

# Common Interests and the Most Important Areas of Political Cooperation between Poland and Romania in the Context of the European Union

Justyna Łapaj-Kucharska<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *The article addresses several issues that constitute the main areas of Polish-Romanian relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the political dimension and in the broad sense of security. Relations between Poland and Romania have been characterized in the context of the membership of both countries in the European Union. Particular emphasis was placed on the period of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of EU, which lasted from January to the end of June 2019. The article indicates the most important common interests of both countries, the ways for their implementation, as well as potential opportunities for the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The article also takes into account the key challenges that Poland and Romania must face in connection with EU membership.*

**Keywords:** *Romania, Poland, European Union, Three Seas Initiative, multilateral cooperation.*

## Introduction

Polish-Romanian relations were particularly close in 1921-1939, when Romania was the only neighbour, apart from Latvia, who was Poland's ally. After the end of World War II, both Poland and Romania were in the Soviet bloc. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Romania initiated, similarly to Poland, a political and economic integration to Western European structures, obtaining in 2004 membership in NATO and in 2007 in the structures of the European Union.

The aim of this article is to point to the key areas of cooperation between Poland and Romania, with particular emphasis on the cooperation of these two countries in the context of the European Union. The article has been divided into several parts, according to their chronological order, in such a way as to identify the most important manifestations of bilateral and multilateral relations of our countries in particular stages: before Poland's and Romania's accession to the EU, from 2004 to 2010, and then in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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<sup>1</sup> Justyna Łapaj-Kucharska works at the Institute of Political Sciences and Journalism, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. She has a Ph.D. in social sciences in the field of political science. She is Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations at the University of Silesia in Katowice. Her research interests revolve around Poland's foreign policy after 1989 in the European and non-European dimension as well as international relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. E-mail: justyna.lapaj@us.edu.pl

There are relatively few studies in Polish scientific literature devoted to relations between Poland and some of the neighbouring countries, including Romania. Especially if the subject of interest is the period after 1989 or bilateral and multilateral relations in the 21st century. The book entitled: "Polish-Romanian relations. History, economy, European Union", edited by S. Sagan and V. Serzhanova from 2013, as well as papers from scientific conferences, which are regularly held in Suceava, certainly deserve attention.

This paper uses several characteristics for social sciences and political science research as well as for international relations, methods and research techniques, such as: analysis of documents and source literature. The political system analysis, decision-making process and institutional-legal analysis were used as research methods.

This article does not aspire to treat exhaustively this interesting and multithreaded issue, which is Polish-Romanian relations in the context of the EU. The author's intention was to point out aspects and areas of convergence of interests of Poland and Romania in the multilateral dimension over two decades of the 21st century, in the face of changing international conditions, which are important from the point of view of the foreign policy and cooperation of both countries.

### **Polish-Romanian relations before accession to Western European structures**

Poland and Romania have had close contacts throughout history. A hundred years ago, relations between our countries alongside important political, military and economic issues also had their personal dimension expressed in mutual sympathy connecting Marshal Józef Piłsudski with King Charles II. In the interwar period, Poland and Romania bordered on each other and maintained very good relations on many different levels. The position of both countries in the bloc of communist states generated a series of shared experiences as well as challenges that later both countries had to face.

After the changes that took place in Central and Eastern Europe in connection with the collapse of the Eastern bloc, new opportunities and prospects for the development of bilateral relations emerged. Both countries experienced a difficult path of modernization and transformation, the aim of which was to democratize and open up to economic and political cooperation with Western countries. This involved the need to adjust the legal dimension, the political, economic and military structures, to the requirements of Western European and Euro-Atlantic organizations, to which both Poland and Romania aspired.

From the beginning of the 1990s, as a result of changes in internal and external policy initiated in both countries, as well as in the first decade of the 21st century, Poland and Romania signed a number of cooperation agreements. In January 1993, the Treaty of friendly relations and mutual cooperation was signed in Bucharest. It emphasized the necessity of cooperation in the field of international security and economic cooperation<sup>2</sup>. On the same day, the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, the

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<sup>2</sup> The Agreement came into force on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January in 1994. Agreement between the Republic of Poland and Romania on friendly relations and cooperation of the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, 1993, Journal of Laws 1993, no. 29, item 106.

consular convention regulating the diplomatic relations between the two countries was signed in Bucharest<sup>3</sup>. A number of important contracts regulating economic contacts were also concluded<sup>4</sup>. Agreement on trade relations and payments and the Protocol on the liquidation of mutual debts and obligations in payment relations as of December 31, 1990, signed on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December in 1990 and two important agreements of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June in 1994 - Agreement for the avoidance of double taxation and prevention Tax evasion with respect to taxes on income and assets and Agreement on the promotion and mutual protection of investments.

However, this was not the time when Poland and Romania saw themselves as particularly important partners in foreign policies of their countries. The aspirations to stabilize mutual contacts were mainly focused on economic relations. In 1993, the post-communist authorities ruling Romania at that time made a declaration of their desire to join Western international organizations such as the Council of Europe, NATO and the European Union. It was a manifestation of common political interests of Poland and Romania, and a similar approach to ways of ensuring the security of this part of the world.

In the following years, as a result of the unification of the Romanian opposition and the creation of the Romanian Democratic Convention (which unified various political forces - from the extreme right, through democrats and peoples, to the Hungarian minority)<sup>5</sup>, the monopoly of post-communists in the Romanian political scene broke, which contributed to evolutions in Romania's internal and foreign policy. It also meant strengthening relations with the countries of Central Europe, such as Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, with a clearly pro-European foreign policy vector.

In 1995, Romania filed an official application for membership in the Communities (on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June)<sup>6</sup>, and in April in the same year, the first official visit of Romanian President Ion Iliescu to Poland took place. Less than a year later, on May from 14 to 15, 1996, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, the President of the Republic of Poland, visited Romania on a return visit<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Consular Convention between the Republic of Poland and Romania, the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 1993, Journal of Laws 1993, No. 29, item 104.

<sup>4</sup> Agreements between the government of the Republic of Poland and the government of Romania: On the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Tax Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Wealth, signed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June in 1994, Journal of Laws, 1994, No. 109, item 530; On the Support and Mutual Protection of Investments, signed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June in 1994, Journal of Laws, 1994, No. 77, item 386; about Cooperation in the field of Science, Education and Culture, signed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June in 1994, Journal of Laws, 1995, No. 109, item 532; on Cooperation in the field of Tourism, signed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December in 1994, on Cooperation in the field of Science and Technology, signed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May in 1996.

<sup>5</sup> O. Aron, „Changes on the political scene of post-communist Romania” in *Two decades of changes 1989-2009*. Ed. K.P. Marczyk, Difin, Warsaw, 2009, pp. 43–54.

<sup>6</sup> More about the negotiation process and Romania's accession to the EU can be found in: *Bulgaria and Romania in the European Union. Political, legal and economic aspects of the accession process*. Ed. J. Barcz, Euro Law Publishing Institute, Warsaw 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Website of the Romanian Embassy in Warsaw, <http://varsovia.mae.ro/index.php?lang=en&id=15822>, and Website of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Bucharest, <http://www.bukareszt.polemb.net/index.php?document=219> (10.06.2019).

