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THE GENESIS OF THE MAASTRICHT TREATY AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND SECURITY

ABSTRACT The Treaty of Maastricht was signed thirty years ago, that is, on 7 February 1992, and after its ratification entered into force on 1 November 1993. It was a quantum leap into the European integration initiated after the Second World War. It constituted a basis for the creation of the European Union (EU), becoming an accelerator of the European integration and an important element of the transatlantic system of international security. Its origin and decisions rest in such contemporary events and processes as the “Autumn of Nations,” which resulted in the fall of communism in the states of Central and Eastern Europe, German reunification on 3 October 1990, the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 and the global end of the Cold War. The article is aimed at analyzing the prerequisites of the genesis of the Treaty of Maastricht and showing its significance for the integration and security of Europe after the collapse of the Yalta-Potsdam order and the end of the Cold War. The main thesis statement is that the Treaty of Maastricht would not have been signed and the European Union would not have been established without the fall of communism in the states of Central and Eastern Europe, the collapse of the Soviet Union and German reunification. Moreover, I believe that international situation after the Cold War would have been less stable without the Treaty of Maastricht and the EU, because the competition for leadership between reunited Germany and France would have intensified.

Keywords: Treaty of Maastricht, European Union, genesis, Cold War, security, integration, Europe, world

INTRODUCTION

The Treaty of Maastricht is formally called the Treaty on European Union (TEU). It is an indefinite-term international agreement initialed on 11 December 1991 and signed on 7 February 1992, which after its ratification entered into force on 1 November 1993.¹ It was a quantum leap into the European integration initiated after the Second World War. The Treaty of Maastricht founded the European Union (EU) defining it as *a new stage in the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen* (Article A TEU). The task of the EU was to organize, in a manner demonstrating consistency and solidarity, relations between Member States and between their peoples. The Treaty of Maastricht was negotiated and signed in a difficult and at the same time earth-shattering moment in the international relations in Europe and the world. Undoubtedly, its origin and decisions lie in such contemporary events and processes as “the Autumn of Nations of 1989,” which resulted in the fall of communism in the states of Central and Eastern Europe, German reunification on 3 October 1990, the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, and the end of the Cold War in the world. They contributed to the fall of the Yalta-Potsdam order and had a far-reaching impact on the initiation of the process of establishing a new, so-called post-Cold-War (post-communist), democratic and peaceful international order.²

The Treaty of Maastricht determined the rules regulating the relations between the European Union and its Member States by introducing the principle of respect for national identities, as well as raising the principle of loyal cooperation to the Union level. Moreover, it set five fundamental objectives to be attained, which have remained topical till now. These were: firstly, to ensure balanced and sustainable economic and social progress, in particular through the creation of an area without border controls, the strengthening of economic and social cohesion, and the establishment of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU); secondly, to assert its identity on the international scene, in particular through the implementation of a common foreign and security policy including the progressive framing of a common defense policy; thirdly, to develop close cooperation in the field of justice and internal affairs; fourthly, to protect the rights and interests of the nationals of its Member States through the introduction of a citizenship of the Union; fifthly, to maintain in full *acquis communautaire* with the

¹ For the text of the Treaty see: A. Przyborowska-Klimczak, E. Skrzydło-Tefelska (eds), *Dokumenty Wspólnot Europejskich*, Lublin 1994; Z. M. Doliwa-Klepaczki, *Wspólnoty Europejskie. Unia Europejska – CECA, EWG, EURATOM. Analiza oraz wybrane dokumenty*, Białystok 1993, pp. 189-269.

² For more on the issue see: J.M. Fiszer, “Transformacja ustrojowa w Polsce po 1989 roku oraz jej sukcesy i porażki,” in J. Wojnicki, J. Miecznikowska, Ł. Zamęcki (eds), *Polska i Europa w perspektywie politologicznej*, vol. II, Warszawa 2020, pp. 73-98; J.M. Fiszer, “Przesłanki wewnętrzne i międzynarodowe upadku Związku Radzieckiego w 1991 roku oraz jego konsekwencje geopolityczne dla polityki zagranicznej Polski,” *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, no. 19(2) (2021), pp. 19-41.

aim of ensuring the effectiveness of the mechanisms and the institutions of the Community (Article B TEU).³

Article 109 of the Treaty of Maastricht also determined essential criteria for systemic convergence, that is, conditions that candidates to the monetary union must meet, which are worth recalling today in the context of Ukraine's efforts to join the EU. They are as follows: the inflation rate not exceeding 1.5% over the average inflation in three EU Member States with the lowest inflation; long-term interest rate not exceeding 2% over the average rates in three EU Member States with the lowest inflation; government debt-to-GDP ratio not exceeding the 60% limit. This way the ground was prepared for the creation of the Economic and Monetary Union and the introduction of the EU common currency, the euro, which took place on 1 January 1999.⁴

By virtue of the Treaty of Maastricht, its Member States granted the contemporary European Union certain competences that were extended by successive amending treaties: the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), the Treaty of Nice (2001) and the Treaty of Lisbon (2007), but in practice it led to tensions that were made evident by the judgement of the German Federal Constitutional Court in 1993, called a judgement concerning the Maastricht Treaty, commonly referred to later in other judgements and the doctrine of other Member States of the European Union.⁵

