



**The Future of Polish-Ukrainian Relations:
Evidence from the June 2004 European
Parliament Election Campaign in Poland**

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Abstract

Poland's accession to the European Union and the dramatic Ukrainian presidential elections made 2004 a crucial year in which the shape of the Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership has been determined for the medium term. This paper shows that although there is a broad foreign policy consensus on Ukraine in Poland and all Polish political parties support Ukrainian accession to the European Union, although opinions differ on policy detail. At one end of the spectrum are parties such as Law and Justice and Civic Platform, whose policies views Ukraine as serious and equal partner for Poland. At the other end is the League of Polish Families, whose rhetoric draws more on the Polish tradition of a civilising mission in the East. If Law and Justice and Civic Platform are forced into a coalition with the League of Polish Families after the next parliamentary election, the latter may have the capacity to obstruct and irritate but the overall direction of Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine will not change. Proof of Poland's influence in Ukraine was provided by President Aleksander Kwaśniewski's key role as a mediator between the government and the opposition during the Orange Ukrainian revolution that followed the disputed second round of 2004's contested presidential election. However, the future of the Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership ultimately depends on the ability of Ukraine's new president, Viktor Yushchenko, to transform this bi-lateral partnership into the bedrock of European Neighbourhood Policy, and the most important source of stability in the region.

The Future of Polish-Ukrainian Relations: Evidence from the June 2004 European Parliament Election Campaign in Poland

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The first European Parliament election to be held in Poland took place on June 13 2004, and forms an interesting platform from which to observe the current state of Polish-Ukrainian relations.¹ The election campaign itself was overshadowed by a government formation crisis and the campaign itself dominated by non-European, particularly domestic issues.² Ukraine is not a member of the European Union, and has no immediate prospect of accession. Although the question of Ukrainian accession did not feature as a major issue in the campaign, all the main parties made some kind of policy statement on Ukraine, which provides an opportunity to examine their approach to this issue in more detail. They also offer clues as to whether there will be any shift in policy after the next parliamentary election, which will probably take place in the spring or summer of 2005, and when there is almost certain to be a change of government. Up until now, there has been a broad consensus amongst the political parties on Poland's relations with Ukraine, much more so than on almost any other aspect of foreign policy. Bi-lateral relations with Ukraine occasionally emerge as a political issue in Polish political debate, generally in relation to contentious historical questions. But they have also become increasingly important in recent years given the recent increase in Ukraine's importance to the Polish economy, since Ukraine overtook Russia as Poland's most important trading partner in the former Soviet Union.

¹ This paper builds on and complements the scholarship of Roman and Katarzyna Wolczuk on the Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership. See: R. and K. Wolczuk, *Poland and Ukraine: a strategic partnership in a changing Europe?* London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2003. Their principal argument is that Poland lacks sufficient diplomatic strength to argue successfully for Ukrainian accession to the Union, and has been frustrated in its attempts to drag Ukraine westwards by the Ukrainian government's inadequate policy of 'declarative integration' – that is declaring its wish to join the European Union without actually taking any concrete steps to achieve this goal.

² See: A. Szczerbiak. 'The European Parliament Election in Poland, June 13 2004'. *European Parties Elections and Referendums Network 2004 European Parliament Election Briefing No 1* at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/epnep2004poland.pdf>

This working paper is organised into three sections. First, it begins with a contextual introduction to Polish-Ukrainian relations and the Polish elections to the European Parliament. Secondly, it examines how the parties that secured representation in the European Parliament addressed the themes relating to Ukraine during the election campaign. As Table 1 shows, eight parties and electoral coalitions crossed the 5% threshold to secure representation in the European Parliament (8% for electoral coalitions). As widely expected, the election was won by the main opposition party: the liberal conservative Civic Platform. The biggest surprise was the strong second place of the Catholic nationalist League of Polish Families. The conservative Law and Justice party finished third ahead of the agrarian Self-Defence party led by controversial radical-populist Andrzej Lepper. Although it has suffered a massive slump in support since the September 2001 parliamentary election, the governing Democratic Left Alliance-Labour Union coalition crossed the eight per cent threshold for electoral coalitions. Three other parties secured representation: the liberal Freedom Union, the agrarian Polish Peasant Party and Polish Social Democracy (formed in March 2004 as a breakaway from the Democratic Left Alliance). Thirdly and finally, the paper concludes with a short prognosis on what this means for the forthcoming elections to the Polish national parliament (the *Sejm*) in 2005 and for post-election scenarios.

