

*Artur Adamczyk\**

## **The Role of Poland in Shaping the Eastward Dimension in the European Neighbourhood Policy**

### **1. European Neighbourhood Policy – genesis and objectives**

An enormous challenge the European Union enlargement presents can be analysed either from the point of view of the evolving situation within that structure or from that of transformations taking place in external context of European integration. As a result of the enlargement, a new layout of the EU outer national borders emerged. Since then, the European Union has directly bordered with countries which, before the 1 May 2004, used to be situated quite far from the EU area, but became its neighbours after that date.

Considering the challenge the EU has faced as a result of a new, if expected, arrangement of national borders, in March 2003 the European Commission prepared a communication entitled “*Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A new Framework for relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*”,<sup>1</sup> which included guidelines for implementation of the EU’s foreign policy towards new neighbouring States. It was in that document that the Commission proposed to create an area of prosperity and friendly neighbourhood (the so-called ring of friends) in which, due to far-reaching mutual relations (resulting from multi-faceted contacts) between the EU and its direct neighbours stability, security and sustained development could be promoted. An ultimate objective of existence of such an area would be to achieve integration at a level that “shared everything with the Union but

---

\* Dr. **Artur Adamczyk** – Warsaw University Centre for Europe.

<sup>1</sup> *Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, COM(2003) 104 final, 11.03.2003.

institutions”,<sup>2</sup> following the model of the European Economic Area which associates the EU and EFTA Member States.

The European Commission’s efforts to develop the new Neighbourhood Policy were supported by the EU Council which, however, underlined that its ideas must not undermine any existing standards regulating the EU’s relations with its new neighbours from Eastern Europe and Mediterranean regions. Ministers have also obliged the Commission to ensure that the Neighbourhood Policy, implemented under the Neighbourhood Programme, focused principally upon “*promotion of sustainable economic and social development of the bordering countries and pursuing regional and trans-national cooperation, including people-to-people contacts, and on ensuring the smooth functioning and secure management of the Eastern and Mediterranean borders, based on (...) relevant financing instruments in the new financial perspectives after 2006*”.<sup>3</sup>

Collaboration between the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament resulted in preparation of a set of the Neighbourhood Policy objectives and tasks, with principal objectives including as follows:

– ***Extension of the internal market and regulatory structures***

Adoption, by neighbouring countries, of rules and standards in force in the EU, is going to contribute to creation of a stable environment for economic activity. Institutional and economic reforms undertaken should follow the EU legal pattern, *i.e.* the *acquis communautaire*.

– ***Preferential market relations and further market opening in line with WTO rules***

Further market opening has been seen as an important element of trade integration, with particular emphasis put upon the idea that this should occur not only between the EU and its new neighbouring countries. Instead, economic collaboration should also evolve among the neighbouring countries (with no EU performing an intermediary role). Such cooperation could base upon contracts identical to those signed by the EU.

– ***Intensified cooperation in matters concerning lawful migration and movement of persons***

The EU’s new border should not become a barrier for commercial, social or cultural exchange, nor should it hinder regional cooperation. The

---

<sup>2</sup> R.Prodi, *A Wider Europe – A Proximity Policy as the key to stability. Peace, Security and Stability International Dialogue and the Role of the EU*, an address presented in Brussels, 6.12.2002.

<sup>3</sup> *Council Conclusion on Wider Europe – New Neighbourhood*, Euromed Report Issue, no. 61, 18.06.2003.

European Union, in collaboration with its neighbouring countries, should create a friendly system regulating small cross-border movement, which belongs to fundamental issues in regional development policy. The Programme of Neighbourhood is meant to solve the problem of free movement of neighbouring countries' citizens from territories adjacent to borders, assuming reliable and well-justified reasons to cross a border. The issue of free border crossing, however, has to be solved with the EU security being safeguarded at the same time. In this context, signing of readmission agreements is going to form an important element of cooperation in order to fight illegal migration.

– ***Intensified cooperation in order to prevent and combat common security threats***

Common threats to security have been defined as: terrorism, international organised crime, customs and taxation fraud, drugs trafficking and trafficking in human beings, fraud, corruption and money laundering, nuclear hazards and epidemics of communicable diseases. Collaboration regarding such vital issues has to be treated with utmost care and should rely upon police and judicial cooperation, *e.g.* in the form of police force training or assistance in reforming of judicial system.

