszew Automotive Group, announced that it would open a production plant for air conditioning in Guanajuato.<sup>66</sup> In addition, in March 2015, the Polish Bury Technologies (a leader in multimedia interfaces for the automotive sector) opened a branch in the Mexican state of Tlaxcala (the company aspires to become the main supplier of electronic components for the Audi factory in Mexico).<sup>67</sup> The field of Polish investments in Mexico also included the cosmetic industry (Inglot) and Polish-Mexican travel agencies.

At the "Strengthening the Dialogue Between Poland and Mexico: A New Opening in Bilateral Relations" conference, which took place in September 2016 in Warsaw, an attempt was made to find out why only a few Polish companies choose to enter the Mexican market and vice versa. As the chairman of Katcon Polska Sp., Bernardo Turner (with five years of experience on the Polish market) maintained that the development of Polish-Mexican trade and investment relations were hindered by insufficient knowledge about the specificity of the partner. The stereotypical perception of Mexico is still present in Poland. This country appears to Polish

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the Republic of Poland, the Mexican Ministry of Economy and the Mexican Business Council for Foreign Trade and Eurocentro Nafin.

<sup>62</sup> Polish capital has reached 8 sectors, the most important being: manufacturing (74.0%), turnover and rental of real estate (22%), tourism (2.9%, including travel agency "Destino México») and trade (1.1%). The value of cumulative Polish investments in Mexico was USD 19.1 million between 1999 and 2014 (the highest figure in 2009 was USD 11.6 million). From: "Notatka informacyjna o polsko-meksykańskich stosunkach gospodarczych"...

<sup>63</sup> Local activity was suspended. The Polish company currently supplies the Mexican partner (Kindemex) only with the components for the production of office chairs.

<sup>64</sup> R. Smyk, A. Grudziński. "Stosunki gospodarcze Meksyk-Polska" ... 97.

<sup>65</sup> *Recomendaciones para el fortalecimiento...* 48.

<sup>66</sup> "Maflow Mexico." *Maflow Boryszew Group*. Web. 16 November 2017. <http://www.maflow.com/art/275/mexico.html>.

<sup>67</sup> *Recomendaciones para el fortalecimiento...* 49.

entrepreneurs primarily as a country of Mariachi, cacti, hats and tequila.<sup>68</sup> There is insufficient information on the areas as to where there is a demand for Polish products in Mexico (and vice versa), as well as the potential for developing cooperation.

In the publication "Recommendations for the strengthening of relations between Poland and Mexico" of 2016, sectors of particular importance in the development of economic cooperation have been analyzed<sup>69</sup>. The most prospective areas of intensification of business contacts included: the automotive sector, electronics, power industry, (especially the coal industry), construction and infrastructure, aviation, tourism,<sup>70</sup> food<sup>71</sup> and environmental technologies.

#### 4. Selected aspects of Polish-Mexican relations on the cultural and scientific level

Political changes in Poland enabled the development of bilateral state relations, including those in the cultural field. In 1990, the Mexican Society of Friends of Chopin was established, to promote his music and the works of the other Polish artists as well. In June 1997, an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the field of education and culture was concluded. On this basis, the Mixed Commission for Educational and Cultural Cooperation between Poland and Mexico was established.<sup>72</sup>

During the visit of Jerzy Buzek, Prime Minister of Poland to Mexico in 1998, an intergovernmental agreement was reached on cultural and scientific cooperation, between the Ministry of Culture and Art of the Republic of Poland and the National Council of Culture and Art of Mexico.<sup>73</sup> It concerned cooperation in the fields of education, culture, sport and the mass media. Based on the agreements signed in 1997 and in 1998 and the institutions, as well as, the mechanisms established by them, it

<sup>68</sup> Speech by Bernardo Turner, President of Katcon Polska Sp. at the Conference: "Strengthening the Dialogue Between Poland and Mexico: A New Opening in Bilateral Relations", Warsaw, 29 September 2016.

<sup>69</sup> *Recomendaciones para el fortalecimiento...*; See also at: "Dynamiczny rozwój gospodarki Meksyku szansą dla polskich eksporterów." *Otoprzetargi.pl*, Monitor Samorządowy. Web. 15 November 2017. <http://otoprzetargi.pl/news/dynamiczny-rozwoj-gospodarki-meksyku-szansa-dla-polskich-eksporterow#.WJb0bBvhDIW>.