Table 1: June 2004 Polish election to the European Parliament

	Votes	%	2001	Change %	MEPs
Civic Platform	1,467,775	24.10	12.68	+11.42	15
League of Polish Families	969,689	15.92	7.87	+8.05	10
Law and Justice	771,858	12.67	9.50	+3.17	7
Self-Defence	656,782	10.78	10.20	+0.58	6
Democratic Left Alliance-Labour Union	569,311	9.35	41.03	-31.68	5
Freedom Union	446,549	7.33	3.10	+4.23	4
Polish Peasant Party	386,340	6.34	8.98	-2.64	4
Polish Social Democracy	324,707	5.33	-	-	3

Source: Polish State Electoral Commission (<http://www.pkw.gov.pl/gallery/10/17/10174.pdf>)

Poland's accession to the European Union and the forthcoming Ukrainian presidential election mean that 2004 is a crucial year that will determine the shape of the Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership for the medium term. The paper shows that although

there is a broad foreign policy consensus on Ukraine and all Polish political parties support Ukrainian accession to the European Union, opinions differ on policy detail. At one end of the spectrum are parties such as Law and Justice and Civic Platform, whose policies views Ukraine as serious and equal partner for Poland. At the other end is the League of Polish Families, whose rhetoric draws more on the Polish tradition of a civilising mission in the East. If Law and Justice and Civic Platform are forced into a coalition with the League of Polish Families after the next parliamentary election, the latter may have the capacity to obstruct and irritate but the overall direction of Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine will not change.

1. The context of Polish-Ukrainian relations

Polish accession to the European Union on 1 May 2004, and the unveiling of the European Commission's European Neighbourhood Policy that it necessitated, have provided an opportunity for Ukraine to embark on a serious programme of preparing itself for eventual integration in the EU. Yet the opposite was perceived to be the case in Ukraine: official rhetoric aside, the perception prior to Ukraine's presidential elections was that Poland's accession to the EU had left Ukraine in the cold. The dramatic events of the Orange Revolution that followed the incumbent Ukrainian administration's attempt to rig the second round of the presidential election have changed this.³ Poland's role as the staunchest ally of Ukrainian democracy, and the special role as mediator played by Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski⁴ demonstrate the strength of Polish influence in Ukraine. The Orange Revolution is a vindication of Polish views on the future direction of relations between the European Union and Ukraine. At the beginning of

³ See: N. Copsey. 'Europe and the Ukrainian Presidential Election of 2004'. *European Parties Elections and Referendums Network Election Briefing No 16* at http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/epern_ukraine_briefing.pdf

⁴ Aleksander Kwaśniewski was able to exploit a unique position amongst the international mediators in the Ukrainian presidential election for three reasons. First and foremost, he remained a friend to the outgoing Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma throughout the period of the latter's international isolation between the 'Gongadzegate scandal' and the dispatch of Ukrainian troops to the war in Iraq of 2003. Second, he did not openly favour either candidate in the election, underlining only his support for the principal of an open, fair and democratic poll, which made his mediation acceptable to both sides. Third, Kwaśniewski's interest in Ukraine gave him a knowledge of Ukrainian affairs equalled neither by the European Union's Javier Solana nor by the blatantly partisan Russian President Vladimir Putin.

2005, Ukraine enjoys unprecedented goodwill in the international arena and with the support of Poland will immediately implement its long-standing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) and Action Plan for the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) with the European Union. Moreover, with a date set for negotiations to open between the European Union and Turkey, it is difficult to think of a credible reason why a stable, reformed, and democratic Ukraine should not also receive candidate status during Yushchenko's first term.

The Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership has been the second most important axis of foreign policy for both states for the past decade, as an unashamed foil to possible resurgent Russian imperialism. The policy draws heavily on the ideas formulated by Polish and Ukrainian émigré thinkers, such as Jerzy Giedroyc and the *Kultura* circle on the Polish side,⁵ and Bohdan Osadczyk and *Sachanist* on the Ukrainian side. In essence, the policy's central tenet is that the continued independence of Poland and Ukraine depends on their co-operation; should they be divided, there is a risk that their independence could be curtailed. The achievements of the Polish and Ukrainian governments over the past fifteen years⁶ should not be underestimated, especially given the historical baggage that the two states carry with them in their bi-lateral relationship. For much of the first half of the twentieth century, Poles and Ukrainians were engaged in an intermittent, though very bloody struggle for the borderlands of today's south-eastern Poland and western Ukraine. The mutual enmity that this generated was frozen for two generations on either side of the closed border between the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and People's Poland. The Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership has always gone hand-in-hand with reconciliation. Recent statistics would seem to prove that this

⁵ See *Kultura*, published in Paris, though crucially available in People's Poland and sometimes even in Soviet Ukraine from 1947-2000. A summary of the thought of Jerzy Giedroyc, together with Juliusz Mieroszewski, Józef Czapski, Jerzy Łobodowski and Jerzy Stempkowski is: Grażyna Pomian (ed), *Wizja Polski na Łamach Kultury, 1947-1976*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin, 1999. It should also be added that some of Giedroyc's ideas on Ukraine drew on the pre-1939 work of Włodzimierz Bączkowski, particularly: *O Wschodniach Problemach Polski* [reprint of pre-1939 works], Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2002.