In the following years, lower-level contacts took place - visits by Speakers of the Senate and Sejm, foreign ministers or groups of parliamentarians. Intensification of mutual contacts favoured building good bases for cooperation of these two countries in the future also in the international dimension. Even in the 1990s, and specifically from 1997, both countries began cooperation within the Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA)<sup>8</sup>.

Although Poland and Romania's efforts to integrate with Western European structures were similar, each country focused on building relations mainly with its closest neighbours. In the context of the process of accession to the EU, Germany played a special role in Polish foreign policy, while France played a significant role in the Romanian case. Nevertheless, the next decade brought a significant revival in bilateral relations at various levels.

The visits at the highest level continued. Official visits took place in January 1997, when Romanian President Emil Constantinescu visited Poland, and then in March 1999 and in October 2003, Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski visited Romania. After Romania's accession to the EU, in 2007, the President of Poland Lech Kaczyński visited Bucharest. The meetings between heads of state were also accompanied by meetings of representatives of the government administration, foreign ministers and defence ministers. There were also meetings and visits of the heads of governments - in 2002, Romania's Prime Minister Adrian Năstase in Poland, and in 2004, the Polish Prime Minister Leszek Miller in Romania<sup>9</sup>.

Strengthening the foundation of formal and legal state relations, in May 1999, an Agreement on legal aid and legal relations in civil matters was signed<sup>10</sup>. Subsequently, in July 2001, a Cooperation Agreement was concluded to combat organized crime, terrorism and other types of crimes (entered into force on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August in 2003). A scientific cooperation agreement was also concluded<sup>11</sup>.

For Polish-Romanian relations at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, the international context related to the growing asymmetric threats in the world was not without significance. Terrorism and the war against it, which grew stronger especially after the attacks on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September in 2001, has become one of the most important goals of the internal and international services. Due to the transnational nature of terrorist threats, the cooperation of states is indispensable in this respect. Romania, like Poland, supported US actions in the intervention in Iraq in 2003. Although Romanian troops did not participate in the second war in Iraq, the country later sent 700 soldiers as part of the stabilization mission<sup>12</sup>.

Both Romania and Poland were in a rather difficult situation at that time. Romania was not yet a member of NATO (the accession of this country to the North Atlantic Alliance took place in 2004). Whereas Poland, although it belonged

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<sup>8</sup> K. P. Marczuk, "Romania in subregional cooperation structures" in *Two decades of changes...*, pp. 109-111.

<sup>9</sup> G. Bonusiak, "Polish-Romanian political relations after 1989" in *Polish-Romanian relations. History, economy, European Union*, Red. S. Sagan, V. Serzhanova, Publisher of the University of Rzeszów, Rzeszów 2013, pp. 114-117.

<sup>10</sup> The contract came into force on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Program for Implementation of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Government of Romania on cooperation in the field of science, education and culture for the years 2003-2006 on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October in 2003, Journal of Laws 2004, No. 34, item 303 and 304.

<sup>12</sup> S. Denca, "Pro-European orientation in Romanian foreign policy after 1989" in *Two decades of changes...*, pp. 99-100.

to NATO since March 1999, was at the threshold of membership in the European Union, and some of the countries of this organization did not support the actions of the United States against Iraq.

However, this was undoubtedly one of the factors that apart from the common goals of our diplomacy, related mainly to European and Atlantic integration, revealed the common interests of our countries on the international scale, as well as a similar approach to global security. All these aspects had a beneficial effect in bringing the two countries closer together at the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century.

The completion of processes initiated in the early 1990s was the accession of Poland and Romania to NATO structures (Poland - 1999, Romania - 2004) and the European Union (Poland - 2004, Romania - 2007).

### **The Polish-Romanian relations in 2004-2010**

In the years 2004-2007, in the period when both countries joined the European Union, bilateral contacts significantly strengthened, while to a lesser extent they were implemented on the EU forum. This was mainly due to the reluctance of the then Polish authorities - the right-wing party of the Law and Justice, to develop cooperation within EU. The focus was primarily on strengthening relations with the United States and with those EU countries that showed a more Eurosceptic attitude, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary or the United Kingdom. Romania was also focused mainly on an alliance with NATO and the USA in both the political and military dimensions.

With the change of government in Poland in 2007, the priorities of foreign policy also changed, especially regarding European integration. The position of Poland as the leader of Central European countries in the EU increased. This manifested itself in various initiatives to achieve the goals of the sub region. In the face of changing external conditions and a number of challenges faced by EU states towards the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as the global economic crisis, the division into a two-speed Europe strengthened. Germany, France and the Benelux countries, as well as countries belonging to the Eurozone, were to remain the leaders of it. In both cases Poland and Romania would be excluded from the possibility of a wide influence on EU decisions. It could also threaten the inflow of European funds to these countries. In the face of new challenges, in order to strengthen bilateral cooperation, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October in 2009, a declaration on strategic partnership was signed by Presidents Lech Kaczyński and Traian Băsescu<sup>13</sup>.

The pillars of the partnership include: political cooperation in the field of, broadly defined, security, support for the countries applying for EU membership, such as Turkey, Croatia, Ukraine and Moldova, cooperation in energy and sustainable development, including support for the construction of the so-called Southern corridor, including Nabucco pipeline, economic partnership - including maintaining the Common Agricultural Policy after 2013, as well as maintaining EU

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<sup>13</sup> *Joint Declaration by J.E. Lech Kaczyński, President of the Republic of Poland and J.E. Traian Băsescu, President of Romania, regarding the Polish-Romanian strategic partnership of October 7, 2009*, President of the Republic of Poland, <http://www.prezydent.pl/archiwum-strony-lecha-kaczynskiego/wizyty-zagraniczne-lecha-kaczynskiego/art.695,wspolna-deklaracja-o-partnerstwie-strategicznym.html> (12.06.2019).

cohesion policy, transport (especially projects for expansion of connections on the EU's eastern border and on the north-south axis), and ensuring the European Area Freedom, Justice and Security - it was a commitment to coordinate efforts to promote the free movement of workers, and in particular to remove barriers to employment of Polish and Romanian citizens in other EU countries.

### **Common interests and challenges in Polish-Romanian relations in the second decade of the 21st century**

It seems that currently - in the first and the end of the second decade of the 21st century, Polish-Romanian interests are even more consistent than before. Poland and Romania have intensified bilateral relations for many years, the purpose of which in the 1990s was to support each other's activities towards accession to international groups. Subsequently, both countries developed multilateral cooperation to strengthen the bilateral contacts at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, which are perceived by the governments of both countries as beneficial also from the point of view of the effective implementation of common interests on the international arena. In the face of the existing challenges faced by key integration groups for both countries, as well as in the context of current asymmetric threats, the need to intensify contacts between Poland and Romania is greater than ever before.

On the basis of common Polish-Romanian interests, we can distinguish the three most important areas of intensification of contacts between these countries in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the bilateral dimension, as well as on a regional and global scale.