– ***Greater involvement in the area of conflict prevention and crisis management***

The European Union, together with its new neighbouring countries, has been collectively responsible for addressing threats to stability in the region, resulting from conflict-stirring situations. The EU should play a more active role to contribute to settlement of disputes emerging in the East of Europe (Transdnistria) as well as in the Middle East. In pursuance of these objectives it should focus upon collaboration with OSCE and other mediators. Settlement of disputes has been understood as both resolution of conflicts and involvement in post-conflict stabilising and security arrangements.

– ***Development of cultural cooperation and person-to-person contacts, basing upon mutual understanding***

Cultural cooperation is meant to focus upon youth and student exchange, academic collaboration, creation of European studies and new Euroinformation centres. In the area of professional exchange training programmes are planned in the field of media (such as training of journalists) and in that of citizen society. The awareness of common values, especially in the area of human rights, as well as mutual

understanding, are going to contribute to closer and better political cooperation (also in such aspects as justice and security).

– ***Integration into transport, energy and telecommunications networks and the European Research Area***

Cooperation (especially economic) between new neighbouring countries and the EU requires compatible and interconnected networks, extended transport infrastructure and harmonised regulatory environments. It is with that consideration in mind that the European Commission recommended integration of the EU's Eastern and Southern neighbours to the Trans European Networks (TENs) Programme. Additionally, in order to develop scientific cooperation and exploit scientific results, it was decided to create the European Research Area.

– ***Investment promotion and protection***

In order to reduce a gap between levels of economic growth between the EU and its neighbouring countries, as well as to promote reforms and consolidate democracy in the neighbouring countries, it is necessary to provide a more stable climate for domestic and foreign investment. Agreements signed by both parties should contain reciprocal provisions granting companies national treatment.

– ***Support for efforts to achieve WTO membership and integration into the global trading system***

Economic growth of the neighbouring countries and efforts to fill a gap in levels of wealth between them and the EU Member States have largely depended upon launching trade relations and investments, which is only possible as far as one enjoys favourable economic image. This, in turn, is much favoured as one is a member of the World Trade Organization. In effect, the WTO membership should be a goal to achieve for those EU-neighbouring countries which haven't become the WTO members yet. The European Union, on its part, is going to support such countries in order for them to obtain the World Trade Organization membership as soon as possible as well as offer them assistance in such areas as customs cooperation, harmonisation of provisions regarding protection of intellectual property rights and the approximation of Internal Market legislation.

– ***Coordination of any sources of finance***

The Commission indicates financial instruments that should be used to support infrastructure investment in the Mediterranean and in Eastern Europe countries. The latter ones have already been assisted under the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment

Bank and the TACIS programme initiatives. The EU's neighbourhood policy, in spite of being addressed to all the neighbouring States, should remain flexible and adjusted to economic and social requirements of particular countries. Financial aid supporting the implementation of necessary reforms, rather than from the EU sources exclusively, should originate from other actors and financial institutions, too.

On 12 May 2004, in the scope of its efforts to improve relations between the EU and its neighbours, the European Commission published another communication, entitled "European Neighbourhood Policy – Strategy paper".<sup>4</sup> The document emphasised that the strategy was not intended to lead to a new European Union enlargement through adoption of those countries the neighbourhood policy was addressed to. On the contrary, the very facts of defining a group of neighbours and designing such a policy towards them meant that it was the EU's desire for those countries to remain its neighbours. The strategy prepared by the Commission indicated the following principal areas over which cooperation among neighbours should evolve:

- promoting a commitment to shared values, such as respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
- political cooperation in the field of crisis management and conflict solution in line with the Common Foreign and Security Policy as well as the European Security and Defence Policy;
- implementation of economic reforms, harmonisation of the neighbouring States' legislation with the EU legislative environment;
- developing cooperation within such sectors as: transport, environment protection, communication, energy, science and education;
- management of cross-border movement, strengthening of cooperation within the Area of Justice and Home Affairs.

Principal instruments for implementation of the neighbourhood policy were defined as follows: the Partnership & Cooperation Agreements as well as the Action Plan. This means that the European Union has foreseen no new agreements to be concluded with countries-addressees of the policy, thus suggesting that the EU decision-makers would rather keep the countries in question at some distance.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Europejska Polityka Sąsiedztwa – Strategia – Komunikat Komisji (The Commission communication "European Neighbourhood Policy – Strategy paper")*, COM(2004) 375, "Monitor Europejski", 2004, p.44 and subs.