⁶ Polish-Ukrainian co-operation and reconciliation began before the formal independence of Ukraine, during the government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki (1989-90), the first non-communist prime minister of Poland since the Second World War, and this dialogue built on the links between Solidarity and the Ukrainian nationalist *Ruch* in the 1980s.

policy is having some success: the percentage of Poles expressing dislike of Ukrainians has fallen from 65% in 1994 to 31% in 2000.⁷

Whilst much of the credit for the success of the Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership is due to the effort of Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski who has developed a considerable rapport with the outgoing Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, the partnership has become such an accepted part of the foreign policy scene in Poland and Ukraine, that there is a broad consensus that it should continue whoever is in power – exemplified by the comments on Ukraine made by all Polish political parties during the election campaign discussed in section two of this paper.⁸

Despite the exchange of many warm words, the tangible benefits of the Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership during the 1990s were limited: one area of success was the visa-free regime for Ukrainians travelling to Poland.⁹ The open border between Poland and Ukraine encouraged a huge volume of cross border trade, and allowed many of the border communities – western Ukraine and south-eastern Poland being respectively the poorest regions of either state – to survive the worst period of the economic transitions they went through during the 1990s. This was belatedly ended in autumn 2003 with the introduction of theoretically free visas for Ukrainians at the behest of the European Union, as a first step for Poland on the road to Schengen maturity.¹⁰ Visa-free travel to Poland also allowed many Ukrainians to work illegally on tourist visas in the sectors traditionally occupied by the first generation economic migrant: construction, agriculture, and care. Prior to the introduction of the visa, between 100,000 and one million Ukrainians were

⁷ Quoted in J. Konieczna, *Polska-Ukraina Wzajemny Wizerunek*, Warsaw: Instytut Spraw Publicznych, 2001, p. 42. Data originally gathered by the CBOS polling agency 1993-1999, see: <http://www.cbos.com.pl>.

⁸ It is worth mentioning, however, that there are the first indications of a crack in broad elite consensus on this issue recently and some criticism of Poland's Eastern Policy, based on the argument that Poland should not support the entry of Ukraine into the European Union, because it is not in Poland's interests to support membership for any country poorer than Poland itself. See: K. Iszkowski, 'Uderzający anachronizm', *Rzeczpospolita*, 1 June 2004.

⁹ Polish-Ukrainian cooperation is also very close in the military sphere, the formation of a joint Polish-Ukrainian border battalion and the service of Ukrainian troops under Polish command in Iraq are just two examples of this.

¹⁰ Some of these Schengen-related issues are addressed in Z. Najder et. al., *Polska Droga do Schengen*, Warsaw: Instytut Spraw Publicznych, 2001.

living and working in Poland – the numbers will be even harder to estimate now that many are remaining in Poland, rather than returning quarterly to Ukraine. Nonetheless, the introduction of the visa has greatly impeded the flow of people across the border. Whilst the visas are technically free, there are considerable delays in the process of acquiring a visa caused by demand greatly outstripping supply, and there are reports of charges being levied in certain Polish consulates, such as at the recently opened branch in Lutsk/Łuck, in western Ukraine.¹¹ Nonetheless, around 49% of Poles accept the necessity of the introduction of the visa, as a necessary component of European integration, and a move towards the adoption of European standards. Only 24% are opposed.¹² Even in the border region, more Poles are in favour than opposed.

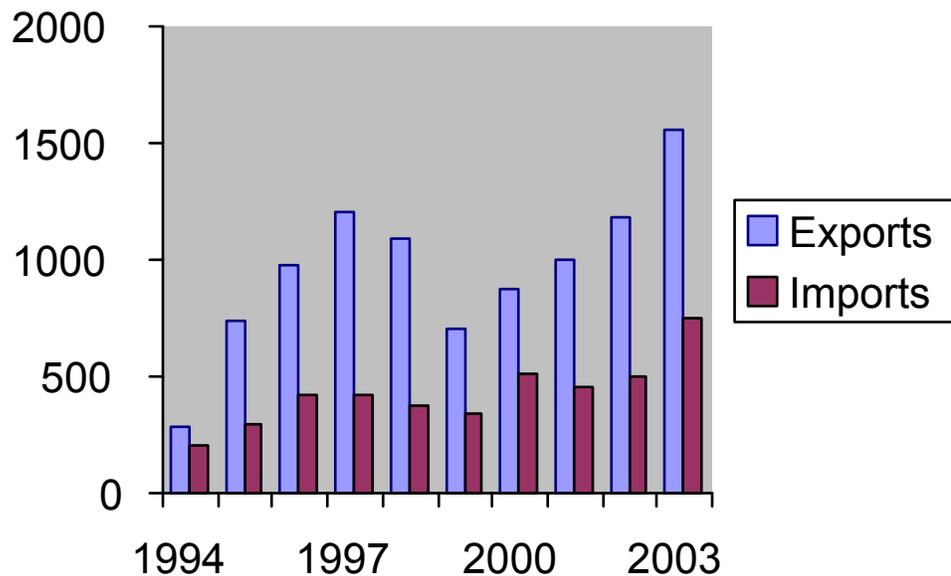
Polish-Ukrainian relations were also disturbed by an attempt earlier in 2004 by the Ukrainian Industrial Union of Donbas steel firm to buy the Polish *Huta Częstochowa* steel mill. The steel sector is a relatively strong part of the Ukrainian economy, buoyed in recent years by a seemingly insatiable demand for steel in China. Since Poland's accession to the European Union, Ukraine has found it harder to sell in the established Polish market, and had been looking to buy a large Polish firm, which would offer direct access not only to Poland, but also to the rest of the lucrative European Union market. The Ukrainian bid was rejected in favour of the Indian-Dutch-British LMN, after the Polish Security Services reported that the Industrial Union of Donbas was suspected of money laundering, accumulating capital from an unknown origin, and promoting Russian interests.¹³ This caused considerable irritation in Kyiv. Nonetheless, Polish-Ukrainian bilateral trade continues to grow apace as the following graph illustrates:

¹¹ See: J. Wilczak, 'Wiza za dewizy', *Polityka*, 12 June 2004, 25/2004, (2457).

