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## **Germany and France towards Eastern Partnership project of the European Union 2008-2015<sup>1</sup>**

### **1. Germany, France and European Neighborhood Policy**

Since signing the Treaty of Maastricht, the European Union (EU) has been interested in strengthening relations with its closest neighbors. In 1995, the EU started to cooperate with the Mediterranean countries within the framework of the Barcelona Process<sup>2</sup>. In subsequent years, a number of initiatives in the region were developed.

The cooperation resulted in rapprochement of companies, mainly connected with trade and development cooperation fields and common foreign and security policy. Association agreements with Tunisia (1995), Morocco (1995), Jordan (1997), the Palestinian Authority (1997), Egypt (2001), Lebanon (2002), and Algeria (2002)<sup>3</sup> were also signed.

The following years brought a reorientation of the EU's foreign policy towards the East and the South. After the accession of eight new countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Cyprus and Malta catalyzed a need for the EU to develop a new, coherent policy towards its neighbors. On May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004, the European Commission published the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP).

The European Council adopted it in June that same year. The document included three groups of countries: From Eastern Europe, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova; from the Mediterranean area, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the

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<sup>1</sup>Article written as part of a research project: German-French Leadership in the European Union in the 21st Century. Problems and Challenges (National Science Center UMO 2013/09/B/HS5/00433).

<sup>2</sup> R. Zięba, *Polityka zagraniczna Unii Europejskiej w rejonie śródziemnomorskim*. In: *Przegląd Europejski* 1/2005, p. 103–143.

<sup>3</sup> K. Lastawski, *Od idei do integracji europejskiej*, Warszawa, p. 314.

Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia; and from the southern Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia<sup>4</sup>.

The main goals of the ENP included promotion of the EU's values, political dialogue, socio-economic cooperation, financial, and technical assistance in order to bring the countries closer to the Union's internal market, cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs, energy, transport, environment protection, research, and the development of information technology<sup>5</sup>.

Based on this document, a free trade zone with Ukraine and the construction of the European Union visa center in Moldova were initiated, among other plans<sup>6</sup>. The EU member states, aware of the economic benefits resulting from the cooperation with the postSoviet area, tried to work out a favorable formula for cooperation with these neighbors. After the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU, there was a need to shift the EU's borders to the Black Sea region. On September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007, the European Commission adopted the Black Sea Synergy, a new regional cooperation initiative. The project involved the cooperation of countries in the Black Sea area with the EU including Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey<sup>7</sup>.

From 2006 to 2008, they implemented various initiatives to deepen the EU's cooperation with former Soviet republics (The Eastern Partnership, The Black Sea Synergy, and the EU's Northern Dimension). In 2006, the Austrian president proposed to deepen cooperation with Ukraine and Belarus in the EU's energy policy<sup>8</sup>. In 2007, the German government proposed a draft of the ENP and Poland and Lithuania suggested deepening the eastern and southern dimension of the ENP<sup>9</sup>. Among the European Union member states, apart from Poland and, to a lesser extent, Sweden in designing the future of the Eastern Partnership, Germany and France played a large role. Initially, Germany strongly supported the Polish-

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<sup>4</sup> E. Cziomer, *Geneza, struktura oraz przesłanki wdrażania Partnerstwa Wschodniego Unii Europejskiej w latach 2008–2010*. In: Sawczuk, J. (ed.) (2011):

Partnerstwo wschodnie wielka szansa dla Europy, Poznań Chorzów, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> J. Węc, *Polska wobec projektu Partnerstwa Wschodniego*. In: Sawczuk, J. (ed.) (2011): *Partnerstwo wschodnie wielka szansa dla Europy*, Poznań Chorzów, p. 70.

<sup>6</sup> M. Arcipowska, *Dialog wizowy Unii Europejskiej z krajami Partnerstwa Wschodniego*. In: *Biuletyn PISM* 4 października 2011.

<sup>7</sup> T. Kapuśniak, *Wymiar wschodni Europejskiej Polityki Sąsiedztwa Unii Europejskiej*, Warszawa, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> B. Wojna, M. Gwiazdowski, *Partnerstwo wschodnie*. In: *Raport otwarcia*, Warszawa 2009.

<sup>9</sup> J. Węc, p. 71.

Swedish initiative to then confine itself to selected areas of cooperation with the countries participating in the project. France, at the same time proposing a different initiative, emphasizes the need for cooperation between the European Union and its southern neighbors. Over time, when it turned out that the Eastern Partnership won with the French proposal of the Union for the Mediterranean, Paris limited its involvement in the EAP to proposals for cooperation of candidates with the European Union in selected areas<sup>10</sup>.