## **2. Implementation of the Neighbourhood Programme. Neighbourhood Policy addressees**

According to the document adopted in March 2003, the Commission planned to introduce the neighbourhood policy as a two-stage process. It was assumed that, in the first stage, the whole set of already-existing legal and financial instruments would be used, with particular emphasis upon transparency and efficacy of cooperation. This was meant to be achieved by implementation of dynamic methods of improving the efficiency of the already-existing procedures.

The first stage assumed introduction of Neighbourhood Programmes that should be jointly developed by the EU and a third-country partner. Such programmes should include the so-called action plans with individual characteristics of each partner taken into account. Such initiatives should focus upon infrastructure problems in the areas of transport, movement across national borders, environment protection, energy and electronic communication. Additionally, they should provide for investment projects necessary for development of economic and social cohesion as well as transfer of persons management and organisation. Neighbourhood Programmes have been listed by the European Commission in detail, with particular participants intended for individual initiatives being also named.

In the second stage, implementation of a New Neighbourhood Instrument has been foreseen, designed as a combination of tasks presented by foreign policy on the one hand and by assumptions for economic and social cohesion on the other. Implementation of this instrument, which replaces the earlier TACIS and MEDA Programmes, has been related with adoption of the EU's new budget for the years 2007-2013. Also, during the second stage, cooperation concerning instruments adopted over the previous stage is going to be carried on and extended by addition of some new financing and organisational arrangements. These, however, are going to be defined in greater detail after effects of the first stage implementation are analysed.

Initially the Neighbourhood Policy was meant to be addressed to those countries which were going to border the EU Member States either directly or indirectly not only after its 2004 enlargement by the accession of ten new members, but also after following the accession of Bulgaria and Romania, due in 2007. Accordingly, the following have been the countries-addressees of the Neighbourhood Policy: countries that had emerged after the USSR disintegration – Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, as well as some Mediterranean States, such as Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and the Palestinian Autonomy.

What is not entirely clear in the policy is the status of Russia, since, on the one hand, it has been listed among countries included in cooperation under that policy, but – on the other hand – the European Commission made it clear that the European Union's cooperation with Russia, as the EU's largest neighbour, was seen as having particular importance. Relations between the EU and Russia are going to rely upon strategic partnership basing on four common spaces (*i.e.* 1. economic, 2. freedom, security and justice, 3. external security and 4. research, education and culture).<sup>5</sup> In early 2004 the Commission, having consulted other EU institutions, made decision on extending the EU Neighbourhood Policy onto three countries of Caucasus, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (as it was assumed they would neighbour the European Union after the accession of Turkey).

It should be firmly emphasised that the Neighbourhood Policy has been addressed to those countries whose membership in the EU in near future is not taken into account – that's why neither Turkey nor Balkan countries were included, since their accession to the EU in foreseeable future cannot be ruled out.

In order to implement the Programme of Neighbourhood, the Commission has involved in bilateral negotiation and provided for the Commissioners' visits in neighbouring countries that were the initiative beneficiaries.

The EU-neighbouring countries on their part, having learnt about arrangements made for the Neighbourhood Policy, have also increased their efforts to be able to absorb assistance declared under the new instrument. What has been especially visible is their activities to develop cooperation among themselves, in order to exert effective group influence to enhance the rate and efficiency of assistance from the European Union.

### **3. EU's relations with Eastern European countries**

While preparing Neighbourhood Programmes for Eastern European countries, the Commission has largely considered earlier progress made in developing cooperation between the EU and that group of countries. Fundaments for such relations were laid in mid-Nineties, when Partnership & Cooperation Agreements were signed with Russia, Ukraine and Moldova. An agreement of the same type had actually been negotiated with Belarus, however, considering frequent infringement of principles of democracy as well as disrespect for human rights and freedom of media in that country, it was left unsigned.

---

<sup>5</sup> *The Commission communication on relations with Russia*, COM(2004) 106, 09.02.2004 and Conclusions from the Council of 24 February 2004.

