



**EUROPE AS A RE-ALIGNING ISSUE
IN POLISH POLITICS?: EVIDENCE
FROM THE OCTOBER 2000
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

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Abstract

This paper considers whether or not EU membership has the potential to become a realigning issue in Polish politics. It argues that although the European issue certainly assumed a somewhat higher profile in the October 2000 Presidential campaign than in any previous Polish elections, it did not really feature as a major issue. Although there were clear differences of approach and nuance, the campaign did not produce a significant pro versus anti-EU cleavage among the main candidates. Some of the minor candidates who were more openly anti-EU and did make it a major focus of their campaign received a derisory share of the vote. Although the EU has become a more salient issue, it is unlikely to provide the basis for realignment in the Polish party system for the foreseeable future.

EUROPE AS A RE-ALIGNING ISSUE IN POLISH POLITICS?: EVIDENCE FROM THE OCTOBER 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Until recently, the issue of EU membership has had very little salience in Polish political discourse. This was largely because it was the subject of an overwhelming consensus among the main political parties, groupings and elites. Although there were clearly varying degrees of enthusiasm and nuances in their different approaches, no major Polish political grouping or actor questioned (openly at least) the objective of EU membership.¹ Along with NATO membership it was as one of two major pillars of Polish foreign policy and all the parties and electoral blocs that won parliamentary seats in the most recent September 1997 elections (the results of which are set out in **Table 1**) declared their support for it.²

Table 1: September 1997 Polish Parliamentary election results

	Votes	%	Seats
Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS)	4,427,373	33.83	201
Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)	3,551,224	27.13	164
Freedom Union (UW)	1,749,518	13.37	60
Polish Peasant Party (PSL)	956,184	7.31	27
Movement for Poland's Reconstruction (ROP)	727,072	5.56	6
Labour Union (UP)	620,611	4.74	

Source: *Rzeczpospolita*, 2 October 1997.

This was reflected in the fact that historically Poland enjoyed one of the highest levels of popular support for EU membership among the former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. However, this did not really represent a conscious and considered declaration of support and public backing for EU membership was, in fact, constructed on extremely shaky foundations. There was also very little serious debate either about what being an EU member actually entailed or of the potential costs and benefits of accession. Consequently, the issue had virtually no resonance in the day-to-day lives of individual Polish citizens. The Polish Euro-debate was couched in very abstract and broad geo-political or historical terms relating to general notions such as 'returning to Europe' and ending the post-war division of Europe into East and West. Moreover, given the existence of such an overwhelming consensus among political elites, Polish Eurosceptics may have been reluctant to identify themselves and earlier polling data probably tended to overstate the true levels of public support. There was,

¹ See, for example: F. Millard, 'Polish domestic politics and accession to the European Union,' in K. Henderson, ed. *Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union*. London: UCL Press. 1998. pp203-219.

² See, for example, the useful survey of Polish parties' attitudes to EU membership in the run up to the September 1997 elections by the Polish Institute of Public Affairs (Instytut Spraw Publicznych: ISP). *Political Parties Towards Prospects for European Integration: 'Yes, and Furthermore No'*. Warsaw: ISP. undated.

as one Polish commentator aptly put it, a “shallow consensus” in favour of EU membership.³

The issue of EU membership acquired a somewhat higher profile after Poland formally submitted its application in 1994 and following the opening of accession negotiations in March 1998. However, as it moved up the political agenda, the EU also tended to be portrayed in an increasingly negative way and began to emerge as a focus for both conflict and hostility.⁴ To some extent this was inevitable. Poland will be a difficult new member for the EU to accommodate and having to conform to the requirements of membership will bring painful economic and social consequences. As the prospect of accession becomes a more realistic one, the negotiations have, given the difficult issues that need to be tackled, not surprisingly focussed to a large extent on the concessions that will have to be made by the Polish side. Consequently, it has slowly begun to dawn on Poles that EU accession is a costly process that involves losers as well as winners and difficult issues that need to be tackled such as the sale of Polish land to foreigners and possible restrictions on access to West European labour markets. This has been exacerbated by the fact that the EU also provides a convenient excuse for Polish politicians looking to shift the blame for the negative consequences of economic and social reform by claiming that these were forced upon them by having to conform to the requirements of EU membership. To the extent that these reforms become inextricably linked with EU accession in the popular consciousness there is likely to be erosion of support for Polish membership.⁵

The beginning of the accession negotiations also saw the emergence of EU membership as an issue that divided Polish political elites. In the first place, a crack appeared in the previously overwhelming pro-EU elite consensus with the formation of the Polish Agreement (Porozumienie Polskie: PP), the first organised and potentially significant political force to adopt an overtly anti-EU stance.⁶ Although it remains on the political fringes, the formation of the Polish Agreement meant that opposition to Polish membership of the EU was, for the first time, an openly articulated feature of Polish political discourse. However, a potentially much more significant threat to continuing Polish public support was the emergence of divisions among those political parties and groupings that were ostensibly pro-EU. The period since the beginning of the accession negotiations saw a marked politicisation of the debate on Polish EU membership not so much about whether or not the country should join *per se* but about the terms on which (and the kind of EU that) it should

³ See: E. Skotnicka-Illasiewicz, E. ‘Poland on its Way Towards Membership of the EU and NATO: Hopes and Anxieties in a View of Public Opinion Polls’, *Yearbook of Polish European Studies*. Warsaw: Warsaw University Centre for European Studies. 1998. pp243-263.

⁴ See: L. Kolarska-Bobińska, ed. *Polska Eurodebata*. 1999. Warsaw: ISP; J. Kucharczyk, *European Integration in Polish Political Debates 1997-1998*. February 1999. Warsaw: ISP; and G. Blazyca and M. Kolkiewicz, ‘Poland and the EU: Internal Disputes, Domestic Politics and Accession’, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*. Vol 15 No 4. December 1999. pp131-143.

⁵ See: Instytut Spraw Publicznych. *Poparcie Polaków dla integracji z Unią Europejską w październiku 1999*. 1999. Warsaw: ISP.

