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Polish-Ukrainian relations after independence

The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the breakdown of the bipolar system on which the existing international order had been based. The emergence of new nations changed the political map of Europe. In the newly created geopolitical configuration, the proclamation of an independent Ukraine held particular significance for the reborn Third Polish Republic. It occurred on 24 August 1991 (shortly after Yanayev’s putsch in Moscow) with the Ukrainian parliament’s passage of the Independence Act,¹ which was then confirmed in a nationwide referendum on 1 December 1991. On the following day, 2 December 1991, Poland was the first country to officially recognize the independence of Ukraine, to some extent complementing earlier resolutions of the Polish Sejm and Senate from late August 1991 which greeted the Ukrainian Independence Act with approval.² It should be noted that soon after the Ukrainian parliament’s passage of the Independence Act, the two countries entered into quasi-diplomatic relations via special envoys (J. Kozakiewicz on the Polish side, T. Starak on the Ukrainian), later elevated to the rank of ambassadors.

Poland’s recognition of Ukraine’s independence was not only an important political act, but also opened the path toward the signing by both countries of the “Treaty on Good Neighborhood, Friendly Relations and Cooperation between the Republic of Poland and the Ukraine.” This treaty, signed in Warsaw 18 May 1992, laid the foundation for the Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership. The idea of a strategic partnership, however, only took shape in 1996, due to a nongovernmental initiative, i.e. the memorandum of the Movement of One Hundred and the Ukrain-

ian National Movement, and was approved by both governments, but that was in some sense the confirmation of previous Polish-Ukrainian co-operation based on the aforesaid treaty. The treaty’s 21 articles highlighted the goals and principles for building mutual relations in the areas of political, economic, military, ecological, cultural, scientific, and humanitarian co-operation, as well as the protection of legal and national minorities, based on collective security, the inviolability of borders, and respect for “the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Accords, the Paris Charter and other documents of European co-operation.”

The road to the Polish-Ukrainian Treaty was not easy for either country. Poland, which as early as 1989 had chosen to adopt a pro-Western political strategy and at the moment of the Treaty’s signing was already an associated country with the EC (on 16 December 1991 Poland signed the Europe Agreement of Association) understood the geopolitical significance of an independent Ukraine, which Zbigniew Brzezinski defined as “a geopolitical linchpin,” writing that: “the very existence of an independent Ukrainian nation encourages the transformation of Russia... Ukraine’s loss of independence would have immediate consequences for Central and Eastern Europe, turning Poland into a geopolitical linchpin on the eastern border of a united Europe.” An independent Ukraine would, by contrast, serve as a buffer separating Russia from Poland and Europe, deflecting any possible threat from Russia, and was therefore “the strategic key to the safety not only of Poland, but of all Europe.” The thesis appears confirmed by the fact that geopolitical factors played a determinative role in the Polish-Ukrainian rapprochement.

Ukraine, on the other hand, which obtained independence without having a tradition of nationhood, inheriting state institutions from the Soviet empire, with its sole legally existing political party i.e. the Communists (Ukrainian Communist Party) and a few independent dissident groups, was still in the phase of building

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3 See R. Kuźniar, Droga do wolności. Polityka zagraniczna III Rzeczypospolitej, Warszawa 2008, pp. 161–162; T. Kapuśniak claims that the concept of a “strategic partnership” was used in August 1993 by then prime minister Hanna Suchocka to define theretofore existing Polish-Ukrainian relations (T. Kapuśniak, Polityka Polski wobec Ukrainy, in: Polityka wschodnia Polski. Uwarunkowania, koncepcje, realizacja, ed. A. Gil i T. Kapuśniak, Lublin–Warszawa 2009, p. 221). Henryk Binkowski on the other hand asserts that the concept of “Strategic partnership between Poland and Ukraine” emerged during Polish president Lech Wałęsa’s visit to Kyiv in May 1993 (H. Binkowski, Traktat między Rzecząpospolitą Polską i Ukrainą o dobrym sąsiedztwie, przyjaznych stosunkach i wspólnej pracy w 15 rocznicę jego podpisania (aspekty bezpieczeństwa), in: Polska i Ukraina w kształtowaniu bezpieczeństwa europejskiego (aspekty militarne i pozamilitarne), ed.: J. Buczyński, H. Binkowski, Przemysław, 8 March 2007, p. 129).

4 Dz. U., Nr 126, 20 July 1993, see p. 573.

5 These issues are analyzed in detail by B. Surmacz, Współczesne stosunki polsko-ukraińskie. Politologiczna analiza traktatu o dobrym sąsiedztwie, Lublin 2002, passim.


7 B. Surmacz, op. cit., pp. 33–34.

8 Since 1976 the Ukrainian Helsinki Group had been active; in 1988 it became the Ukrainian Helsinki Union. Other functioning groups included: “Memorial,” the Taras Shevchenko Society for the Defense of the Ukrainian Language, the Democratic Union, Zeleny Svit (“Green World,” an environmental group created after the Chernobyl disaster). In 1989 as a result of the fusion of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union with members of the Kyiv creative intelligentsia (I. Drach, D. Pavlychko, V. Yavorivski) the People’s Movement of Ukraine was formed. The Movement initially recognized the leadership role of the Communist Party but later, at the Movement congress in October 1989, eliminated all traces of pro-Communist orientation. Opposition groups prepared for the parliamentary elections in 1990
internal democratic structures. In foreign policy four main concepts quickly crystallized: the Pavlychko or neutrality doctrine postulating a neutral Ukraine; the idea of "balanced interests," based on cooperating with eastern as well as western and southern countries; the Euro-Atlantic idea, i.e. opening up to the West, and the Eurasian idea, proposing to reintegrate the post-Soviet sphere. Although none of these concepts was accepted, continual Ukrainian-Russian disagreements and the search for a supportive ally led the first president of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, to turn his attention toward Poland. He was counting not only on Poland's engagement in Ukrainian-Russian issues but also on help in transforming Ukraine from a post-Soviet country into a Central European nation. At that time Polish policy toward its eastern neighbors was ruled by a two-track strategy based on "good" relations with Moscow on one hand and establishing relationships with the peripheral Soviet republics on the other. Thus after the collapse of the USSR, when this two-track policy began to lose its raison d'être, Poland made an opening to Ukraine, without, however, entering into Ukrainian-Russian disputes, the more so since there were still Russian troops stationed in Poland. On the other hand, caution toward Ukraine was also shaped by the two countries' painful shared history, but dealing with such problems was deferred to a later date.

The Polish-Ukrainian treaty was important not only for the geostrategic policy of both countries, but also for the bilateral relationship between them. It has by creating the Democratic Bloc and won 25% of the seats in parliament. In the parliament itself the opposition established the National Council (125 deputies) at whose initiative the Verkhovna Rada on 16 July 1990 passed the resolution "Declaration of Ukrainian national sovereignty," B. Surmacz, op. cit., pp. 36–38.