Agreements concluded with Russia, Ukraine and Belarus have focused upon definition of political and trade relations intended to prepare those countries to legislative approximation with the single market system and with principles required by the World Trade Organization. Additionally, agreements signed with Ukraine and Moldova contain the so-called evolution clause providing for creation of a free trade area.<sup>6</sup>

However, it is the TACIS Programme, in operation since 1991, that has been the EU's most important single financing instrument addressed to 12 Eastern and Central Europe countries. Quite naturally, it covers Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus with the scope of its assistance, providing support to implementation of political and social reforms in those countries, targeted at consolidation of democracy and introduction of free market principles. Until the end of 2006 the TACIS Programme (as well as MEDA Programme, covering Mediterranean countries) are meant to be the principal instrument of financial assistance to partner States.<sup>7</sup> Activities carried out under that Programme in the years 2000-2006 have included as follows:

- institutional, legal and administrative reforms,
- development of private sector in economy,
- counteracting negative consequences of social transformation,
- environment protection and natural resources management,
- investment into agricultural sector,
- ensuring security in the field of nuclear energy.

In the years 1991-2006 it was planned to earmark the funds the total value of which amounted to EUR 7,364 million for the countries included to the TACIS Programme, including EUR 3,138 million in the years 2000-2006. The principal criterion regarding the funds utilisation is that of alignment of projects prepared to provisions of the Partnership & Cooperation Agreement concluded with a given country.

#### **4. EU's relation with Ukraine**

The Partnership & Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Ukraine entered into force in 1998. A year later another important document was signed to further regulate relations between those partners, namely the Common Strategy. It is in these documents that the following objectives were defined, regarded as a fundament of cooperation between the partners:

---

<sup>6</sup> *The Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation between the European Communities and their Member States and Moldova*, <http://www.pca.md>

<sup>7</sup> *The European Neighbourhood policy – Strategy paper. Communication from the Commission*, Brussels, COM(2004) 373 final, 12.05.2004.



- assistance in the process of democratic and economic transition in Ukraine,
- ensuring stability and security throughout the European continent (including nuclear and energy security as well as natural environment stability),
- increasing cooperation between the EU and Ukraine; the country's integration with European economy as well as intensifying cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs.

The European Union has regarded its relations with Ukraine as one of its priorities, as evidenced by signing of the document entitled Common Strategy (1999) which, beside Ukraine, was only signed with Russia. The framework of institutional arrangements prepared in order to ensure efficient launch of cooperation between both parties can be regarded as another testimony of a high status of those relations. In this context, the Cooperation Council was formed, composed of representation of the Presidency, of the European Commission, of the Ukrainian government and of the EU High Representative responsible for the CFSP. At the working level the Cooperation Committee was established (consisting of high officials from Ukrainian ministries and the European Commission representatives) to coordinate cooperation in such areas as trade and investments, economy and finance, issues regarding energy, nuclear power, environment, science, research, technology and education. Both parties have attached particular importance to customs and cross-border cooperation as well as one in the fields of justice and home affairs.

During his visit to Kiev in November 2003, Commissioner Chris Patten specified particular areas upon which cooperation between the EU and Ukraine should focus following the EU enlargement (forthcoming at that time). He declared that the EU was going to especially support efforts in such areas as nuclear energy, contributing to greater freedom of media and to respect for principles of democracy understood as the fundament of political, social and economic reforms.<sup>8</sup>

On 9 December 2004, by signing the Action Plan with Ukraine, the European Commission started implementation of assumptions of the Neighbourhood Policy towards that country (apart from Ukraine, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Israel and Palestinian Autonomy have all signed their Action Plans, too). However, it was only on 21 February 2005 that the document entered into force, since the EU decision-makers waited for political situation in Ukraine to clear and for a new government to be formed following the

---

<sup>8</sup> *Commissioner Patten in Ukraine, 10-11 November 2003: Wider Europe Conference and bilateral visit*, the European Commission's press release no. IP/03/1511, 7 November 2003.

elections.<sup>9</sup> The Action Plan, signed for a standard period of three years,<sup>10</sup> has thus become a valid basis of the EU cooperation with Ukraine, assuming as follows:

- the EU assistance in implementation of economic and legislative reforms in order to enable Ukraine to integrate into the EU Single Market;
- Ukraine's participation in a number of EU programmes in such fields as education, research and environment protection;
- cooperation in the areas of border control management, migration, fighting of organised crime, of financial and economic crime and of money laundering;
- improvement of cooperation in the areas of transport, energy and know-how;
- improvement of cooperation in fighting terrorism and counteracting proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as well as in solving regional conflicts.