<sup>70</sup> The number of Polish tourists visiting Mexico is steadily increasing. The Mexican market is attractive to Polish investors in terms of beach tourism, culture and gastronomy. In Mexico, in turn, there is great interest in religious and cultural tourism in Poland.

<sup>71</sup> As far as the food industry is concerned, the biggest trading opportunities are for wheat, meat, fruit and vegetables. It should also be noted that the interest of Poles in exotic fruits is increasing.

<sup>72</sup> B. Wizimirska. "Stosunki traktatowe Polski." *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej*, 1998: 352. See also at: M.P. Moloeznik. "Stosunki dyplomatyczne polsko-meksykańskie z perspektywy historycznej" ... 130.

<sup>73</sup> The agreement on cooperation in the field of education and culture between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of the United States of Mexico (Journal of Laws of 1998), replaced the Agreement on Cultural, Scientific and Technical Exchange between the Government of the Polish People's Republic and the United States of Mexico from 1970.

can be stated that at the end of the 20th century, there was full legal infrastructure in the field of Poland's cultural relations with Mexico.<sup>74</sup>

In the first and until half of the second decade of the 21st century, a lot of cultural events were organized to popularize Polish culture in Mexico and to commemorate periods of the common history of Poles and Mexicans. For example, in 2001, several events were organized to celebrate Paderewski's International Year, including a review of Polish films, as well as, theater, music and art events.<sup>75</sup> In 2004, a number of cultural events took place in the state of Jalisco, presenting Polish music, culinary arts and selected films.<sup>76</sup> In addition, a presentation of Polish art (music, visual arts and theater) took place in the field of cultural cooperation between our countries at the occasion of the EU-Latin America and Caribbean Summit in Guadalajara in 2004.<sup>77</sup>

Since the 1960s, Polish theater has been known and appreciated in Mexico. For many years, Polish theatrical and musical ensembles have been invited to participate in the annual International Cervantes Festival in Guanajuato. In 2004, Poland was a special guest of the 7th May Cultural Festival in Guadalajara, during which Polish musical, theatrical and ballet shows were presented.<sup>78</sup>

In 2012, the Polish Days in Mexico were organized, during which the International Cervantino Festival in Guanajuato was inaugurated, where Poland was one of the honorary guests. In 2016, a documentary film, entitled: "Santa Rosa. Odissea al son de mariachi" was presented in Mexico. It was devoted to the history of Polish immigrants who came to this country during the Second World War.<sup>79</sup> In the same year, on the occasion of the 1050th anniversary of Baptism of Poland, a film about the origins of Polish statehood was presented.

A lot of music events were organized as part of the promotion of Polish culture in Mexico, in the second decade of the 21st century. In October 2016, the Days of Polish Music were organized, during which various works of music from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries were presented.<sup>80</sup> Concerts of Polish artists were also organized.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>74</sup> T. Lichota. "Stosunki dwustronne Polski. Państwa Ameryki Łacińskiej" ... 253.

<sup>75</sup> P. Bogdziewicz. "Stosunki dwustronne Polski. Meksyk" ... 230.

<sup>76</sup> M.P. Moloeznik. "Stosunki dyplomatyczne polsko-meksykańskie z perspektywy historycznej" ... 143.

<sup>77</sup> "Wizyta oficjalna Prezydenta Meksykańskich Stanów Zjednoczonych z Małżonką" ...

<sup>78</sup> D. Rycerz. "Polsko-meksykańskie związki w dziedzinie kultury." *Relacje Polska-Meksyk. Historia i współczesność* ... 63.

<sup>79</sup> It is worth remembering that between 1918 and 1930, there was also a great emigration wave from Poland to Mexico, the number of which was estimated at several thousand people. Initially, it was only transit traffic on the way to the United States, but later it also was of the nature of target emigration.

<sup>80</sup> "Dni Muzyki Polskiej w Meksyku." *Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Meksyku*, 7 October 2016. Web. 17 November 2017. [http://www.meksyk.ms.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca\\_dwustronna/kultura/wydarzenia\\_kulturalne/tytul\\_strony\\_1](http://www.meksyk.ms.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca_dwustronna/kultura/wydarzenia_kulturalne/tytul_strony_1).