## **2. Birth of the Eastern Partnership**

The Eastern Partnership (EAP) is a European Union policy launched in 2009 and addressed to six countries in Eastern Europe: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and the Ukraine. The policy was initiated by Poland and Sweden (by Radosław Sikorski and Carl Bildt respectively). Their motives were: Revival of the European dimension of the EAP towards easterly direction; demonstration of Polish ability to create the European eastern policy; need to move from general statements on support to specific activities; and the prevention tactics of French President Sarkozy's first version of Mediterranean Union.

Two main dimensions characterize the Eastern Partnership conception: Institutional cooperation (e.g. meetings of Heads of States and Governments and annual meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs) and multilateral relations, focusing on democracy, well provided politics, economic integration with the EU policy, energy safety, and human relations.

## **3.The Eastern Partnership between 2009 and 2015**

The Eastern Partnership met with different responses from EU Member States. It was supported by countries admitted to the EU in the years 2004-2007, open opposition was demonstrated by the countries of the Mediterranean region, which were closer to the idea of the Union for the Mediterranean supported by France. The most important country in the EU- Germany was answered to the idea of the Eastern Partnership without euphoria, but positively, seeing in it a continuation of the earlier proposed ENP + concept and an idea well in line with the German Presidency's conclusions of 2007. The Polish plans were

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www1.rfi.fr/actupl/articles/101/article\\_4732.asp](http://www1.rfi.fr/actupl/articles/101/article_4732.asp). 2015.

supported by Chancellor Merkel during her stay in Gdańsk on June 17, 2008 and by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, F.-W. Steinmeier. After the war in Georgia in Berlin, it was postulated to strengthen the German and EU development assistance for Eastern Europe in order to increase the stability of the region. The opening, however, in Berlin was signaled that the Eastern Partnership could not have an anti-Russian attitude, constitute the first stage of accession to the European Union of Eastern European countries and constitute compete for the Partnership for Modernization preferred by Berlin. Within the framework of the EaP, Germany was most interested in activities aimed at deepening economic relations with partner countries. Within the framework of the EaP, Germany was most interested in activities aimed at deepening economic relations with partner countries. From Germany's point of view, these countries were considered an attractive area for German exporters and investors due to the prospects for economic growth and related internal demand, cheap labor, geographic proximity, cultural links and growing knowledge of the region's specificity among German companies. Similar arguments and reservations were made in France, where relations with Russia and cooperation between Gazprom and Gaz de France were highly appreciated. It was emphasized that the Eastern Partnership project would be expensive and the benefits that it would bring – uncertain. It was also believed that the EU should take some more breath after the recent difficult expansion of its borders to Romania and Bulgaria. The European Union has put a lot of effort to disperse Moscow's distrust and concern over the EaP, and the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, invited Russia to participate in the Partnership. This issue has been the subject of many months of discussions in the Union. Some countries, including France, Spain and Italy, wanted to open a project for Russia as well as Turkey. According to other countries, among others Czechs and Poles, it would dissipate the program.

From 2008 to 2015, four Eastern Partnership summits were held. The first inaugurating summit of the Eastern Partnership was organized on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in Prague during the Czech presidency. The Polish-Swedish proposal was relatively favorably, but not enthusiastically adopted by partner countries. Michail Saakashvili seemed to be fully satisfied after the Prague meeting. He called the Eastern Partnership Project “Europe’s response to the RussoGeorgian War”.

Most partners from Eastern Europe emphasized the economic benefits of creating free trade zones. There were also hopes for loosening the visa regime. The biggest concerns during the French Summit in Paris were the attitudes of the EU member states. From the leaders of major countries, only Angela Merkel attended. Silvio Berlusconi did not show up, as he was involved in his divorce proces. France sent its prime minister, François Fillon. The ambassador to the EU on the other hand, represented Austria<sup>11</sup>. The project also expressed concern about Russia that the inauguration of the summit interfere in its internal affairs and violates its zone geopolitical interests<sup>12</sup>. Finally, at the inaugural summit of the Partnership Partnership in Prague (7.05.2009), an enigmatic formula inviting "third countries" to participate in individual projects was agreed.