While provisions contained in the Action Plan are of a rather general nature, Ukraine has involved, in parallel to cooperation under the European Neighbourhood Policy, in other attempts to launch closer economic relations with the EU by implementing important economic reforms. Notably, in its endeavours to obtain the status of a market economy country (an opinion issued by the European Commission) Ukraine carried out a number of economic reforms consistent with requirements of the World Trade Organization. (Ukraine's principal objective in that context has been to open up a duty-free trade in steel and textiles – goods that account for as much as 30% of the country's export to the EU.)

Without a doubt, Ukraine's principal goal has been to obtain the European Union membership. The country requests from the EU decision-makers clear declarations as regards specifying of a date of its accession. However, European politicians' attitudes towards presence of that country in the EU family of States have been rather sceptical. Neither the Commissioner for external relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner nor the High Representative for CFSP seem eager to make any promises to Ukraine – the fact that speaks volumes for the lack of any specific political plans on the part of the EU towards that Eastern-European country. The distance that has been obvious in the EU-Ukrainian relations stems from poor knowledge of the country, from deeply-rooted clichés as well as from inconsistent attitudes presented by

---

<sup>9</sup> S.Mueller-Kraenner, *The European Neighborhood Policy: Opportunity and Challenges in: Ukraine after the Orange Revolution*, eds. J.Forbrig, R.Shepherd, Washington 2005, p.76.

<sup>10</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/ukraine.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/ukraine.htm)

Ukrainian politicians. Despite declarations on their wish to integrate Ukraine into the European Union, made by subsequent Presidents (Kravchuk, Kuchma), in fact Ukraine undertook no real efforts to launch any closer relations with the EU for quite a long time. By the way, such a neglectful attitude on the part of Ukrainians must have suited the EU, which shaped its relations with Kiev in such a way as not to undermine Russia's interests. It was not until 2004 that Ukraine managed to specify its external policy priorities – namely, whether it went for European or for Russian option. Attempts to stay balancing between the two only petrified political chaos and evidenced the lack of stability, which was accompanied by authoritarian trends plainly contrary to the EU-promoted set of rules. The Orange Revolution, which contributed to political change in Ukraine and to Kiev's European aspirations being ultimately manifested, opened up a new chapter in the country's relations with the European Union.

On the other hand, the EU on its part does little to promote closer relations with Ukraine, either. The fact of including that country into the European Neighbourhood Policy is a clear signal that it is regarded as Europe's neighbour, rather than as member of the "European family".<sup>11</sup>

## **5. The importance of the Neighbourhood Policy for the EU's relations with the East**

The Neighbourhood Policy applied by the European Union in its new form, enlarged by the adoption of 10 Members States, has emerged as one of its key priorities. In conclusions adopted by the EU Council on 25 April 2005, special role of the European Neighbourhood Policy for the EU's external relations was confirmed. Ranking of the Instrument of the European Neighbourhood as one of six financial instruments to operate in the EU's sphere of external relations after 2006 has been another fact to illustrate the importance of that policy.

Shifting of the EU's Eastern borders further Eastwards, at some point in the future, can be seen as potential threat of emergence of new barriers and divisions in our continent. It has been the EU's goal to prevent such divisions. Any further enlargement should not only be of advantage to the EU itself, including its new Member States, but should favour neighbouring countries as well. Moreover, it should extend the area of stability, peace and welfare. However, the process may only be regarded beneficial if the benefits it brings

---

<sup>11</sup> A.Szeptycki, *Ukraina i Unia Europejska: Europa od Brestu po Don (Ukraine and the European Union: Europe from Brest to Don)*, "Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny", no. 1/2006, p.6 and subs.

are mutual and experienced by both sides: by the EU Member States as well as by their direct neighbours.