⁶ The Polish Agreement was formed in April 1999 (and registered formally as a political party in November) by a number of individuals and groupings associated with Catholic nationalist right. The party was allied to a seven-member parliamentary caucus that left the parliamentary fraction of the main government coalition partner, Solidarity Electoral Action (Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność: AWS), in July 1998 and who have provided the main focus for opposition to EU membership in the Polish legislature.

join. As one commentator has noted, this has resulted in a tendency to turn political debates about EU membership into ‘ideological’ confrontations between the right-wing governing AWS grouping and the opposition left-wing communist successor formation the Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej: SLD). These confrontations often emerged over somewhat artificial issues such as whether Poland should join a ‘Christian’ or a ‘secular’ Europe.⁷ One of the most important aspects of this politicisation of the Polish Euro-debate was the division of the pro-EU camp into those who were (allegedly) ‘soft’ and prepared to give in to Brussels and those who (allegedly) favoured a ‘tough’ negotiating stance. The latter, while falling short of opposing EU membership outright, hedged their general support with strong qualifications and underlined the necessity of achieving certain essential pre-conditions.

There is already evidence that the emergence of a negative side to EU membership and concomitant politicisation of the Polish Euro-debate has been reflected in a steady and significant drop in public support for accession over the last few years.⁸ As **Table 2** shows, since Poland formally submitted its application in 1994, the proportion of Poles supporting EU membership has declined from 77% in June 1994 (and a peak of 80% in May 1995) to 55% in August 2000. At the same time, a significant current of Polish Eurosceptic opinion has begun to emerge with the number of opponents increasing from only 6% in 1994 to 26% in 2000. Although the precise figures vary somewhat across between different polling organisations, the overall trend over the last six years has been unmistakably downward.

Table 2: Polish support for EU membership, 1994-2000

	June 94	May 95	May 96	March 97	April 97	Aug 97	May 98	Aug 98	Dec 98	May 99	Nov 99	Feb 00	May 00	Sept 00
Yes	77	72	80	72	72	72	66	63	64	55	59	55	59	55
No	6	9	7	12	11	12	19	19	19	26	26	26	25	26
Don't know	17	19	13	16	18	15	15	18	17	19	15	19	16	19

Source: Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, *Opinie o integracji Polski z Unią Europejską*. Warsaw: CBOS, September 2000.

Taking a long-term perspective, some Polish commentators have speculated that the EU membership issue could have the capacity to precipitate a broader realignment in Polish politics. Hitherto, the key division between the two largest political camps in Poland during the post-communist period has been based on different attitudes towards the communist past and moral-cultural issues.⁹ The issue of EU membership

⁷ See: J. Kucharczyk, ‘Porwanie Europy,’ *Rzeczpospolita*. 4 March 1999.

⁸ See: A. Szczerbiak, ‘Spadek i stabilizacja. Zmieniające się wzorce poparcie dla członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej’, in E. Popławska, ed, *Konstytucja dla rozszerzającej się Europy*. Warsaw: ISP. 2000. pp405-428; and A. Szczerbiak, ‘Polish Public Opinion: Explaining Declining Support for EU Membership’, *Journal of Common Market Studies*. Vol 39 No 1. March 2001. pp107-124.

⁹ See: A. Szczerbiak, ‘Interests and Values: Polish Parties and their Electorates’, *Europe-Asia Studies*. Vol 51 No 8. 1999. pp1401-1432.

could, it is argued, act as the catalyst for bringing new socio-economic divisions between 'winners' and 'losers' from the economic transition (and new party configurations based upon them) to the fore.¹⁰ This reflects the argument advanced by some Western scholars that, given the likelihood of Polish economic reforms succeeding, party competition will eventually be structured on the basis of the socio-economic cleavages that emerge from the new interests created by the economic transition.¹¹ In other words, given that socio-economic issues will increase in salience as a basis for determining voting patterns, and attitudes towards EU membership are emblematic of broader support or opposition to economic transition, the European issue could, potentially, prove to be a 're-aligning' issue in Polish politics. In the short term, some commentators argued that EU membership would certainly feature much more prominently as an issue in the October 2000 Presidential election given that it was the first major national election to be held in Poland since the accession negotiations began.¹²

However, this paper argues that EU membership was not really a major issue in the October 2000 presidential election campaign either in terms of its profile in the candidates' programmes or in terms of producing a significant pro- versus anti-EU cleavage. The paper begins by examining the campaign themes of the four main candidates. While two of them did introduce some critical elements, all four were basically pro-EU and the two most supportive of Polish membership won easily the largest shares of the vote. The paper then goes on to analyse the five minor candidates who were openly anti-EU and (to varying degrees) did make the issue a focus of their campaign. All of these candidates received a derisory share of the vote. Finally, the other four minor candidates are also considered briefly. Some of these were also, to some extent, critical of the EU although they all fell short of advocating outright opposition and none of them really made it a major feature of their campaign. These candidates fared no better than the 'harder' Eurosceptic candidates in terms of their share of the vote.

The Four Main Candidates

From the beginning of the summer of 2000, it became clear that there were four major candidates in the Polish presidential race and that the incumbent, SLD-backed former communist Aleksander Kwaśniewski was the overwhelming favourite. Kwaśniewski's three main opponents were the independent liberal-conservative Andrzej Olechowski, leader of the governing AWS grouping and the Solidarity trade union Marian Krzaklewski and Polish Peasant Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe: PSL) leader Jarosław Kalinowski. As **Table 3** shows, Kwaśniewski (53.9%) and Olechowski (17.3%), the two candidates who were most supportive of Polish membership of the EU, won over 70% of the popular vote between them.

¹⁰ See, for example: L. Kolarska-Bobińska. 'Co innego będzie dzielić Polaków', *Rzeczpospolita*. 26 November 1998; and K. Bachman, 'Historyczny kompromis inaczej', *Rzeczpospolita*. 9 June 2000. Cf: M. Grabowska, 'Przyszłość polskiej sceny politycznej – stabilność i zmiana', in Instytut Spraw Publicznych. *Przyszłość polskiej sceny politycznej*. Warsaw: ISP. March 1999. pp39-66.