Contrary assessments of the condition, tasks, objectives and the future of the European Union dominate among researchers and politicians. On the one hand, there is a dominant opinion that the EU has already created a specific system of internal bonds, built up its own structures and original governing procedures, and its main bodies reflect a specific system of legislative, executive and judicial powers with limited enforcement possibilities. According to them, the Union signposts the most advantageous development of Europe as a whole. Moreover, they state that the deepening of the European integration has strengthened Member States, and that the EU constitutes a protective umbrella for them. Thanks to that, these states have increased their influence in the world.⁶ On the other hand, there are opinions that the European Union has been drifting for years in an unknown direction, which is a serious threat for it, that it needs further improvement of its structures and new rules of cooperation and broader development of the European and global awareness among its Member States, their citizens and political elites. Brexit, that is, the exit of the United Kingdom from the EU structures, which eventually took place on 31 January 2020, deepened

³ J.J. Węc, *Spór o kształt ustrojowy Wspólnot Europejskich i Unii Europejskiej w latach 1950-2010. Między ideą ponadnarodowości a współpracą międzyrządową. Analiza politologiczna*, Kraków 2012, pp. 209-212; J.M. Fiszer, *Unia Europejska a Polska – dziś i jutro*, Toruń 2002, pp. 31-42.

⁴ K. Żukrowska, "Skutki unii walutowej dla procesów integracji," *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, no. 3 (1997), pp. 84-87; M. Günther, "Wchodzenie w erę euro," *Deutschland*, no. 4 (1998), pp. 3-7.

⁵ J.J. Węc, *Spór o kształt ustrojowy Wspólnot Europejskich i Unii Europejskiej*..., p. 210; T.G. Grosse, *Pokryzysowa Europa. Dylematy Unii Europejskiej*, Warszawa 2018.

⁶ P.M. Kaczyński, "Silniejsza Unia to silniejsze państwa," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 25 July 2022, at <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75968,28723719,silniejsza-unia-to-silniejsze-panstwa.html>, 13 VI 2023, p. 15.

those pessimistic assessments. Brexit has significantly weakened the EU potential and thus the European security.⁷

The article is aimed at analyzing the prerequisites of the genesis of the Treaty of Maastricht and showing its significance for the security of Europe after the collapse of the Yalta-Potsdam order and the end of the Cold War. However, the main thesis statement of the paper is that the Treaty of Maastricht would not have been signed and the European Union, which has become an accelerator of the European integration, would not have been established without the collapse of communism in the Central and Eastern European countries and the end of the Cold War. Moreover, I believe that, by founding the EU, which has become an important pillar of the transatlantic system, the Treaty of Maastricht also contributed to the strengthening of security in Europe after the end of the Cold War.

1. INTERNATIONAL PREREQUISITES OF THE GENESIS OF THE TREATY OF MAASTRICHT

A new stage of building European unity started in international relations in the early 1960s. On 10 and 11 February 1961 a conference of Heads of State or Government and Foreign Affairs Ministers took place in Paris, where the issue concerning the creation of a European political union was discussed. It was decided to establish a special committee, chaired by a French ambassador Christian Fouchet, with the task to develop this project. The committee's work resulted in a plan to establish a political union of the European States, which was officially announced on 2 November 1961.⁸ The Fouchet Plan included detailed recommendations concerning foreign policy, as well as issues connected with tightening scientific and cultural cooperation. However, the project did not obtain approval by the Community Member States, which reproached it for a too far-reaching departure from the creation of a supranational political union. The Fouchet Plan proposed the establishment of a European Political Commission, the members of which would be directly subordinate to national ministries. After Christian Fouchet's dismissal in March 1962, the new chair of the Committee Attilio Cattani kept up the plan to establish a European Political Union. Unfortunately, also his proposals were disapproved by the Six, which resulted in giving up talks on the creation of a political union.⁹

At the same time, after long negotiations, British and American agreements on close cooperation in the field of nuclear weapons and for the security of the Atlantic community were signed in December 1962, which was of great importance for the security of Europe. In response to the rapprochement between Great Britain and the United

⁷ J.M. Fiszer, "Unia Europejska po brexicie," in J.M. Fiszer (ed.), *Unia Europejska – Chiny w XXI wieku*, Warszawa 2018, pp. 35-71.

⁸ Z.M. Doliwa-Klepacki, *Integracja europejska*, Białystok 1999, p. 283.

⁹ K. Łastawski, *Od idei do integracji europejskiej*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 186-188.

States, on 22 January 1963 France and West Germany signed the Élysée Treaty, which announced reconciliation between the two countries, coordination of foreign and military policy and cooperation in the field of European integration.¹⁰

Taking further steps in order to establish a European Political Union was blocked at the beginning of 1965 in connection with the institutional crisis in the European Economic Community. The crisis had its roots in the conflicting interests of the Community Member States, and the Commission and the European Parliament's demands for an increased scope of their competences. In accordance with the Treaty of Rome, from 1 January 1966 a series of decisions taken by the Council of Ministers were to be passed by the qualified majority of votes and not unanimously as before. This meant that it was possible to take many decisions with the support of two thirds of votes without the possibility of exercising the right of veto by the outvoted country.¹¹ Such a solution was unacceptable for France, which was afraid of being outvoted in decisions important from its point of view. President Charles de Gaulle's decision to withdraw France from participation in the work of the Council of Ministers triggered the crisis that ended on 30 January 1966 by signing the so-called Luxembourg Compromise, which laid down that *in the case the Treaty stipulates qualified majority voting, every state is given a veto power on topics deemed to be very important national interests*.¹² Undoubtedly, the Luxembourg Compromise should be numbered among France's successes. The change of the provisions of the Treaty of Rome did not undermine the idea of the European integration, however, in a way, it moved the supranational emphasis onto leaving a considerable part of national sovereignty to Member States. The Luxembourg Compromise stipulated that the introduction of whatever change would not be possible without full support of the strongest state of the Community, that is, France.

