

POLISH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN UNION

Janusz Józef Węc, An Assessment of the Polish Presidency of the Council of European Union

The article deals with the assessment of Polish presidency of the Council of Europe. The author presents the strategic (priorities) and operational program of the Polish presidency, the limitations it encountered, and the major achievements and failures of the Polish government in the realization of preset goals (their categorization is provided). The most important achievements of the Polish presidency include: adoption of a package of regulations reinforcing the control of public finances of the member states of the eurozone and the European Union; achievement of a compromise on the EU general budget for 2012; start of negotiations on the long term financial framework for 2014-2020; initiation of debate on the reform of cohesion policy after 2013; continuation of work on the EU's energy security; prolongation of the program of food aid for the most deprived EU citizens; further progress in the realization of the EU enlargement strategy; the Eastern partnership summit; completion of negotiation on the signing of the Association Agreement with Ukraine and beginning of similar negotiations with Georgia and Moldova; continuation of debate on the deepening of the internal market and sources of growth; legislative work on the introduction of a unified patent system and new regulations in the area of freedom, security and justice.

In assessing the failures it must be noted that they were mostly due to a negative attitude of some EU member states or third countries to the Polish initiatives, while only a few can be attributed to negligence of the presidency as such. To the first category certainly belong the following: the lack of a unified stand toward Belarus in the Warsaw declaration; the lack of signing the Association Agreement with Ukraine; lack of admission of Bulgaria and Romania to the Schengen sphere; lack of realization of preset goals in a common policy on security and defense; lack of progress in accession negotiations with Turkey; lack of progress in work on the reform of the Schengen system. The second category of failures includes: a rather passive attitude of the Polish presidency during the UN climate conference in Durban; lack of realization of preset goals in a common agricultural policy; lack of substantial progress in negotiations on the reform of a common fishing policy and in the area of social and employment policy.

Elżbieta Maślak, Mikołaj J. Tomaszuk, Leadership in the European Union in the Context of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

The need of leadership in the European Union becomes especially conspicuous in situations of crisis. So far the member states managed to weather many such crises unscathed and afterwards adopted a new treaty or reached a gentlemen's agreement to clarify any controversial regulations of the treaty in force. However, the consequences of the global economic crisis for the EU and its particular member states seem to have a deep effect on the nature of the EU and the character of cooperation between its member states. In a natural way therefore there emerges the need for an anti-crisis leadership, especially a collective one. The authors of the article strive to answer the following questions: How does the crisis affect the functioning of EU institutions?; How can the presidency of the EU Council act as the principal coordinator of the EU's anti-crisis measures?; and finally: How did Poland during its presidency of the EU Council influence the scenarios of overcoming the crisis within the EU?; What was the role of the Polish Prime Minister in this context?

Sidonia Jędrzejewska, Polish Presidency and the Budget of the European Union

Polish presidency of the Council of the European Union was the first to start formal negotiations of the EU's multi-annual budget, i.e. the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). It was a significant merit of Poland's chairmanship that the negotiations focused on the MFF project of 2011 prepared by the European Commission and that representatives of the European Parliament were invited to take part in the debate, since the EP traditionally support a generous EU budget. The project of the Commission balances the demands to freeze the multi-annual budget voiced by countries who are net payers and the Parliament's appeal for an increase of the future MFF by 5% compared to 2013. The inclusion of the European Parliament in these negotiations follows from the regulations of the Lisbon Treaty and is important because in times of crisis it is this institution that protects the interest of the EU as a whole. Such a state of matters is a positive signal for Poland that in negotiations of the 2014-2020 budget it can rely not only on its traditional allies, e.g. the so-called friends of the cohesion policy but also on a vast majority of the members of the European Parliament.

Natalia Jackowska, Reason of State and the Polish Presidency

Presidency of the Council of Europe is an institution of the European law which has been exercised since 1958 and evolves together with changes of the treaty and the dynamism of development of the European Communities and the EU. It binds the European communities to their foundation, i.e. national states, and by giving prominence to the subjectivity of the state it facilitates references to the idea of the reason of state. In Poland, this idea manifested its

validity in the last decades which are identified with the democratic breakthrough and transformation of the state system of government. The civic theme voiced in public rhetoric showed the reason of state in a new light, revealing its affinity to national interest. The civic foundation of statehood is expected to contribute bold and convincing ideas to the European debate on the future. This will help to outline a new interpretation of the notion of the reason of state, compatible with the model of a state that realizes its sovereignty within the framework of an institution of transnational cooperation.