¹¹ See, for example: G. Evans and S. Whitefield. 'Identifying the Bases of Party Competition in Eastern Europe', *British Journal of Political Science*. Vol 23 No 4. 1993. pp521-548.

¹² See, for example: J. Paradowska. 'Stawka inna niż urząd', *Poliytka*. 20 May 2000.

Table 3: October 2000 Polish Presidential Election Results

	Votes	Percentage
Aleksander Kwaśniewski (SLD)	9,485,224	53.90
Andrzej Olechowski (Independent)	3,044,141	17.30
Marian Krzaklewski (AWS)	2,739,621	15.57
Jarosław Kalinowski (PSL)	1,047,949	5.95
Andrzej Lepper (Samoobrona)	537,570	3.05
Janusz Korwin-Mikke (UPR)	252,499	1.43
Lech Wałęsa (ChDIIIRP)	178,590	1.01
Jan Łopuszański (PP)	139,682	0.79
Dariusz Grabowski (KdP)	89,002	0.51
Piotr Ikonowicz (PPS)	38,672	0.22
Tadeusz Wilecki (SND)	28,805	0.16
Bogdan Pawłowski (Independent)	17,164	0.10

Source: *Polityka*. 21 October 2000

In an interview at the end of June, Kwaśniewski cited achieving EU membership as one of the five key points in his re-election programme.¹³ In his actual election statement, Kwaśniewski argued that Poles needed to "prepare ourselves in a serious way and, with all our available determination, open up to Europe, bring our law and economy into line with the requirements of EU membership and bring our standards closer to those that exist in the most advanced countries".¹⁴ On another occasion, he argued that EU membership "is an opportunity for Poland. Both for our security and sovereignty".¹⁵ Joining the EU was also "a way of modernising of our economy...It gives us the chance of broader participation in European markets...our economy will also gain from overseas investment...we won't be on the peripheries of Europe".¹⁶ Interestingly, although it was not a major feature of his campaign, in an interview immediately after his re-election Kwaśniewski identified achieving EU membership as the main priority for his second term. Indeed, he went so far as to say that "joining the EU, would, in fact, suffice for me as something to do throughout my entire term of office. Today the West clearly does not have the willingness to enlarge the community, that is, someone is needed who knows how to talk to these politicians, knows what kind of arguments to use, who can form an appropriate atmosphere".¹⁷

Similarly, although it featured even less in his campaign literature, Olechowski strongly supported EU membership as a "civilisational necessity".¹⁸ Generally, he broadly echoed Kwaśniewski's argument that, "given that history has shown that we are not in a position to construct those kind of structures that can guarantee our security (in the area of currency, defence), then we have to be open to co-operation with others. We have chosen NATO and the EU".¹⁹ However, on other occasions,

¹³ See: 'Prezydent Aleksander Kwaśniewski: Nie jestem politykiem pustych gestów', *Rzeczpospolita*. 26 June 2000.

¹⁴ See: *Deklaracja Aleksandra Kwaśniewskiego: Dom wszystkich - Polska, 2000*. Warsaw. 2000.

¹⁵ See: 'Postaw krzyżyk przy kandydacie', *Polityka*. 7 October 2000.

¹⁶ See: 'Kandydaci o Unii Europejskiej', *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 26 September 2000.

¹⁷ See: 'Zostawcie to mnie', *Polityka*. 14 October 2000.

¹⁸ See: 'Programy wyborcze kandydatów na Prezydenta', *Rzeczpospolita*. 4 October 2000.

¹⁹ See: 'Kandydaci o Unii Europejskiej'.

Olechowski attempted to distinguish his approach from Kwaśniewski's (and, implicitly, those of the other two main candidates) a little more by arguing that his “conviction of the necessity of entry into the EU arose from my principles and worldview, not from purely pragmatic thinking”.²⁰

The other two main candidates, AWS leader Marian Krzaklewski (15.57%) and PSL leader Jarosław Kalinowski (5.95%) did introduce some elements that were critical of the EU into their campaigns and both of them referred to the need for Poland to adopt a ‘tough’ negotiating stance. However, they were also basically pro-EU and neither made the issue a major campaign theme. Indeed, Kalinowski (arguably) actually made EU membership less of an issue than we might have expected him to.

Krzaklewski never actually questioned the necessity for Poland to join the EU as such. According to the AWS leader, “our national interest depends on ensuring Poland an appropriate and sovereign position in the family of European nations. Poland's integration with the EU - as understood by AWS - serves to ensure Polish well-being, access for our products to the markets of the European Community, ensuring Polish industry and agriculture the conditions for development comparable to those that countries that are EU members have, giving Poland additional guarantees of external security”.²¹ Joining the EU would, as Krzaklewski put it, “complete the construction of the Polish edifice on our common road to freedom.”²² Rather than viewing EU membership as a “retreat from Polishness” Krzaklewski saw it as “a condition of the better solution of the economic and social problems faced by Poland and as the road to a fuller realisation of the national interest and to the strengthening of Polish identity”.²³

However, Krzaklewski also contrasted what he saw as his own and AWS's ‘pragmatic’ approach to European integration with Kwaśniewski and the SLD's (allegedly) ‘ideological’ approach. AWS and a “significant segment of those responsible politicians from the post-August camp” wanted Europe to be a “community of free nations that remember their identity”. He wanted “to participate in the building of a Europe of nations, John Paul II’s Europe, and not a Europe of left-wing Utopias”. This approach contrasted with that adopted by Kwaśniewski, the SLD and the “left-wing of the Freedom Union” that saw EU membership as an “ideological objective” for whom the “negotiation of the Polish political and economic interests (was) a second order matter”. The former communists were, he argued, motivated by the same opportunism that characterised them during the communist era and “regard Brussels as a new Moscow, the European Union as a new Comecon and their policy as simply finding new protectors for their own careers”.²⁴

According to Krzaklewski, Poland faced “challenges going beyond the dimension of

²⁰ See: ‘Utrwalenie III RP: Rozmowa z Andrzejem Olechowskim, kandydatem na prezydenta’, *Wprost*. 2 April 2000.