10 After Ukraine proclaimed independence, President Yeltsin's press secretary declared that Russia reserved the right to revise its borders with the republics withdrawing from the USSR and that with regard to Ukraine these claims concerned the Donetsk Basin and Crimea. The dispute over Crimea has geopolitical (Russian access to the Black Sea), military (the Russian Black Sea Fleet), ethnic (Russians and Crimean Tatars), economic (oil deposits on the Black Sea shelf, transport of natural energy resources) aspects. When Ukraine established its own armed forces in 1991, the ranks of the Black Sea Fleet were 40% Russian. The problem of taking a loyalty oath to Ukraine arose (20% of the sailors refused to take such an oath, including chief admiral V. Kasatonov). Another divisive issue was Soviet nuclear weaponry (Ukraine inherited approximately 12% of the Soviet nuclear arsenal). When on 24 October 1991 the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine passed a resolution "On the Ukraine's nuclear-weapons-free status," a dispute began concerning the procedures, the method of destruction and even the advisability of giving atomic weapons back to Russia. In the end Ukraine pledged to give the weapons to Russia by the end of 1994.

11 While the treaty was being negotiated, the Ukrainians insisted on a notation regarding Operation Vistula. But the Poles cited the resolution of the Polish Sejm of 3 August 1990 condemning Operation Vistula as typical of the totalitarian systems in which the principle of collective responsibility was applied. Finally the notation was left out of the treaty. It bears mentioning that during the meeting of Polish and Ukrainian parliamentarians in Jabłonna in May 1990 V. Chornovil spoke thus: "Operation Vistula was a state action. It cannot be equated with events in Volhynia, since there was no Ukrainian state at the time." Quoted from: B. Surmacz, op. cit. p. 27. It should also be noted that in exchange for the Polish Senate resolution on Operation Vistula, Poles expected a reciprocal stance from Ukrainians in regard to the genocide against Poles in Volhynia carried out by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.
sometimes been referred to as the Constitution of Polish-Ukrainian relations.\textsuperscript{12} For Poland it meant strengthening Ukraine’s independence, and the possibility of enticing her toward Europe while simultaneously pushing her away from Russia. Ukraine, for her part, saw Poland as an advocate on her path to European integration and also interpreted the treaty as an alternative option or enhancement of her position in her dealings with Russia. Its signing was determined by the state of both countries’ relations with Russia at that time. This is evident from the fact that the deadline for signing it was postponed by the Polish side, which since the spring of 1992 had been conducting negotiations with Russia regarding the removal of Russian troops from Polish territory. There were fears that signing the treaty with Ukraine could cause Russia’s position on the other issue to harden. Finally after disputes between President Wałęsa and Premier Olszewski and through some Ukrainian diplomatic maneuvering the decision was made to sign the treaty with Ukraine before the one with Russia (22 May 1992).

The first stage of the Polish-Ukrainian treaty’s consummation and implementation on the international level occurred during the first presidencies of the new period of independence for both countries: that of Lech Wałęsa in Poland (1990–1995), and of Leonid Kravchuk in Ukraine (1990–1994). During that period both nations not only concluded a whole series of treaties, agreements, protocols and conventions relating to various areas of co-operation but also established the Consultative Committee for the Presidents of Poland and Ukraine (12 December 1993), tasked with maintaining an ongoing dialogue and stimulating the development of mutual relations. In the international arena Ukraine became a member, with Poland’s support, of many international organizations. In 1992 she was admitted into the OSCE and the UN\textsuperscript{13} and a UN office was opened in Kyiv; in 1994 she joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, the IMF and the World Bank. In February 1994, Ukraine became the first CIS nation to join NATO’s Partnership for Peace program, in June 1994 the Ukrainian government signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union, and in 1995 the country gained membership in the Council of Europe.\textsuperscript{14} But despite Poland’s active support for Ukraine, a certain reserve could be noted on the Polish side, whose priority in security policy was obtaining NATO membership. \textsuperscript{15} For the same reason, President Kravchuk’s campaign for Ukraine’s accession to the Visegrád Group, the latter’s expansion from a trio to a quartet [a development which instead resulted from the dissolution of Czechoslovakia — translator’s note], and the creation of a Central European zone of stability and security (in the Kravchuk Plan of 1992–1993) to serve as a bridge between Western Europe and Russia, were not given Poland’s blessing.\textsuperscript{16} In the meantime, Polish-Ukrainian relations felt a chilling effect at the

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\item \textsuperscript{12} H. Binkowski, op. cit., p. 131.
\item \textsuperscript{13} It should be remembered that Ukraine was a founding member of the UN, but the US recognized Ukraine on 25 December 1991, after the Alma-Ata declaration by the founding presidents of the Commonwealth of Independent States (Russia, Belarus and Ukraine) stating that the USSR had ceased to exist and was not being replaced by the CIS, which was neither a state nor a superstate body. The CIS was established on 8 December 1991 in Minsk.
\item \textsuperscript{15} This tendency in Polish security policy defined Jan Olszewski’s government at the beginning of 1992. After the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, Poland sought security guarantees mainly through the OSCE.
\item \textsuperscript{16} T. Kapuśniak, op. cit., pp. 220–221.
\end{itemize}
turn of 1993–1994 due to the espionage scandal involving Maj. Anatoliy Lysenko and the controversial Polish-Russian agreement to build a pipeline from the Yamal region to Poland, bypassing Ukraine. This latter issue was seen by Ukraine as a blow to her national interest. Riding the wave of Ukrainian indignation, Moscow announced that Ukraine was considered the “near abroad,” in Russia’s sphere of influence. At the same time, the Russians sent word to Ukrainian official circles that Poland had offered to withdraw support for Ukraine’s independence in exchange for accepting Russia’s entry into NATO. One result of these developments was the visit of Ukrainian foreign minister Anatoliy Zlenko to Warsaw in March 1994, which undoubtedly brought about a thaw in Polish-Ukrainian relations. Zlenko, thanking Poland for supporting Ukrainian independence, also talked about Ukraine’s foreign policy priorities, which included political and economic integration with Europe. His Warsaw visit bore fruit in the signing of the “Declaration of principles for the formation of Polish-Ukrainian partnership,” in which the concept of the “close partnership” was developed. From Ukraine’s geopolitical position at that time, with Russia openly hostile and the US, in view of Ukraine’s still-unresolved nuclear weapons issues, pursuing a policy of “Russia first,” the partnership with Poland gave Ukraine greater legitimacy in the international arena. And though Ukraine showed reluctance toward the expansion of NATO to include central and eastern European countries, fearing that with the accession of Poland, the former Czechoslovakia and Hungary to the alliance, Ukraine would become a buffer state between Russia and NATO, her lack of stronger ties to the West and de facto isolation at that time rendered her voice feeble. It should be noted that many western observers of Ukrainian internal politics (non-reform, crisis) and foreign policy predicted the dissolution of Ukraine into two countries, a pro-European Western Ukraine and a pro-Russian Eastern Ukraine; and “some Russian political circles suggested that Poland could in such a situation seek a rapprochement with the western part of Ukraine.” At the same time, a group of Polish politicians, so-called “neorealists,” felt that Poland should cease active support for post-Soviet nations in favor of good relations with “Russia of whatever stripe.”