<sup>81</sup> For example, in November 2016, there was a concert of a duet of musicians from Cracow (Cracow Duo), well-known and highly regarded both in Mexico and in the world, which performed the works of European and Mexican composers. A few months earlier, in June, a concert took place in which the works of Polish composers were performed in the Palacio de Bellas Artes. In addition, there were performances of Polish folklore ensembles, such as "Zespół Pieśni i Tańca Jawor", which took place at the Folklore Festival called "Folkloriada" in Zacatecas in August 2016. See at: "Koncert Polska-Meksyk." *Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*

In addition, in 2016 a presentation of books devoted to the theater and heritage of Lech Hellwig-Górzyński, a Polish actor and director, took place. He played a key role in the Mexican theater of the last decades of the twentieth century.<sup>82</sup> It is worth mentioning that the University of UNAM in Mexico, awards the Lech Hellwig-Górzyński Award, for theatrical works for UNAM students. Not only does this provide the promotion of artistic development of the young generation but the dissemination of Polish theater in Mexico as well.<sup>83</sup>

As Polish poster makers have great merit in educating the circle of Mexican graphic and posters artists (called "Polish school"), Poland was the honorary guest at the 14th International Poster Biennale in Mexico, which took place in September 2016. During the event, conferences and shows devoted to Polish poster art were held.<sup>84</sup>

Polish-Mexican scientific contacts are among the traditional areas of cooperation between our countries. Between 1970-1990, Poles undertook pedagogical work in Mexican art schools, in the capital of the country and in Xalapa. Young Mexicans were educated at many Polish academies of art, studying among the others: Photography, Stage Design, Filmmaking, Singing, Graphic Arts and other arts.<sup>85</sup>

The Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement, signed on the 30th of November 1998 (entered into force in March 2000)<sup>86</sup> provided significant importance for the development of scientific cooperation.

Cooperation agreements were also concluded between Polish and Mexican universities and colleges. In May 2004, the Academic Cooperation Agreement was

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<sup>82</sup> "Transteatralidades. Dziedzictwo Lecha Hellwiga-Górzyńskiego." *Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Meksyku*, 6 September 2016. Web. 17 November 2017. [http://www.meksyk.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca\\_dwustronna/kultura/wydarzenia\\_kulturalne/transteatralidades](http://www.meksyk.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca_dwustronna/kultura/wydarzenia_kulturalne/transteatralidades).

<sup>83</sup> "Stosunki Polska-Ameryka Łacińska i Karaiby." *Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych RP*. Web. 17 November 2017. [http://msz.gov.pl/pl/polityka\\_zagraniczna/inne\\_kontynenty/ameryka\\_lacinska\\_i\\_karaiby/stosunki\\_dwustronne\\_ameryka\\_lacinska\\_karaiby/tytul\\_stroiny;jsessionid=61F0FF2C3CC1D311D7A983278DFEF7BA.cmsap6p](http://msz.gov.pl/pl/polityka_zagraniczna/inne_kontynenty/ameryka_lacinska_i_karaiby/stosunki_dwustronne_ameryka_lacinska_karaiby/tytul_stroiny;jsessionid=61F0FF2C3CC1D311D7A983278DFEF7BA.cmsap6p).

<sup>84</sup> "Polska gościem honorowym na XIV Międzynarodowym Biennale Plakatu w Meksyku." *Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Meksyku*, 27 September 2016. Web. 17 November 2017. [http://www.meksyk.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca\\_dwustronna/kultura/wydarzenia\\_kulturalne/polska\\_gosciem\\_honorowym\\_na\\_xiv\\_miedzynarodowym\\_biennale\\_plakatu\\_w\\_meksyku](http://www.meksyk.msz.gov.pl/pl/wspolpraca_dwustronna/kultura/wydarzenia_kulturalne/polska_gosciem_honorowym_na_xiv_miedzynarodowym_biennale_plakatu_w_meksyku).

<sup>85</sup> D. Rycerz. "Polsko-meksykańskie związki w dziedzinie kultury" ... 60.