²¹ See: *Strategia Zwycięstwa*. Warsaw. 2000.

²² See: ‘Chcemy dokończyć ten remont: Z kandydatem na prezydenta, przewodniczącym AWS, rozmawiają Bożena Wawrzewska, Piotr Aleksandrowicz i Krzysztof Gottesman’, *Rzeczpospolita*. 19 July 2000.

²³ See: M. Krzaklewski, ‘Strategia zwycięstwa’, *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 11 July 2000.

²⁴ Ibid. The Freedom Union (Unia Wolności: UW) is a liberal-centrist post-Solidarity party that was, until June 2000, AWS's junior coalition partner.

ordinary politics". He saw these two approaches to European integration as exemplifying and embodying a "fundamental civilisational battle" that was taking place in Poland with AWS on the side of those who wanted to modernise Poland and open up to the West while simultaneously safeguard her national identity. The outcome of this battle would determine, "in what way and on whose side we will unite in the building and uniting of Europe. We are now deciding if Poland will take the place that belongs to it among free states that remember their national identity, or if we will become the subject of ideological experiments, whose objective was the formation of a new so-called European nation".²⁵ Partly echoing the argument of some Polish academic and media commentators (cited above), Krzaklewski argued that this new struggle would redefine the divisions within and re-align the Polish political scene.

Krzaklewski also sought to portray himself as an advocate of a 'tough' negotiating stance in the EU accession negotiations and, in particular, a staunch defender of the interests of Polish farmers. He pledged specifically to strive for: the opening up of markets to Polish producers, supporting activities aimed at encouraging exports and obtaining guarantees that Polish farmers' production and goods would be treated the same as their French, German and Italian colleagues. As Krzaklewski put it, "Polish politicians travelling to Brussels do not have the right to forget about the interests of Polish farmers, do not have the right to think and talk about Polish farmers as if they were an obstacle on our path to the EU. The Polish farmer should be supported in the same way as his colleague in the West is supported by their government and by the President of their country...Let no one say that that which is a value, the salt of the Earth, deprives us of our right to join the EU".²⁶

By adopting this kind of 'Euro-realist' discourse, Krzaklewski appeared to be adapting the approach and arguments of AWS's Catholic nationalist wing (to whom he was quite ideologically close anyway). The prime exponent of this kind of rhetoric within AWS was the Christian National Union (Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe: ZChN) party that hedged its general support for EU membership with numerous conditions and qualifications. Indeed, explaining why he would be voting for Krzaklewski, AWS deputy and one of the Catholic nationalist right's ideological gurus Jan Maria Jackowski echoed many of the arguments of those who saw the European issue as a possible basis for re-aligning the Polish political scene. Setting out his own version of the 're-alignment hypothesis', Jackowski argued that the post-Solidarity right and ex-communist left now primarily represented what he described as "two realisms". Although they clearly continued to hold radically different assessments of the communist period, the most important issue dividing these two camps was no longer attitudes towards the past but towards European integration. Jackowski did not argue that the Polish political scene would realign on the crude basis of support for or opposition to the EU. Rather, it would be increasingly polarised between those who Jackowski argued were prepared to effectively defend Polish national interests and identity in the context of EU negotiations and those who were prepared to compromise them. As Jackowski put it, the most important battle in Polish politics related to "the civilisational, political and economic future of Poland in the perspective of European integration...The fundamental issue is the question of

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

Poland's method of being a part of a Europe that is uniting." For Jackowski, Kwaśniewski and the SLD represented "a school of political realism that requires an exaggerated politeness towards the dominant political force," that Jackowski argued would lead to, "integration with the EU, conducted on our knees and without consideration of the costs." Such an approach was, "above all, in the interests of a section of the political establishment, administrative-state apparatus, technocrats, who locate their future in international institutions." On the other hand, Krzaklewski and the AWS represented "a decidedly tougher course" because he was "not attempting to secure a good opinion in international institutions at any price, but was a politician who looks after the national interest".²⁷

Kalinowski also adopted a position of 'critical' support for EU membership or, as he put it in his programme, he would strive to ensure that "our integration into the EU (is) on the basis of partnership".²⁸ The PSL has traditionally adopted a 'twin-track' approach to the EU issue: supporting membership in principle, while positioning itself as the most effective 'defender of Polish national interests', by which it meant particularly the interests of the peasant smallholders that comprised its core electorate. According to Kalinowski, while the EU did, potentially, represent a threat to Polish identity, sovereignty and economic interests, "the degree of that threat can be limited through intelligent domestic policies".²⁹ According to Kalinowski, Poles should not fear, but rather "learn from politicians in Brussels about how one should defend our economic interests. We have to finally become aware that in relations between states, relations between Poland the EU, there was not any, is not any and there won't be any sentimentality. Hard economic interest is what counts".³⁰

At the beginning of the Presidential campaign, it appeared that Krzaklewski saw the EU issue as an effective means of differentiating himself from the incumbent and would attempt to build support on the basis of his (allegedly) different approach towards accession and vision of Europe. For example, at his campaign launch in June, where he set out his 'Strategy for Victory', Krzaklewski actually made his particular approach to EU membership one of the main pillars of his first major speech.³¹ We might also have expected Kalinowski to sharpen his anti-EU rhetoric and give this issue a reasonably high profile, particularly given the fact that his political base comprised the section of the electorate that felt most threatened by and hostile to Polish accession.³² However, in the event, neither of them made EU membership a prominent campaign theme. While the EU barely warranted a mention in Kalinowski's campaign literature and election broadcasts, Krzaklewski also downgraded the issue as the campaign progressed, except for his continued emphasis on the need to defend Polish agriculture.³³

²⁷ See: Jan Maria Jackowski, 'Odmiennie realizmy', *Rzeczpospolita*. 31 July 2000. For a similar line of argument from a leading ZChN member see: K. Marcinkiewicz, 'Zasługujemy na więcej', *Rzeczpospolita*. 11 August 2000.