First of all, it is in the interest of both countries to strive to strengthen their place within the structures of the European Union, by tightening integration and skilfully responding to current problems and challenges faced by the European Union, such as Brexit, problems of integrity and leadership in the EU or a number of dilemmas related to accepting refugees from the Middle East.

Secondly, Polish-Romanian interests manifests themselves in the constant intensification of cooperation with the United States, both bilaterally within NATO. It should be kept in mind that both Poland and Romania lie on the eastern border of the European Union and are NATO flank countries. This and similar historical experiences, causes the perception of the governments of both states on various international issues, including Russia, to be consistent.

Thirdly, both countries recognize the need to strengthen their place both on the global and regional level, as well to increase European security. To this end, it is justified to further develop bilateral cooperation in the political, economic, cultural and scientific dimension, as well as in the area of defence, which may bring benefits to both countries. Intensification of contacts is done, among the others, by cooperation within such integration structures as the Three Seas Initiative or Bucharest Format (B9), referred to later in this article. The tripartite security talks that take place between Poland, Romania and Turkey also play an important role.

The second decade of the 21st century abounded in many meetings of significant importance, both for bilateral relations and for multilateral cooperation. Only in 2017 took place a number of meetings and consultations between the high representatives of both countries. For example, the President of Romania took part in the Summit of the Three Seas Initiative in July 2017, announcing that his

country will be the host of the Summit in 2018. There were also three visits by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania in Warsaw and a visit of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest. There were also numerous contacts at the ministerial level devoted to the development of cooperation in various fields, in particular science, environment and defence. The meetings confirmed common interests in foreign policies of both countries, connected with strengthening their attachment to the EU and with a tight transatlantic relationship and a strong North Atlantic Alliance. Both countries assign a crucial role to these structures in ensuring stability and security in Europe.

In February 2018, the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Jacek Czaputowicz, took place in Bucharest, where he met his Romanian counterpart Teodor Meleşcanu and was received by President Klaus Iohannis<sup>14</sup>. As it was emphasized, Romania was the third country after Bulgaria and Germany visited by Czaputowicz, which confirms the importance of good relations between the two countries. The talks concerned both bilateral and multilateral cooperation issues. The will to intensify bilateral relations in terms of economic cooperation, infrastructure development and transport was confirmed, based on the mechanisms developed during the Three Seas Initiative Summit in Warsaw in July 2017. It was emphasized that Poland and Romania are similarly looking at the future of Europe and the threats to its security, including the issue of energy or migration policy<sup>15</sup>. It was declared the aim to strengthen cooperation regarding work on the multiannual budget of the European Union after 2020. Both countries also agreed on the issue of EU integration of the Western Balkan states, which is the only way to ensure the security and prosperity of cooperation in this part of Europe. The cooperation of the Bucharest Format in the area of strengthening NATO's eastern flank was also the subject of talks<sup>16</sup>.

In the same month, the head of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture, Krzysztof Jurgiel, met with his Romanian counterpart, Petre Daea. The meeting confirmed that such issues as: a strong Common Agricultural Policy after 2020, the situation on agricultural markets, trade in agricultural real estate or the control of ASF virus (African swine fever) are convergent in Polish-Romanian relations. In the field of the Common Agricultural Policy after 2020, it should be considered, according to the Polish minister, an increase in the membership fee to the EU, which is connected with the exit of the United Kingdom from the EU. Both Poland and Romania believe that trade in agricultural real estate in the European Union should be the competence of nation states. Both countries are also in favour of closer cooperation on agricultural markets. With current globalization and disruptions on

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<sup>14</sup> The visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland took place three days after the appointment of the Social Democratic Party MEP (PSD) Viorica Dăncilă for the position of the head of the Romanian government.

<sup>15</sup> *Poland and Romania share similar view on Europe's future – Polish Foreign Minister*, The First News, <https://www.thefirstnews.com/article/poland-romania-share-similar-view-on-europes-future---polish-fm> (10.06.2019).

<sup>16</sup> *A visit of the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Jacek Czaputowicz in Romania*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, [https://www.msz.gov.pl/c/MOBILE/aktualnosci/wiadomosci/wizyta\\_szefa\\_msz\\_jacka\\_czaputowicza\\_w\\_rumunii](https://www.msz.gov.pl/c/MOBILE/aktualnosci/wiadomosci/wizyta_szefa_msz_jacka_czaputowicza_w_rumunii) (10.06.2019).

agricultural markets, good monitoring and rapid intervention at EU level is needed<sup>17</sup>.

Polish-Romanian cooperation, and in particular issues related to the economy, energy policy and security were the subject of talks between Viorica Dăncilă and Mateusz Morawiecki during a meeting in Warsaw in May 2018. The heads of governments of both countries confirmed that through the Central European dimension they want to build a strong EU and strengthen mutual relations within NATO structures. The key projects include: construction of the Via Carpatia route connecting the Baltic with the Black Sea. Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki emphasized that Romania is one of the key partners of Poland in the field of economic and trade cooperation, as well as in the field of defence, cultural policy and broadly understood European policy. As the head of the Polish government declared, Poland supports Romania's ambitions in joining the Schengen area. It has been declared that in areas such as cohesion policy, common agricultural policy and European Union funds, Poland will try to cherish its relations with Romania and other countries as much as possible. The Nord Stream 2 project was also discussed, where both countries stressed the importance and necessity to diversify sources of gas supply. As stated, the creation of the second branch of the northern gas pipeline does not mean the construction of a common, diversified gas supply field. The head of the Polish government pointed out that both Poland and Romania would defend the interests of the Central European region with determination. He stated that the European partnership, Europe of one speed, not several speeds, is a promise of common development and agreed on this development throughout the EU<sup>18</sup>.

In June 2018 a visit of the President of Romania to Poland took place. It had a direct connection with the meeting of the B9, which Poland and Romania co-host. The talks between the President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, and Klaus Iohannis concerned mainly the security policy in the region and the coordination of activities before the July NATO summit in Brussels. The economic situation in Europe and work on the next financial perspective and the future EU budget were also discussed. President Duda underlined the convergence of positions of Poland and Romania in terms of maintaining at the appropriate level of the cohesion funds and financing related to the Common Agricultural Policy. The issue of cooperation within the countries of the Three Seas Initiative was also raised, noting the need to take actions for the implementation of joint initiatives in the development of road, railway and energy infrastructure in our region<sup>19</sup>. The presidents' talks also

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<sup>17</sup> A. Michałek-Tycner, *Poland and Romania on ASF and Common Agricultural Policy*, Polish Radio, <https://www.polskieradio.pl/42/5202/Artykul/2030804,Polska-i-Rumunia-o-ASF-i-Wspolnej-Polityce-Rolnej> (05.06.2019).

<sup>18</sup> Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki: *We want to build a strong European Union through the Central-European dimension*. Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Official Website, <https://www.premier.gov.pl/mobile/en/news/news/prime-minister-mateusz-morawiecki-we-want-to-build-a-strong-european-union-through-the.html> (10.06.2019).