It was planned to introduce changes concerning the three Community bodies during the last stage of the implementation of the Treaty of Rome, which started on 1 January 1966. At the beginning of their functioning, they had similar bodies, however, with different competences resulting from their different objectives and activities. The European Economic Community (EEC) was believed to be the most influential organization, recognized as the engine of the European integration. It was the EEC that undertook the task of implementing three common policies: the agricultural one developed in the years 1962-1968, the trade policy adopted in 1970, and the Customs Union introduced in 1968.¹³ An attempt to merge the Community bodies triggered disagreements among Member States, which were afraid that the bodies would be granted

¹⁰ S. Parzymies, *Od pojednania do wspólnego bezpieczeństwa. Wojskowe aspekty stosunków Paryż – Bonn*, Warszawa 1990, p. 42; J.M. Fiszer (ed.), *Współpraca Polski, Niemiec i Francji w ramach Trójkąta Weimarskiego (1991-2021)*, Warszawa 2022.

¹¹ A. Noble, *Przewodnik po Unii Europejskiej. Od Rzymu do Maastricht i Amsterdamu*, transl. by S. Zalewski, Warszawa 2000, p. 45.

¹² W. Góralski, "Wspólnoty europejskie," in W. Góralski (ed.), *Unia Europejska. Geneza – System – Prawo*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 149-182.

¹³ K. Łastawski, *Od idei do integracji europejskiej*, p. 196.

a supranational position. The Community Member States managed to work out a common stance that paved the way to signing the so-called Merger Treaty on 8 April 1965, which came into force on 1 July 1967. By virtue of it, the main decision-taking bodies of the Communities (the Council of the European Coal and Steel Community, the Council of the European Economic Community and the Council of the European Atomic Energy Community) were unified to form a single Council of the European Communities. It was composed of the representatives of the governments with the number of votes corresponding to the demographic potential of a given Member State. Officially, Foreign Ministers were appointed government representatives, however, in practice the composition of the Council changed and depended on the issues discussed. The Merger Treaty also unified the executive institutions: the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community, the Commission of the European Economic Community and the Commission of the European Atomic Energy Community into one common Commission of the European Communities. The Commission was composed of nine members: each Member State appointed one representative with the exception of the biggest Member States, which could appoint two commissioners. The merger of the institutions undoubtedly had enormous importance for the efficiency of the European Communities' activities.¹⁴

The internal development of integration and gradual tightening of cooperation between the Six did not close the way to establish cooperation with successive European states. Article 237 of the EEC Treaty stipulated that each European State might apply to the Council and join the Community. The decision on admission shall be consulted with the Commission and taken unanimously. The first applications of potential candidates were addressed to the Community in 1961. The United Kingdom officially applied for admission to the EEC on 9 August. Around the same time Ireland (31 July), Denmark (10 August) and Norway (2 May) applied.¹⁵ The decision concerning the admission of Great Britain into the Community structures was influenced by the mistrustful stance of France on sincerity and intentions of London. The meeting of Prime Minister Macmillan with President Charles de Gaulle in 1958 during which the British Prime Minister compared the establishment of the EEC to the Continental Blockade, which had taken place in Europe during Napoleon Bonaparte's rule in France, cast a shadow on the negotiations. Eventually, the United Kingdom's application for admission to the Community was rejected on 29 January 1963. This influenced the decisions of the other states, which gave up efforts to join the EEC structures. The change of government in Britain in 1964 led to another attempt to join in. The application for admission to the EEC was submitted by Great Britain on 10 May 1967. Ireland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden also submitted their applications in the same year.¹⁶ This attempt also faced opposition from President de Gaulle, who publicly announced his veto on the British application on 27 October 1967. The stance of the European Parliament

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 196-198.

¹⁵ K. Popowicz, *Historia integracji europejskiej*, Warszawa 2006, p. 81.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 98.

was different: it supported accession attempts of all the states. The negative stance of France once again prevented the enlargement of the European Communities.¹⁷

The meeting of Foreign Ministers and Heads of Governments of the Member States in Hague on 1 and 2 December 1969 opened a new stage of the European integration. It started regular summits during which Heads of Governments took most important decisions concerning the European Community (EC). The Hague Summit aimed at determining the direction of further integration, including the creation of an economic and monetary union and the enlargement of the Community and starting negotiations with Denmark, Ireland, Norway and Great Britain. The meeting resulted in the appointment of a group of experts in 1970, chaired by Pierre Werner, the aim of which was to develop a project of establishing an economic and monetary union. The project was composed of three stages and assumed meeting the objective till 1980. However, the aim was not achieved due to the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the economic crisis of 1973 caused by the increase in the prices of crude oil. The next initiative was the establishment of a committee consisting of political department directors of Foreign Ministries of the Community Member States presided by Étienne Davignon of Belgium, which aimed at preparing a proposal regarding general recommendations for European political cooperation, including the scope of cooperation in the field of foreign policy.¹⁸ It was approved on 27 October 1970 and became a foundation of the European Political Cooperation. In accordance with the assumptions of the Hague summit, it was eventually possible to start the procedure of the enlargement of the Community through the accession of candidate states. In June 1970, accession negotiations with Denmark, Ireland, Norway and Great Britain started, which finished with the signing of the Treaty of Accession on 22 January 1972. In referendums on joining the European Community held in the candidate states, only the Norwegian society voted against (53.49% of 'no' votes).¹⁹ In other countries (Denmark, Ireland and Great Britain), the ratification procedure ended on 1 January 1973, when the Treaty entered into force.