Polish-Ukrainian relations entered a new, more dynamic phase of development during the presidencies of Leonid Kuchma in Ukraine (from autumn 1994 to autumn 2004) and Aleksander Kwaśniewski in Poland (1995–2005). There was nothing to indicate such an entente between the two countries in Kuchma’s electoral campaign, whose program focused on improving Ukraine’s economy and rebuilding good relations with Russia. At first, Polish-Ukrainian relations remained “frozen.” However, his visit to Poland in January 1995 not only failed to confirm Polish anxieties about Ukrainian-Russian reconciliation at Poland’s expense, but saw him actively attempting to strengthen Polish-Ukrainian co-operation, particu-

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17 The Ukrainian side proposed resolving the case of Maj. Lysenko, arrested in Warsaw, in secret. Nevertheless, the case became a media sensation and went to trial, with the final result that Lysenko was convicted.
18 B. Surmacz, op. cit. p. 172.
19 T. Kapuśniak, op. cit., p. 221.
20 In January 1994 Ukraine signed a joint declaration of de-nuclearization with the US and Russia. The related resolution of the Verkhovna Rada was not passed until 24 October 1994.
larly in the transnational sphere. This injected some dynamism into the Carpathian Euroregion, established in 1993, led to the establishment of the Bug Euroregion in 1995, and reactivated the Consultative Committee for the Presidents of the two nations. During his visit to Warsaw, Kuchma let it be understood that Poland had little to offer Ukraine as an intermediary toward Euro-integration, especially in economic terms; at the same time, he announced that Ukraine would try to get financial assistance from the West while normalizing relations with Russia but not knuckling under.\textsuperscript{23} For the Poles this was a clear signal that Ukraine sought not only good relations with East and West, but also with Poland. After Aleksander Kwaśniewski’s inauguration as president, communication became more vigorous and a renaissance in Polish-Ukrainian relations emerged. In defiance of Kuchma’s dismissal, Poland soon became not only an intermediary — which Kravchuk had been aiming for earlier — but an advocate for Ukraine in Europe and their mutual relations began to be characterized as a “strategic partnership.” A breakthrough in bilateral relations occurred in 1996. Then Kyiv unexpectedly changed its stance on NATO expansion for the countries in the Visegrád Group and began to underscore the idea that Poland’s accession to NATO would be beneficial for the security of Central-Eastern Europe, including for Ukraine. There simultaneously came a push for support for Ukraine’s European aspirations.\textsuperscript{24} When this new pro-European current in Ukrainian politics was confirmed during Kuchma’s June visit to Warsaw (1996), drawing Ukraine toward Poland and Europe became a canon of Polish policy. One sign of this were the words of Polish foreign minister Dariusz Rosati, who on 9 May 1996 in a speech to the Sejm said: “We see Ukraine’s independence as one of the chief elements guaranteeing Polish security and European stability.”\textsuperscript{25} As a result of these events, Ukraine received Polish support for membership in the Central European Initiative and Kuchma’s participation in the organization’s summit in Łańcut in 1996, which was seen as Ukraine’s symbolic initiation into Central Europe. Ukraine’s image also began to improve significantly in the West, including in the US, leading to increased financial aid. The US’s interest in Polish-Ukrainian cooperation was embodied in the establishment, in 1998, of a foundation: the Polish-American-Ukrainian Cooperation Initiative, PAUCI. In the same year, a Polish Institute opened in Kyiv.

The intensity of Polish-Ukrainian intercommunication in various areas was also conducive to mutual economic co-operation. After 1995 trade deals boomed as a result of numerous government agreements, including the agreement on visa-free travel (25 July 1996), which took effect 8 September 1997, as well as the opening of the new Koczowa–Krakovyets border crossing in 1998.\textsuperscript{26} Economic change was fostered by various initiatives such as the Poland–East Economic Forum in Krynica, the Polish-Ukrainian Economic Summit in Rzeszów in May 1998 and trade fairs in Krosno and Lviv. The purpose of breaking down many barriers which had hindered economic exchange and Ukraine’s preparation for membership in WTO and CEFTA was also served by a joint memorandum on action for trade liberalization between Poland and Ukraine (1997). This surge in economic co-operation was a result of prime minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz’s visit to Kyiv in October 1996, during which the decision was taken to build a railway and pipeline from Odessa to Brody.

\textsuperscript{24} R. Kuźniar, op. cit., p. 162.
\textsuperscript{25} Quoted from: R. Kuźniar, op. cit., p. 162.
to Gdansk, enabling transport of oil from the Caspian Sea (the Odessa–Brody segment was finished in 2001; the line between Brody and Poland, however, has yet to be built). Toward the end of 1998 the Polish-Ukrainian economic boom came to an end due to the collapse of the Russian economy, which met its reflection in the economic crisis in Ukraine.27