<sup>19</sup> *Bilateral visit of President of Romania, Mr. Klaus Iohannis, in the Republic of Poland and his participation in the High Level Meeting of the Bucharest Format (B9), on 7-8 June 2018*, President of Romania, <https://www.presidency.ro/en/media/press-releases/bilateral-visit-of-president-of-romania-mr-klaus-iohannis-in-the-republic-of-poland-and-his-participation-in-the-high-level-meeting-of-the-bucharest-format-b9-on-7-8-june>,



concerned bilateral economic cooperation. It was emphasized that last year, mutual trade volume amounted to over EUR 5.5 billion.

At the end of 2018, there was one more visit from the Polish side in Romania. Polish President Andrzej Duda and Minister of National Defense Mariusz Błaszczak met with Polish soldiers serving in the multinational NATO forces in Craiova<sup>20</sup>.

An important project in the development of Polish-Romanian relations is the initiative of Poland and Romania, of bringing together 9 EU and NATO member states from the Eastern Flank - "Format 9 Bucharest" (B9). This structure includes: Romania, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Poland. It aims at state consultations on security issues, coordination of their activities, and consolidation of the North Atlantic Alliance. According to the view expressed by the President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, B9 - is building of a sphere of security. In March and October 2017, a meeting of the General Directors for Strategic and Security Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took place in Warsaw.

In June 2018, in turn, a meeting of B9 presidents took place in Warsaw. It was the second meeting at the highest level of this forum. The first took place in 2015 in Bucharest and ended with the signing of a declaration, which stated the aim of joining efforts to ensure, where necessary, the "strong, credible and balanced military presence" of NATO in the region.

The result of the meeting in 2018 was the adoption of a common position of NATO's eastern flank countries within the goals of the Alliance for the coming years. The document's provisions confirm that NATO's eastern flank countries are unanimous in their perception of threats, as well as ways to strengthen security in the region. In accordance with the joint declaration adopted by B9 - NATO's approach to Russia based on deterrence and defense and openness to political dialogue, it will remain the policy of these countries. NATO Summit in 2018 was expected to develop a comprehensive response to contemporary security threats, including hybrid threats faced by the Allies. In line with the position of states, ensuring a coherent and integrated approach to the defence of NATO's eastern flank is based on an effective and region-focused Alliance command structure,

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and *A visit of the President of Romania to Poland*, President of the Republic of Poland, <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wydarzenia/art,1028,prezydent-rumunii-w-czwartek-z-wizyta-w-polsce.html> (13.06.2019).

<sup>20</sup> As part of strengthening the eastern flank of NATO, the allies decided at the NATO summit in 2016 to deploy multinational battle groups in the Baltic States and in Poland, as part of the so-called enhanced forward presence (eFP), and in Romania and Bulgaria, where the initiative received the name tailored forward presence (tFP). While Polish soldiers are part of the tFP forces in Romania, the eFP battalion grouped in Poland includes 120 Romanian air-raiders. Poland has allocated a contingent of about 230 soldiers from the 17<sup>th</sup> Wielkopolska Mechanized Brigade from Międzyrzecze, armed with 14 wheeled armored personnel carriers Rosomak, grenade launchers and light mortars to the multinational brigade tFP in Romania and Bulgaria. The main task of the NEC is joint training under the auspices of the Multinational South East Division. In: *A visit of the President of the Republic of Poland to Polish soldiers stationed in Romania*, President of the Republic of Poland, <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wizyty-zagraniczne/art,310,prezydent-z-wizyta-u-polskich-zolnierzy-stacjonujacych-w-rumunii.html>, *Poland's President Andrzej Duda pays visit to South-East Multinational Brigade in Craiova*, Romanian Business News - ACTMEDIA, <https://actmedia.eu/daily/poland-s-president-andrzej-duda-pays-visit-to-south-east-multinational-brigade-in-craiova/78923> (13.06.2019).

strengthening of naval forces and strong air defence and realistic support strategy. It was emphasized that increasing the readiness and capability of NATO forces to respond, and the military mobility in the territory of the Alliance, is essential in the context of deterrence and defence on the eastern flank. The leaders of the B9 states also announced further investment in their own security in order to strengthen NATO's overall capabilities and to maintain defence spending at 2% of GDP (or approach this level accordingly). The B9's Estonia, Romania and Poland are three (out of only five) NATO countries that currently fulfil the two per cent obligations. This shows just how serious the Eastern flank is for NATO<sup>21</sup>. As Polish President A. Duda remarked, this type of activity proves to our partners that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe can take responsibility not only for their region, but also actively contribute to ensuring the security of the Western allies<sup>22</sup>.

Another important meeting of B9 took place in February 2019 in Slovakia. In addition to heads of state, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg also took part. The meeting was a commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of NATO, and the 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the accession of the B9 countries to the Alliance. Politicians talked about the security situation in the region and hybrid threats, as well as cyber security. The key importance of joint actions in ensuring regional security was underlined. The meeting, as specified, was a demonstration of the unity and solidarity of the B9 countries, as well as openness to mutual needs. Importantly, there was no disagreement between the participants when it comes to assessing the security situation and perceiving threats in the field of military security in Central and Eastern Europe. The presidents talked about the situation in Ukraine, the Black Sea, the incident in the Kerch Strait, the situation of the Baltic States and the Baltic Sea, as well as the problem of the return of Russia's imperial ambitions, which should be reacted to appropriately. One of the postulates that emerged during the meeting was the need to strengthen the presence of the Alliance in the Black Sea region and to increase NATO's readiness and presence in this part of Europe by increasing the number of soldiers of allied countries in the region. Regarding NATO enlargement, the President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, sharing the standpoint of other B9 states, stated that the Alliance should maintain an open-door policy, referring to the future prospects of Northern Macedonia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova or Ukraine<sup>23</sup>.

This article has already mentioned another important initiative which also combined the interests of Poland and Romania in the political and economic dimension and which is called the "Three Seas Initiative"<sup>24</sup>. It is a platform of

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<sup>21</sup> S. Kawczynski, *Why Germany should care about B9?*, New Eastern Europe, June 29, 2018, <http://neweasterneurope.eu/2018/06/29/germany-care-b9/> (05.06.2019).

<sup>22</sup> *Joint Press Statement of the President of Romania, Mr. Klaus Iohannis, with President of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Duda*, President of Poland, <https://www.presidency.ro/en/media/joint-press-statement-of-the-president-of-romania-mr-klaus-iohannis-with-president-of-the-republic-of-poland-mr-andrzej-duda> (14.06.2019).

<sup>23</sup> *The Summit of The Bucharest Nine in Koszyce*, President of the Republic of Poland, <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wizyty-zagraniczne/art,318,szczyt-bukaresztanskiej-dziewiatki-w-koszycach.html> (10.06.2019).