<sup>86</sup> It primarily concerned co-operation in the creation of joint research projects, exchange of scientists, documentation and information, as well as organization and participation in symposia and conferences, scientists and researchers from both countries. The body appointed by it was the Joint Commission on Science and Technology Cooperation, developing executive programs. From: M.Z. Osuchowska. "Kierunki rozwoju współpracy kulturalnej i naukowej w świetle umów bilateralnych podpisanych przez Polskę z państwami latynoamerykańskimi." *Polska-Ameryka Łacińska. Historia – polityka – gospodarka – kultura...* 85-86.



renewed between the Universities of Warsaw and Guadalajara.<sup>87</sup> In July 2016, in turn, a memorandum on cooperation between the University of Warsaw (UW) and the Mexican Cooperation Agency for Development (AMEXCID) was signed. According to its provisions, the University of Warsaw is to establish the Faculty of Mexico.<sup>88</sup> The signing of a cooperation agreement between the Conference of Presidents of Polish Academic Schools (KRASP) and the Mexican National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education (ANUIES) would be beneficial for the development of scientific cooperation between our countries. Some activities have already been initiated to conclude an appropriate agreement.

In 1995-1996, no more than 11 students from Mexico were studying in our country.<sup>89</sup> At the turn of 2015/2016, 45 Mexicans studied in Poland. Considering the total number of foreign students in Poland, this is not a large number. However, they were the second in terms of the number of students from Latin America in Poland after Brazilians (who were the leaders at the turn of 2015/2016 – 82 students).<sup>90</sup>

The reasons for which few Mexicans decide to study in Poland are, according to the Mexican side, language barriers (the Polish side offers foreigners education programs in English only, which limits the number of Mexicans interested in it) and financial barriers (scholarships offered by the Polish government are nearly three times lower than those offered by other European countries or Mexican institutions in the country, e.g. CONACYT).<sup>91</sup>

Polish and Mexican universities have implemented a number of joint research and educational projects. Co-operation with the largest Mexican universities was made by many Polish universities and colleges, including: the University of Warsaw, the Wrocław University of Technology (cooperation with the National Polytechnic Institute in Mexico), the F. Chopin University of Music in Warsaw (cooperation with the National Institute of Fine Arts, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, INBA), the AGH University of Science and Technology in Krakow, the University of Lodz, Jagiellonian University in Krakow<sup>92</sup> or the University of Silesia in Katowice.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>87</sup> M.P. Moloeznik. "Stosunki dyplomatyczne polsko-meksykańskie z perspektywy historycznej" ... 131.

<sup>88</sup> Information obtained on the basis of a discussion with Dr. J. Gocłowska-Bolek, dated 21 November 2016, with reference to the Memorandum of Understanding on Political and Economic Consultations in Mexico, 10-11 November 2016.

<sup>89</sup> A. Dembic. "Współpraca naukowa między Polską i Argentyną." *Relacje Argentyna-Polska. Historia i współczesność*, edited by A. Dembic. Warszawa: CESLA UW 1996: 95-96.

<sup>90</sup> Speech by Dr. J. Gocłowska-Bolek, titled: "Poland-Mexico. Potential for academic and scientific cooperation", during the Conference, titled "Strengthening in the Dialogue between Poland and Mexico: New Opening in Bilateral Relations", Warsaw, 29 September 2016.

<sup>91</sup> It is worth noting, however, that scholarships of the Polish Government are offered under the same conditions for students from all countries, and – importantly – from the entire Latin American region, only students from Mexico are awarded grants under the scholarship agreement. Information on the basis of a conversation with Dr. J. Gocłowska-Bolek, dated 21 November 2016, with reference to the Memorandum of Understanding on Political-Economic Consultations in Mexico, 10-11 November 2016.

<sup>92</sup> Co-operation includes primarily: political and social issues, state-church relations and migration policy. From: Dr. J. Gocłowska-Bolek's speech, "Poland-Mexico. Potential for academic and scientific cooperation" ...

<sup>93</sup> At the Faculty of Philology of the University of Katowice, semantic, cultural and

One of the most important educational ventures was the revitalizing of the *nahuatl* language, which the Warsaw University carried out together with the Ethnological Institute for Academic Research in Zacatecas.

In the document entitled "Recommendations for strengthening relations between Poland and Mexico" from 2016, potential areas for joint scientific action are presented. These include: education,<sup>94</sup> music education,<sup>95</sup> language studies and diplomas,<sup>96</sup> indigenous languages<sup>97</sup> and scientific cooperation within the EU.<sup>98</sup>

## 5. Final conclusions and recommendations for Polish-Mexican relations

Despite the significant participation of Poland and Mexico in international economic and political relations (membership in regional and supra-regional structures), mutual trade exchange is small and does not reflect the potential and possibilities in bilateral cooperation. Neither Polish nor Mexican state institutions have a clearly defined strategy of mutual rapprochement. The Strategy of the Republic of Poland for Non-European Developing Countries from 2004 requires updating and supplementing with new short- and long-term goals for both Mexico and the entire Latin American region.