¹² See: *Polska-Ukraina Wzajemny Wizerunek*, p. 41.

¹³ See: RFE/RL NEWSLINE Vol. 8, No. 26, Part II, 10 February 2004.

Figure 1: Polish Trade with Ukraine 1994-2003, Millions of US Dollars



Source: <http://www.exporter.pl>

Poland's enthusiastic support for Ukrainian membership of the European Union is not shared by any other member state at the present time, although the United Kingdom has cautiously signalled that there is no reason *in principle* why Ukraine should not one day become a member.¹⁴ This difference in attitude towards the EU's eastern neighbours should not bring Poland into conflict with any other member state in the immediate future, although if Poland wants the New Neighbourhood Policy towards Ukraine to have any teeth, it will have to persuade another large and powerful member state, ideally Germany, to support its ambitions for Ukraine. Poland's role is not limited to advocating for Ukraine in the European Union, it has also been the spokesman of the Franco-German alliance in Ukraine, at a time when French and German politicians would prefer to have as little to do with Ukraine as possible. Poland's role in the so-called Weimar Triangle was to express the strong disapproval of France and Germany about the actions of President Kuchma during the 'Gongadzegate scandal' of 2000, when tapes were released purporting to be of Kuchma ordering the murder of the journalist Heorhiy Gongadze. Another of the EU's large eastern neighbours, Turkey, may bring Poland into conflict

¹⁴ Speech by Kim Darroch, (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Sussex European Institute Wider Europe Seminar, University of Sussex, 4 June 2004.

with the other members, should Poland decide to veto the opening of membership negotiations when the European Commission delivers its *avis* on whether Turkey has fulfilled the Copenhagen criteria for European Union membership at the end of 2004. Depending on how Poland decides to lever its influence, Turkey may greatly benefit the cause of Ukraine's European integration.

Russia's growing influence in Ukraine has also stimulated the interest of Polish politicians, particularly since Ukraine's ratification of the Single Economic Space (SES) agreement with Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus on 24 April 2004. The agreement was marketed as a Free Trade Area, but in fact has more of the characteristics of a Customs Union, which will impede Ukraine's possible future integration into the European Union. Russia's acquisition of the right to 50% of the profits of Ukraine's oil and gas transportation network, together with the weighting of SES voting to give Russia an 80% share, have caused considerable concern in Warsaw.¹⁵ Polish fears about Russian dominance in Ukraine, and their desire not to end up facing Russian forces on the eastern border of the European Union, explain Poland's strong interest in the European Neighbourhood Policy – arguably its best means of influencing internal developments in Ukraine over the long term – and why all the victorious political parties had something to say about Ukraine during the election campaign. Whilst the SES was a real and potent issue at the time of the European Parliament election in Poland, it is worth noting that Viktor Yushchenko is likely to pull Ukraine out of this embryonic organisation early in 2005.

2. Ukraine and the 2004 European Parliament election

The June 2004 European Parliament election, therefore, came during an uncertain period for Polish-Ukrainian relations. 2004 marks a crossroads for the Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership. This meant that some attention was paid to how the parties approached this issue during the election campaign. Ukraine was mentioned explicitly in the manifestoes of three parties and electoral coalitions that secured representation in the

¹⁵ Author interviews with Borys Tarasyuk and Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Institute of Strategic Studies, Warsaw 16 June 2004.

European Parliament: Law and Justice, Civic Platform and the League of Polish Families. This is important because it demonstrates that these parties regard Ukraine as being sufficiently salient issue to comment on it independently of being invited to do so by journalists. Crucially, they were also the three most successful parties in the elections, winning 32 out of 54 seats and around 52% of the vote. Law and Justice devoted two out of eleven pages of its manifesto¹⁶ to Ukraine, opening the Eastern Policy segment with the unambiguous statement that: ‘After its entry to the Union, Poland must conduct an active and offensive Eastern Policy’. It goes on to explain exactly what components Law and Justice’s Eastern Policy would contain. Civic Platform includes only two short paragraphs on Eastern Policy, opening with the obvious statement ‘Europe does not end at the [river] Bug’. Rather more space is given over to Eastern Policy in a collection of essays and policy statements published to coincide with the election by the League of Polish Families’ Wojciech Wierzejski titled: *We chose Poland!* t. They devote three pages out of thirty-seven to Eastern Policy. The accent is very different with references to ‘Our Forgotten Borderlands.’¹⁷ The emphasis is exclusively on support for the Roman Catholic Church and the Polish minority in Ukraine.