Anna Umińska-Woroniecka, The Cultural Program of the Polish Presidency: Strategy and Reality

One of the elements of each presidency of the EU Council is a cultural program. The country which holds the presidency can influence the foreign public and political decision-makers by presenting its cultural heritage and organizing artistic events. Instruments of public and cultural diplomacy are helpful in shaping positive attitudes towards the country, its citizens and sometimes even its foreign policy. The cultural program of the Polish presidency comprised two elements: the domestic and the foreign one. Its object was to promote Poland in Europe and the world, and the European Union in Poland. It was implemented with unprecedented flourish, including 1400 events and projects both in Poland and abroad.

The article attempts to sum up the cultural program and its goals: both the overriding ones and the particular ones. A considerable difficulty in making a final assessment is the lack of instruments that would allow a qualitative evaluation of the program as well as its current and possible future effects and outcomes.

Krzysztof Malinowski, Poland and Germany in the European Union – Opportunities and Barriers of Cooperation

Polish presidency of the European Union in the second half of 2011 was determined by the context of relations with Germany. Poland's significance to Germany as a valuable and important EU partner was perceptible in the friendly declarations of Merkel's government. One of the crucial elements of this encouraging atmosphere was the pro-European attitude of the Polish public opinion and the ruling coalition PO-PSL. Poland relied on Germany's support to engage in closer cooperation on the EU arena and possibly even create EU policy in certain areas. However, during EU presidency Poland's significance for Germany was limited by the following factors: Poland stays outside the eurozone; Germany prefers close cooperation with France at the expense of Poland's postulates on participation in shaping remedial measures within the eurozone; divisions within the EU and the emergence of a two-speed economy; unfavorable situation in Eastern Europe viz. lack of progress in the democratization of Belarus and of clearly pro-EU orientation of Ukraine accompanied by regress in democratization of this country; a tendency on the part of France and Great Britain to individually reinforce their military role within the EU.

Izabela Janicka, German Press Commentaries on Poland's Chairmanship of the Council of the European Union

The article presents the commentaries of German press on the Polish presidency of the Council of the European Union. The analysis spans German national daily newspapers and weeklies examined in chronological order with focus on the crucial thematic content and political events. Poland held presidency of the EU in the second half of 2011 at a time of crisis, growing Euro-scepticism, the threat of a division of Europe into two speeds and parliamentary elections in Poland. The course of the presidency, achievement of preset goals, a pro-European tone of the statements of Polish politicians and unsuccessful attempts to deepen the idea of Eastern Partnership became the object of a critical but factual assessment of the German journalists. Eastern policy priorities oriented at increasing its effectiveness had to be modified but they can still be achieved in the future.

Bogdan Koszel, German-French Leadership of the European Union in the Period of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Rule

The author discusses the thesis that in the arduous circumstances of the 21st century France passed the test of cooperation with the united Germany. The French-German "integration engine" scored both successes and failures but did not break down. Germany governed by Chancellor Merkel proved to be a loyal and predictable partner while France during Sarkozy's presidency did not venture any steps that would strain this cooperation. A real test of the German-French leadership of the EU came with the financial crisis of the eurozone. President Sarkozy understood the situation better and reacted faster to the growing threats whereas Germany owing to internal reasons delayed launching large-scale rescue actions. Nevertheless, the signing of the fiscal union pact was the effect of a compromise between the two partners and yet another proof of the stability of the German-French cooperation.

Piotr Kalka, The European Union toward the Crisis of Public Finances in the Eurozone

The author presents initiatives launched by the European Union in order to overcome the financial crisis of the eurozone member states. To meet this goal emergency instruments were created (aid programs for Greece, European Stability Mechanism and purchase by the European Central Bank of loans issued by countries of the eurozone in debt crisis) as well as permanent instruments (the Euro Plus Pact, sharpened regulations of the Stability and Growth Pact and the Fiscal Pact). Emergency measures did not bring about any substantial positive effects since only the financial situation of Ireland improved to some extent. The state of public finances in Greece is still critical and therefore many economists suggest that this country should declare its bankruptcy. Permanent instruments to fight debt might yield the

desired effects (in the case of a majority of the eurozone countries) if they are used consistently and in accordance with their object.

Jerzy Rutkowski, Poland's National and Foreign Debt

The beginning of a global economic crisis can be identified with the collapse of Lehman Brothers, an American investment bank. Liberalization and deregulation processes enhanced competition on the market of goods and services and also on the market of loans, granted to persons and entities of decreasing repayment capacity. The crisis triggered large scale interventionism which in turn led to a substantial growth of public debt. A lack of consequences in implementing the procedures of excessive debt must be considered the major cause of a widespread growth of public debt in the EU member states. This policy is responsible for the fact that the average public debt of EU countries in 2010 amounted to 80% of the GDP with 85.1% in the eurozone. The Polish public debt at the end of 2011 was 53.5% of the GDP. Measures aimed at reducing the public debt of the member states to the level provided for in the Treaty of Maastricht must be appreciated. The considered solutions include the so-called "six pack" and Treaty on the Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union. Ratification of those agreements and their implementation in respective constitutional arrangements would be desirable.