The European Commission describes the importance of the EU's new policy in quite a gaudy way, announcing, through its officials, that the Neighbourhood Policy has been a significant component of the EU's future foreign policy: "*The EU has to be able to speak as one and act consistently and effectively; comprehensive policy towards its neighbours, being an important condition for this to come true, has to be reflected in the Constitutional Treaty*".<sup>12</sup>

While the EU's intents and plans towards its new neighbours are very ambitious, one should ask a question whether procedures and instruments undertaken are viable and, if so, whether they are sufficient. Plans contained in the Commission's documents contain no specific dates, thus providing no time scale for duration of individual stages of cooperation. Apart from the lack of any specific timetable, no criteria as regards advancing to subsequent stages of cooperation are defined. "*While preparing for cooperation with the East, then, the EU should outline such a timetable on the basis of an intimate dialogue with its Eastern neighbours*".<sup>13</sup>

The strategy of the Commission's policy towards the neighbouring countries has a distinctly holistic nature, characterised by designing cooperation between the EU and individual addressees of the Neighbourhood Programme along specific, targeted action plans. This leaves an evident lack of more diversified initiatives of regional or bilateral cooperation. The area covered by the Neighbourhood Policy is meant to promote the goal of Europeanisation understood as "*modernisation of former communist dictatorships (...) as well as of Europe's weak countries*".<sup>14</sup> Europeanisation is thus conceived as a very broad process, basing on political, economic and social transformation, with its principal aim being a creation of a powerful area of stability, peace and security. Vagueness of the Neighbourhood Policy and attempts to attract neighbouring countries with imprecise promises, with no clear definition of benefits or results, but secured by complex and hardly attainable conditions, may occur little effective method of achieving such a splendid goal.

---

<sup>12</sup> M.Emerson, *Wider Europe Matrix*, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels 2004.

<sup>13</sup> W.Cimoszewicz, "*The Eastern Dimension of the European Union. The Polish View*" – an address presented on 20.02.2003 during the conference: "The EU Enlargement and the Neighbourhood Policy".

<sup>14</sup> K.Pelczyńska-Nałęcz, *Poszerzona Unia Europejska wobec wschodniego sąsiedztwa: problemy i rozwiązania (The Enlarged European Union Facing Its Eastern Neighbours: Problems and Solutions)*, Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, Warszawa 2003.

Financial issues have been another area subject to a fair deal of doubt as to whether it is possible to achieve expected effects of the transformation process soon. Despite the EU officials' declarations that the Neighbourhood Policy is going to become one of the priority elements of the EU external policy, relevant expenditure planned in the budget perspective for the years 2007-2013 accounts for only 10% of total funds earmarked for the EU's external policy. On the other hand, one has to admit that the funds in question have been almost doubled compared to the level awarded to TACIS and MEDA programmes in the previous budget perspective (2000-2006: EUR 8.5 thousand million; 2007-2013: EUR 14.9 thousand million). Nevertheless, further doubts arise if we consider the distribution of spending foreseen for the Neighbourhood Policy. Comparing funds earmarked for support of reforms in Mediterranean countries (under the MEDA Programme) with those foreseen for the Eastern European countries (TACIS Programme) it becomes evident that the former group has been vastly privileged over the latter one in terms of volume of the aid provided.

Considering the scale of financial outlays and progress in implementation of what was assumed, the EU activities from the very outset of the Neighbourhood Policy idea until the end of 2006, one has to notice that the process of putting the policy into practice is little impressive, being neither particularly efficient nor spectacular. Hopefully, newly-adopted Central and Eastern European countries, having acquired some experience and routine in operating in the EU bodies, would intensify their activities in the scope of the Neighbourhood Policy, in particular towards the East (as illustrated by the example of Poland's involvement in the process of building democracy in Ukraine).

The EU Member States have been aware that relations with their neighbours should be seen as the basis for security of Europe in the broadest meaning, including the European Union, of course. It is upon their relations with their closest environment that both economic and social stability and military security have largely depended (including prevention against other types of threats or crisis situations, such as fighting organised crime or unlawful migration). The support given to economic reforms in the neighbouring countries contributes to a growth of their wealth, but – in the long run – it promotes economic growth in the Member States, as well.

An ability to create an efficient policy towards one's closest neighbourhood, a policy operating "in the border zone" lends evidence to the European Union's competence as an important actor in international relations and in globalisation processes. Unless it has an efficient programme of dealing with its neighbours, the EU is hardly going to ever enjoy the image of a truly reliable party in international politics.