In addition to these three manifestos, in the days running up to the election the best-selling quality daily, *Gazeta Wyborza*, interviewed candidates from each of the main political parties¹⁸ about a series of issues connected with Poland’s role in the European Union. Question five related to Ukraine, and was as follows:

¹⁶ See: “*Europa solidarnych narodów*”: *program polityki europejskiej Prawa i Sprawiedliwości* at http://www.pis.org.pl/dokumenty/program_pe.htm

¹⁷ See: W. Wierzejski, *My Wybieramy Polskę!* Warsaw: Komitet Wyborczy Legia Polskich Rodzin, , 2004, p. 9-11.

¹⁸ Not all of the answers were directly attributable to a particular candidate, some were issued by party spokesmen as the following shows: Janusz Lewandowski (Civic Platform candidate for Pomorze); Daniel Podrzycki (leader of the Polish Labour Party); Janusz Maksymiuk (Director of the Self-Defence national office); the SLD’s foreign affairs department spoke on its behalf; Marek Borowski (leader of Polish Social Democracy); Kazimierz M. Ujazdowski (Law and Justice foreign affairs spokesman); the League of Polish Families ‘candidates’ spoke collectively on behalf of that party; an official spokesman gave the view of the Freedom Union; Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, (Polish Peasant Party vice-chairman). However, in all cases these can be considered as authoritative statements by representative party leaders or spokesman.

*Ukraine is a poor country and the Union would have to subsidise it considerably, but it is an important partner for Poland and a traditional counterweight against Russia. Should we push for the expansion of the Union to Ukraine?*¹⁹

The question itself demonstrates an awareness of the argument that Poland should oppose Ukrainian membership of the Union on the grounds of its present economic weakness. What is interesting about the responses of all the politicians surveyed is that not one of them makes this point as a reason to oppose Ukrainian membership of the EU.

The responses given by spokesmen for the parties can roughly be categorised into seven themes: (i) cultural ties with Ukraine, (ii) aiding the process of democratization in Ukraine, (iii) Ukraine's geopolitical position vis-à-vis Russia, (iv) economic cooperation with Ukraine, (v) Poland's role as an advocate for Ukraine in the European Union, (vi) the impact of the Schengen regime on Poland's eastern frontier with Ukraine, and (vii) Ukraine's future accession to the European Union.

The League of Polish Families, the Freedom Union, and Polish Social Democracy all mentioned the importance of *cultural ties between Ukraine and the West*, and Ukraine and Poland in particular. This is an established part of dialogue on Ukraine. There is a tendency amongst Polish politicians to talk in general terms about Ukraine as if the whole state resembled western Ukraine to a greater or lesser extent. Cultural ties between the two states are limited to western and central Ukraine; the predominantly Russian speaking east and south have fewer cultural ties and shared history with Poland. Nonetheless, economic ties between eastern Ukraine and Poland are almost as strong as they are between western Ukraine and Poland, mostly because the bulk of Ukrainian economic muscle is concentrated in the large cities of the east: Kharkiv, Dnipropetovsk, and Donetsk. These industrial cities have received around a third of Polish investment in Ukraine, and their links in Poland are with the industrial and commercial cities of western Poland, such as Poznań.

¹⁹ See the archive of *Gazeta Wyborcza* at <http://www.gazeta.onet.pl>

Democratisation in Ukraine was an issue that preoccupied the two social democratic parties, and the Freedom Union. This is a much more complicated issue for any Polish political party to address, since they can hardly be seen to support a policy of active intervention in Ukrainian domestic politics – and even if they could, their impact is likely to be minimal. In terms of influencing the democratisation of Ukraine, the quiet diplomacy of Aleksander Kwaśniewski is more likely to pay dividends. In some respects, however, Poland can and does help indirectly the gradual conversion of Ukraine towards a fully democratic system, largely through its already extensive provision of scholarships for Ukrainian students to study in Poland in the hope that they will form the vanguard of the movements for a more democratic Ukraine (and Belarus) in the future. Under the auspices of these grants, over 60,000 Ukrainian students study at Polish universities.²⁰

Ukraine's *geopolitical position as a barrier against future Russian imperialism* was picked up on by three parties: the Polish Peasants' Party, the League of Polish Families, and the Civic Platform. In contrast to these three, Self-Defence was keen to underline that Polish-Ukrainian cooperation should not be seen as a policy directed against Moscow, rather as part of a wider Eastern Policy designed to integrate Poland more closely with the markets of the Eurasian economic sphere. Only three of the party spokesmen surveyed mentioned this issue, given that the concept of Ukraine as a 'counterweight' was actually part of the question. This is perhaps less surprising than would first appear to be the case, since from the inception of the Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership, the official line has always been that it is specifically not directed against anyone, including Russia. However, this has begun to change since the expansionist Vladimir Putin became president of the Russian Federation, and the limits to Russia's peaceful democratisation have become more apparent. Even Polish diplomats are now talking about Russian economic expansion in Ukraine as the prelude to political control.²¹

Poland's *role as an advocate for Ukraine in the European Union* was raised by the Civic Platform, Polish Social Democracy, Law and Justice, and the Polish Peasants' Party. The

²⁰ Author interview with Ewa Figel, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 February 2004.

²¹ Ibid.

