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THE EASTERN POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION. THE ROLE OF POLAND

ABSTRACT

The paper aims at outlining the EU policy – including Poland's role in its development – towards the Union's eastern neighbours encompassed by the European Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership. The situation of the EU's eastern neighbours has become considerably complicated in the last two years (2014-2015). The Euromaidan revolution and war in the Donbas have led the EU Member States to direct their efforts towards stabilising the situation in Ukraine. As a consequence, discussions of future prospects and the EU policy towards Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus have been set aside. In addition, wars and conflicts occurring in the south of Europe along with the immigrants flooding southern EU Member States have led to the eastern neighbours and their problems being neglected (despite the fact that Ukraine is engulfed in war).

Keywords: Eastern Policy of the European Union, Poland, EU's eastern neighbours, European Neighbourhood Policy, Eastern Partnership, Eastern Europe

INTRODUCTION

The paper aims at outlining the EU policy – including Poland's role in its development – towards the Union's eastern neighbours encompassed by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Eastern Partnership (EaP).¹ The situation of the EU's eastern neighbours has become considerably complicated in the last two years (2014–2015). The Euromaidan revolution and war in the Donbas have led the EU Member States to direct their efforts towards stabilising the situation in Ukraine. As a consequence, discussions of future prospects and the EU policy towards Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus have been set aside. In addition, wars and conflicts occurring in the south of Europe along with the immigrants flooding southern EU Member States have led to the eastern neighbours and their problems being neglected (despite the fact that Ukraine is engulfed in war). Therefore, due to several internal problems present in the EU (the Eurozone crisis,² Brexit, nationalist parties gaining power in the individual Member States), the validity of the eastern policy ought to be revisited. Will EU decision-makers seek prospects in the eastern countries or will they merely focus on stabilising the situation in Ukraine and normalising relations with Russia (in mid-term perspective)? The paper will also attempt to indicate the required modifications in the logic of the ENP and EaP. As the situation in the southern and eastern neighbourhood proves, with no changes in the neighbourhood policy, the EU will be unable to react to conflicts and the rapidly changing reality. Both the EU and its neighbourhood are undergoing changes. For that reason, the policy of conditionality, which is the basis of the ENP, ought to be modified with the EU's objectives and interests towards the neighbourhood in mind.³

THE “BIG BANG” ENLARGEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

In 2004 and 2007, the European Union was enlarged by the entry of states from Central and Eastern Europe.⁴ Due to the enlargement, the European Union's eastern border shifted, causing a change in the geopolitical system of forces in that part of the continent.⁵ When Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova became the immediate neighbours of the Community, the European Union's border with Russia became significantly longer.

¹ This article was written during the author's research at Harvard University in June–August 2015.

² A. Åslund, 'Ukraine Is More Important Than Greece', *Atlantic Council*, 6 July 2015, at <<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/ukraine-is-more-important-than-greece>>.

³ For more information on the required changes in the ENP see: N. Witney, S. Dennison, *Europe's neighbourhood: crisis as the new normal*, European Council on Foreign Relations, Policy Memo, no. 135, June 2015, at <http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/Europes_Neighbourhood.pdf>.

⁴ The states that joined the EU in 2004 were: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. In 2007, Bulgaria and Romania joined as well.

⁵ M. Klatt, T. Stępniewski, *Normative Influence. The European Union, Eastern Europe and Russia*, Lublin–Melbourne 2012, pp. 115–136.

On the one hand, the new neighbourhood permitted development and augmentation of the political and especially economic dialogue. On the other hand, it gave rise to a number of new challenges resulting even from unpredictability of those neighbouring countries' political systems. This situation generated a need for EU Member States to work out a new eastern policy concept, called the Eastern Dimension. Numerous studies of the influence of the "Big-Bang" Enlargement of the *EU upon the Union's foreign policy towards its eastern neighbours emerged*.⁶ *The enlargement, encompassing countries from Central and Eastern Europe, fostered the EU to take note of the other countries to the east. It can be stated that owing to the enlargement, the EU's foreign policy has changed. Up to the moment of the 2004 enlargement, the Union practiced a "Russia first" policy.*

THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

The concept of the European Neighbourhood Policy was presented for the first time by the European Commission in March 2003 in the announcement titled *Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours (Communication on Wider Europe)*.⁷ It was pointed out in the document that there are 14 countries bordering the Community: Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, and the members of the Barcelona Process: Algeria, the Palestinian National Authority, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia. Subsequently, in 2004, Turkey's neighbours, which itself is an EU candidate, were included into this group of countries. Those were Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. As a result, the ENP encompassed a total of 17 countries, inhabited by approximately 400 million people. We should remember about the concept of Eurosphere and the fact that the EU could be

⁶ E. Kaca, A. Sobják, K. Zasztowt, *Learning from Past Experiences: Ways to Improve EU Aid on Reforms in the Eastern Partnership*, April 2014 (PISM Report), at <http://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=17080>; see also: N. Babayan, 'The Return of the Empire? Russia's Counteraction to Transatlantic Democracy Promotion in its Near Abroad', *Democratization*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (2015), at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2014.993973>>, pp. 438-458; J. Dempsey, 'The EU's Blindness about Eastern Europe', Carnegie Europe: Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe, 28 May 2015, at <<http://carnegieurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60229>>; R. Dragneva, K. Wolczuk, *Russia, the Eurasian Customs Union and the EU: Cooperation, Stagnation or Rivalry?*, August 2012 (Chatham House Briefing Paper), at <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Russia%20and%20Eurasia/0812bp_dragnevawolczuk.pdf>; H. Haukkala, 'The Impact of the Eurasian Customs Union on EU-Russia Relations' in R. Dragneva, K. Wolczuk (eds.), *Eurasian Economic Integration: Law, Policy and Politics*, Cheltenham 2013, pp. 163-178; J. Kobzova, *Eastern Partnership after Riga: Rethink, Reforms, Resilience*, 19 May 2015, p. 1 (ECFR Riga Series), at <http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_eastern_partnership_after_riga_rethink_reforms_resilience3037>; R. Menon, E. Rumer, *Conflict in Ukraine. The Unwinding of the Post-Cold War Order*, Cambridge, Mass. 2015 (Boston Review Book); A.A. Michta, 'After the Summit', *The American Interest*, 25 May 2015, at <<http://www.the-american-interest.com/2015/05/25/after-the-summit/>>.

⁷ *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament "Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours"*, Brussels, 11 March 2003, COM(2003) 104 final, at <http://ec.europa.eu/enp/pdf/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf>.

the first post-modern empire or superpower in the 21st century. To become a superpower, the EU has to confirm its position among the ENP countries.

Despite its theoretical coherence and dynamism, the European Neighbourhood Policy comes across many hindrances caused by its structural contradictions. First of all, it encompasses a group of several countries from Morocco to Georgia that have completely divergent potentials and aspirations. Some of them still stand a chance of being accepted to the EU, even if only in the distant future, whereas others have high aspirations of joining the free trade area. Accordingly, the addressees themselves – both eastern and southern countries – have felt underappreciated by the EU. The fact that countries like Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway (if they agree, they can join the EU anytime) were not included in the group dissatisfied the addressees even more. Besides, Turkey and the West Balkan states, which are waiting for candidate status, were not incorporated into the ENP either. On the other hand, the EU's most important neighbour, Russia, was not included in the neighbourhood policy at its own clear emphatic request. Following the resolutions of the EU–Russian Summit in December 2003, a rule of strategic partnership in four dimensions was accepted.

The ENP was repeatedly renamed and reformulated. It started as the New Neighbours Initiative, which was transformed into the Wider Europe Programme in 2003, the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2004, the European Neighbourhood Policy Plus in 2006, the Black Sea Synergy in 2007, the Enhanced European Neighbourhood Policy, and finally the Eastern Partnership in 2008. The reshaping of the neighbourhood policy and its frequent modifications do not make this policy efficient enough. The Arab Spring in the southern neighbourhood, the war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 and the current hybrid war between Russia and Ukraine confirm its inefficiency.

The ENP is a policy that fails to respond to the challenges of the 21st century and the dynamics of any ongoing transformations in the EU's southern and eastern neighbourhoods. The EU cannot establish its relations with several countries of extremely varied nature using a single policy. Therefore, the ENP should be radically modified. The ENP could exist as a framework for other initiatives. The problem is the word "neighbourhood" in its name as it implies that those who are neighbours cannot be members. Thus, the EaP should probably have the same status as the countries of the western Balkans.