The conference of Heads of State and Governments of the EEC that took place on 9 and 10 December 1974 started the next stage of the European integration development. This was when a new idea of preparing a report containing detailed recommendations for the future shape of the European Union emerged. Leo Tindemans, Prime Minister of Belgium, was tasked with the project coordination and on 22 December 1975, after a year's consultations, he presented a final document called "European Union." The main proposals of Tindemans Report included the introduction of common economic, agricultural, industrial, monetary, energy and research policy. Another decision was to create a common foreign policy and a common defense system, as well as to develop a common social policy and to strengthen the protection of human rights. The document played an important role in the genesis of the European Union

¹⁷ K. Łastawski, *Od idei do integracji europejskiej*, p. 199.

¹⁸ K. Popowicz, *Historia integracji europejskiej*, p. 115.

¹⁹ K. Łastawski, *Od idei do integracji europejskiej*, p. 218.

because it demonstrated the weaknesses of the former integration activities in Europe and at the same time included a vision of the European Union as an organization uniting Member States politically. In 1976 both the European Parliament and the Commission approved the implementation of the proposals in Tindemans Report. In order to check the possibility of adjusting the EC mechanisms to the needs of the future European Union, the European Council appointed a special team of the “Three Wise Men.” Their report defined the objectives and tasks of the European Union. It was similar to the proposals put forward by Leo Tindemans.

The integration process was slow but progressing in the sphere of the Community functioning as well as its enlargement. On 1 January 1981, Greece became the tenth Member State, and on 1 January 1986, Spain and Portugal joined the Community. The early 1980s made politicians realize that the process of European integration required far-reaching reforms mainly based on Tindemans Report. One of the key initiatives in the area was German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher’s speech on 6 January 1981, in which he advocated for the transformation of the Communities into the European Union. The project was supported by Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Emilio Colombo and became the basis for the European Act.²⁰ The document proposed revising the foundation treaties, increasing the competences of the European Council and the European Parliament, developing closer cooperation in the field of security and culture. It also assumed the limitation of the application of the Luxembourg Compromise to “very important national interests” of Member States. In March 1981, based on Genscher-Colombo initiative, the European Council adopted the Solemn Declaration on European Union and tasked the Committee on Institutional Affairs appointed by the Parliament with drawing up a project of building a political union. Further steps to sign the Treaty of Maastricht and create the European Union were taken during the European Council in Milan on 28 and 29 June 1985. A White Paper summing up the activities aimed at creating a common market until 1992 was presented. Next, during the Intergovernmental Conference on 9 September 1985, 12 European States approved the draft Single European Act (SEA). Spain, which signed the Accession Treaty on 12 June 1985 and formally became the Community Member State on 1 January 1986, took part in the conference. Portugal, which applied for membership at the same time as Spain (1977) and joined the Community on 1 January 1986, also participated in it.²¹ The SEA was signed in two stages: on 17 February 1986 (by nine States) and 28 February 1986 (by Italy, Greece and Denmark), and entered into force on 1 July 1987.

After the collapse of communist governments in Central and Eastern Europe, and with the end of the Cold War, two international conferences were held in 1990. The first one dealt with an economic and monetary union and the second one was devoted to a political union. Both conferences accelerated the work on the Treaty on European Union, which – as I have already mentioned – was preliminarily adopted

²⁰ W. Góralski, “Wspólnoty europejskie,” p. 80.

²¹ K. Łastawski, *Od idei do integracji europejskiej*, pp. 238-240.

by the European Council in Maastricht on 9 and 10 December 1991.²² Negotiations on the European Union gathered pace after the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, the German reunification on 3 October 1990 and the election to Bundestag on 2 December 1990 with the result that Helmut Kohl continued to be German Chancellor for the following four years.²³

Germany and France declared that they were for a common foreign and security policy, which in the future was to lead to a defense community closely cooperating with NATO, and for strengthening the role of the European Parliament in the EU decision-taking process. They supported the development of a federal Union with a common currency. Eventually, on 7 February 1992 Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain signed the Treaty on European Union (TEU), commonly called the Treaty of Maastricht,²⁴ which entered into force on 1 November 1993. It consisted of 7 titles, 33 declarations and 17 protocols. The Treaty established the European Union, which was a turning point on the way to its security.

2. EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS ACTION FOR INTEGRATION AND SECURITY IN EUROPE AFTER THE COLD WAR

The most important tasks that the European Union gave Member States were formulated in Article 2 (TEU) of the Treaty of Maastricht. They included: to promote economic and social progress, to eliminate unemployment, to tighten cooperation between the EU Member States in the economic and social field. The ultimate objective of the common efforts was to establish an economic and monetary union with a common currency. Article 2 obliged the EU Members to implement a common foreign and security policy, which in the case of threat should constitute the basis for common defense. The Treaty emphasized the strengthening of the protection of the rights and interests of the nationals of Member States, who became citizens of the Union. All the residents of Member States holding their citizenship acquired the citizenship of the European Union. By virtue of the Treaty, they had the right to move freely within the territory of the Community. One of the most important parts of the Treaty included the decisions concerning the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the so-called convergence criteria, which opened the door to the monetary union for Member States.²⁵

The European Union established by virtue of the Treaty of Maastricht has a rather complex structure composed of three 'parts' called pillars. The first pillar grouped the

²² M. Cini (ed.), *Unia Europejska. Organizacja i funkcjonowanie*, Warszawa 2007, p. 77.