<sup>24</sup> The first meeting of the Initiative took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2015 in New York, while the formal First Summit of the Three Seas took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 2016 in Dubrovnik. Its participants adopted a joint

cooperation for the presidents of the twelve countries located between the Adriatic, Baltic and Black Seas. Its aim is to stimulate the development of their countries and strengthen the European Union's cohesion by building strong ties and connections on the North-South line, in accordance with the conviction that the stronger Central Europe is, as part of the EU, the stronger the European Union becomes. Countries within the framework of the Three Seas initiative undertake activities aimed at strengthening cooperation and developing transport and energy infrastructures, digital communication on the North-South line, by supporting cross-border and macro-regional projects of strategic importance for the countries in the region. The members of the Three Seas Initiative are: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary. Through the political patronage of heads of states, the initiative supports the cooperation and synergy of already existing regional models of cooperation in the EU, especially the Visegrad Plus Group (V4 +) implemented in an extended format, in which - depending on the subject - the countries of the region already cooperate.

The most important projects being implemented and initiated include: the Baltic-Adriatic Transport Corridor, the Via Carpatia and Via Baltica roads, the Rail Baltica and Amber Rail Freight Corridor rail connections, local government initiatives such as the Central European Transport Corridor as well as the North-South Gas Corridor<sup>25</sup>. However, the Tri-Sea summit in 2017 showed some divergent interests regarding the vision on energy policy of member states. At the summit in Warsaw, US President Donald Trump was present, promoting liquefied gas from the USA, which may be an alternative to Gazprom's supplies. Meanwhile, just before the Summit, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, Peter Szijjarto signed with the head of Russian Gazprom Alexey Miller an agreement on a new gas supply route to Hungary. The minister explained that for Hungary the most realistic scenario for connecting to the southern gas supply route is cooperation with Gazprom, which began the construction of a gas pipeline project running from Russia to Turkey along the bottom of the Black Sea. "The issue of energy supply has taken a geopolitical dimension with the expiration of the transit agreement between Russia and Ukraine at the end of the year and the absence of a new deal," the minister said. As he also added: "So the situation may arise that Russia will stop delivering gas to Europe via Ukraine. This is what we have to prepare for because we always have to prepare for the worst-case scenario when we're planning the country's energy supplies". Szijjarto argued also that Romania still had not allowed bilateral gas transport, and in Croatia there was still no liquefied gas terminal on the island of Krk<sup>26</sup>.

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declaration – they agreed that cooperation in the Adriatic-Baltic-Black Sea area, both within the EU and in the wider transatlantic space, must be revived, „but without creating parallel structures to existing cooperation mechanisms”.

<sup>25</sup> In total, in the Croatian project prepared by experts from the private sector Project Catalog, there are 157 infrastructure projects concerning mainly energy, transport and telecommunications in the Three Seas region. *The Summit of the Three Seas Initiative*, President of the Republic of Poland, <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wydarzenia/art,653,inicjatywa-trojmorza--three-seas-initiative.html> (15.06.2019).

<sup>26</sup> *Foreign Minister: Hungary's Gas Supplies Secured for next Year*, "Hungary Today", <https://hungarytoday.hu/foreign-minister-hungarys-gas-supplies-secured-for-next-year/> (15.06.2019).

The main topics discussed at the third Three Seas Summit, which was held in Romania in 2018, were transport, energy and digital issues<sup>27</sup>. The US Secretary of State for Energy, Rick Perry, who was present at the summit, said: “we know that energy security is basically tantamount to national security, and transatlantic energy security is fundamental to the national security of all of our nations”. The energy should never be used as a means of political coercion – he added. He also assured the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that they can count on the United States as a stable and reliable energy partner<sup>28</sup>. The growing presence of interest and the rank of the initiative was evidenced by the presence of Jean-Claude Juncker, the head of the European Commission, as well as representatives of the USA and Germany. At the summit, key documents were signed to further develop this initiative: letter of intent regarding the establishment of the Three Seas Fund, declaration of the establishment of a network of chambers of commerce and industry of the TSI countries and the establishment of the Tricity Business Council. Although, as Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki pointed out in May 2018, the Three Seas Initiative is not “against anyone”, but is for strengthening the EU and this part of Europe, Hungary was absent at the Bucharest summit. Hungary, as the only Tri-Sea country, did not decide to join the Trinitarian Fund<sup>29</sup>.

In June 2019, the fourth Summit of the Three Seas Initiative took place in Slovenia. At this year's meeting, apart from representatives of 12 countries, also the head of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier participated<sup>30</sup>. The President of Slovenia Borut Pahor encouraged the European Commission to include the Three Seas Initiative in the process of policy creation. The leaders stressed that the tool that will boost cooperation within the framework of the Three Seas Initiative is also the so-called progress report – periodically published document showing the degree of implementation of projects from the so-called short list of priority projects. This way would involve in the Three Seas Initiative projects – along with European institutions and national governments – also private entities are to be organized regularly the Tri-regional Initiative Business Forums. This year the forum was held for the second time on the occasion of the Brda summit. US Energy Secretary Rick Perry also participated. The President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda said

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<sup>27</sup> *Three Seas Initiative Summit, Business Forum*, <http://three-seas.eu/business-forum/> (15.06.2019).

<sup>28</sup> The American Secretary also announced the launch of a new initiative called Partnership for Transatlantic Energy Cooperation. He assured that by working with the countries of the region and in close cooperation with the European Commission, it will be accelerated investment in infrastructure critical to the North-South energy corridor. The most important projects are: completion of the trans-Adriatic gas pipeline, LNG Krk terminal, interconnections between Greece and Bulgaria, interconnection between Bulgaria-Romania and Hungary, as well as many oil and gas projects at sea. As stated, these are important projects, and the Tri-Sea countries have too much potential to limit themselves to pipeline policies. He also added that the plans for the nuclear power program in Poland, the resumption of a competitive tender in Temelin in the Czech Republic, are important guidelines for the revival of nuclear energy in Europe. *U.S. Secretary of Energy Rick Perry at the Three Seas Initiative Business Forum*, U.S. Embassy in Romania, <https://ro.usembassy.gov/secretary-of-energy-rick-perry-at-the-three-seas-initiative-business-forum/> (17.06.2019).

<sup>29</sup> According to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, his country needs a partner that he can count on. In addition, the Hungarians want to become a bridge between the European Union, NATO and Russia.

<sup>30</sup> Three Seas Summit, <https://www.three.si/> (29.06.2019).

that this year summit showed that cooperation within the framework of the Three Seas Initiative "has evolved considerably". He stressed that its aim is to create a "cooperation effect" in Central Europe, that is, coordinating efforts, among others, for infrastructure projects. Romanian President Klaus Iohannis pointed out that the Three Seas Initiative contributes to the strengthening of transatlantic ties. As he noted, the presence of US is a real catalyst for strengthening cooperation, it has a strategic value, and it is an essential component of the transatlantic partnership<sup>31</sup>. The Three Seas Initiative Fund was also established – the only institutionalized form of cooperation under this initiative, which is to finance joint projects<sup>32</sup>.

It should be noted that the activity of Poland and Romania in these two initiatives - B9 and the Three Seas Initiative, increases the security of the EU's and NATO's eastern borders. Both countries support part of NATO's missile defence system and NATO's international battalions. Both countries also have strategic interests in their neighbourhood in the east. It is also worth emphasizing that in both these initiatives, Bucharest and Warsaw have closely cooperated with each other from the beginning.