The next summit of the Eastern Partnership was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2011 in Warsaw during the Polish presidency. Meeting the 'Eastern Partner' of the stewards of the European Union would be the focal point of the Polish Presidency of the EU Council. It was hard to expect a spectacular success, which would push forward this ambitious project because its greatest weakness was from the very beginning the lack of promise of membership<sup>13</sup>. During the summit, a joint declaration was adopted in which the Heads of Government acknowledged the European aspirations and the European choice of the partner countries<sup>14</sup>. During the Polish presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2011, Warsaw consistently promoted issues related to the eastern policy. However, the priority of the Eastern Partnership, which took place at the end of September 2011 in Warsaw confirmed that the expectations connected with him were too great. The meeting was not attended by any high-ranking Belarusian politician. There was Former Chancellor A. Merkel, but no N. Sarkozy, who was replaced by Prime Minister F. Fillon. There was not also the British Prime Minister David Cameron and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Their absence showed that the Eastern Partnership project was of little interest

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<sup>11</sup> D. Pszczółkowska, J. Pawlicki, *Moda na wschód minęła*. In: *Gazeta Wyborcza* 8 maja 2015. .

<sup>12</sup> *Newsweek: Unia Europejska nadepnęła na odcisk Rosji*. *Newsweek.pl*; <http://swiat.newsweek.pl/unia-europejska-nadepnela-na-odcisk-rosji,39215,1,1.html> 2011.

<sup>13</sup> A. Barabasz, M. Piechocki, M. *Partnerstwo Wschodnie jako instrument polityki wschodniej Unii Europejskiej*. In: *Rocznik Integracji Europejskiej*. 6/2012, p. 267.

<sup>14</sup> M. Kosinski, *Wspólna Deklaracja warszawskiego Szczytu Partnerstwa Wschodniego*. Rzeczpospolita Polska; [http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/fotogaleria\\_i\\_multimedia/wspolna\\_deklaracja\\_warszawskiego\\_szczytu\\_partnerswa\\_wschodniego;jsessionid=E40AC8226626A9B480F591851FF1F40E.cmsap1p.9.2015](http://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/aktualnosci/fotogaleria_i_multimedia/wspolna_deklaracja_warszawskiego_szczytu_partnerswa_wschodniego;jsessionid=E40AC8226626A9B480F591851FF1F40E.cmsap1p.9.2015).

to the countries represented by them<sup>15</sup>. During the summit, Chancellor Merkel and Donald Tusk and Radosław Sikorski met with the Belarusian opposition<sup>16</sup>. On the other hand, Prime Minister Filon expressed his opposition to the proposal to discuss the chances of Ukraine and Georgia for EU membership<sup>17</sup>.

However, each country in the Eastern Partnership project emphasized different expectations for the European Union. The Ukraine hoped for an association agreement and a free trade agreement. Georgia however, in the Polish-Swedish project, emphasized safety issues and saw it as an opportunity to strengthen the sense of security from Russia, which in 2008 invaded the Caucasian country. Armenia and Azerbaijan, involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, counted on economic benefits within the cooperation with the EU in the export of raw materials to the Old Continent. Moldova led changes modeled on European patterns. Belarus, ruled by Aleksander Łukaszenka's authoritarian system, could not count on something more tangible than mere gestures of courtesy.

Even before the meeting in Warsaw, Germany's strategy towards Eastern Partnership was well-argued. The Eastern Partnership project is part of the European Neighborhood Policy and does not have a positive impact on the prospects of EU partner countries' accession or negatively on EU relations with Russia. Germany supports the deepening of economic relations with partner countries as well as institutional development programs and the development cooperation system. Germany does not want to change political relations with the countries covered by the Eastern Partnership project<sup>18</sup>.

France she watched the course of events . The media has speculated about Paris's involvement in the Eastern Partnership initiative. Because the French president N. Sarkozy in the beginning of October 2011 took a visit to the South Caucasus region. It was

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<sup>15</sup> UE : la France réticente à d'adhésion de l'Ukraine et de la Géorgie „Le Point,, z 30.09.2011. E. Pflimlin, *Le partenariat oriental de l'UE : un enjeu à ne pas négliger, mais qui est loin d'être gagné ?* <http://www.fenetreeurope.com/php/page.php?section=chroniques&id=900>.

<sup>16</sup>A.Dorywalski,<http://www.psz.pl/117-polityka/szczyt-partnerstwa-wschodniego-w-warszawie-przebieg-i-analiza04.2014>.

<sup>17</sup><https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/szczyt-partnerstwa-wschodniego-francja-przeciw-aspiracjom-ukrainy-i-gruzji/vvtbb04.2014>.