The EU Member States developed an efficient Eastward policy towards the Central and Eastern Europe countries back in 1990s – one that ultimately led to the process of accession of as many as eight countries of that region to the EU. On 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2004, however, the European Union faced a new challenge, that of coming up with a new Eastward policy. The creation of the European Neighbourhood Policy should not be seen as a process of putting into practice of any real policy towards the EU's new neighbours situated beyond its Eastern border. Rather than that, the ENP was created *ad hoc*, with African countries of the Mediterranean region being grouped within one scheme together with such new UE neighbours as Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

In fact, the EU's new Eastward policy has not been in place yet. It has not been defined in any detail. Consequently, Poland, while becoming the European Union Member State, was not included into a group of actors already applying some specific EU's policy towards the East. Instead, Poland is going to participate in the process of developing such a policy. Recently, an evident clash has become visible between old EU Member States that have favoured relations with Russia in their Eastward policy and new Member States that have shared an apprehension about Russia and thus have advocated the process of planting democracy in Ukraine and other countries of the region. However, the role Polish diplomacy played at the time of solving the electoral crisis in Ukraine, clearly shown to the „old Fifteen” that no EU's Eastward policy can be developed without participation of Poland and other new Member States from Central and Eastern Europe. It is going to be the principal objective of that group of countries to break through negative clichés rooted in other EU countries and to convince them that their new neighbours from beyond their Eastern borders have firmly belonged to European family as well. A task for Polish diplomacy, in this context, will be that of make the principal EU actors see and appreciate that there really are other important partners for the European Union in the East, apart from just Russia.<sup>15</sup>

Poland has been especially interested in involving in the EU's Eastern dimension, mainly through active participation in the Neighbourhood Policy. It seems vital not to allow for new barriers or divisions to emerge at the EU's Eastern border. Central European countries are ones best disposed to act as role models in shaping good relations with countries situated to the East of the EU border. During their accession process both Poland and other countries worked hard to cope with adaptation requirements and problems with meeting the EU criteria and conditions as well as to overcome a great deal of prejudice

---

<sup>15</sup> A.Szeptycki, *op.cit.*, p.6 and subs.

among Western European politicians. Thanks to this experience, they have better understanding now of problems faced by the EU's Eastern neighbours as they go through processes of transformation suggested by the EU. It is this awareness of their situation that prompts Poland to undertake an active role in the Eastern Policy, as better knowledge of problems enables one to prepare action programmes and further assistance that are more detailed and tailored to specific needs.

What Polish government seems especially interested in is persuading other European countries to rise above their obvious scepticism about Ukraine's aspirations to access the European Union. This mainly results from inadequate knowledge about this country and regarding it as an unstable and non-democratic State. Recent changes bringing democracy to Ukraine managed to partly alter that negative image and helped Ukraine in its consistent endeavours to associate with structures of the European Union. This is, however, ultimately up to the Kiev government to put a vast effort in order to bring political and economic transformation in the country and be able to start real negotiation with the EU. Poland may only assist in this task, but cannot make it happen: most of the work has to be done by Ukrainians themselves.

Undeniably, Poland would like to play a similar role with respect to the EU's new neighbours as Germany did during the process leading to the recent enlargement. It has been an ambition of Polish diplomats to act as advocates in the process of approximation of Ukraine to the EU. Polish government, such as its German equivalent earlier on, has sought to mobilise resources to finance the most important political and economic reforms. Basing upon Polish and German expertise, funds are going to be made available to Ukraine under cross-border cooperation schemes. *"Development of cross-border cooperation in the EU's Eastern borders in near future will be important for the form of new aid instruments, known the Neighbourhood Instruments meant to become, starting from 2007, an integral part of the European Union's policy towards countries that, while being its neighbours, have no prospects for becoming its Member States for the time being".*<sup>16</sup>

It seems that Poland, as the largest country along the EU's Eastern border, should naturally become an advocate of the EU's Eastern policy. Particular emphasis has been put, in this context, upon relations with Ukraine which is a new neighbour for the UE, while for Poland it has already been a traditional

---

<sup>16</sup> M.Guz-Vetter, *Nowe granice UE: Polska-Ukraina-Białoruś. Jak wykorzystać doświadczenia polsko-niemieckiej współpracy transgranicznej?* (*The EU's new borders: Poland-Ukraine-Belarus. How to make use of the experience of Polish-German cross-border cooperation?*), "Analizy i Opinie", no. 29/2004.

partner cooperating in a number of fields. This, however, should not suggest that Poland feels no responsibility for shaping the EU's relations with its other Eastern neighbours, such as Russia and Belarus, no matter how difficult it sometimes occurs.