Another forum of multilateral cooperation between the two countries is the regular trilateral consultations held since 2016 - Romania - Poland - Turkey. In August 2017, talks at the level of Foreign Ministers took place in Warsaw. The next meetings took place in 2018 in Bucharest and in 2019 in Ankara. These states are interested, among others, in strengthening NATO's presence in the Black Sea region. It would also be beneficial to strengthen military cooperation through the presence of Turkish soldiers on the eastern flank of NATO. Although Turkey was not a proponent of this type of activity earlier, the position of Ankara is changing due to the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the imbalance of power between these countries<sup>33</sup>. The geopolitical location of Poland and Romania, as well as the historical experience of these countries, make them predisposed to promote Euro-Atlantic values in the neighbouring regions. All the more so, because in the national interest of both Poland and Romania, there is already mentioned the desire to strengthen the position of both countries and play an important role in the regional and international dimension in strengthening democracy and security.

A manifestation of the tightening bilateral relations between the two countries is, among other things, the launch in March 2019 of the first Polish honorary consulate in Romania, in the city of Braşov. One of the aims of the consulate will be to help in establishing business contacts between companies from

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<sup>31</sup> *Joint Declaration of the Fourth Summit of the Three Seas Initiative*, President of the Republic of Poland, <https://www.prezydent.pl/en/news/art,1059,joint-declaration--of-the-fourth-summit-of-the-three-seas-initiative.html> (29.06.2019).

<sup>32</sup> Jean-Claude Juncker pointed out that in 2004-2020, 60 billion euros were invested from the Structural Funds in the region of the Tri-Sea Initiative. Juncker's plan has generated an additional EUR 42 billion for the 12 countries participating in this initiative. "I am convinced that we have done and will continue to do everything we can to support better cohesion and a better network of connections in this region also in subsequent years" - he said. As he added, in the Commission's proposal on the EU budget for 2021-2027, "we want to pay 42.3 billion euros for a better network of connections, especially in this region."

<sup>33</sup> *Trilogue Poland-Romania-Turkey. Security in the Black Sea region*. Polish Radio, <https://www.polskieradio.pl/130/4428/Artykul/2297838,Trilog-PolskaRumuniaTurcja-Bezpieczenstwo-w-rejonie-Morza-Czarnego> (08.06.2019).

Poland and Romania. As emphasized by the Honorary Consul Janusz Szaliński, he would like to bring more businesses from Poland to Romania<sup>34</sup>.

### **Polish-Romanian relations during the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU**

In January 2019, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Jacek Czaputowicz visited Romania. The head of Polish diplomacy was the first foreign guest of his Romanian counterpart, Teodor Meleşcanu, in the year of the Presidency of Romania at EU Council. As Czaputowicz said, his visit to Bucharest was a proof of the will to develop very good bilateral relations and cooperation within the most important multilateral structures – the EU and NATO.

Ministers discussed, among the others, energy policy, the Multiannual Financial Framework, cohesion policy and migration policy. The convergence of views on many issues was emphasized. The urgent need to revise the Gas Directive was pointed out. The head of the Polish Foreign Ministry expressed his conviction that it is crucial for the finalization of the Energy Union project. He referred in this context to the subject of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, stressing that this project has a negative impact on the EU gas market and destroys EU solidarity. The issue of the need to provide support to the countries of the Western Balkans in the process of EU integration was also discussed<sup>35</sup>.

Both countries pay special attention to bilateral relations and cooperation in the area of security policy, including within NATO and in various regional formats (especially B9 and the Poland-Romania-Turkey triangle). The issues of the growing Polish-Romanian economic cooperation and the possibilities of its development as well as the directions of economic, infrastructure, transport and cyberspace cooperation within the framework of the Three Seas Initiative were discussed.

The head of Polish diplomacy also met with the Prime Minister of Romania Viorica Dăncilă. She expressed her conviction that good cooperation will help both countries to face challenges such as Brexit and the future of Europe after the exit of United Kingdom from EU structures, or migration<sup>36</sup>.

In January 2019, the first ever Romanian presidency of the Council of the European Union began, lasting six months – until the end of June. The Romanian presidency was carried out under the slogan: cohesion is a common European value, defined as unity, equal treatment and convergence. The Presidency program focused on values such as: Europe of Convergence, Security Europe, Europe as a Strong Global Actor and Europe of Shared Values<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> *Romania: a new honorary consulate was opened in Braşov*. Polish Radio, <https://www.polskieradio.pl/5/1223/Artykul/2286483,Rumunia-w-Braszowie-otwarto-nowy-konsulat-honorowy-RP> (08.06.2019).

<sup>35</sup> W. Jakóbk, *The Romanian relief. The whip on Nord Stream 2 returns*, Biznesalert.com, <https://biznesalert.com/romania-presidency-nord-stream-2/> (12.06.2019).

<sup>36</sup> *Visit of Minister Jacek Czaputowicz in Romania*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, [https://www.ms.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/wiadomosci/wizyta\\_ministra\\_jacka\\_czaputowicza\\_w\\_rumunii](https://www.ms.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/wiadomosci/wizyta_ministra_jacka_czaputowicza_w_rumunii) (08.06.2019).

<sup>37</sup> *Presidency in the EU Council*, European Council, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/pl/council-eu/presidency-council-eu/> (12.06.2019).

In connection with the takeover by Romania of the presidency of the EU Council, Poland had its expectations. They were mainly related to the fact that Romania was responsible for conducting negotiations on the new EU budget after 2020. One of the important events that was to take place during the Romanian Presidency was also Brexit, but the UK's exit from the EU was postponed until later 2019. Poland expressed hope that Romania would accelerate the work on the amendment of the gas directive, which is supposed to hinder the creation of Nord Stream 2. Romania, together with 13 other Member States, including Poland, takes the view that Nord Stream 2 is harmful to the Union.

The European Commission expressed some concerns about the efficiency of the Romanian presidency due to existing social and political divisions. The concerns were connected to a dispute between the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis and the ruling coalition composed of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE). The concerns expressed by the President of the European Commission also concerned threats to the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary in Romania, as well as insufficient fight against corruption. The position expressed by the President of the European Commission, Jean Claude Juncker, was badly received in Bucharest. The Prime Minister of Romania, Viorica Dăncilă, rejected his criticism in Brussels in November 2018, assuring that compliance with the rule of law is ensured in Romania, and that the country understands what the Presidency is well prepared for it. The statement of the President of the Commission was also negatively received by some other European countries.

The president of Romania himself, just before the country took over the presidency in the EU, emphasized that although the democracy lesson is one of the most important things that Bucharest has learned, democracy is not something given forever and requires constant work for its protection and promotion. Iohannis warned that enacting a reform of the justice system, which the ruling majority demanded, could lead to the application of article 7 against Romania, as it was the case with Poland. It seems that regardless of the divisions and differences of opinion appearing on the Romanian political scene, what connects both Romanian and Polish politicians – and which also coincides with the opinion of the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker – is opposition to strengthening the formula of Europe of two or more speeds. The indivisibility of the Union is for all of these parties one of the key values of the European project<sup>38</sup>.