<sup>18</sup>J.Gotkowska,[www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/komentarze-osw/2010-06-18/niemcy-wobec-partnerstwawschodniego02.2014](http://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/komentarze-osw/2010-06-18/niemcy-wobec-partnerstwawschodniego02.2014) .

perceived by some journalists as willingness to enter France as the main player of the European Union's policy in the region<sup>19</sup>.

During the third summit of the Eastern Partnership in Vilnius on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2013, association agreements with Georgia and Moldova were initialed along with agreements for establishing the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA). The Ukraine decided not to sign an agreement because of pressure from Russia. Armenia chose to integrate with the Customs Union of Russia, and Belarus and Kazakhstan elected for direction of its foreign policy in coming years. During this meeting, Azerbaijan signed an agreement on visa facilitation and Georgia chose to participate in the EU crisis missions<sup>20</sup>.

After the Vilnius summit in 2013 there were tragic events in Ukraine. As a result of the war of Ukraine with Russia and Moscow annexed Crimea, and the country was divided into EU supporters and cooperation with Russia. This situation has been met with an immediate reaction of the European Union and its major leaders in Germany and France<sup>21</sup>. On the initiative of Germany, not without disputes within the EU, the organization imposed on Russia economic sanctions against entities and citizens. Merkel's government sought to maintain the "channels" of communication with President Putin and led to the launch of a four-sided format talks between Russia and Ukraine with the participation of Germany and France (the so-called Normandy format)<sup>22</sup>.

The last summit of the Eastern Partnership was held in Riga in May of 2015. The members of the meeting confirmed their recognition of the European aspirations and the European choice respect of the three countries Partnership. Before the summit in Riga, the Ukraine signed the political part of the association agreement with the EU and later the economic part as well. Georgia and Moldova confirmed their aspirations in Vilnius signing

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<sup>19</sup> W. Kędzia, Łagodne zejście Partnerstwa Wschodniego, <http://www.psz.pl/117-polityka/grzegorz-kedzia-lagodne-zejscie-partnerstwa-wschodniego,03.2014>.

<sup>20</sup>R. Sadowski, *Szczyt w Wilnie: bez przełomu w Partnerstwie Wschodnim*; <http://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2013-12-04/szczyt-w-wilnie-bez-przelomu-w-partnerstwie-wschodnim>.

<sup>21</sup> A. Barabasz, *Prasa polska wobec zaangażowania Niemiec i Francji w kryzys polityczny na Ukrainie (luty-maj 2014)*, In. Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne, nr 2 2015.

<sup>22</sup> K. Malinowski, *Polityka Niemiec wobec Europy Wschodniej, Russia first*, In. Przegląd Politologiczny, nr 4 z 2015, p..28.

association agreements with the European Union<sup>23</sup> The declaration contained a recognition of the European aspirations of the partner countries, a commitment to reforms under the association agenda, and the readiness of the EU to consistently support this process<sup>24</sup>. Ryga During the Riga summit, Germany forced other EU member states not to promise future membership to the countries of the Eastern Partnership. In turn, President Hollande announced that the Eastern Partnership can not "lead to a conflict with Russia"<sup>25</sup>.

#### **4. The Challenges of the Eastern Partnership**

In 2013, Armenia stood a good chance of signing the association agreement and creating a joint agreement with the European Union in Vilnius. However, under pressure and even blackmail from Russia, it decided against association with the West. On the way to an agreement with Yerevan and Brussels, the safety issue "of Nagorno-Karabakh" took precedent. This has long been an effective tool used by Russia in order to maintain its influence both in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

As compensation for President Serzh Sargsyan and his government, a membership in the Eurasian Economic Union and the Organisation of the Collective Security Treaty were offered to Serzh Sargsyan. According to Conrad Zashtowt, the analyst of the Polish Institute of International Affairs, Armenia's choice will not lead to stabilization of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. In addition, Armenia's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union will not significantly improve its economic situation. However, Armenia's declared membership in the Eurasian Union excludes the liberalization of trade with the EU; both governments in Yerevan and Brussels started to seek closer contacts. During the summit of the Eastern Partnership in Riga in 2015, the EU offered the so-called Armenian negotiating mandate, which takes into account its membership in the Eurasian Union. According to this analyst, "Armenia should submit a new offer of an association agreement. This document must take into account the constraints to economic integration with the European Union resulting from the membership of the country in The Eurasian

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<sup>23</sup> T. Bielecki, *Szczyt minimum w Rydze*. Gazeta Wyborcza z 22 maja 2015.