The great successes of Polish-Ukrainian political co-operation were continually threatened by bitter wounds from the past. Cases in point were the reaction to Pope John Paul II’s reactivation of the Roman Catholic metropolitanate in Lviv in 1991 (denial of Cardinal Marian Jaworski’s ingress) and the Greek Catholic Przemyśl–Warsaw archeparchy in Przemyśl in 1996, and also the fierce debate over Przemyśl’s Uniate cathedral (the matter of the Carmelite church). This thorny problem for the nation’s memory, often overlooked in political discussions, was taken up by Aleksander Kwaśniewski during his visit to Kyiv in May 1997. It resulted in the Joint Declaration of the Presidents of Ukraine and the Polish Republic on Understanding and Reconciliation of 27 May 1997. The declaration included the statement: “The path to authentic friendship leads above all through truth and mutual understanding. We recognize that no end can justify crimes, violence or the application of collective responsibility. We simultaneously remember that sometimes these conflicts originated outside Poland and Ukraine, that they were caused by circumstances not determined by Poland and Ukraine and by undemocratic political systems thrust upon our nations against their will. We pay tribute to the innocent — those murdered, subjugated and forcibly displaced Poles and Ukrainians. We condemn the perpetrators of their suffering. We simultaneously express gratitude to all who during those difficult years acted on behalf of stronger ties between our nations. Today Poland and Ukraine are sovereign nations, good neighbors and strategic partners. That is why it is also particularly important to surmount the bitterness which remains in the memory of many Poles and Ukrainians. We are impelled to do so not only by respect for democratic values, respect for human rights, and basic principles and norms of international law, but also by our wish to see Poland and Ukraine in a united Europe.”28 Though the declaration stimulated a lively discussion of the most sensitive issues from the past (the Volhynia crimes, Operation Vistula, the Cemetery of Eaglets in Lviv...) on both sides of the border, government authorities focused on the issues of memorials to victims of war and repression. In his address to the Sejm of 5 March 1998 foreign minister Bronisław Geremek spoke thus: “We want to create the best possible climate for Polish-Ukrainian relations to overcome the painful heritage of the past. We are therefore going to consistently work toward resolving issues of protecting and honoring places of rest and remembrance of the victims of war and repression. We also expect similar action from the Ukrainian authorities.”29 Soon afterward, in November 1998, the Ukrainian government convoked the National Interdepartmental Commission on Commemoration of Victims of War and Political Repression, which in concert with Poland’s Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites which since 1999 set about implementing the 1994 intergovernmental agreement “On the protection of places of rest and remembrance of victims of war and politi-

27 B. Surmacz, Stosunki Ukrainy z Polska..., pp. 220–221.
28 Joint statement of the presidents of the Polish Republic and Ukraine on understanding and reconciliation, 21 May 1997.
29 Quoted from R. Kuźniar, op. cit., p. 163.
cal repression.” The visible results of these activities were the opening, on 17 September 1999, of the cemetery of Polish officers murdered in Kharkov, and the renovation and preparation of the Cemetery of Eaglets in Lviv, whose opening, due to the opposition of Lviv city authorities, only took place in 2005. In 2003, on the sixtieth anniversary of the tragedy in Volhynia, the “Memory-Mourning-Unity” reconciliation monument was unveiled in Pavlivka (formerly Poryck) while in February 2009 another ceremony linked to the unveiling of a memorial was held on the 65th anniversary of the murder of approximately 1,000 inhabitants of Huta Pieniacka, perpetrated on 28 February 1944 by fourteen SS Galizien divisions. In 2006 the cemetery of Ukrainians murdered in Pawłokoma was opened.

In 1999, when Poland became a NATO member, Ukraine’s institutional security had yet to be settled. True, Ukraine had signed on to the Partnership for Peace program in 1994, but that had yet to be actualized in practice. At Kuchma’s initiative, therefore, a separate document was signed with NATO defining Ukraine’s participation in the program. On the basis of that document, Ukrainian units took part in NATO operations SFOR (completed 2 December 2005), IFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1995–1996), and KFOR (begun in 1999). When NATO took the decision in favor of institutionalizing relations with Russia (signed 27 May 1997 in Paris), the Ukraine–NATO relationship was, through Poland’s support, institutionalized in like manner (Charter for the Special Partnership between NATO and Ukraine, signed 9 July 1997 in Madrid). Ukraine’s rapprochement with NATO came to fruition with the raising of a Polish-Ukrainian battalion, POLUKRBAT, in Przemyśl in 1998, later chosen to complete a peace mission in Kosovo (in 2000). It should be noted that after signing the Madrid charter, Ukraine in October 1997 as part of its multivectorial policy attempted to create a new regional grouping called GUUAM, to include Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova, with the purpose of, on the one hand, reducing Russia’s political influence, and on the other enhancing Ukraine’s security without joining NATO.

Toward the end of the year 2000, in Kuchma’s second term as president, the political situation in Ukraine grew considerably more complicated. The murder

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30 This agreement was not implemented due to lack of the necessary institutions in Ukraine, i.e. an equivalent to the Polish Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites; as well as lack of political will.

31 The struggle over the Lviv Cemetery of Eaglets lasted several years due to the opposition of Lviv’s authorities and defacement of the cemetery perpetrated by the nationalist organization UNA–UNSO. A diplomatic scandal was created by the change of the inscription on the monument without the consent of Polish authorities before the visit by the presidents of Poland and Ukraine. Prof. Zbigniew Brzeziński commented on the events thusly: “The extremist actions in Lviv have considerably worse consequences for Ukraine than for Poland. Ukraine cannot come into Europe without good Ukrainian-Polish relations. Poland is coming in anyway.” B. Surmacz, Współczesne stosunki polsko-ukraińskie..., p. 190.


33 The Polish-Ukrainian battalion in Przemyśl was created on the basis of the treaty between Poland and Ukraine on joint military units for international peacekeeping and humanitarian operations under the aegis of international organizations (signed by the national defense ministers of Poland and Ukraine on 26 September 1997 in Warsaw), see W. Śmiałek, Polsko-ukraińska współpraca wojskowa (1992–2002), in: Polska i Ukraina..., pp. 333, 343; R. Synowski, POLUKRBAT (Polsko-ukraiński batalion), in: Ibid., pp. 145–150.

34 M. Pietraś, op. cit., p. 359.
of a journalist from the online magazine Ukrainska Prawda, Georgiy Gongadze, brought into sharp focus the crisis resulting from the shortage of democracy. The influence of clans, and therefore of associated politically active groups of businessmen, who had taken control of the most powerful political parties and had real influence on policy, was revealed. Furthermore, the rivalry between mainly the Dniepropetrovsk and Donetsk clans for control over various domains of economic activity led to killings on both sides (Ahat Brahim, leader of the Donetsk clan, perished in one such attack in 1995), as well as political assassinations (e.g. deputy Yevhen Shcherban in 1996). This informal oligarch clan system was already developing in Kuchma’s first term, and one determining factor in his re-election was oligarch Oleksandr Volkov’s group and his political party Democratic Union. After the murder of Gongadze, when Maj. Mykola Melnychenko, a former presidential security guard living in exile in the US, revealed a tape recording of numerous presidential conversations proving Kuchma was implicated in the death of an opposition journalist, energized the Ukrainian opposition. The Committee for Ukraine Without Kuchma, supported by the youth group For Truth, was organized and demanded Kuchma’s resignation and an impartial investigation at many demonstrations from December 2000 to late April 2001. It turned out that the then-tofore course of Ukrainian politics had been “based on weak foundations and multivectorial policy was a convenient alibi which allowed Ukrainian elites to make 180-degree turns motivated by their private, usually short-term interests.” Though President Kuchma tried to wait out the situation, denying all charges, he dismissed two trusted colleagues from the department of security, one of them Yuriy Kravchenko, as well as dismissing — under pressure from the oligarchs — the pro-western and pro-reform prime minister Viktor Yushchenko and his government, on 29 April 2001. The minister of foreign affairs in Anatoliy Kinakh’s newly-formed government was Anatoliy Zlenko (replacing pro-European Borys Tarasiuk, who began to revive closer ties with Russia and in place of the strategic partnership with Poland ushered in “good neighborly relations.” In the West as in Poland, these events were seen with unease. President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, who had a good relationship with Kuchma, organized two meetings in Kazimierz Dolny in an effort to take control of the situation: one with President Kuchma, the other with a delegation of the Ukrainian opposition. They talked about “ways to resolve political crises in a democratic system, and expressed concern about the further development of events and their possible consequences for Ukraine.” After the cessation of the Ukrainian demonstrations, a second meeting between the presidents of Poland and Ukraine took place in Łańcut in June 2001, at which Poland maintained her previous tack toward Ukraine. Soon thereafter, however, in April 2002, Maj.