²³ B. Koszel, *Rola Niemiec w procesach decyzyjnych Unii Europejskiej w XXI wieku*, Poznań 2019, p. 36.

²⁴ A. Przyborowska-Klimczak, E. Skrzydło-Tefelska, *Dokumenty europejskie*, vol. 3, Warszawa 2007, p. 295.

²⁵ B. Koszel, *Rola Niemiec w procesach decyzyjnych...*, p. 38; P.J. Borkowski, *Międzypaństwowość w procesie integracji europejskiej*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 269-297.

European Communities together; the second pillar focused on common foreign and security policy; and the third pillar aimed at cooperating in the field of justice and home affairs.²⁶ The above-mentioned European Union citizenship was introduced within the scope of the first pillar. It was not granted to the European Union residents who came from outside the Community. The European Ombudsman was established to guarantee the exercise of human rights, and to whom citizens and organizations could lodge complaints against the EU institutions. The Treaty obliged all Member States to establish closer cooperation in the field of healthcare, environment protection and trans-European transport, communication and energy network development. All the objectives on the way to the implementation contained in the TEU had to take into account the principle of subsidiarity, which was laid down in Article 5 of the (TEU) Treaty.²⁷

The cooperation within the second pillar aimed at strengthening security in the Community territory through systematic development of cooperation between Member States. The signatories to the Treaty also committed themselves to developing common values and safeguarding interests, especially the security of every Member State of the European Union. It was also important to protect human rights and strengthen democratic procedures.²⁸

It must be mentioned here that, after the Second World War, the first state to address the issue of the need to create an autonomous structure of cooperation between Western European countries in the field of security was France, which was afraid of a new threat from Germany. As early as in March 1947, this led to the Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance with the United Kingdom signed in Dunkirk, and in March 1948 to the so-called Brussels Pact, that is, the Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence, which was entered into by France, Great Britain and the three Benelux countries. Based on this treaty, the first organization of the Western European countries' collective self-defense was established.²⁹

When general de Gaulle regained power in 1958, the cooperation between France and FRG in the field of the European security started to get a more material shape. As I have already mentioned, de Gaulle believed that reconciliation and cooperation between France and Germany are necessary elements of the reconstruction of Europe, as well as a condition for ensuring its security and strengthening the role of France in the international arena. The provisions of the Treaty of Maastricht concerning a common EU foreign and security policy referred to the former proposals put forward by France and Germany. In the following years the French-German cooperation, with the

²⁶ J. Maliszewska-Nienartowicz, *System instytucjonalny i prawny Unii Europejskiej*, Toruń 2010, p. 31.

²⁷ E. Wojtaszek-Mik, C. Mik, *Unia Europejska. Wspólnota Europejska. Zbiór dokumentów*, Zakamycze 2005.

²⁸ J. Starzyk-Sulejewska, "Francja i Niemcy wobec wspólnej polityki bezpieczeństwa i obrony Unii Europejskiej," *Studia Politica Germanica*, no. 1 (2012), pp. 197-229. Also see: S. Parzymies, "Polityka zagraniczna i bezpieczeństwa w ramach EWG," *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, no. 1-2 (1992), pp. 51-57; A. Szeptycki, *Francja czy Europa? Dziedzictwo generała de Gaulle'a w polityce zagranicznej V Republiki*, Warszawa 2005.

²⁹ J. Starzyk-Sulejewska, "Francja i Niemcy wobec wspólnej polityki...", p. 198.

participation and support of other Union Member States, determined *successive stages of actions for the development of assumptions and implementation of the European Security and Defence Policy at first, and later, i.e. since the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force, the Common Security and Defence Policy*.³⁰

The final, third pillar resulted from a compromise between Member States, which was worked out with great effort because they wanted the competences in home affairs and justice to be maintained at the national level. In accordance with Article K of the Treaty, the matters of common activities and interests included, inter alia, combating terrorism, asylum policy, combating drug trafficking, rules governing the crossing of the external borders of the EU, combating illegal immigration and organized crime, and judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters.³¹

The conclusion of the Treaty of Maastricht and the creation of the European Union presented many new challenges and obligations to its Member States, which aimed at achieving a final effect: a common market without any barriers. Mutual efforts resulted in the regional, agricultural, monetary, industrial, research and development, and transportation policy, as well as in other social policy spheres.³² The development of the regional policy constituted one of the priorities of the EU and was supported by the European Investment Bank.

The regional policy of the EU aimed at supporting entrepreneurship through the development of a new infrastructure, an increase in industrial investments, and from 1994 the development of cross-border cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The agricultural policy was of key importance from the beginning of the development of the foundations of the post-war European integration. The Common Agricultural Policy within the European Union maintained its priority, as reflected in the share of the Community budget for the sector, which on average accounted for 54% of the total in the years 1990-1996, and today exceeds 40%. Those massive subsidies were aimed at influencing the increase in competitiveness of the European agricultural products on the world markets, as well as eliminating differences in the incomes of agricultural holdings. The introduction of the Common Monetary Policy was the next element tightening the cooperation between Member States in order to achieve the target: an economic and monetary union. As already mentioned, the treaty of Maastricht introduced a few indicators of convergence that should not be exceeded.³³ One of the European Union objectives was also to introduce a common currency, the euro, the name of which was approved during the following session of the European Council in 1995.