²⁸ See: *Deklaracja Programowa Jarosława Kalinowskiego kandydata na Prezydenta RP*. Warsaw. 2000.

²⁹ See: 'Postaw krzyżyk przy kandydacie'.

³⁰ See: 'Kalinowski: Bez obaw wobec Unii Europejskiej,' *Rzeczpospolita*. 30 August 2000.

³¹ See: 'Strategia zwycięstwa'. For a good analysis of this speech and the themes adopted by Krzaklewski in the first part of his campaign see: P. Wroński, 'Wróg dobry na wszystko', *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 18 July 2000.

³² See: 'Polish Public Opinion'.

³³ See, for example, the coverage of his second major campaign speech in mid-August: M. Sandecki,

In Krzaklewski's case this was, perhaps, less surprising. He may have felt it necessary to adopt ZChN-type rhetoric and make overtures towards the Eurosceptic elements on the Polish Catholic nationalist right in order to neutralise the challenge from overtly anti-EU right-wing candidates such as Jan Łopuszański (see below). More broadly, his adoption of 'soft' Eurosceptic rhetoric may have been part of a broader strategy to prevent what his campaign manager Wiesław Walendziak termed the 'Le Pen-isation' of the mainstream right: being pushed into an anti-EU position by the emergence of an electoral challenger on its far right flank.³⁴ As the vote for candidates on the anti-EU right shows (see below), in this respect at least Krzaklewski's tactics were undoubtedly successful. His adoption of a critical stance towards the EU may also have been part of a (much less successful) attempt to recover some of AWS's support in rural areas that it had lost to both the PSL and the SLD since the September 1997 parliamentary elections. However, Krzaklewski always had to be careful about how much prominence he gave such Euro-realist rhetoric given that AWS voters were actually more pro-EU than either the average Pole (or even than the SLD supporters who backed Kwaśniewski so overwhelmingly). As **Table 4** shows, a Centre for the Research of Public Opinion (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej: CBOS) poll taken in September 2000 revealed that 67% of AWS voters were pro-EU (21% against) compared with an average of 55% (26% against) and 60% among SLD voters (27% against). Similarly, a CBOS December 2000 poll also found a clear correlation between support for EU membership and an intention to vote for the AWS.³⁵ Of course, this does not necessarily mean that AWS voters were unsympathetic to Krzaklewski's arguments about the *kind* of EU that he wanted Poland to be a member of. However, given the current level of the Polish Euro-debate this kind of argument was simply pitched at too high a level of abstraction for the average AWS voter to grasp and is unlikely to develop greater salience as a basis for political divisions until *after* Polish accession.

Table 4: Party supporters attitudes towards EU membership, September 2000

	For	Against	Don't know
Freedom Union (UW)	79	14	7
Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS)	67	21	12
Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)	60	27	13
Polish Peasant Party (PSL)	35	50	15
Average	55	26	19

Source: Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, *Opinie o integracji Polski z Unią Europejską*. Warsaw: CBOS, September 2000.

'Sierpień Krzaklewskiego', *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 16 August 2000.

³⁴ See: 'Wróg dobry na wszystko'.

³⁵ See: CBOS. *Partie polityczne : ich reprezentatywność, zaplecze polityczne i profile sympatyków*. CBOS: Warsaw. December 2000.

It was, perhaps, more surprising that Kalinowski did not give the issue greater prominence in his campaign. As noted above, his party's core voters were the most anti-EU segment of the population and there was a strong correlation between opposition to the EU membership and support for the PSL. As **Table 4** shows, only 35% of PSL voters were pro-EU compared with 50% who were against. Moreover, Kalinowski faced a threat to his core electorate from the leader of the radical farmers' union Self-Defence (Samoobrona) Andrzej Lepper who (as discussed below) adopted a more robustly anti-EU stance than the PSL leader.

There are a number of possible explanations as to why Kalinowski did not adopt a sharper and more prominent anti-EU tone in his campaign. Firstly, Krzaklewski's adoption of a relatively high profile 'soft' Eurosceptic stance at the beginning of the campaign may, as one commentator put it, have "knocked the weapon from out of their (the PSL's) hands by saying that he will defend the vision of a Europe of Nations and farmers against disadvantageous solutions".³⁶ Secondly, the Kalinowski presidential election strategy was certainly formulated with at least one eye on the possible outcome of the forthcoming parliamentary election (due in September 2001). Given that the SLD, its most obvious potential coalition partner, has carefully and deliberately positioned itself as a pro-EU party, a sharper and more high profile anti-EU stance by the PSL would clearly have made such a coalition more difficult for the former communists to countenance. This was particularly true given that the EU accession negotiations will be entering their most critical phase.³⁷ However, the most plausible explanation was that the PSL was deliberately trying to broaden out its base of support beyond its agricultural and rural core. This was clearly evident in Kalinowski's campaign where he made a conscious effort to position himself as more than simply the 'rural' or 'peasant' candidate.³⁸ Giving such prominence to sharp anti-EU rhetoric focused on defending Polish national (and, by implication, farming) interests would simply have re-inforced rather than helped to undermine the party's stereotype as being concerned solely or primarily with representing the interests of agricultural smallholders.

Openly anti-EU minor candidates

Five of the minor candidates - Andrzej Lepper, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, Jan Łopuszański, General Tadeusz Wilecki and Bogdan Pawłowski - ran on programmes that either rejected or came very close to rejecting EU membership. As **Table 3** shows, all of them received a minimal or even derisory share of the vote.

The most successful of these (in relative terms at least) was the leader of the Self-

³⁶ Lena Kolarska-Bobińska cited in E. Czaczkowska, 'Wizerunek mało wyrazisty', *Rzeczpospolita*. 20 September 2000. If this was, indeed, the main reason for Kalinowski giving the EU such a low profile in his campaign then it was almost certainly a mistake on his part. Criticism of the EU would still have distinguished Kalinowski sharply from Kwaśniewski and Olechowski and he was always likely to be a more convincing defender of rural and farming interests than the AWS leader as their respective voting profiles subsequently showed. Krzaklewski won 13.7% of rural voters and 11.4% of farmers' votes compared with his average of 15.57% while Kalinowski won 13.3% of rural voters and 30.8% of farmers compared with his average of 5.95%.