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35 G. Gongadze died in mid-September 2000 and his body was found only in November in the Taraszhanskyi area of the Kyiv oblast. In 2008 a monument to him was unveiled in Kyiv.

36 The Kyiv group, i.e. clan, of Hryhoriy Surkis and Viktor Medvedchuk, took control of the Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine, Akhmetov’s Donetsk group of the Labor and Liberal Parties and later the Party of Regions when Viktor Yanukovich (a colleague of Akhmetov’s) became its leader.


39 Ibid., p. 248.


41 Ibid., p. 244.
Melnichenko produced more tapes recorded in Kuchma's office which revealed that the president had not respected the UN embargo and had accepted the sale of the Kolchuga missile defense system to Iraq. After the verification of the tapes' authenticity by American experts, this story brought Kuchma isolation from the international community and led the US to renge on some of its promised economic aid. Meanwhile, starting in mid-September 2002, anti-Kuchma protests broke out in Kyiv and many other Ukrainian cities, marching under the slogan “Rise, Ukraine!” As a result, Kuchma was not invited to the NATO summit in Prague on 22 November 2002 (Kuchma went anyway, with humiliating consequences) at which a new plan of action for preparing Ukraine toward NATO membership was presented. Furthermore, the matters of Ukrainian weaponry and the internal situation in Ukraine were discussed in the forum of the Council of Europe. In a resolution passed on 29 January 2004, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe threatened to suspend Ukraine's membership if authorities there continued to conduct political reforms by unconstitutional means and failed to guarantee free and fair presidential elections.

The political crisis in Ukraine and the collapse of the country's credibility on the international stage did not help Poland with the task of being her main partner and advocate in discussions with NATO and the European Union. Warsaw, though wary of the situation in Ukraine and her turn away from Europe, had no intention of giving up on the strategic partnership. Before the Prague NATO summit, an international conference on Ukraine's place in Europe was organized in Warsaw on 15–16 October 2002 with the presidents of Poland, Ukraine, and Sweden participating as well as the leaders of the most important political forces in Poland and Ukraine and high-level representatives of the EU and NATO, including Javier Solana. The conference, at which the Ukrainians presented their aspirations and expectations toward the EU and NATO, undoubtedly contributed to the softening both of tensions between Ukraine and the West and internal Ukrainian tensions between the president and the opposition. Thus in late 2002 Poland presented to the EU its “non-paper” on the idea for a strategy of coordinating aid in the eastern region, depending on the level of interest in European integration within each country. A more developed version presenting the eastern dimension of the EU was presented by foreign minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz in February 2003; in fact, this was a modified version of an earlier idea put forward by Poland in 1998, when then foreign minister Bronisław Geremek raised it during the first negotiations of Poland's accession. These plans regarding Ukrainian interests were unfortunately never carried out.

Towards the end of 2002, faced with continuing discontent, opposition forces began to prepare for the next presidential election, which was set to take place in autumn 2004. In March 2003, the convention of the Pan-Ukrainian United Opposition Congress met with Viktor Yushchenko and Yulia Timoshenko, politicians representing a pro-European position and promising to pass institutional reforms, taking part. President Kuchma, meanwhile, was still doing a balancing act between Russia and Europe. However, as the date of the election approached, he

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42 M. Pietraś, op. cit., p. 359; Ukraine sold military equipment to Eritrea, Ethiopia, Angola, Yemen, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and countries of the former Yugoslavia. Many of these countries were subject to UN sanctions; see T. Kapuśniak, op. cit., p. 224.
43 In May 2002 Yevhen Marchuk, chairman of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, announced that Ukraine's long-range goal was full membership in NATO.
put greater emphasis on bolstering relations with Moscow. In February 2003 he was appointed on Putin’s recommendation as chairman of the Council of the CIS, and in September, while discussing the EU Wider Europe initiative of March 2003, he stated that “Ukrainians have had enough of being benchwarmers.” Later, in Brussels, after Poland’s accession to the EU on 1 May 2004, the Polish government made an appeal to the EU to present Ukraine with the prospect of membership, to which the European Commission’s response was the European Neighborhood Policy document, promising Ukraine partner status. Kuchma in turn gave the order on 15 July 2004 that phrases identifying EU and NATO membership as Ukraine’s strategic goals be deleted from the defense program. At the same time, Ukrainian internal policy ceased making concessions to opposition media and began taking away those previously granted, a development reflected in the European Parliament’s resolution expressing concern at the state of the Ukrainian media.

The climax of Ukraine’s political crisis came with the presidential election in autumn 2004. The election campaign, which was fierce on all fronts, including in the forum of parliament, was fought out between two main candidates: the incredibly popular politician Viktor Yushchenko, leader of the opposition party Our Ukraine, and Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych, leader of the Party of Regions, supported by the camp of the authorities, Kuchma and the clans of Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, and Kyiv. After the first round of elections, on 31 October, to the surprise of all observers, neither candidate received a majority of votes but Yushchenko won a plurality (39.87% of the vote), defeating Yanukovych (with 39.32% of the vote) by 0.55%. In the second round, however, on 21 November 2004, according to an announcement by the Central Election Commission on 24 November, approved with a handful of opposing votes, the winner was Viktor Yanukovych, with 49.46% of the vote and a 3% advantage over Yushchenko. This elicited many protests of malversation and the local authorities in the major cities of Western Ukraine refused to recognize the election results, while in the center of Kyiv demonstrations began, entrances to government buildings were blocked and on the Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) growing crowds of Yushchenko supporters began picketing as soon as the results of the second round were announced. The US, the EU, NATO and the OSCE expressed dismay at the course taken by the election. The leaders of the opposition called society to put up active resistance, and as a result civil disobedience action spread throughout Western Ukraine and was named the “Orange Revolution.” They simultaneously made an Appeal to the Parliaments and Peoples of All Countries for “support of the Ukrainian people’s will, for support of their need for a return to democracy.” On 23 November, during a meeting of parliament called by opposition deputies and boycotted by most of the government, Yushchenko took the presidential oath of office. The events of the “Orange Revolution” were particularly electrifying for Poland, where at assemblies, marches, and street concerts, people expressed solidarity with Ukraine. The “Orange” movement also found support among Polish political groups, in the Sejm and the Polish government, and former Polish president and Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa, Lech Kaczyński, then mayor of Warsaw, and numerous “pilgrimages” of