<sup>24</sup> *Szczyt Partnerstwa Wschodniego w Rydze uznał europejski wybór partnerów*. Komunikaty Instytucji, 22/05/15; <http://centrumprasowe.pap.pl/cp/en/news/info/30686,,msz-szczyt-partnerstwa-wschodniego-wrydze-uznal-europejski-wybor-partnerow>.

<sup>25</sup> <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/unia-europejska-hamuje-partnerstwo-wschodnie/el574f> 14.05.2014.

Economic Union. At the same time, the new agreement should include as many as possible elements of those negotiated in 2013<sup>26</sup>. Zasztowt suggests that the EU's offer should be addressed not just to governments, but also to non-governmental communities and academic, which could lobby the government to choose the path of rapprochement with the EU.

The year 2013 was a breakthrough period for Eastern Partnership countries. For a long time, the European Union was preparing three of the six members of the project for association agreements were about to be approved during the Vilnius summit. Among those countries was Azerbaijan, which was reluctant to deepen cooperation, and above all, to the need for democratic reforms in the country<sup>27</sup>. Since 2003, Azerbaijan has ruled by the charismatic president Ilham Aliyev who is obliged to keep Moscow's suggestions in mind when implementing foreign policy. For this reason, he was absent from the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga in 2015 and represented by the head of his administration Nowruz Mammadov and Elmar Mammadiarov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. They did not want to claim final declaration of the summit record condemning the annexation of the Crimea by Russia<sup>28</sup>. The issue of cooperation of Azerbaijan with Russia is so important that the Baku authorities are counting on Russian support in the conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh. Moreover, the Kremlin is an ally of Armenia in the framework of the Collective Security Treaty while Azerbaijan remains outside the Alliance.

However, the Armenian 'ally' is becoming more and more objectively treated vassal<sup>29</sup>. No reaction of Azerbaijan to the suggestions of the European Union to introduce modernization of the country by western standards does not mean lack of its interest in the joint realization of Baku with the EU economic projects. Azerbaijan is interested in energy cooperation with the EU and sending materials to the West. Imports of raw materials from the Caucasian republics can solve Europe's addiction to Russian gas and oil supplies.

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<sup>26</sup> K. Zasztowt, *Armenia w Euroazjatyckiej Unii Gospodarczej-wyzwania dla UE*. In: Bulletin of the Polish Institute of International Affairs 21, 23.3.2015

<sup>27</sup> According to the Index of Economic Freedom, Azerbaijan is ranked 85<sup>th</sup> in the Index of Economic Freedom; [www.indexofeconomicfreedom.com](http://www.indexofeconomicfreedom.com), June 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Szczyt Partnerstwa Wschodniego bez Białorusi i Azerbejdżanu. *Nie ma szans na przełom*. In: Gazeta.pl 22 maja 2015; [www.gazeta.pl](http://www.gazeta.pl).

<sup>29</sup> K. Zasztowt, *Kaukaskie echa ukraińskiej rewolucji i wojny domowej w Donbasie*. In: Biuletyn PISM, p. 23.

Negotiations over an association agreement between the European Union and Georgia began in 2010. The next step on the way to rapprochement between the two parties was negotiating on signing an agreement on establishing a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). In November 2013, the association agreement with constituting part of the DCFTA was initiated. The purpose of the agreement was to strengthen the European Union's economic relations with Georgia by facilitating trade and investments<sup>30</sup>. For the Georgian economy, the trade agreement with the EU still is important, because it supports the transformation of its economy and political system. The DCFTA Agreement provides, among other items, the elimination of tariffs on most goods, introduction of the EU consumer protection standards and intellectual property, abolition of non-tariff barriers in access to two markets. These actions will undoubtedly contribute to the growth of exports of Georgian goods to the EU markets, which so far has been small<sup>31</sup>. The EU could make profits on the modernized and transparent Georgian markets in which it may invest its capital, and the territory of Georgia could play a role of a bridge for the Transcaucasian sources of raw materials. In addition, due to the cooperation with the EU and the NATO, Georgia can be a model for the Caucasian countries in the sphere of democracy, free markets, reform of the justice and security sector<sup>32</sup>. Therefore, according to the PISM analyst Konrad Zasztowt, the European Union should expand the offer of the EAP to include new elements such as further economic integration, deeper freedom to travel, and the facilitation of future access to the labor market for the Georgians. Besides, there is still a threat to the proWestern direction changes introduced in Georgia. Lately this region was affected by political crisis due to the accusations of corruption among state officials and division in the ruling coalition *Georgian Dream*. According to Konrad Zasztowt, instability of the political system in Georgia reveals how the weakness of the Georgian state institutions that can threaten further the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Georgia<sup>33</sup>. According to Zasztowt, the EU and the NATO should push the government in Tbilisi to deal with the corruption and the Ministry of Defense Decision and the allegations