Eastern Dimension, sometimes also referred to as Wider Europe, and now officially titled European Neighbourhood Policy, was an issue specifically mentioned in the manifestos of three parties: Law and Justice, the Civic Platform, and the League of Polish Families. Law and Justice's manifesto was by far the most thorough-going policy document of all the political parties released for the European elections, and has several concrete proposals for the Polish government.²² In its view, Poland should be the leader of all East and Central European countries that do not belong to NATO and the EU. In support of this foreign policy goal, an incoming Polish administration should establish a Good Neighbourhood Fund to support social, scientific, and education cooperation in Ukraine (and Belarus), particularly targeting MA and PhD candidates. Law and Justice also supports much greater cooperation on the regional level, between local governments on either side of the Belarusian and Ukrainian borders, as well as the recognition of Ukraine as a market economy. Finally, Law and Justice mentions the role of the Polish minority in Ukraine and Belarus' and the Polonia (Poles living abroad and those of Polish origin). The Polish minority are the cornerstone of the Catholic nationalist League of Polish Families' policy towards Ukraine, calling for much more spiritual and material assistance for Poles living outside the Polish borders, at the expense of existing Polish foreign aid plans. The victorious Civic Platform also mentioned the need for strong Polish involvement in the Eastern Dimension, noting that the European Union possesses the political and economic power needed to strengthen the market economies and democracies of its neighbours.

The introduction of *Schengen frontier controls* on the eastern frontier of Poland, and the consequent introduction of a visa for Ukrainians travelling to Poland was mentioned by Civic Platform, Polish Social Democracy, and Law and Justice. The low profile given to the issue of the visa for Ukrainians may be evidence that the issue is henceforth regarded as settled by the Polish political community.

²² See: "Europa solidarnych narodów"

Economic cooperation with Ukraine was only raised by Self-Defence. This is also rather peculiar, given the ever-increasing importance of Ukraine for the Polish economy, in terms of cheap labour supply, as a destination for FDI, and as a trading partner.

Finally, all the parties unanimously supported *Ukraine's future membership of the European Union*. Self-Defence pointed out that Ukraine's membership of the European Union was a matter for the Ukrainian people to decide amongst themselves, but added that this would certainly be useful for Poland. The Freedom Union was the only political party to sound a note of caution, diluting its endorsement of Ukraine's future entry to the European Union by underlining that this was very much a long-term perspective.

The responses given by the political parties when questioned on Ukraine conformed broadly to what one would have expected to find: strong support for Ukraine's membership of the European Union, and the usual endorsement of Ukraine's role as a strategic partner of Poland. That Polish politicians do not often mention Ukraine's economic potential is a reflection of the way they view Poland's relationship with Ukraine in general. The economic ties of the relationship tend to be viewed in a rather one-sided way by many Polish politicians. When talking about Ukrainians coming to Poland to work, they stress how useful this is for Ukrainians. When talking about Polish investment in Ukraine (currently \$152 million and rising), the emphasis is placed on the beneficial impact this will have on the Ukrainian economy. In dealing with Ukraine, the economic invariably takes second place to the political in Poland.²³ Many Poles also draw direct comparisons between Ukraine today, and Poland in the 1970s before the visit of Pope John Paul II; for them, Ukraine is 25 years behind Poland in terms of economic and political development. Whilst their attitude towards Ukraine can come across as rather paternalistic, any tendency towards the sentimental or the woolly is tempered by their apparently well rooted fear of Russian expansionism into Ukraine.

The election campaign exemplifies the consensus that exists in Poland about what kind of Eastern Policy it should have for Ukraine, and what kind of tactics it should pursue in the

²³ Author interviews with a range of Polish politicians in Warsaw in January, May and June 2004.

European Union to meet these ends. This contrasts with the Eastern Policy of the Polish Second Republic (1918-1939), which was split between Federalists led by Marshal Piłsudski, and Nationalists, led by Roman Dmowski. Federalists favoured a union with Ukrainians and Belarusians, with considerable devolution of power. Nationalists preferred a more hard-line annexation and integration approach. The consensus today is roughly as follows: Ukraine is and should remain Poland's major partner in the East, and that Poland should do everything that it can to support eventual Ukrainian accession to the European Union. No party, however extreme, now favours a policy of annexation in the East.

Within this broad consensus there is a certain amount of room for manoeuvre between the positions of the various political parties, and their differing standpoints on Ukraine were apparent in the European Election campaign of 2004. Piłsudski's old Federalist model has been replaced by what could be called the Giedroyc model, which encourages the development of strong, independent states between Poland and Russia – naturally Ukraine is the cornerstone of this. At the one end of today's political spectrum on Ukraine is the Civic Platform, who could be described as the purest adherents of this Giedroyc tradition. Their rhetoric is about partnership with Ukraine in the strictest sense, with much less of the paternalism of the other political parties. The two social democratic parties, Polish Social Democracy and the Democratic Left Alliance, also fall broadly into this category. At the other end of the spectrum is the Catholic Nationalist League of Polish Families, who describe themselves as the direct heirs of Roman Dmowski's political thought. The League of Polish Families does not shy away from references to the Poles' self-appointed *mission civilisatrice* in the East, 'strengthening the rule of Latin Civilisation amongst the eastern Slavs'.²⁴ The focus of their policy on Ukraine is always on strengthening the position of the Polish minority and the Catholic church, not on aiding the process of democratisation or marketisation in Ukraine.