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46 Ibid., pp. 261–262.
47 I.e. the daily Silski Visty was closed on 28 February 2004, and the Continent radio station had its concession taken away on 3 March.
49 Ibid., p. 197.
Polish students all came to visit the Maidan. Although Ukrainian authorities contemplated using force to suppress the movement, they held back from declaring a state of emergency. Finally the Supreme Court of Ukraine deliberated on the election protests on 3 December 2004 and invalidated the results of the second round, while the Central Election Commission designated the next round of voting to take place on 26 December. But these decisions were taken only after the second round of meetings of the Ukrainian “Round Table” from 26 November to 6 December, an idea which had taken flight when President Kuchma asked the presidents of Poland and Lithuania to mediate and help resolve the conflict. Considering how the Orange Revolution had been internationalized, it was natural for the Ukrainian Round Table to follow suit, with the presence, beside Kuchma, of the two chief rivals in the election (Yushchenko and Yanukovych), the chairman of Ukraine’s Verkhovna Rada, Volodymyr Lytvyn, Polish president Aleksander Kwaśniewski, Lithuanian president Adamkus, EU Joint Security and Foreign Policy representative Javier Solana, OSCE Secretary General Jan Kubisz, and chairman of the Russian National Duma Boris Gryzlov. After three rounds of meetings, a compromise was reached on the night of 6–7 December. The camp of the authorities agreed to a repeat of the second round of presidential elections based on renewed voting rights in exchange for support from the opposition for constitutional reform which would significantly limit the power of the president. The composition of the Central Election Commission was also changed and Prime Minister Yanukovych was relieved of his duties (the obligations of the head of government were taken over by the deputy prime minister). Following this agreement, the opposition ceased the blockade of government building doorways and called for an end to the protests on the Maidan, excepting the “Orange Village.” Worthy of note was President Kwaśniewski’s active participation in the Ukrainian mediation and in particular his breaking with the existing cautious stance of the EU, of which foreign minister Adam Daniel Rotfeld wrote: “Western Europe at times treated the crisis in Ukraine as belonging to the category of legal casuistry, when in fact it was a political crisis, which called for a political solution.”

As a result of the repeated second round of the Ukrainian election, Viktor Yushchenko became president, obtaining 51.99% of the vote against Yanukovych’s 44.20%. This meant that the former’s pro-Western orientation had triumphed over the latter’s Eurasian one. The new president during several visits to Western Europe in January and February of 2005 declared that Ukraine was breaking with the theretofore existent “multivector” foreign policy and that the priority of Ukrainian policy would be gaining membership in the EU and NATO. He also appealed for a “comprehensible European perspective” to be presented to Ukraine. The EU gave an immediate answer. On 21 February 2005 the Ukraine Three-Year Plan of Action had already been signed; in it, the Ukrainians agreed to full democratization of state structures, liberalization and legal regulation of the economic sphere according to EU standards, while the EU introduced the special Tacis program, an extension of the 2003 European Neighborhood Policy, and the community program Interreg for Poland, Ukraine and Belarus. Ukraine was also promised membership in WHO and recognition of her status as a free-market economy. In April 2005, meanwhile, Ukraine began an intensive dialogue with NATO regarding membership. It is important to remember that Poland, as a member of the EU, energetically supported the efforts of President Yushchenko and agitated “for the

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51 A. Chojnowski, J. J. Bruski, op. cit., p. 281.
crystallizing Eastern Dimension of EU Neighborhood Policy to bring the relevant countries closer to the EU, but not in doing so to condemn them to being [mere] partners forever.”

When parliamentary and presidential elections in Poland in autumn 2005 brought a change in the political order and Lech Kaczyński became president, Ukraine’s internal relations saw a slow reversal of the Orange Revolution. The dismissal of Prime Minster Tymoshenko on 8 September 2005 amid pronounced differences in the Orange camp, the defeat of that camp in the parliamentary elections of March 2006 by the Party of Regions (though that party, too, failed to achieve a majority), the “transitional” government of Yuri Yekhanurov (September 2005–August 2006), and finally the creation of Yanukovych’s government on 4 August 2006 revealed that Ukrainian democracy was again following a course of oscillation between Brussels and Moscow. Though Yanukovych, before taking on his function as prime minister, signed the Universal of National Unity in which he agreed to recognize the president’s policies and political guidelines, including especially respect for Ukraine’s aspirations with reference to the Atlantic alliance as well as keeping Ukrainian language as the only official language, the real reason for his doing so became increasingly obvious. Among some politicians reluctance began to be expressed toward Yushchenko’s pro-European and, in particular, pro-Atlantic policies. A clear signal came with the 2006 demonstrations against the planned NATO manoeuvres in the Black Sea which resulted in all work on the Plan of Action for Ukraine’s intended entry into NATO being put on hold. During that period Poland’s Ukraine policy, determined by joint EU policy, invariably kept up support for Yushchenko’s pro-European aspirations. President Kaczyński, following the example of his predecessor President Kwaśniewski in maintaining good relations with the president of Ukraine, consistently gave support not only to Polish-Ukrainian co-operation initiatives such as EURO 2012 but also took on the position of being an advocate of Ukraine in the international arena and simultaneously promoting the eastern policies of the EU and NATO.

In autumn 2007 Poland and Ukraine both held early parliamentary elections. They led to the creation of Donald Tusk’s coalition government (of his Civic Platform party and its rival Law and Justice) in Poland and Yulia Tymoshenko’s coalition government (Tymoshenko’s bloc working with the Our Ukraine and People’s Self-Defense parties) in Ukraine on 18 December 2007. The formation of both governments coincided with Poland’s entry into the Schengen zone on 31 December 2007. Thus, beginning 1 January 2008, Ukrainian citizens who wanted to cross the Polish-Ukrainian border which had existed since 2004 had to have paid Schengen visas. Polish citizens still cross the Ukrainian border without visas, it is true, but the Ukrainians reminded Polish authorities at the time about the unsigned

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52 T. Kapuściński, Polityka Polski wobec Ukrainy..., p. 230.
53 Yushchenko, hoping to avoid confrontation, looked for a broad agreement with his opponents. He therefore organized the Round Table in July 2006 which included the leaders of all parliamentary factions with the goal of uniting a broad national unity coalition based on non-negotiable basic principles of foreign and internal policy. Yuliia Tymoshenko refused to sign the Universal of National Unity.
54 A. Chojnowski, J. J. Bruski, op. cit., p. 290.
55 The idea of the Schengen Pact, signed 14 June 1985, was the abolition of borders within the EU. It became binding ten years after the signing, i.e. 26 June 1995. In 2004 after joining the EU Poland became part of the Schengen zone and after three years of preparation on 31 December 2007 it became binding for land borders and on 31 March 2008 for air borders. J. Draus, Polityczne aspekty granicy polsko-ukraińskiej w obliczu Schengen (in print).
agreement on limited border traffic and also the EU’s earlier assurances that with the expansion of the Schengen zone, visa restrictions on Ukrainians would be eased. Though the treaty on limited border traffic was signed in March during prime minister Tusk’s visit to Kyiv and became binding in July 2009, the issue of visa relief went mute.