³⁷ I am grateful to Jacek Kucharczyk from the Institute of Public Affairs for drawing this argument to my attention.

³⁸ See: K. Naszkowska, 'Lud wraca do stolicy', *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 18 November 2000.

Defence farmers' union, Andrzej Lepper. Although derisory in comparison with the four front-runners, Lepper's 3.05% of the vote represented an all-time high for him (he had won 1.32% of the vote five years earlier). Given that his core electorate is located among small peasant farmers he probably has the strongest basis for building a political movement based on an anti-EU platform. Lepper argued that an accession referendum should be preceded by a wide ranging public debate on the pros and cons of membership because "only a conscious society should decide if it wants to join the EU or not".³⁹ He also said that while he was not opposed to EU membership in principle, it was "definitely" a threat to national identity, sovereignty and economic interests and, together with dependence on the World Bank and the IMF, would make the country "the absorber of the West's product surpluses".⁴⁰ He also argued that current membership terms were unacceptable and that Poles did not "have to (join) the European Union, we only have to (deal with) those who want to co-operate with us on an honest basis...I believe that relations with all our partners – whether they are with the EU or with the East - must be on the basis of equality. If they are not then they should be renegotiated and if they are still disadvantageous then we should leave." Lepper argued that by the time Poland was "ready" for EU membership, the whole European project could have disintegrated anyway "under the pressure of the domestic national interests of the countries associated with it. That is why we must have our own, Polish policy and not the doctrine 'to join the EU at any price.' This is unacceptable".⁴¹ Hinting at a possible alternative foreign policy scenario, Lepper stressed the importance of "maintaining good neighbourly relations with our bordering states such as Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Lithuania, Belarus, the Ukraine and the Russian Federation".⁴² particularly the importance of promoting exports and developing trade links with Poland's Eastern neighbours.⁴³

Opposition to EU membership was one of the most important themes of the presidential campaign of the liberal-conservative Union of Real Politics party (Unia Polityki Realnej: UPR) leader Janusz Korwin-Mikke (1.43%). Korwin-Mikke argued that, "the socialists in Brussels are worse than paedophiles. As long as they are governing Europe, I am a determined opponent of the EU".⁴⁴ In his election programme, Korwin-Mikke argued that in the "growing conflict between the USA and the EU" Poland should follow the low tax, liberal US economic approach rather than model itself on the "bureaucratized" EU that was an "economic catastrophe".⁴⁵ Korwin-Mikke, therefore, posited membership of the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) as an alternative foreign policy on the grounds that "NAFTA does not threaten the sovereignty of the state and, unlike the EU, we can leave NAFTA at any moment".⁴⁶

³⁹ See: 'Kandydaci o Unii Europejskiej'.

⁴⁰ See: 'Postaw krzyżyk przy kandydacie'.

⁴¹ See: 'Razem Ratujemy Kraj: Z przewodniczącym Samoobrony, Andrzejem Lepperem, kandydatem na Prezydenta RP, rozmawia Tomasz Sypniewski', *Samoobrona Narodu*. August 2000.

⁴² See: *Tezy Programowe. Wybory Prezydenckie 2000. Kandydat na Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej Andrzej Lepper*. Warsaw. 2000.

⁴³ See: 'Razem Ratujemy Kraj'.

⁴⁴ See: 'Kandydaci o Unii Europejskiej'.

⁴⁵ See: 'Kandydaci o Unii Europejskiej' and 'Weekend prezydencki', *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 31 July 2000.

⁴⁶ See: *Program Wyborczy: kandydata na Prezydenta RP Janusza Korwin-Mikkego*. Warsaw. 2000.

Running on the slogan 'Europe - Yes, European Union - No', Polish Agreement leader Jan Łopuszański (0.79%) predictably made opposition to Polish EU membership the dominant theme of his campaign. In his election literature Łopuszański argued that, "the process of Euro-unification and bringing Poland into line with various other international demands is leading to a progressive dispossession of Polish independence and loss of sovereignty for the nation in our own state". He continued that "Polish property, Polish jobs, Polish produce, farming and trade, Polish scientific potential are under threat. The attributes of a sovereign state are being transferred to supranational organisations. Polish patriotism is being progressively destroyed, and in its place models of civilisation based on consumption are being universalised with tragic consequences for the family and social life. These phenomenon find their roots internationally, although they could not effectively develop if the leadership of the Polish polity was in the hands of defenders of the good of the Fatherland".⁴⁷ Łopuszański saw his candidacy as the first phase in a broader campaign to mobilise an effective anti-EU bloc while the country was "still in a position to defend our sovereignty without resort to bloodshed and violence".⁴⁸ Łopuszański argued that he couldn't "see any difference between his (Krzaklewski's) views on the EU and those of the SLD".⁴⁹ Consequently, he saw this struggle as one that transcended the traditional historical divide between left and right because, "the axes of divisions that are relevant today runs between that which is Polish and that which is cosmopolitan".⁵⁰

An important factor accounting for Łopuszański's poor showing in this campaign was the failure of the influential Catholic nationalist fundamentalist broadcaster Radio Maryja to give him any backing. Run by Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, Radio Maryja is the fourth most popular radio station in Poland with 2.7 million listeners (representing 8.9% of the total) and has a closely aligned daily newspaper *Nasz Dziennik* ('Our Daily') with a circulation of 600,000.⁵¹ Some commentators credited Radio Maryja with a crucial role in helping AWS to win the September 1997 parliamentary elections by mobilising support for them among the (not insignificant) 'religious right' electorate.⁵² Radio Maryja has also adopted an extremely negative attitude towards Polish membership of the EU and Łopuszański, who had at one stage been very closely associated with the broadcaster, must have hoped that it would have backed (or, at the very least, given sympathetic coverage to) his presidential candidacy. However, much to his chagrin, Łopuszański received no overt backing from either Radio Maryja or *Nasz Dziennik*⁵³ and, indeed, towards the end of campaign Father Rydzyk used Radio Maryja broadcasts to mobilise support for Krzaklewski.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ See: *Jan Łopuszański: Polska - prosty wybór*. Warsaw. undated.