The response of the remaining parties lies somewhere between these two extremes. Although the Freedom Union is a liberal party and Law and Justice a conservative one,

²⁴ See: *My Wybieramy Polskę!* p9.

they actually use similar, paternalistic (rather than post-Giedroycian) rhetoric on the Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership. An important exception to this categorisation is Self-Defence. They do follow the central tenets of the cross-party consensus on Ukraine, but always with the qualifying comment that Ukraine is one partner of many for Poland in the East, and that Poland should also develop its economic relations with Russia and the other successor states to the former Soviet Union. Thus within the policy consensus, there are a number of different perspectives.

The varying opinions on Ukraine expressed by Polish politicians during the June 2004 European Parliament Election were mirrored by their responses to the dramatic events in Ukraine of November and December 2004. As crowds converged on Kyiv to protest against the government's attempt to steal the election, Polish parliamentarians divided along identical lines to June. As reported in one of Poland's leading quality daily newspapers, *Rzeczpospolita*,²⁵ Civic Platform's Bronisław Komorowski underlined the importance of using Poland's position as a European Union member to further the cause of democracy in Ukraine, and cautiously noted the risk of Russian expansionism. Law and Justice's Jarosław Kaczyński opinion was categorical: Poland must react strongly and immediately in order to prevent the reincorporation of Ukraine into a new Russian Empire. He also made reference to Poland's obligations to Ukraine dating from the era of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations.²⁶ Moreover, he stated that Poland should refuse to recognize a non-democratically elected Ukrainian government. Tadeusz Iwiński of the ruling Democratic Left Alliance was more cautious, but reiterated the party line that Poland must cooperate with either potential victor. Janusz Dobrosz of the League of Polish Families remarked that the election was testament to Ukraine's East-West split and that the result should be recognized. Andrzej Lepper of Self-Defence commented that, in his view, the pre-election atmosphere in Ukraine was anti-Yushchenko and that Poland should focus solely on the maintenance of good relations with Ukraine.

²⁵ See: 'Powiedzieli "Rzeczpospolitej"', *Rzeczpospolita*, 22 November 2004.

²⁶ The Commonwealth of the Two Nations (1569-1793) encompassed not only the titular nations of Poland and Lithuania, but also all of what is today Ukraine and Belarus.

3. Post-parliamentary election prospects

The broad consensus amongst all the eight successful political parties on Ukraine makes it possible to hazard some predictions about what kind of policy an incoming government might pursue towards Ukraine, after the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Projections based on this result of on the number of seats that parties would have won in a national election point to a fragmented parliament.²⁷ Civic Platform (118 seats) and Law and Justice (63), felt by many commentators to be natural partners in any new centre-right government, would fall short of a parliamentary majority (231), even with the backing of the liberal Freedom Union (34). Both main centre-right parties have ruled out a coalition with either Self-Defence (58) or the Democratic Left Alliance-Labour Union (46), and a coalition with Polish Social Democracy (25) also appears unlikely. This only leaves them with only the League of Polish Families (82) or (more likely) the (primarily office-seeking but ideologically anti-liberal and EU-critical) Peasant Party (34) as potential government partners. Based on this result, the most likely coalition, therefore, appears to a rather unwieldy four-party one involving Civic Platform, Law and Justice, Freedom Union and the Peasant Party. This would have a roughly 40-seat majority over the combined Eurosceptic/populist and ex-communist/left opposition.

Given the broad consensus on Ukrainian issues, this would not matter most of the time, as far as voting on Ukraine is concerned. There are, however, some controversial issues relating to Poland and Ukraine's mutual past that could periodically menace the unity of this possible future ruling coalition. As a previous case, one could cite the heated debates in the *Sejm* during July 2003, over the wording of a joint message of reconciliation to be issued together with the Ukrainian *Verkhovna Rada*.²⁸ The disagreement was over whether the phrase 'genocide of the Polish people' should be included in a statement that commemorated the deaths of tens of thousands of Poles and Ukrainians in the borderlands during a conflict between the two nations that reached its peak in July 1943. The leader of the demands for the insertion of this controversial phrase, Jarosław

²⁷ See: *Rzeczpospolita*, 15 June 2004.

²⁸ See: RFE/RL NEWSLINE, vol. 7, no. 130, Part II, 11 July 2003.

Kaczyński, is also the leader of Law and Justice. In the end, he and his party abstained, and only the League of Polish Families actually voted against the declaration of reconciliation. The chances of repetition of this incident are quite high at the present time, as the sixtieth anniversaries of various Polish-Ukrainian conflicts are marked over the next few years; for example, the deportations of Poles from western Ukraine in 1944-46, or the deportations of Ukrainians from south-eastern Poland in 1947, the so-called Operation Vistula. It should be borne in mind that Law and Justice has a manifesto promise to establish a Good Neighbourhood Fund to aid cooperation in Belarus and Ukraine. In short, Law and Justice treats partnership with Ukraine with perhaps a greater sense of purpose, and with a view to more concrete outcome than many of the other political parties.