Adam Kirpsza, Legislative Challenges for the European Union after the Coming into Effect of the Treaty of Lisbon

The purpose of the article is to identify the legislative challenges of the European Union that became apparent after implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon provisions. At least six such threats are diagnosed. Firstly, the Treaty of Lisbon has deepened the European Parliament legislative exclusion by increasing the number of areas where it does not have any formal powers. Secondly, more than half of the treaty basis for enacting legislation includes procedures other than the ordinary legislative procedure which relatively weakens the position of the Parliament. Thirdly, the habit of trilogues - informal meetings between the Council, Commission and Parliament in the early stages of the legislative procedure - generates serious consequences for the status of institutions and democracy in the EU. Fourthly, the custom of so-called early agreements results in almost complete disappearance of the second and third reading and quicken the decision-making process at the expense of its transparency. Fifthly, trilogues and early agreements degraded the role of the European Parliament's committees in legislative proceedings. Sixthly, there is a declining involvement of ministers in the legislative process, resulting in technocratic and secret decision making.

Anna Potyrała, The Immigration Policy of the European Union from the Perspective of the Arab Spring

Multilateral cooperation of the member states of today's European Union which is oriented towards the creation of uniform immigration legislation goes back to 1985 when the Schengen Treaty was signed. However, it was the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union that marked a turning point. When defining the areas of common interest the member states indicated immigration, visa and asylum policy and declared to accept regulations on the crossing of external borders. The objective agreed upon was to suppress illegal immigration, residence and work in the EU of the citizen of third countries. Implementation of a unified immigration policy for the member states of the EU proved to be especially important in the situation of an increased influx of people from the region of North Africa. Developments known as the Arab Spring and the migration pressure from North Africa triggered a debate on the necessity of reforming the EU's immigration policy. The object of the reform is twofold. On the one hand it is to increase the effectiveness of preventive measures against illegal influx of persons from third countries and their illegal residence in the EU. On the other hand, attention is drawn to constructing the EU's immigration policy in such a way as to facilitate legal immigration with a view to the development and stabilization of the European labor market.

Jędrzej Skrzypczak, The Audiovisual Policy of the European Union

The article provides a provisional systematization of EU policy on mass media. The approach of the European Communities to the issue of mass media in the last decades can be divided into several stages. In the initial period, relatively the longest one, EC organs were denied competences to interfere in this area. The 1980s and 1990s were characterized by an attempt on the part of the EU to work out adequate and distinct strategies regarding mass media. The moment the EC organs "gained" the competences to regulate the principles underlying the functioning of the media, a boisterous development of the EU medial law started and became especially conspicuous with the emergence of global media. Regulations on mass media initially pertained to television but then expanded onto audiovisual media services followed by a growing significance of the so-called "new media". EU policy deals with the media in three different contexts: firstly, in the aspect of competition policy and principles governing the functioning of the internal market; secondly as an element of democratic and cultural infrastructure; and thirdly, on the plane of building the so-called information society. A hypothesis is put forward that the EU audiovisual policy is dominated by a two tracks strategy of regulating the functioning of the media.

Izabela Wróbel, An Assessment of the German Presidency of the European Union in the First Half of 2007

In the first half of 2007 the Federal Republic of Germany held presidency of the European Communities/EU for the 12th time so it had all the necessary experience, excellently prepared civil servants and political potential of the biggest member state, which had long been perceived as the „engine” of European integration. This time the challenges that had to be faced differed from those in the past, while the expectations addressed to Berlin were enormous. The article is an attempt to assess the internal conditions, course and results of the German presidency of the EU in the first half of 2007 taking into account the opinions of the members of the FRG government and the comments of researchers, journalists and politicians from other European countries. The focus is on the coalition agreement and the program of the presidency as the starting point of German activity in the EU and relations on European issues between Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) and Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) the minister of foreign affairs in her government. Berlin was extremely successful in discharging its tasks connected with the presidency and managed to overcome the crisis of leadership in Europe, opening the way to resumption of the interrupted reform of the Treaty and achieved a number of other ambitious goals in the specific policies of the EU.

Artur Pohl, The Opportunities and Challenges Connected with Turkey’s Accession to the European Union

Turkish accession to the European Union has for years been the subject of much debate. This issue is of particular importance in the context of increasingly better economic and political position of a candidate country in the international arena, and economic stagnation in the Member States of the organization. The admission of Turkey into the EU will result in many consequences. The article presents the opportunities, challenges, potential benefits and concerns related to the process of this country’s accession. The author focuses on economic, political and security issues, depicted from the perspective of both parties. The author does not try to assess the positives and the negatives or answer the question of whether Turkey should become a member of the organization.