POLAND AND THE EASTERN DIMENSION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION⁸

Poland, which from the beginnings of 1990s attached particular attention to relations with its eastern partners, has always been a country the most involved in promoting the

⁸ Comp.: T. Kapuśniak, *Wymiar wschodni Europejskiej Polityki Sąsiedztwa Unii Europejskiej. Inkluzja bez członkostwa? The Eastern Dimension of the European Union's Neighbourhood Policy. Inclusion with-*

Eastern Dimension. Krzysztof Skubiszewski, the then minister of foreign affairs, saw maintaining good relations with Poland's eastern neighbours and creating new regional structures in Central and Eastern Europe as a priority in Poland's foreign policy.⁹ Undoubtedly, integration with the Euro-Atlantic structures of NATO and the EU as well as relations with Western Europe remained the overriding aim of this policy.

It has been widely assumed that the bases of the Eastern Dimension of the EU were mostly created by Polish analytical centres and representatives of Polish decision-making bodies. In 1998, after the commencement of Poland's accession negotiations, the then foreign affairs minister Bronisław Geremek in his inaugural speech for the first time formulated the conception of the Eastern Dimension. He called for creating an eastern dimension that would build a framework of cooperation for new EU Member States after the enlargement that was to happen in 2004. The 'Non-paper'¹⁰ proposal, which referred to strategy of coordination of aid actions of the EU as well as other institutions in Western Europe, was put forth in December 2002. The proposal assumed diversification of the relations with the countries of Eastern Europe depending on the degree to which they were interested in cooperation with the EU. Other factors included advancement in systemic transition as well as compliance with the Community's laws, rules and norms. Ukraine was given a central position and according to the authors of the document was supposed to hold a position resembling that of Russia. Nevertheless, Ukraine was given the chance to join the EU in the future. The suggested actions included the three following aspects: community, governmental (bilateral as well as multilateral) and non-governmental. It was also highlighted that the Eastern Dimension and its assumptions were not rival to those of the already existing Northern Dimension. The Eastern Dimension was only to complete the solutions accepted within the EU's foreign policy.

Subsequently, during the "EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy" conference taking place in Warsaw on 20 February 2003, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, the Polish foreign affairs minister at that time, gave the speech *The Eastern Dimension of the European Union. The Polish View*. In the speech he presented a developed notion of the EU's Eastern Dimension, indicating that this proposal should have become a tool of the EU's foreign policy towards its neighbours on the eastern borders.¹¹ The minister stressed the fact that Poland has unique knowledge about the countries of that region and can therefore be not only a bridge in eastern relations but also an advocate of the region.

It is worth noting that the governmental dialogue was paralleled with a discussion in academic analytical centres as well as in the media. For example, the Stefan Batory

out Membership?, Warszawa 2010 (*Zeszyty Natolińskie*, No. 42), at <http://www.natolin.edu.pl/pdf/zeszyty/Natolin_Zeszyt_42.pdf>.

⁹ K. Skubiszewski, 'Racja stanu z perspektywy polskiej' [Reason of state from the Polish perspective], *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej* (1992), pp. 38-39.

¹⁰ *EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy. Proceedings of the conference held by the Stefan Batory Foundation in co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland on 20-21 February 2003 in Warsaw*, pp. 93-107, at <http://www.batory.org.pl/doc/nowi_se.pdf>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-23.

Foundation prepared a report titled *More than Neighbourhood*, authored by a group of Polish and foreign specialists. The report suggested that attention should be focused on one particular country – Ukraine – and that actions should be taken to enable that country early access to the EU.¹²

Polish suggestions were not accepted by Brussels and, what is more, the concept of the ENP presented in 2003 fundamentally departed from the Polish idea. First of all, the political level was different, as was the question of policy differentiation and membership policy. In 2008, for the first time since Poland's accession in 2004, a new situation occurred when Poland could introduce its own concept into the EU's foreign policy. Along with Sweden, the Polish government put forth the suggestion of creating the Eastern Partnership.¹³ Despite prior reluctance, the EU accepted the project because it did not change the framework of ENP and was based on sensible assumptions. Due to that, on 19 and 20 June 2008, during a summit in Brussels, the project was accepted.¹⁴

THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP OF THE EUROPEAN UNION¹⁵

Although bilateral cooperation will be crucial in the eastern policy of the EU, the Polish government submitted the proposal of creating a new, multilateral regional policy towards the countries situated east from the outside borders of the EU. In accordance to the assumption of the Polish–Swedish initiative, the Eastern Partnership is to be based on two dimensions of cooperation with the eastern partners: bilateral and multilateral. In April 2008, during a session with the prime ministers of the EU Member States, Radosław Sikorski, the then Polish minister of foreign affairs, presented that programme for the first time. The project had been prepared for several months, and a few weeks before it was presented it had been discussed with the partners from the EU, and European Commission and states such as Germany, Great Britain, Denmark, and Sweden tentatively approved the idea.¹⁶ Officially, the initiative was proposed as a common Polish-Swedish project on 19-20 June 2008 by Donald Tusk, the then Polish Prime Minister, during a sitting of the European Council. The aim of the project was to strengthen the ENP's Eastern Dimension. The basis for further actions within

¹² G. Gromadzki (ed.), *More than Neighbours. European Union and Ukraine – New Relations. Final Report*, Stefan Batory Foundation, International Renaissance Foundation, Warsaw–Kyiv 2004, at <http://www.batory.org.pl/doc/final_rep.pdf>.

¹³ *Partnerstwo Wschodnie* [Eastern Partnership], at <https://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/polityka_zagraniczna/partnerstwo_wschodnie/>.

¹⁴ Council of the European Union, *Brussels European Council, 19-20 June 2008, Presidency Conclusions*, Brussels, 17 July 2008, at <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/101346.pdf>.

¹⁵ Comp.: T. Kapuśniak, *Wymiar wschodni...*

¹⁶ It is worth mentioning that originally the project was supposed to be presented as an initiative of several countries. However, due to difficulties in negotiating a common transcript, it was decided that the project had to be a Polish-Swedish initiative.

the Eastern Partnership was submitted in the European Council conclusions. It was highlighted in the following words: *The European Council is glad to accept the suggestion of development of the ENP's Eastern Dimension, which aim will be set on strengthening the EU's policy – both lateral and multilateral – towards its eastern partners participating in the ENP.*¹⁷

To sum up, the Eastern Partnership assumes creating forms of regional cooperation of the EU Member States with the Union's eastern neighbourhoods such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, and conditionally, after introducing democratic changes – with Belarus. It is important to point out that the initiative does not include Russia. The Eastern Partnership is going to be based on the already existing ENP. The Eastern Partnership's projects will not be financed from new budget lines but rather from the ENP's implementation outlays as well as from the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. As it was emphasised, participation in the Eastern Partnership would not guarantee becoming an EU Member State in the future; however, its goal is to help countries adjust to potential membership. Apart from that, the Eastern Partnership can contribute to augmenting the EU's interest in its eastern neighbours, which have been given far too less attention.¹⁸

Generally, the Eastern Partnerships must be seen as a big success of the Polish diplomacy, supported by the Swedish one. It is also the outcome of well-thought-out government policy and, on the other hand, the result of numerous independent events in the international area. Above all, authorities launched political lobbying as early as in March 2008, during the EU summit, which was dominated to a great extent by France's project of creating the Union for the Mediterranean. Having gained the acceptance of their own initiative, the French could no longer hinder analogous actions of other countries'. The co-occurrence of two events: the presentation of the Eastern Partnership and the EU's approval of a mandate for talks with Russia about a new deal met with enthusiasm in many European states.

Germany remains the key partner in the realisation of the Polish project of the Eastern Partnership. Without this country, it is impossible to handle eastern policy. The states of the Visegrád Group have an essential role to play as well. Germany's politics, in the past accused of having been too friendly towards Russia, nowadays seems to take the same direction as Poland's politics. First of all, Germany admitted that the interest of such countries as Ukraine or Georgia cannot be ignored.¹⁹ Chancellor Angela Merkel visited Ukraine for the first time since the Orange Revolution. She also cautiously but firmly got involved in the crisis in Georgia. The question which naturally comes up is whether or not German activity in the East will result in weakening of Poland's role

¹⁷ Council of the European Union, *Brussels European Council, 19-20 June 2008...*

¹⁸ Comp.: T. Kapuśniak, *Ukraina jako obszar wpływów międzynarodowych po zimnej wojnie*, Warszawa–Lublin 2008, pp. 219-221.