All the European Union actions were aimed at one main objective: economic growth translating into increase in employment, improvement in the standard of living and competitiveness of particular economic sectors of the whole EU. To that end,

³⁰ Ibid., p. 212.

³¹ A. Przyborowska-Klimczak, E. Skrzydło-Tefelska, *Dokumenty europejskie*, p. 306.

³² K. Łastawski, *Od idei do integracji europejskiej*, p. 300.

³³ Ibid., p. 303.

great importance, and thus expenditure, was attached to scientific research and technological development. Research programs were to focus on the development of high technologies for civil and military needs, which required finance to fund research, as well as the education of highly qualified scientific staff. The Common Transport Policy improving the movement of people and goods within the European Union territory was another important factor in supporting the development of the common market. Common actions for the development of the European infrastructure were aimed at considerably decreasing the costs of transport, and minimizing burden on the natural environment at the same time.³⁴ Actions for environmental protection did not only concern the issues of transport and its negative impact on the natural environment. The Treaty of Maastricht introduced many limitations and norms to which Member States had to adjust. The policy in this field was targeted at improving the natural environment condition, and thus health and human life protection. In the period of constant economic and civilization development, it was a very important issue that was a basis for sustainable development that takes into account the needs of future generations.

The actions promoting integration initiated after the Second World War by the Western European countries led the European Union to the position of the strongest social-political and economic organization in Europe and its strengthened security in the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War. For the remaining European states, the membership in the European Union became an opportunity for development and gave them a chance to strengthen their global position, which can be exemplified, inter alia, by Poland.³⁵ Austria, Sweden, Finland and Norway composed the next group of countries that applied for membership of the EU. In the case of Austria, Sweden and Finland, the negotiations succeeded and the three countries became the European Union Member States on 1 January 1995. The lack of Norway's full integration with the Community resulted from the referendum in this country in which 52% of the citizens voted against the accession to the EU structures.³⁶

The signing of the Treaty on European Union did not mean the end of the European integration process. The process required introducing successive solutions that had to take into account the level of cohesion achieved, and at the same time should mark out new targets and priorities. On 2 October 1997, the Treaty of Amsterdam was signed and it entered into force on 1 June 1999. The most important changes it introduced included, inter alia, incorporating the cooperation within the Schengen Agreement to the EU policy, movement of the actions within the scope of justice and home affairs from the third pillar to the first pillar (European Communities), and extension of the application of the qualified majority voting method by the European Parliament.

³⁴ W. Weidenfeld, W. Wessels, *Europa od A do Z. Podręcznik integracji europejskiej*, transl. by E. Ptaszyńska-Sadowska, Gliwice 1999, p. 237.

³⁵ J. Niznik (ed.), *Polska w Europie jutra. Polityka europejska Polski w kontekście zmian międzynarodowych XXI wieku*, in cooperation with J. Barcz and J. Truszczyński, Warszawa 2021.

³⁶ K. Łastawski, *Od idei do integracji europejskiej*, p. 322.

The next revision of the founding treaties took place on 26 February 2001, when Member States signed the Treaty of Nice, which entered into force on 1 March 2003. It was a basis for the future enlargement of the European Union into Central and Eastern Europe. The Treaty of Lisbon, which was signed on 13 December 2007 and entered into force on 1 December 2009, is the latest but equally important agreement. The enlargement of the EU required the introduction of new regulations concerning, inter alia, determining decision-taking mechanisms. The Treaty of Lisbon was aimed at strengthening democracy, tightening cooperation in the field of border control, and judicial and police cooperation. What deserves a special mention is the introduction of the so-called citizens' initiative, which enables societies in the EU to actively participate in its life.³⁷

By virtue of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament has gained much power and it now *decides on most of the Union legislation. Some of the obtained competences were earlier reserved for the Council, e.g. the agricultural, visa and asylum policy. In addition, they include matters that the Union has not dealt with so far, such as personal data protection, energy or intellectual property. The Parliament has considerable influence on the appointment of commissioners.*³⁸

The European Parliament today can *de facto* create law in the same way as the Council of the EU or the European Commission. It has the power to block the EU commercial agreements (e.g. if they are in conflict with human rights) and influences the distribution of the Union funds, for example those allocated for the Common Agricultural Policy. Speaking about continually growing competences of the European Parliament, one must remember that Member States grant them. Member States decide what the Parliament can and how it uses its competences. The European Parliament has no rights to decide about itself and grant itself power because these are matters subject to the EU Member States' decisions.³⁹ The Lisbon Treaty has strengthened the powers and role of the European Parliament in the EU decision-making process as well as the role of national parliaments. It has given the EP new competences in the field of budget, legislation or the process of entering into international agreements. The extension of its role in the co-deciding procedure, which *de facto* makes the Parliament equal to the Council, has been the most important change for the Parliament.⁴⁰

The Lisbon Treaty also determines a new share in seats allocated to the EU Member States. As far as the national parliaments and their new role in the process of the

³⁷ J.J. Węc, *Traktat Lizboński. Polityczne aspekty reformy ustrojowej Unii Europejskiej w latach 2007-2009*, Kraków 2011; J.M. Fiszer (ed.), *Parlament Europejski po Traktacie z Lizbony. Doświadczenia i nowe wyzwania*, Warszawa 2011; J.M. Fiszer, "Modernizacja Unii Europejskiej w dobie kryzysu i kształtowania się nowego ładu globalnego. Szanse i zagrożenia," *Politeja*, vol. 10, no. 4(26) (2013), pp. 149-168.