From the beginning of the Presidency, the acceleration of work on amending the EU gas directive was visible. Romania has submitted amendments – a compromise proposal to the draft amendment to the EU directive. The second amendment, after being amended by the German-French amendments, was adopted on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, at the meeting of the EU Council Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER), as the Council's common position on the amendment, and on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February COREPER accepted determined a week

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<sup>38</sup> *President of the EC: An obstacle for Romania on its way to Schengen may be the lack of the rule of law.* Polish Radio, <https://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/2206242,Przewodniczacy-KE-na-drodze-Rumunii-do-Schengen-moze-stanac-brak-praworzadnosci> (08.06.2019).

earlier, within Trilogue,<sup>39</sup> with the European Parliament compromise version of the amendment to the gas directive, which comes into force before the completion of Nord Stream 2. Agreement on the directive became possible, among the others, thanks to the change of position from Germany, which for a long time opposed the application of EU legal rules to the Russian project<sup>40</sup>.

The adopted version of the amendment is the result of an intra-EU compromise and is more lenient than the original proposal of the European Commission. At the same time, it is the first document clearly confirming the jurisdiction of the European Union in the case of Nord Stream 2 – the application of the EU law to a part of the gas pipeline running in German territorial waters. This means that all gas pipelines, including those imported, and parts of the sea within the Community, will be covered by the EU energy package<sup>41</sup>. Earlier, it was not possible to submit such amendments because both Austria and Bulgaria, holding the Presidency before Romania, blocked any changes to the Directive. Although, as the Minister of Energy of Russia Aleksandr Nowak said, the amendments to the EU gas directive will not pose a threat to the further construction of the gas pipeline, the application of particular provisions of the third package will complicate and most likely delay its implementation and application. In addition, exemptions from the application of EU law to existing (Article 49) or new (Article 36) gas infrastructure may only be granted if they do not have a negative impact on competition, the functioning of markets or security of supply to the EU. In the case of Nord Stream 2 it would include markets of Central European countries<sup>42</sup>.

The implementation will be crucial for the effectiveness of the directive and its provisions. There are still a lot of issues to be determined and clarified, e.g.: clearly defining the procedure for determining the legal regime of the entire gas pipeline, defining the moment of completion of a given investment – whether it will be the moment of its construction, commencement of gas transport or filling up with raw material, which countries in the case of individual gas pipelines will be considered as the one for which the investment has an impact – and therefore with

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<sup>39</sup> On the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, a Trilogue took place in Strasbourg, representing the ITRE Committee and the Romanian Presidency in the presence of representatives of the European Commission representing the European Parliament - the final version of the amendments to the Directive.

<sup>40</sup> A. Łaskot-Strachota, *The gas directive revision: EU law poses problems for Nord Stream 2*, Centre for Eastern Studies, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2019-02-21/gas-directive-revision-eu-law-poses-problems-nord-stream-2> (21.06.2019).

<sup>41</sup> The legal regime of the entire gas pipeline - including parts from the end of German territorial waters to the border with Russia - will require a separate clarification guaranteeing the application of EU law within the limits set out in the Directive and German consultations with the Russian side, and possibly also negotiating and signing an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) EU-Russia on this subject.

<sup>42</sup> In addition, the final version of the directive provides a role for other Member States where the gas market will be affected by the investment. A record was made, e.g. of requirement to carry out (non-binding) consultations with them by the state in which the first connection of a given infrastructure to the EU network is made before making the switch-off decisions. At the request of these Member States, the European Commission will also be able to become an observer of bilateral consultations with a third country (in the case of Nord Stream 2, German-Russian) on the rules for implementing the provisions of the Directive. See: A. Łaskot-Strachota, *The gas...*; W. Jakóbiak, *The Romanian relief...*



which countries it will be necessary to consult. It will also be important to determine how the impact of Nord Stream 2 will be tested against competition in individual EU markets. However, the decisions already taken, in connection with the adoption of amendments on the initiative of Romania, are an important step on the road to sanctioning the most sensitive issues from the point of view of the energy security.

During the Romanian presidency, the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's accession to the EU took place. On this occasion, the Polish Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, organized the High Level Summit "Together for Europe" in Warsaw on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May with the participation of countries that joined the EU in 2004 and in subsequent years. The participants adopted a joint declaration on the future of the EU. The declaration included the role of the common market, the budget for the next financial perspective, as well as the issues of internal and external EU security, the Eastern Partnership, further EU enlargement, among the others for the countries of the Western Balkans and climate threats<sup>43</sup>.

As the Prime Minister emphasized, this declaration shows the coherence of all signatories. The discussion between leaders of the countries were concerned with the new institutional cycle after the European elections, the Brexit issue and the ongoing negotiations on the multiannual EU budget. During a joint conference with Romanian Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă, the head of the Polish government assessed that the countries of Central Europe are the engine of economic growth for the entire EU. He also stressed the differences in problems and challenges in different parts of Europe.

Romanian Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă described the Joint Declaration signed in Warsaw as an important pillar in building the future of the European Union. As she said, for Romania, becoming a member of the EU constituted a period of development, modernization, economic growth and a visible improvement of citizens' quality of life. Currently, as the Prime Minister is convinced, Romania is one of the most active promoters of continuing consolidation of the European integration process. At the same time, she stressed that the EU needs a budget, "which is sustainable and robust, which will promote continued convergence as well as a unity of actions and that will respond to new challenges and objectives at European level"<sup>44</sup>.

Connected with the Romanian Presidency, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May in 2019, on Europe's Day, an informal meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the European Union was organized in Sibiu. At the summit, the leaders adopted a joint declaration for the next 5 years on the future of the European Union, which is to be a "commitment to future generations", where Europe is to be a "responsible and global leader". As EU leaders pointed out, a united Union has more power in an increasingly restless and challenging world. The Declaration included 10 commitments to help meet the challenges facing the EU. These include readiness to

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<sup>43</sup> *Warsaw Declaration on the reunification of Europe*, Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Official Website, <https://www.premier.gov.pl/mobile/en/news/news/warsaw-declaration-on-the-reunification-of-europe.html> (26.06.2019).

<sup>44</sup> *Prime Minister of Romania: The declaration signed in Warsaw is an important pillar of the future of the EU*. Polish Radio, <https://www.polskieradio.pl/5/1222/Artykul/2302473,Premier-Rumunii-deklaracja-podpisana-w-Warszawie-to-wazny-filar-przyszlosci-UE> (27.06.2019).

defend one Europe – from east to west, from north to south. It was also pointed out that there is no place in the EU for divisions that undermine the common interest. The leaders announced in the declaration that the principle of justice will always be observed in the Union, be it in the labor market, in social care, in the economy or in digital transformation. The readiness to further reduce the disproportions between member states and to help the neediest in Europe has been declared, putting people ahead of politics<sup>45</sup>. "We will give ourselves the means to match our ambitions. We will provide the Union with the means necessary to attain its objectives and carry through its policies." - it was emphasized in the declaration<sup>46</sup>.