During Tusk’s visit to Kyiv, despite his emphasis on the desire for a Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership, his earlier visit to Moscow in January 2008 was brought up. When Tusk conducted talks in Moscow, voices were raised in criticism in both Poland and Ukraine. Leonid Kravchuk, the first president of Ukraine, stated: “For the first time since Ukraine obtained independence, we have the impression that the Poles are not being honest with us. It looks like you are suddenly changing your policy,” while for his part, Aleksander Kwaśniewski had the following comment to offer: “Great strategies are built by great politicians, and not shopkeepers who count every penny to make the books balance. Let me be honest with you: we should still be giving more than we take, because the stakes are high.” In Prof. Bogdan Osadczuk’s view, “Donald Tusk lost Ukraine, which was the centerpiece of Polish statesmanship. Immediately after the election they expected him to come to Kyiv. But he chose another way... He should not have sought Russia's favor at the expense of Ukraine...” It also seemed that the Tymoshenko government was revaluing Ukraine’s policy toward Poland because of the reigning opinion that “It isn’t worth fighting for Polish support since providing it is in Poland’s best interests anyway” or “perhaps Poland is tired of performing this role” (Yuri Andrukhovych).

In Kyiv the rivalry between the ambitions of President Yushchenko and those of Prime Minister Tymoshenko were readily apparent in their policies toward the EU and NATO. Tymoshenko, taking into account the upcoming elections and realizing that over 60% of the Ukrainian population did not support Yushchenko’s pro-European policy, took a very cautious position on this issue, in contrast to the president of Ukraine, who in that area was working closely with President Kaczyński. Thus during the April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, when the issue of inviting Ukraine and Georgia to begin a Member Action Plan (MAP) came up, in spite of support for the initiative from President Bush, President Lech Kaczyński and the Polish government, the proposal was dropped due to opposition from Germany, France, and Italy. But, at Kaczyński’s persistence, the summit approved a declara-

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56 Ukraine signed a similar agreement with Hungary earlier and also concluded negotiations with Slovakia and Romania.
58 The agreement stipulates that Ukrainians living in the border zone may cross the Polish border without Schengen visas on the basis of special cards issued by Polish consulates.
61 Gazeta Wyborcza, 2008, 1 April, p. 18.
63 Berlin, Paris and Rome had reservations concerning the following issues: instability of the political situation, the scale of corruption, failure to establish civilian control over armed factions, failure to dissolve the remnants of the Soviet army, and insufficient activity by parliamentary commissions on the special services. According to analysts, the political direction in these countries, especially Germany, indicate that “there will be no NATO expansion without Russia’s agreement.” France and Germany intend, however, to support NATO entry for Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia, Rzeczpospolita, 2008, 3 April, p. A–10.
tion that “the future of both countries is linked with the alliance.” Ukraine was thus left with an unclear perspective on accession to NATO.

Ukraine’s aspirations for joining the EU appear in a similar predicament. The EU summit in Brussels in June 2008 confirmed EU skepticism toward Ukraine and the discrepancy between France and Germany’s positions on EU expansion. President Sarkozy has long been effective at forcing his conception of greater EU engagement in the Mediterranean region, an example of which is the transfer of two-thirds of the European Neighborhood Policy funds to that area, while only one third are designated for countries outside the EU’s eastern borders. Germany’s foreign policy, meanwhile, is oriented towards Russia. Prof. Bogdan Osadczuk writes: “[…] The German group oriented towards the West is systematically decreasing, The West has a growing number of advocates not for Eastern Europe, but for Russia. This has led to a state of affairs where the European Union contains a German-Russian Trojan Horse… Merkel and her compatriots are really thumbing their nose, in an unheard-of fashion, but only at the Americans, Poles, and Ukrainians. Not at the Russians, because in their dealings with them they are unusually accommodating.” Thus despite Ukraine’s entry into the World Trade Organization in February 2008, steps taken to open the Ukrainian market to foreign investors, and the initiation of talks with the EU on a free market zone, in the words of Deputy Prime Minister Hryhoriy Nemyria — “Ukraine wants to convince the leaders of the EU countries that without us a real vision of contemporary Europe is impossible,” although he noted that the Ukraine’s integration process, first economic and later political, could take a long time to complete.

Despite Ukraine’s far from advantageous situation in the EU and NATO integration processes, the Polish government would appear to be increasingly abdicating from its previous role as regional Central-Eastern Europe leader in favor of joint EU eastern policy. This priority of Polish foreign policy was recently manifested in pronounced form in minister Radoslaw Sikorski’s speech to the Sejm in which he declared: “Poland strong in Europe, patron and promoter of its eastern policy.” These words referred to the plans for the new Polish initiative Eastern Partnership, which was presented by Sikorski in April 2008 during a meeting of the head diplomats of EU countries, and officially announced by Tusk in June 2008 during the session of the Council of Europe as a joint Polish-Swedish project. The program in fact aims to strengthen the eastern dimension of the European Neighborhood Policy. The Eastern Partnership went into effect after the EU summit in Prague of 7 May 2009 and includes financial aid, trade co-operation and visa relief for six nations: Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus. The EU has designated 600 million Euros for this purpose.