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<sup>30</sup> D. Wnukowski, D. / Zasztowt, *Umowa o wolnym handlu między UE a Gruzją: szansa dla polsko-gruzińskich relacji gospodarczych*. In: Biuletyn PISM nr 48, z 2014 p. 22.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>32</sup> K. Zasztowt, Rosja na Kaukazie Południowym; zarządzanie konfliktem i biznes z oligarchami. In: Biuletyn PISM, p. 24.

<sup>33</sup> K. Zasztowt, *Gruzińskie Marzenie w kryzysie: Wolni demokraci przechodzą do opozycji*. In: Biuletyn PISM, p. 14.

made by the former Minister Irakli Alasani were clarified and all the details communicated to the public<sup>34</sup>.

On June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Moldova signed an association agreement with the European Union deciding on taking the pro-Western course in the foreign policy. The situation in this country is, however, relatively stable as the government in Chisinau redeemed economic and political pressure from Russia. Stanislav Secieru and Anita Sobjak (experts from the Polish Institute of International Affairs) pointed out several main anti-Moldavian activities of Moscow in 2014. Among them was the introduction of the Russian embargo on import of vegetables and fruit from Moldova, the restricting access to the Russian labor market for Moldovan workers and the influencing of the outcome of elections scheduled for the end of 2014. The first two actions were contributing to the country's economic slowdown, and pressure from the pro-Russian lobbyists was about to distract the Chisinau from the chosen pro-EU direction in the foreign policy<sup>35</sup>.

In another bulletin of the PISM, Stanislav Secieru analysed the political and economic situation in Moldova. He noted that recently (in 2015) the introduced reforms in Moldova had weakened significantly. In the face of increased public dissatisfaction, protesters flooded the streets. Chisinau was even more disappointed with the recent tax increases. In Secieru's opinion, intensifying protests in the country can cause political instability in Moldova and distract the country from the reforms desired by the West. Once again, the citizens of Moldova face a difficult choice: Tighten integration with the European Union or enter into the orbit of Russian influence. The latter, in all likelihood, will make a use of the situation and financially and organizationally support the rapprochement with Russia. Recently, 3.5 million Moldavians went to the EU in search of employment, while just half a million went to Russia<sup>36</sup>. According to the author of the report, the slow awakening of Moldova is caused by its efforts to avoid such a scenario. In these circumstances, the EU should first: Protect protesters against any attempt by the government to suppress the demonstrators by using force and patronize democratic activities; cautiously encouraged

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>35</sup> S. Secieru, A Sobjak, *Trzy sprawdziany dla umowy stowarzyszeniowej między UE a Mołdawią*. In: Biuletyn PISM 83, p. 27.

<sup>36</sup> S. Secieru, *Powolne przebudzenie Mołdawii*. In: Biuletyn PISM, p. 15.

protesters to put forward realistic demands so that they can take the form of a road map leading to the desired goals; transfer funds to newly established centers at the local level, not to the so-called governmental institutions great projects; and finally, put pressure on the government to resume the reform and greater emphasis on the fight against corruption<sup>37</sup>. According to Secrieru, it is also a good idea to send a mission of European judges and prosecutors to assist the judicial authorities of this country. In the summer of 2015, the pro-European parties won the parliamentary elections in Moldova: The Liberal-Democratic Party, The Democratic Party, and The Liberal Party. Therefore, it seems that the pro-EU direction in the country won.

During the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius in 2013 and in Riga in 2015, Belarus suggested to the European Union that it is not interested in signing an association agreement with Brussels. This does not mean, however, that Alexander Lukashenko neutral funds are directed from Brussels to the Eastern Partnership countries. Belarus has also repeatedly expressed its interest in easing the EU visa regime. Nevertheless, the policy of repression of political opponents in Belarus and the lack of manifestations of democracy in the country effectively reinforced Brussels policy towards preventing financial support for the country. Nonetheless, Minsk still counts on resuming the dialogue with the European Union; hence, this would remove the sanctions imposed on the country. Therefore, in the face of the presidential election in 2015, president Lukashenko gestures endeavored to show the good face of the regime.