³⁸ See M. Marczak, "I kto tu rządzi?," *Newsweek Polska*, special supplement, December 2009, p. 23.

³⁹ See J.A. Wojciechowski, *Europa po liftingu*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 56-58.

⁴⁰ For more on this issue see: J. Jaskiernia, *Pozycja Parlamentu Europejskiego w systemie instytucjonalnym Unii Europejskiej po Traktacie z Lizbony*, in J.M. Fiszer (ed.), *Parlament Europejski po Traktacie z Lizbony...*, pp. 153-178.

EU functioning are concerned, the following solutions were adopted: participation in a simplified procedure of amending treaties, strengthening the position in the field of freedoms, security and justice, and increase in information. In addition, the Lisbon Treaty determines the possibilities and conditions for a state's exit from the EU membership and a decrease in the number of commissioners to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the number of Member States (starting from 1 November 2014). Moreover, the Treaty changes the rules of functioning of some EU bodies. First of all, it recognizes the European Council as the European Union institution, although it still does not have legislative power. The decision-making process in the European Council raised most doubts and, eventually a qualified majority system of voting was chosen. In addition, a new institution, that is, president of the European Council appointed for a two-and-a-half-year term, was established. The president's main tasks are to organize and manage the work of the European Council, submit reports to the European Parliament, and ensure the continuity of the European Council work. Unfortunately, in practice this leads to collision with the competences of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.⁴¹ One can put forward a thesis that the Treaty of Lisbon strengthened not only the role of the European Parliament but also the position of the EU in the international arena. The Treaty of Lisbon finally limited the number of members of the European Parliament to 750 (without the President of the European Parliament) and decided that the minimum number of representatives of the least populated Member State should be six. Moreover, it stipulated that seats should be distributed according to degressive proportionality.⁴² This means that the distribution of seats is not based on the universal mathematical rule but results from a political agreement and is temporary in nature, and that it is subject to discussion before the next election to the European Parliament. In addition, it was agreed that in the future, the European Council would determine the detailed distribution of seats between Member States based on the proposal of the European Parliament.⁴³

Unfortunately, all these solutions did not protect the EU against problems and crises, especially the 2008-2014 financial and economic crisis and the 2015-2016 migration crisis, which have not been efficiently resolved up to now and still pose a threat to the European integration and security. It results from the fact that the anti-crisis actions were not aimed at solving the main causes of the problems occurring. The EU leaders excessively focused on secondary problems and the protection of their national interests, which was harmful to the climate of mutual trust and faith in the efficiency of the European integration. Not always, according to Tomasz Grosse, *the right diagnosis of the crisis was established or mistakes were made in the anti-crisis policy. It was also evident that there was 'an asymmetry of rationality' of anti-crisis*

⁴¹ See M. Kleinowski, "Wpływ Traktatu lizbońskiego na siłę Polski w Radzie Unii Europejskiej," *Mysł Ekonomiczna i Polityczna*, no. 1(48) (2015), pp. 184-207.

⁴² See Ł. Sosnowski, "Podział mandatów do Parlamentu Europejskiego," in K. Smyk (ed.), *Traktat z Lizbony – postanowienia, ocena, implikacje*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 152-162.

⁴³ Ibid. See also: J.M. Fiszer, "Parlament Europejski po wyborach z czerwca 2009 roku," in J.M. Fiszer (ed.), *Parlament Europejski po Traktacie z Lizbony...*, pp. 115-152.

*actions, consisting in the fact that the decision-makers cared about the interests of their electorate and taxpayers more than about the wellbeing of the EU or the EMU. The policy-makers tended to minimise the costs for their societies and to transfer them onto other countries.*⁴⁴

Despite those anomalies and growing threats to the security of Europe and the world today, which are determined by the aggression of Russia against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, in my opinion, there are no better prospects than far-reaching integration in Europe. That is why its strengthening is an imperative, regardless of the short-sighted policies of some European leaders or even against them. At the same time, in order to eliminate the increasing nationalistic moods, the European Union must actively support the Member States' attempts aimed at maintaining their specificity and cultural identity, and create its own military forces necessary to ensure security in Europe. This will require an overall transformation of the European citizens' awareness. It can be assumed that the global situation and the attractiveness of the EU will be conducive to this. Despite many weaknesses and unsolved problems, the EU is still an attractive international organization for many countries, such as Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia or the Western Balkan states, and enjoys much social support in Member States. For example, according to the latest survey by CEBOS,⁴⁵ the social support for Poland's membership in the EU has never been as strong as it is now. 92% of Poles are for Poland's membership in the European Union and over half of them praise the Union for combating the Covid-19 pandemic, the stance on the war in Ukraine and guarding the rule of law in Member States. The results for the climate and migration policies are much lower. On the other hand, 38% of the respondents are for strengthening integration of all the EU Member States.⁴⁶

CONCLUSIONS

The post-war Yalta-Potsdam international order, also called bipolar or Cold-War order, broke down 30 years ago with the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, the German reunification and the collapse of the Soviet Union, which took place in the years 1989-1991. As a result of these historic processes, the Cold War ended and the political map of Europe and the world changed. New sovereign and democratic states, including Poland as a leader, came into being. The balance of power in Europe and the world changed. The process of building a new post-Cold-War international system started and one of its results, apart from far-reaching globalization, was

⁴⁴ T.G. Grosse, *Pokryzysowa Europa...*, p. 275. See also: H.W. Maull, "World Politics in Turbulence," *International Politik und Gesellschaft*, no. 1 (2011), pp. 11-25.