The situation could become more complicated if any incoming centre-right government is forced to rely on the League of Polish Families for a parliamentary majority. As noted above, the League of Polish Families' rhetoric on Ukraine differs strongly from that of the political mainstream. Should the League use its position in the governing coalition to force through some of its policy ideas for Ukraine, many of the achievements of Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation in the past decade could swiftly be undone. Pressure from the Polish government on Kyiv to increase the number of Polish language schools in western Ukraine, and open support for the rebuilding of the Roman Catholic Church in western Ukraine (technically a separate Ukrainian Roman Catholic Church, albeit served almost exclusively by Polish clergy for the Polish minority with most masses in Polish) could provoke an anti-Polish backlash from western Ukrainian politicians. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church is already wary of having too close a connection with the Roman Catholic Church, particularly in those parishes where it is already in competition with the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church, since cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church lays the Greek Catholic Church open to charges of being an agent of a foreign power: Poland.²⁹ Ironically, in attempting to strengthen the position of 'Polish' institutions in western Ukraine, a Polish government would in fact be undermining them by weakening

²⁹ Author interview with Father Sviatoslav Shepchuk, Advisor to Greek Catholic Cardinal Huzar, Lviv, 26 August 2004.

their ties with friendly Ukrainian sister institutions. The League of Polish Families has also pursued an uncompromising line on reconciliation with Ukraine until now. Relations between Poles and Ukrainians were often far from harmonious in the past, especially during the generation between the end of the First World War and the end of the Second World War, as Poles and Ukrainians struggled for the control of the borderland between the two countries – an area of mixed Polish and Ukrainian settlement. Tensions boiled over in the summer of 1943, in an undeclared Polish-Ukrainian War. Casualties – especially amongst non-belligerents - were high on both sides in this guerrilla war, which etched scars of mutual distrust and even hatred onto the Polish and western Ukrainian historical memories. On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the conflict, the Polish and Ukrainian parliaments issued a joint statement of reconciliation. The League of Polish Families was the only party to vote *en masse* against this statement of reconciliation.³⁰

Such speculation must be tempered by two factors. First, even if Roman Giertych and his party scrape into a coalition, it is unlikely that they would manage to stay within it for more than a few months, limiting their capacity to influence Polish government policy on this issue. Second, although the idea of rebuilding ‘Polishness’ in western Ukraine and appealing to Polish nostalgia may work well as rhetoric, it is unlikely that it would translate into popularity and votes if the policy were implemented. After all, Poles living in Ukraine do not vote in Polish elections. Moreover, diverting government aid from the poorest regions of contemporary Poland to western Ukraine would be hard to justify. Most Poles will feel that there is a limit to the importance of history in this context.

What kind of policy an incoming Polish president might pursue towards Ukraine after the presidential elections in autumn 2005 is much more difficult to forecast. The only certainty is that Aleksander Kwaśniewski will not be standing again, since Polish electoral law limits tenure of the presidency to two terms. However, given the huge personal stake that Kwaśniewski developed in improving Polish-Ukrainian relations,

³⁰ A more detailed examination of the past in contemporary Polish-Ukrainian relations is: N. Copley (2004), ‘Echoes of the Past in Contemporary Politics: the case of Poland and Ukraine’, unpublished work in progress. Copies available from the author on request.

arguably the impact of this election will be even more significant than that of the parliamentary one. Given that the race for the next presidency is currently wide open it is impossible to speculate on its impact in any meaningful way.

Conclusion

The Polish 2004 election to the European Parliament underlines the importance of the Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership on the Polish political scene. All of the eight parties or electoral coalitions that gained seats in the European Parliament agree that Ukraine is an important partner for Poland and the EU, and support Ukraine's eventual accession. Nevertheless, sheltering under this umbrella of consensus there is a broad range of opinions on precisely what kind of policies should be adopted towards Ukraine.

Judging from the election manifestoes and policy statements, the entrance of Law and Justice into a coalition with Civic Platform would be good news for Ukraine. Law and Justice is the only political party to have mapped out a precise range of policies on Ukraine, including the headline aim of establishing a Good Neighbourhood Fund to support the development of democracy and good governance. Other political parties and electoral coalitions were generally much more vague on Ukraine – although this represents more their general absence of concrete policies in the European election than a specific lack of interest in Ukraine. Support for Ukrainian accession to the EU is so strong amongst Polish political parties that even the League of Polish Families is in favour, showing a clear limit to their hard-line rhetoric on Ukraine.

Whoever wins the 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections, Poland will continue the policy of close co-operation with Ukraine, although the entry of Law and Justice into a coalition would be even more productive for Ukraine; the party's tough historical rhetoric notwithstanding. The future of the Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership probably lies more in the hands of Ukraine's incoming President Viktor Yushchenko. His priority must be to capitalise on the unprecedented goodwill towards Ukraine in the international arena and implement both the PCA and Action Plan for ENP with the European Union, and

then seek Ukrainian accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as preparation for EU membership. In all of this, it is likely that Yushchenko can count on Polish support and assistance along every step of the way.

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