In October that year, the political opponents were released from jail. In the response to those actions, the EU suspended its economic sanctions, lifted the arms embargo, and abolished the ban on entry into the European Union for many Belarusian public authorities. The leader of Belarus was relatively tolerant towards the activities of the opposition, which were taking place during the presidential campaign in autumn of 2015. According to the PISM analyst Marta Przelomiec, the European Union is making a turn in its policy towards Belarus and putting on a pragmatic “promińskość”<sup>38</sup>. Further cooperation between the EU

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>38</sup> M. Przelomiec, *Czy Łukaszenka może skręcić na Zachód?* Blog PISM, p. 8. (dostęp 11.09 2016).

and Belarus will largely depend on Belarus. Will Belarus slowly and conditionally deepen its cooperation with the EU? Pressured by Russia, will it be dependent from Russian interests as a member of the Eurasian Union?

In 2014, Ukraine signed the political and economic parts of the Association Agreement with the EU (Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement – DCFTA). It resulted in a positive impact on the Ukrainian economy in the form of creating a common free trade zone and was gradually increasing the access of Ukrainian companies to the EU market. The country had also begun some preparations to implement the *acquis communautaires* of the European Union. In September 2014, the Ukrainian parliament ratified an association agreement with the EU. At the same time, the European Parliament has ratified the same agreement giving a clear signal of support for Ukrainian efforts of rapprochement with the West. The process continues, although deepening the cooperation with the united Europe conditions for the implementation of the EU regulations, is not a sufficient panacea for the ills of Ukraine while it entails difficulties for the Ukrainian trade, mostly with Russia. Therefore, according to the PISM analysts Jewgen Vorobyov and Peter Kościński, to become independent from the Russian market Ukraine altogether, the European Commission has to make continuous efforts to redirect exports of goods from Kiev to the European and world markets in the near future<sup>39</sup>.

Given the tremendous financial support to institutions and international organizations for economic and political transformation, there are real prospects for closer cooperation between Kiev and Brussels. The Ukraine, obliged to retain the chosen pro-Western directions of changes, has been already supported by the amount of about 40 billion US dollars. As indicated in the report *International assistance to Ukraine. Opportunities for Polish companies and organizations*, the largest donors in 2013 and 2014 were international institutions and organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Union, and individual country donors such as the United States, Canada, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> J. Worobiow, P. Kościński, *Umowa stowarzyszeniowa Ukrainy i Unii Europejskiej – kolejne kroki*. In: Biuletyn PISM 85, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> P. Kugiel, P. Kościński, *Międzynarodowa pomoc dla Ukrainy*. In: PISM, Warszawa, p. 13–15.

### **Conclusions (German and France dilemmas)**

Both at the stage of initiating and then implementing the project of the Eastern Partnership of the European Union, Germany and France played important roles. The concept was supported by Berlin, which supported Poland as the actual initiator of the project in developing cooperation with six members of the initiative. Paris interpreted a bit differently on this issue, for which it was more important at this time to develop broad cooperation with countries located in the Mediterranean basin under the concept of the Mediterranean Union. After the first two summits of the Eastern Partnership (Prague 2009, Warsaw 2011), both countries declared their willingness to cooperate with Eastern partners, however, they were far from faith in fully realizing the goals of the Polish-Swedish initiative. Over time, Paris and later Berlin began to diversify Eastern Partnership countries in terms of the possibility of implementing reforms and deepening cooperation with the European Union as part of the European Neighborhood Policy<sup>41</sup>.

Since the implementation of the idea of the Eastern Partnership, both Germany and France were in agreement with the fact that “inflammatory” contacts with Moscow should be avoided. They also disagreed that the EAP project would be a bridge to the membership of these countries in the European Union. Such a declaration has never been on the part of the European Union. The decisions taken at the Vilnius Summit in 2013 were not a positive stimulus for the initiative. Shortly after its end, a political crisis appeared in Ukraine, which then turned into a Russian-Ukrainian conflict. It was an attempt not only for Berlin, Paris and the European Union, but also for the countries of the Eastern Partnership. Both Berlin and Paris did not pass this test, and the only winner in this game turned out to be Moscow and Vladimir Putin, who through the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Donbas proved he will not hesitate even before using the armed forces when any state or organization interferes with his interests. The attitude of Germany, but also of France was hesitant and fearful. The economic sanctions imposed were not as severe for Russia as they expected, imposing them mainly on the initiative of Germany. In addition, both countries

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<sup>41</sup> D. Cardier, *France's policies toward the Eastern Partnership countries in context*, Georgian Institut of Politics, April 2017.

remembered how important an important economic partner for them is Russia. Germany connect with Russia gas interests, broader energy with Russia and cooperation of the medium enterprise sector<sup>42</sup>, and Paris, above all, energy and military cooperation, but also pharmaceutical, automotive, logistics and trade<sup>43</sup>.