Leaders announced that they would protect EU citizens and ensure their security, "investing in soft and hard power" and "cooperating with international partners". The announcement of cooperation with partners around the world also appears in the context of maintaining and developing international law-based order, to take full advantage of new trade opportunities and collectively address global issues such as environmental protection and combating climate change. The document also referred to elections to the European Parliament, which took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May, 2019. The document ends with the words: "This is a spirit of Sibiu and of a new Union of 27, ready to face its future as one"<sup>47</sup>.

As assessed by dr. Mirosław Bieszki from the Conference of Financial Enterprises, the summit in Sibiu was "vague", and in 10 points of the final declaration there were no "specific and outlining the future of the Union" manifestations. As he said, these issues can be more precisely defined only after the European Parliament elections<sup>48</sup>.

From the point of view of Poland's interests, the most important issues were: adequate principles of external border protection policy, so that the refugee and migration crisis would not threaten European cohesion any more, as it did in 2016; strengthening the common market and combating economic protectionism – ensuring the freedom to provide services, transmission and economic policy, and the expansion of the Schengen area in the context of the freedom of movement of both people and the transport of goods. The structural funds of the EU are also important for both – Poland and Romania. Poland and Romania would like the funds, especially those for agricultural policy, not to decrease in the future EU financial framework. However, the Polish party expressed the conviction that a coherent policy on this issue of 13 EU countries that share Poland's position and

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<sup>45</sup> *Informal meeting of heads of state or government, Sibiu, 09/05/2019 – Main results*, Romania2019.eu <https://www.romania2019.eu/2019/05/10/informal-meeting-of-heads-of-state-or-government-sibiu-09-05-2019-main-results/> (27.06.2019).

<sup>46</sup> *The Sibiu Declaration*, European Council, Council of the European Union, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/05/09/the-sibiu-declaration/>. (18.06.2019).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>48</sup> *A very important European problem: what was the economy talking about at the Sibiu summit?* Polish Radio, <https://www.polskieradio.pl/42/273/Artykul/2306119,Bardzo-wazny-problem-europejski-co-na-szczycie-w-Sybinie-mowiono-o-gospodarce> (18.06.2019).

which recently signed the Warsaw Declaration, guarantees that the budget will be the best for the countries of our region<sup>49</sup>.

As Prime Minister of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki said before the meeting, one of the important topics of the summit would be the issue of combating inequalities between EU countries and within these countries. The Polish Head of the Council of Ministers also stressed the need to increase funds for innovation and security, both in anti-terrorism and online. It was also emphasized that European security should be absolutely consistent with NATO, which is "our leading, major defence alliance"<sup>50</sup>.

The summit in Sibiu had a symbolic dimension. It took place 15 years after the largest EU enlargement to the east, in a country that 30 years ago was still on the other side of the Iron Curtain. This summit is to be the beginning of the road to the creation of a new EU strategy until 2024. The adoption of the declaration did not end the EU summit. The leaders furthermore discussed the outline of the EU strategy until 2024.

### **Final conclusions**

As the Prime Minister of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki, said at a meeting with the Prime Minister of Romania in May, 2018: "Romania is one of the absolutely key partners for Poland, both in the field of economic and commercial cooperation, but also in the field of defence, cultural policy and broadly understood European policy"<sup>51</sup>. In diplomacy, the declarative sphere is often more extensive than the reality. In Polish-Romanian relations it is different. This does not mean, however, that in the relations between our countries the potential of bilateral cooperation is fully exploited, and that there are no issues that need to be developed or supplemented.

In the current period of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, relations between Poland and Romania are developing very well and, most importantly, based on the existence of many common interests, increasingly ambitious cooperation projects are being undertaken, such as the Three Seas Initiative, cooperation in the B9, or a tripartite dialogue Poland-Romania-Turkey. Cooperation within them has not only a positive impact on the bilateral relations, but allows raising regional issues in the EU to a higher level. Therefore, it is important to continue to strengthen cooperation under multilateral initiatives, which allows us not only to show the potential of Central European countries and the effective implementation of our interests, but also enriches the development of the entire EU.

For Poland and Romania, cooperation with the US as well as with the EU are the key two pillars of security, including energy security, as well as the pillars of economic development and investment growth. In turn, the eastern flank of NATO is an area of major importance for strengthening European and transatlantic security in the near future. The most important areas of multi-layered Polish-

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<sup>49</sup> *The EU summit in Romania. Prime Minister Morawiecki: We are at the moment when we will develop a new strategy for Europe.* In the politics, <https://wpolityce.pl/polityka/445882-unijny-szczyt-w-rumunii-zdjecia> (20.06.2019).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>51</sup> *Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki: We want to build a strong European Union...*

Romanian cooperation at the end of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century also include: strengthening the position within EU structures, especially in the field of budgetary policy and common EU agricultural policy, cohesion policy and energy security, cooperation for addressing such EU challenges as Brexit, the issue of accepting refugees from the Middle East and North Africa, and the question of leadership in the EU. The aim of our policies is also to act effectively in relation to a Europe with many speeds, so that the interests and needs of Central European countries are not pushed to the margin of the EU. Cooperation in the fields of economy, digitization, defence, investment, infrastructure and rural development is also important.

The accession of Bucharest to the Schengen area would have a positive impact on the intensification of relations with Poland. For this to happen, a country applying for Schengen must demonstrate that it is able to effectively defend the external borders of the community and cooperate with other countries in ensuring internal security. Poles have used free borders since 2007. Currently, there are more and more prospects for Schengen accession of Bulgaria and Romania. European parliamentarians argue that both countries have met the conditions to join Schengen in 2011 and already share some of the responsibilities associated with belonging to this zone. Despite this, residents can not enjoy the resulting benefits. For a country to join Schengen the unanimous consent of all Member States is required, which in this case is lacking. Accession of both Romania and Bulgaria to Schengen area would be extremely desirable, especially as, according to a report prepared by one of the European Parliament's committees, border controls between Bulgaria and Romania and other European Union countries, hinder the development of trade and lead to economic losses<sup>52</sup>.

Speaking with one voice, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, especially Poland and Romania, which derive their interests from common historical experience and which similarly perceive both threats to European security and challenges related to the future of Europe, are able to take better care of their interests in the EU and in the global arena, rather than acting alone. An example of such a joint action is, let us say, the Romanian initiative on amendments to the EU Nord Stream Directive, or joint efforts to secure a favourable EU financial framework. In turn, the most important added value of such forms of cooperation as the Tri-Sea Initiative is to provide political support at the highest level for investments that have so far remained a neglected field in the cooperation of the Central European countries. The Tricity is therefore pro-European and complementary to existing regional cooperation formats. Poland and Romania may have an important role to play in Western European structures as a catalyst for cooperation and promoter of the convergent interests of states in the region of Central and Eastern Europe.

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<sup>52</sup> EP: *Romania and Bulgaria should join the Schengen area. "They met the conditions"*. Polish Radio, <https://translate.google.pl/#view=home&op=translate&sl=pl&tl=en&text=PE%3A%20Rumunia%20i%20Bu%C5%82garia%20powinny%20do%C5%82%C4%85czy%C4%87%20do%20strefy%20Schengen.%20E2%80%9ESpe%C5%82ni%C5%82y%20warunki%E2%80%9D>. (01.07.2019).

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