The process of rapprochement between Ukraine and NATO undoubtedly accelerated the Russian-Georgian armed conflict in Georgia in August 2008. At the time President Kaczyński took up the issue of Georgian territorial integrity, came to Tbilisi together with President Yushchenko and other Eastern European leaders (representing all three Baltic states) as the Polish government mobilized EU politi-

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66 Ibid.
68 Quoted from: T. Kapuśniak, Polityka Polski wobec Ukrainy..., p. 231.
69 Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko took a neutral position on the Russian-Georgian conflict, while opposition leader Viktor Yanukowych came out on the side of Russia; Nowa Europa Wschodnia, 2008, nr 2, pp. 13–14.
cians toward restraining Russia. Though President Sarkozy’s mission to Moscow did not extinguish the conflict (in the end Russia de facto tore South Ossetia away from Georgia) Kaczyński’s efforts, which at the time confirmed his leading position among Eastern European states, breathed new life into the question of NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia. When Washington signaled during the extended stand-off that it did “not see any reason why Kyiv and Tbilisi should not get MAP status by the end of the year,” Polish efforts to make this American suggestion a reality intensified. However, by the time of the December 2008 meeting of NATO diplomacy chiefs, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had declared that the US would not support awarding Ukraine and Georgia with Member Action Plans (MAPs), since both countries “have a long way to go toward fulfilling the conditions for membership,” simultaneously underscoring that “Kyiv and Tbilisi have a future place in the Organization.”

This no doubt referred to the unstable political situation in Ukraine (constant struggles among the president, prime minister, and parliament) and the encroaching Ukrainian economic crisis while also leaving any decisions to be made by the next American administration, which came to power in January 2009. Still, instead of an MAP, Kyiv obtained an agreement with Washington on strategic partnership, signed 19 December 2008. The US signed a similar treaty with Georgia on 4 January 2009.

Before the new US president, Barack Obama, was sworn in, a gas war had already started between Russia and Ukraine. Russia’s Gazprom after previously breaking off talks with Ukraine’s Naftogaz (Kyiv did not agree to a 40% increase in gas prices) had since 1 January 2009 put a limit on and then frozen natural gas imports to Ukraine, which caused anxiety in those EU countries which were cut off from Russian gas delivered through Ukrainian pipelines. A similar situation arose in late December 2005 and early January 2006, but with a temporary three-day suspension of transports of gas to Ukraine. In both cases the official reason given for Gazprom cutting off the gas was an outstanding payment (and interest) from Naftogaz. In this atmosphere of mutual Russian-Ukrainian accusations, both sides took diplomatic action in EU countries to internationalize the conflict. Ukraine, deeming Russia’s position blackmail, appealed to the European Commission for help with resolving the conflict [“All our hope is in Europe,” said Oleksander Hudyma, Prime Minister Tymoshenko’s energy advisor] and President Yushchenko in his letter to the leaders of Europe and the US declared Ukraine to be an “honest contractor” in its relations with Gazprom and that it was “not in her interest to violate procedures and miss payments.” Tymoshenko in the meantime assured European Commission Chair Jose Manuela Barroso that “Europe can rest easy,” since Ukraine’s reserves would “last for several weeks yet.”

The contrary position was taken by Russia, which accused Ukraine of gas theft and, through Gazprom vice-president Aleksandr Medvedev in Berlin, summoned the countries signatory to the European Energy Charter (signed by Ukraine, but not by Russia) to apply legal measures against Ukraine. On the one hand Moscow’s purpose was to test confidence in Ukraine in the international arena in view of the coming April 2009 NATO summit in Strasbourg and to prevent the passage of a declaration designating future accession of Ukraine to the Atlantic Alliance, while on the other it aimed to force international acceptance for the Nord Stream pipeline construction project in the Baltic Sea region. Moscow’s tactics were furthermore geared to bring into being

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72 Dziennik, 2009, 2 January, nr 1, p. 1.
a Russo-Germano-Ukrainian consortium (a June 2002 memorandum was signed by Putin, Schroeder and Kuchma), which would take control of the Ukrainian gas pipelines. Though the memorandum did not take effect due to Kuchma's withdrawal followed by the Ukrainian parliament's move to block acquisition of Naftogaz by any private or foreign parties in 2007, Putin returned to the idea in January 2009 at a press conference with Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek, chair of the EU presidency. Significantly, Russia, afflicted by economic crisis in the post-crash period (since 1998) wanted to force the highest possible prices for raw materials. The European Union position on the "gas war" at first led to the statement that it was an exclusively Russian-Ukrainian dispute. However, when such EU countries as Slovakia, Rumania, and Bulgaria were deprived of gas, and the prime ministers of these countries in Moscow and Kyiv lost hope of procuring a regular supply of gas, EU diplomacy sprang into action. This occurred after the meeting between Presidents Kaczyński and Yushchenko in Wisła. At that time Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek and Jose Barroso, chairman of the European Commission, took up the burden of negotiating in the name of the EU. Thanks to personal pressure on both sides of the clash, on 19 January 2009 Ukraine Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin agreed in Moscow on a compromise; Gazprom and Naftogaz subsequently signed congenial agreements on the delivery of Russian gas. Aside from the commercial value of this arrangement, it had an undoubted political dimension. Prof. Zbigniew Brzeziński stated that "In the long run Russia was not successful at all in her last gas dispute with Ukraine, since she did not drive a wedge between Ukraine and Europe... The main point is that what Russia did was not aimed at Europe as such, only at Ukraine, in the hope that the Europeans would join against Ukraine... the Russians hoped that the Europeans would exert a lot of pressure on Ukraine and give her to understand that they didn't need to deal with her. It didn't work out as well as they expected it to...". If Moscow failed to achieve her geopolitical goal in this war, it nonetheless influenced the internal situation in Ukraine before the presidential elections set for the beginning of 2010. The winner of those elections was Viktor Yanukovych, leader of the Party of Regions. Thus Moscow finally dug the grave for the idea of the "Orange Revolution."

In summing up Polish-Ukrainian relations and their European context at the end of 2008 it is worth considering the words of Prof. Ihor Shevchenko, spoken in October 2002 at a conference called "Borders and Border Countries: Their Role in the Formation of Europe. Ukraine's Past and Prospects": "The future of Ukraine, including the western option, will probably depend on three factors: it will depend on the ruling nomenklatura in our country; on the way the West (Europe and the USA) perceives its interests in Ukraine; and finally, on how Russia perceives its interests. The nomenklatura behaves equivocally. The West and its opinion-makers, for whom the USSR equalled Russia, and Ukraine was something along the lines of Texas, holds a neutral position. What is more, after 11 September 2001, new global configurations emerged, as a result of which the West's attitude about supporting the western option for the Ukraine changed, not always for the better. Only Russia is consistent in her policy: her goal is a return to the pre-1991 situation [...] To help transform the ruling elites in Ukraine will take not ten years, but thirty or

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71 The consortium was to be created by: Gazprom, E.ON Ruhrgas and Naftogaz. Gazprom and Ruhrgas support the construction of Nord Stream and are working to privatize the gas sectors of Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary.
72 Gazeta Polska, 2009, 18 February, p. 15.
73 Ibid.
more. In theory it’s a task for Ukrainians themselves, but Ukraine’s foreign friends should help with this long-term job. Not only in the interest of Ukrainians, but in their own interest as well.”