¹⁹ German politicians often talked about the “ENP Plus” conception, addressed to the countries of Eastern Europe.

in that region. In the current state of affairs, it seems that there is no such danger. Polish actions were appreciated and Germany's involvement led to developing the system of both expert and political discussions. It was put down in the European Council's conclusions of 19-20 March 2009 that the project presupposes: 29. *Promoting stability, good governance and economic development in its Eastern neighbourhood is of strategic importance for the European Union. In line with the Commission communication of 3 December 2008, the European Council welcomes the establishment of an ambitious Eastern Partnership.*²⁰

PRAGUE SUMMIT (7 MAY 2009): ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP²¹

Those present during the Prague Summit²² conceded that: *The participants of the Prague Summit agree that the Eastern Partnership will be based on commitments to the principles of international law and to fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as to, market economy, sustainable development and good governance.*²³ They also concluded that the Eastern Partnership will be governed by the principles of *differentiation and conditionality*. It was stressed that the aim of the Eastern Partnership is to create *A more ambitious partnership between the European Union and the partner countries,*²⁴ based on two aspects: deeper bilateral engagement (signing association agreements and establishing complex free trade areas was agreed upon) and multilateral co-operation (meetings of Heads of State or Government of the Eastern Partnership every two years, four thematic platforms of cooperation: democracy, good governance and stability; economic integration and convergence with EU sectoral policies; energy security; and contacts between people).²⁵

It was expressed in the declaration that *The significant strengthening of EU policy with regard to the partner countries will be brought about through the development of a specific eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy. [...] Eastern Partner-*

²⁰ Council of the European Union, *Brussels European Council, 19/20 March 2009, Presidency Conclusions*, Brussels, 29 April 2009, at <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/106809.pdf>.

²¹ Comp.: T. Kapuśniak, *Wymiar wschodni...*

²² During the summit, the following politicians were present while the Eastern Partnership was established in Prague: The Heads of State or Government and representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, the representatives of the European Union and the Heads of State or Government and representatives of its Member States.

²³ Council of the European Union, *Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit, Prague, 7 May 2009*, Brussels, 7 May 2009, 8435/09 (Presse 78), at <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

*ship will seek to support political and socio-economic reforms of the partner countries, facilitating approximation towards the European Union. This serves the shared commitment to stability, security and prosperity of the European Union, the partner countries and indeed the entire European continent.*²⁶

THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP – 7 YEARS LATER

The emergence of the Eastern Partnership in 2009 as the EU's joint policy towards 6 countries of Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus was partly a consequence of Russia's war with Georgia (August 2008) and the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean (2008).²⁷ Undeniably, the EaP was not a direct response to Russia's aggressive policy towards Georgia, due to the fact that such a soft project cannot constitute a response to war and separation of a region from Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia). However, the war in South Caucasus surely accelerated the work on the project.

What is novel about the Eastern Partnership, as compared to the ENP, is the scope of its implementation (multilateral), which should contribute to and support political and economic change in the states of Eastern Europe and South Caucasus and make it become, in the course of things, a forum for exchanging information on and experience of, for example: democracy, management and stability, economic integration and convergence within EU policies, energy security and human relations. Many EU members and some of its partners expect the multilateral political cooperation to play the role of a tool in establishing trust across the region.²⁸

It has to be remembered that the rivalry for the *common unstable neighbourhood* (Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and also Central Asia²⁹) between the European Union and the Russian Federation has also had its impact on the efficiency of the EaP.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Cf. W. Drescher, *The Eastern Partnership and Ukraine. New Label – Old Products?*, 2009, pp. 1-29 (*ZEI Discussion Paper*, C194), at <https://www.zei.uni-bonn.de/dateien/discussion-paper/dp_c194_drescher.pdf>; Ch. Hillion, A. Mayhew, *The Eastern Partnership – Something New or Window-dressing*, 2009 (*SEI Working Paper*, no. 109), at <<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=sei-working-paper-no-109.pdf&site=266>>; K. Longhurst, 'Stepping into the Geopolitical Game. The European Union and its Eastern Neighbourhood', *Analizy Natolińskie*, No. 2 (15) (2007); S. Schaffer, D. Tolsdorf, 'The Eastern Partnership – "ENP plus" for Europe's Eastern Neighbors', *CA Perspectives*, No. 4 (2009).