There are several important areas in which active measures should be taken to strengthen Polish-Mexican cooperation. It is important to strengthen cooperation through information exchange and inter-institutional cooperation on global issues

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sociolinguistic studies are conducted on the influence of Native American languages into Spanish.

<sup>94</sup> For Mexico, it would be valuable to take advantage of the experience of the Polish reform of the education system.

<sup>95</sup> Poland is recognized in Mexico as a leader in music education. The Mexican side expressed interest in allowing Mexican students to take postgraduate studies in Polish conservatories.

<sup>96</sup> Due to the great interest in learning Spanish in Poland, it is advisable to promote the learning of this language and its certification by the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the Cervantes Institute. A good step in the promotion of Polish language and literature in Mexico would be to introduce appropriate classes at one of the Mexican universities.

<sup>97</sup> It would be worth using the growing interest in Mexican pre-Columbian culture in Poland.

<sup>98</sup> Polish and Mexican scientific institutions could participate in the EU Research and Development R&D program, Horizon 2020. In addition, being an EU Member State, Poland may participate in a number of other EU initiatives aimed at strengthening scientific relations with the countries of the Latin American region, including Mexico. These include, for example, the Erasmus Mundus Program and the EU Bilateral Innovation Initiative (EU-MEX-INNOVA), an initiative to develop cooperation in areas such as: climate change, food security, sustainable development, clean energy, health and transport, as well as, science and research or innovation. Poland also cooperates with Mexico through the Alfa Puentes EU program, which aims to strengthen the Latin American and EU higher education sector by creating effective mechanisms for the modernization, reform and harmonization of education systems in Latin America. From: Dr. J. Gocłowska-Bolek's speech, titled: "Poland-Mexico. Potential for academic and scientific cooperation" ...; See also at: Web. 19 November 2017. <http://alfapuentes.org/portal>.

and security. Cooperation on the forum of the European Union (Poland can take action to strengthen the political and economic dialogue with Mexico), as well as on the forum of the Pacific Alliance, which is gaining significance on the international area is very important. It would be good to continue the policy of giving each other support within the UN as well as other international organizations and multilateral forums. In the political dimension, it is important to maintain a permanent political dialogue through meetings of presidents and foreign ministers, as well as the implementation of annual consultations at the level of deputy ministers. The Poland-Mexico Friendship Group should be reactivated in both parliaments.

In the economic dimension, it would be beneficial to set up economic aid offices in both countries. It would be also important to create alternative mechanisms for the mutual promotion of trade and investment, as well as the establishment of the Joint Economic Commission of Poland and Mexico under the auspices of the ministries of economy. It is also important to identify prospective sectors and promote them through business missions and participation in trade fairs. Another important issue is to support tourism and increase tourism in both countries. This would help to increase knowledge about each other and reduce stereotypes. The dialogue between customs institutions (including the conclusion of a cooperation agreement that would facilitate bilateral trade) and migrations is also important.<sup>99</sup>

It is important to strengthen relations between the societies of both countries, for example through the organization of cultural events with the support of diplomatic missions. There is a need to increase the scope of academic exchange and the promotion of joint research projects. The implementation of the project of establishing the "Department of Mexico" at the University of Warsaw may contribute to the strengthening of Polish-Mexican cooperation.

Relations between Poland and Mexico in the second decade of the 21st century are going well. Mexico is one of the most important Polish partners in Latin America. In the second decade of the 21st century, there are many positive trends in the mutual relations carried out under the so-called "new opening in the relations between Poland and Mexico". Their manifestation was, for example, the first, historic visit of the head of the Polish state in this country in 2017. At the same time, it should be stated that there is unused potential in the political and in the economic bilateral relations. Due to the strengthening of the place and role of Poland and Mexico on the international arena and due to the existence of many opportunities for developing relations on the political, economic, cultural and scientific levels, both countries should take active measures to intensify relations in the bilateral and multilateral dimensions.

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<sup>99</sup> Based on: *Recomendaciones para el fortalecimiento...*

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