⁴⁸ See: 'Unii - nie!' *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 24 July 2000. See also: W. Załuska, 'Łopuszański i inny', *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 30 March 2000.

⁴⁹ See: 'Łopuszański: wyprowadzić życie publiczne w zapaści', *Rzeczpospolita*. 17 August 2000.

⁵⁰ See: 'Unii - nie!'

⁵¹ See: "'Claudia" z "Przyjaciółką"', *Rzeczpospolita*. 11 December 1998.

⁵² See: M.D.Zdort. 'Kandydat katolicki i radykalny', *Rzeczpospolita*. 22 June 1998.

⁵³ See: E. K. Czaczkowska and F. Gawryś, 'Obustronna wstrzeźliwość', *Rzeczpospolita*. 14-15 August 2000.

⁵⁴ See: 'Czas na kampanię', *Rzeczpospolita*, 9 October 2000; 'Poróżnienie w rodzinie', *Gazeta Wyborcza*. 10 October 2000.

From a slightly different perspective, the issue of EU membership also featured quite prominently in the presidential campaign of the former head of the Polish armed forces General Tadeusz Wilecki (0.16%) who was backed by the small anti-EU National Democratic Party (Stronnictwo Narodowo-Demokratyczne: SND). Wilecki called for an immediate suspension of the EU accession negotiations and "halting the unconstitutional process of bringing Polish law into line with the law of the Union".⁵⁵ According to Wilecki, Poland's experience from its EU association agreement (the so-called 'Europe Agreement') was that the EU had become "a formal basis for extracting one-sided advantages for the EU" and its implementation had "caused the collapse of many Polish businesses". This, according to Wilecki, "together with the evolution of the EU itself in the direction of a supranational, extremely ideologised and bureaucratised superstate...prevents the possibility of Polish participation in this proposed integration on the basis of partnership". Joining the EU "in the current position of our state would mean none other than the further dependency on foreign capital and pushing Poles into the role of cheap labourers".⁵⁶ Consequently, Poland "should join at the earliest around 2015 (and then only) after dealing with its (own) economy".⁵⁷

Finally, independent Bogdan Pawłowski (0.1%) attempted to present himself as the most extreme and radical nationalist candidate. Running on the slogan 'The President of Poland should be a Pole', he addressed few specific issues in a campaign that consisted largely of discussing the alleged foreign origins of his rival candidates and other senior Polish officials.⁵⁸ Not surprisingly, when asked, he declared himself to be an "opponent of incorporation to the EU".⁵⁹

Other minor candidates

Although he did not refer to the issue very often in his campaign, former President and legendary Solidarity leader Lech Wałęsa⁶⁰ (1.01%) argued that Poland "cannot allow not to find ourselves in the EU".⁶¹ EU membership gave Poland "an opportunity to play a role in international political and economic relations that is active and adequate to our aspirations." However, he also argued that Poland needed a long-term strategy to ensure that it joined the EU on the basis of partnership and not "second class membership". As he argued it in his election programme, having "always been treated as a partner in the international arena...I want to lead our country into the European community honourably". In order to help achieve this, Wałęsa particularly stressed the importance of a new development programme to assist the Central and East European former communist states that he dubbed 'The Marshall Plan of the New Generation'.⁶²

⁵⁵ See: 'Wilecki: Przerwać rozmowy z UE', *Rzeczpospolita*. 22 August 2000.

⁵⁶ See: 'Silne państwo - bezpieczeństwo, sprawiedliwość, praca (Tezy programu wyborczego gen. Tadeusza Wileckiego)', *Myśl Polska na Wybory*. September 2000.

⁵⁷ See: 'Œci¹ga wyborcza', *Wprost*. 8 October 2000.

⁵⁸ See: F. Gawryœ, 'Co kandydat obiecywa³', *Rzeczpospolita*. 4 October 2000.

⁵⁹ See: 'Œci¹ga wyborcza'.

⁶⁰ His own small Christian Democracy of the Polish Third Republic party supported Wałęsa (Chrzeœcijañska Demokracja Trzeciej Rzeczpospolitej Polski: ChDIIIIRP).

⁶¹ See: 'Kandydaci o Unii Europejskiej'.

⁶² See: *Czarne Jest Czarne. Biale Jest Biale. Zarys Programu Wyborczego Lecha Wałęsy*. Warsaw. 2000.

Running on a nationalist and social protectionist ticket, Coalition for Poland (Koalicja dla Polski: KdP) candidate Dariusz Grabowski (0.51%) made virtually no mention of the issue of EU membership in his presidential campaign. In his election programme he simply argued that in a future EU accession referendum Polish citizens should be "given information honestly and precisely so that they know the truth about the positive and negative effects of our accession".⁶³ His few references to the issue during the campaign were rather negative arguing that "rushing (to join the EU) is not necessary...Poland needs partners".⁶⁴

Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna: PPS) leader Piotr Ikonowicz (0.22%) also made very little mention of the EU in his campaign. However, on those occasions that he did refer to it he tended to do so positively although from a somewhat different perspective than other pro-EU candidates. Ikonowicz argued that if Poland did not join the EU then it would "become the victim of globalisation",⁶⁵ because otherwise "international capital, which is totalitarian and not democratic, will plough us up".⁶⁶ At the same time, he also argued in favour of a 'social' rather than a 'capitalist' vision of Europe⁶⁷ and that Poland should "join intelligently, not giving in to the European Commissars".⁶⁸