⁴⁵ The survey was conducted from 30 May to 9 June 2022. See: A. Karwowska, "Antyunijna retoryka PiS nie działa. Polacy proeuropejscy jak nigdy," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 25 July 2022, at <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,28722152,antyunijna-retoryka-pis-nie-dziala-polacy-proeuropejscy-jak.html>, 13 VIII 2023, p. 8.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

the unprecedented acceleration of integration processes on our continent, which led to the Treaty of Maastricht and the creation of the European Union.⁴⁷ The Treaty of Maastricht became a strong foundation of the EU and an accelerator of the integration in Europe, which became an important part of the Euro-Atlantic system of international security.

At the same time, in the 1990s, with the global end of the Cold War, the number of weak, collapsing and collapsed states increased year by year. They constituted and still pose, besides arms race and international terrorism, one of the main threats to the European and global security.⁴⁸ This internal weakness of states and aggressiveness of stronger states against weaker ones resulted in most of the conflicts after 1991. There were over seventy serious military conflicts only in the years 1992-2008, and dozens of others in 2009-2022. They included such conflicts threatening the world peace as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Russo-Georgian War, the war in Syria, as well as the Russo-Ukrainian War.⁴⁹

What is more, in the years 2008-2022, the role of the Atlantic Community in the international arena was weakening because the EU and NATO could not reach a consensus on the form and scope of further cooperation and methods of fighting for peace in the world. The United States and Europe made their own ways. Their bonds and cooperation were no longer as strong as during the Cold War. It turned out that the Atlantic Community was not prepared for the collapse of the bipolar order and the collapse of the Soviet empire. They were taken by surprise by the "Arab Spring," the events in Ukraine, Syria or the Islamic State. In the early 1990s, there was an erroneous assumption that the neoliberal world developing under the control of the United States, the world of free trade and democracy, would provide solutions that would lead to the establishment of a new world: a world of freedom, democracy, peace and prosperity modelled after and resembling *Pax Americana*. However, it did not happen because some new candidates to take over the control over the world appeared, namely China and Russia of President Putin, who already at the 2007 Munich Security Conference spoke about the end of the 'unipolar' world meaning the United States' dominance. He spoke against the American one-sidedness and expansionism.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ J.M. Fiszer, *System euroatlantycki przed i po zakończeniu zimnej wojny. Istota, cele i zadania oraz rola w budowie nowego ładu globalnego*, Warszawa 2013; J.M. Fiszer, "Polska wobec małych sąsiadów – aspekty teoretyczne i uptylitarne," in R. Żelichowski (ed.), *Pierwsza pięciolatka. Małe państwa Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w Unii Europejskiej*, Warszawa 2010, pp. 29-57; Z. Brzeziński, *Strategiczna wizja. Ameryka a kryzys globalnej potęgi*, Kraków 2013; R. Kuźniar, *Europa w porządku międzynarodowym*, Warszawa 2016.

⁴⁸ R. Rybkowski, "Komu potrzebna są państwa Upadłe?," in R. Kłosowicz, A. Mania (eds.), *Problemy upadku państw w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, Kraków 2012, pp. 16-23; G. King, L. Zeng, "Improving Forecasts of State Failure," *World Politics*, vol. 53, no. 4 (2001), p. 623.

⁴⁹ A.D. Rotfeld, "Polityka suwerennej Polski w niestabilnym świecie," *Sprawy Międzynarodowe*, no. 4 (2008), p. 10; J.M. Fiszer, "Zadania i cele polityki zagranicznej Władimira Putina," *Mysł Ekonomiczna i Polityczna*, vol. 52, no. 1 (2016), pp. 167-201.

⁵⁰ J.M. Fiszer, "Will China Take Over the World in the Middle of the 21st Century?," *Studia Polityczne*, vol. 50, no. 1 (2022), pp. 11-34; P. Buhler, *O potęgę w XXI wieku*, transl. by G. Majcher, Warszawa

Russia governed by Putin was introducing more and more aggressive foreign policy, which was tolerated by the West for a long time, and which continues to pose a threat to the European and global security today. Vladimir Putin set detailed objectives to achieve in the international arena and has been pursuing them successively since 2000 up to now. He has not assumed a defensive position and started to prepare Russia to return to the forefront of the international scene. Russia managed to torpedo the planned Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement in 2013 and annexed the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, which resulted in the return of the Cold War and a deep crisis in international relations. What has become Putin's main objective is to eradicate the European Union and destroy the Euro-Atlantic system, as well as to restore powerful Russia and its strong position in the international arena as a superpower having adequate potential, especially economic and military one. The aims and tasks that Vladimir Putin set for Russia's foreign and military policy were and still are dangerous for Europe and the whole world, as well as for the peace and international security. They may lead to the outbreak of the third world war. What is more, the international community is wondering today whether the world is going to face the specter of nuclear war. President Joe Biden warned on 5 October 2022 that *the risk of nuclear Armageddon is at its highest since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962*. What is comforting is the fact that the Russian aggression against Ukraine, against Putin's expectations, consolidated the EU and NATO, as well as the Euro-Atlantic system, and opened the door for Ukraine to the EU and perhaps also to NATO, thanks to which the European integration and security have been strengthened. Thus, the objective set in the Treaty of Maastricht: "ever closer union," that is, the development of increasingly closer integration, continues to be the main aim of the European Union and is conducive to the security of Europe.

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