²⁸ T. Stepniewski, 'The European Union's Eastern Partnership: between Realism and Disillusion', *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, Vol. 10, No. 6 (2012), pp. 45-58.

²⁹ K. Kozłowski, *Geopolityka naftowa Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej*, Toruń 2013 (*Biblioteka Azji i Pacyfiku*); idem, *Państwo Środka a Nowy Jedwabny Szlak. Poradziecka Azja Centralna i Xinjiang w polityce CHRL*, Toruń 2011 (*Biblioteka Azji i Pacyfiku*).

CONCLUSIONS: CHALLENGES AND THREATS TO THE EAP IN THE CONTEXT OF RUSSIA'S WAR WITH UKRAINE

In 2014, the European Commission reviewed the European Neighbourhood Policy in terms of the EU's objectives and interests in the neighbourhood. The eastern neighbourhood is undergoing significant strain exerted by Russia. In addition, *insecurity, instability and unfavourable socio-economic conditions in the neighbourhood countries can have negative impacts and reverse past democratic trends*.³⁰

The Eastern Partnership must be adapted to the new geopolitical situation in the whole Eastern Neighbourhood.³¹ Russia's imperial policy challenges the EaP project as well as the EaP states, especially Ukraine, which will not be able to cope with this situation unless assisted by the West. If the EU wants to shape the Eastern Neighbourhood, it needs to focus on deepening its relations with the EaP states by offering them specific conditions for this cooperation to stabilise their politics, economy and security. The EU should upgrade the Eastern Partnership by adding a missing security component even if not in military terms.

Many researchers claim that the Eastern Partnership has the potential to be the foundation for further cooperation between the EU and its Eastern neighbours. However, this initiative needs to be profoundly reformed and that if it is not, Russia will make use of this situation (as it is actually doing so in Ukraine) to undermine the importance of this project or to bring about its downfall.

The most important challenge for the future of the EaP policy and the EaP countries is to involve the EaP countries in a European economic area. Bearing in mind the war between Russia and Ukraine, it is important to strengthen the EU's cooperation in security and energy issues with the EaP countries. Also, the EU should seek to continue and develop sectoral cooperation in the areas that are of particular interest both to the EU and the EaP countries (especially Ukraine) – that is first in areas such as energy and soft security and then in other areas such as transport, cross-border cooperation, migration, etc.

Natalia Shapovalova and Tomasz Stępniewski rightly indicate that Poland's interest in the Eastern neighbourhood is long-term and strategic. Poland aspires to the democratisation of Eastern European countries and their integration into European structures. These goals are rooted in Polish history, while Poland benefits from its membership in the EU and NATO to promote their cause at a European level. Poland continues to

³⁰ *European Parliament resolution of 9 July 2015 on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (2015/2002(INI))*, Strasbourg, 9 July 2015, at <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P8-TA-2015-0272&language=EN>>.

³¹ Cf. З. Станкевич, Т. Стемпневски, А. Шабациук (eds.), *Безопасность постсоветского пространства: новые вызовы и угрозы*, Люблин–Москва 2014 [Stankiewicz Z., Stępniewski T., Szabaciuk A. (eds.), *Security of the Post-Soviet Region: New Challenges and Threats*, Lublin–Moscow 2014]; А. Гиль, Т. Стемпневски (eds.), *Перед выбором. Будущее Украины в условиях системной дестабилизации*, Люблин–Львов–Киев 2013 [Gil A., Stępniewski T. (eds.), *Facing a Dilemma. The Future of Ukraine under Systemic Destabilization*, Lublin–Lviv–Kiev 2013].

support Ukraine's and other Eastern European countries' accession to the EU. However, in the absence of EU-wide support, it focuses on short-term measures of the EU agenda with these countries, such as advancing with free trade, visa-free travel and enhanced funding for civil society. Bilaterally, Poland is increasing its aid to the Eastern neighbours and working to increase people-to-people contacts. Warsaw is boosting its engagement with Moldova and the three South Caucasus countries as their commitment to reform is crucial for the success of the Eastern Partnership.³²

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³² N. Shapovalova, T. Stępniewski, 'Poland and the Eastern Partnership of the European Union: A Sustained Commitment', *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, Vol. 11, No. 6 (2013), pp. 67-76.

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