Finally, Movement for Poland's Reconstruction (Ruch Odbudowy Polski: ROP) leader Jan Olszewski (who withdrew from the election in Krzaklewski's favour at the very end of the election) also did not make EU membership a major feature of his campaign. As a self-styled 'Euro-realist', Olszewski supported EU membership in principle but expressed reservations about the timing and conditions on which Poland would be accepted as a member. According to Olszewski, the idea that EU membership was the solution to all the country's problems and that Poland should, therefore, quickly bring its law into line with EU norms was a mistaken one. While EU membership was clearly an opportunity for Poland, the country had to complete a "civilisational leap" for it to be advantageous and "talking of some magical (entry) date was as un-meritocratic as rejecting membership outright".⁶⁹ Olszewski promised to "return equality in our arrangements with the EU through revising the agreements that allow EU countries of the EU to export unemployment and their surplus goods to Poland".⁷⁰ He also pledged to obtain long transition periods and toughen the country's negotiating stance.⁷¹ In particular, he said that he would make joining the EU conditional on securing "a guarantee of maintaining ownership of land together with maintaining dispositions in such strategic areas as the banking system, energy and telecommunications in our hands".⁷²

⁶³ See: 'Deklaracja Programowa' in *Konkrety: Pismo Komitetu Wyborczego Dariusza Macieja Grabowskiego*. Warsaw. July 2000.

⁶⁴ See: 'Œci¹ga wyborcza'.

⁶⁵ See: 'Ikonowicz: polska gospodarka mniejsza od Coca-Coli', *Rzeczpospolita*. 5-6 August 2000

⁶⁶ See: 'Kandydaci o Unii Europejskiej'.

⁶⁷ See: P. Ikonowicz. *Pracy i Chleba: Z liderem PPS rozmawia Stefan Zgliczyñski*. Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy 'Ksi¹zki i Prasa'. undated. pp15-22.

⁶⁸ See: 'Kandydaci o Unii Europejskiej'.

⁶⁹ See: 'Jan Olszewski: Zawsze w s³usznej sprawie', *Rzeczpospolita*. 4 September 2000.

⁷⁰ See: *Jan Olszewski: Wybory Prezydenckie 2000*. Warsaw. 2000.

⁷¹ See: M. Janicki, 'Tañce rytualne', *Polityka*. 5 August 2000.

⁷² See: 'Kandydaci o Unii Europejskiej'.

Conclusion: A realigning issue?

EU membership certainly assumed a somewhat higher profile in the October 2000 Presidential campaign than in any previous Polish election and all the candidates did refer to it in one way or another. Nevertheless, it did not feature as a *major* issue other than in the campaigns of some of the fringe candidates. Nor, although there were clear differences of approach and nuance, did the campaign produce a significant pro versus anti-EU cleavage among the main candidates. As **Table 3** shows, Kwaśniewski and Olechowski, the two most solidly and uncritically pro-EU candidates, won over 70% of the popular vote between them. The other two main candidates, Krzaklewski and Kalinowski, did introduce some elements critical of the EU into their campaigns and both of them referred to the need for Poland to adopt a 'tough' negotiating stance. However, they were both also basically pro-EU and neither made it a major campaign theme, although it appeared that Krzaklewski might at one stage. The more openly anti-EU candidates such as Lepper, Korwin-Mikke, Łopuszański (who made it the centrepiece of his campaign), Wilecki and Pawłowski were fringe candidates who all received derisory votes.

The danger that the October 2000 Presidential election would politicise the issue of Polish EU membership in any significant way did not, therefore, materialise. The next landmark will be the parliamentary election scheduled for September 2001 and there is currently little evidence to suggest that this will follow a substantially different pattern. A number of fringe and protest parties, such as Łopuszański's Polish Agreement and Lepper's Self-Defence farmers union, may try to use the issue strategically as a way of differentiating themselves from the political mainstream.⁷³ Given that small farmers, who constitute the PSL's core electorate, feel particularly threatened by the prospect of accession, there is still a chance that this party could develop a more critical tone towards the EU. The Catholic-nationalist elements of the AWS coalition, such as the ZChN, will try to ensure that their grouping adopts a similarly 'Euro-realist' approach. The issue of EU membership may also assume greater prominence and become more divisive at some point in the future when voters focus more on the *kind* of EU that they want to be part of rather than the desirability of EU membership *per se*. However, there is still an overwhelmingly pro-EU consensus among Polish political elites. It is unlikely that any significant political party, grouping or even political figure will be prepared to adopt an overtly anti-EU stance and, thereby, risk being seen to place themselves outside the political mainstream.

Moreover, the evidence from the October 2000 Presidential elections suggests that there is currently very little prospect for the emergence of a substantial new political formation based on opposition to the EU, particularly given Radio Maryja's decision to continue backing the critically supportive AWS. Overt and active support from

⁷³ Indeed, evidence from Western Europe suggests that such 'hard' Euroscepticism is a phenomenon largely confined to fringe parties. This is a direct consequence of the fact that these are generally protest parties deliberately using opposition to European integration as a means of differentiating themselves from the political mainstream. See: P. Taggart, 'A Touchstone of Dissent: Euroscepticism in Contemporary Western European Party Systems', *European Journal of Political Research*. 1998. Vol. 33. pp363-388; and A. Szczerbiak and P. Taggart. *Opposing Europe: Party Systems and Opposition to the Union, the Euro and Europeanisation*. SEI Working Paper No 36. October 2000. Brighton: Sussex European Institute.

Radio Maryja is probably a necessary (if not sufficient) condition for the development of a more serious and influential Polish Eurosceptic political movement. The various options presented during the presidential campaign (membership of NAFTA, closer links with Eastern neighbours or isolationism) also highlighted the anti-EU camp's lack of a convincing and potentially appealing foreign policy. This lack of an attractive and credible alternative remains the biggest obstacle to the Polish Eurosceptics' attempts to broaden their base of support and is probably the pro-EU campaign's trump card. Consequently, although it has become more salient and (to some extent) more politicised, EU membership is not a major issue dividing Polish political elites and is unlikely to provide the basis for a realignment in the Polish party system in the foreseeable future.

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