And although both Paris and Berlin support the implementation of political and economic reforms in the Eastern Partnership countries because it is beneficial<sup>44</sup>, they also express support for the association agreements concluded between the EU and Georgia, Moldova and later Ukraine, however, it is not necessary to set promising perspectives for the Polish-Swedish initiative. As mentioned earlier, the sin of the Eastern Partnership project was from the beginning the lack of a promise of membership for six countries<sup>45</sup>. In addition, weak democratic foundations in these countries and slowly implemented free-market reforms are the shadow of closer cooperation. Not to mention the attitude of Russia, which will, if possible, depreciate the concept, for instance by promoting the project of the Eurasian Union<sup>46</sup>. It seems that the attitude of both Germany and France towards the Eastern Partnership project is included in the Weimar Declaration signed by Poland, France and Germany in 2015 which assumed that the European Union should "respond to the needs, ambitions and potential of partner countries during their implementation taking into account their own interests"<sup>47</sup>.

**STRESZCZENIE:** Zasadniczym celem artykułu było przedstawienie stosunku Niemiec i Francji wobec projektu Partnerstwa Wschodniego Unii Europejskiej w latach 2008-2015. W artykule przybliżono również najważniejsze decyzje podjęte podczas szczytów PW.

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<sup>42</sup> Z. Kuźmiuk, *Niemcy nie kryją interesów gazowych z Rosją*, Nasz Dziennik, 04 2017. A. Kwiatkowska-Drożdż, *Niemcy wobec Rosji. Powiązania tak, zbliżenie nie*, OSW Warszawa 2014. W. Waszczykowski, Niemcy troszczą się o interesy Rosji, <https://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-ze-swiata>, 12.2015). O. Górzyński, Niemcy ostro o nowych sankcjach na Rosję, <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/> (dostęp 20 lipca 2017). M. Kędziński, Między partnerstwem a rywalizacją. Polityka RFN wobec Rosji po zjednoczeniu Niemiec, <http://psz.pl/117-polityka>, 11. 2015).

<sup>43</sup> K. Stańko, Francja w Rosji inwestuje bez oporów, <http://forsal.pl> 07.2017). P. Olak, *Za co Francuzi kochają Rosjan?*, <https://www.polskieradio.pl> 08.2014. K. Przybyła, Rosyjska polityka wobec zachodu. Wybrane zagadnienia, [www.bbn.gov.pl](http://www.bbn.gov.pl) file:///C:/Users/Adam/Documents/Downloads/67-90\_Katarzyna\_Przybyla%20(2).pdf 09.2015. T. Baliszewski, Francuzi zbroją Europę. Dla Rosji mistrale, dla Polski okręty podwodne, <https://natemat.pl> 05.2015.

<sup>44</sup> L. Delcour, *France's view on the Association Agreement with Ukraine*, Clingendael : Netherlands Institute of International Relations, March 2016.

<sup>45</sup> A. Barabasz, M. Piechocki, p.267.

<sup>46</sup> L. Jewmienow, *Unia Europejska a integracja euroazjatycka*, <http://www.geopolityka.org> 09. 2014.

<sup>47</sup> L. Fabius, F-W. Steinmeier, G. Schetyna, Communiqué conjoint des Ministres des Affaires étrangères du Triangle de Weimar, Wrocław, 3 April 2015.

Uwypuklono również wyzwania stojące przed sześcioma krajami objętymi projektem. Zwrócono też uwagę na stosunek Rosji do polsko-szwedzkiej inicjatywy.

**ABSTRACT:** The main aim of the article was to present the reaction of Germany and France towards the Eastern Partnership project of the European Union between 2008-2015. In the article the summit of the Eastern Partnership was also briefly discussed and the most important decisions that were made there were emphasized. Attention was also paid to the challenges facing the six countries covered by the project. Attention was also paid to Russia's attitude towards EAP.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Partnerstwo Wschodnie, Unia Europejska, Europejska Polityka Sąsiedztwa, Niemcy, Francja

**Key words:** Eastern Partnership, European Union, European Neighborhood Policy, Germany