

*Andžej Pukšto\*, Ieva Karpavičiūtė\*\*, Mindaugas Norkevičius\*\*\**

*Department of Political Science and Diplomacy, Vytautas Magnus University*

## The Dynamics of Lithuanian-Polish Strategic Partnership

The paper aims at identifying relations between the events which influence Lithuanian-Polish strategic cooperation, defining principal aspects of cooperation dynamics, and analysing recent challenges in relations between Lithuania and Poland. For the purpose of analysis the following objectives have been set: 1) to analyse the development of strategic partnership and political dialogue in bilateral relations; 2) to evaluate the importance of security, defence policy, and economic projects in cooperation between the states; 3) to assess the aspect of ethnic minorities in the context of bilateral relations. The authors of the paper seek to review the principal internal and external factors which affect bilateral cooperation between Lithuania and Poland. The following methods of analysis are used in the paper: public statements made by officials, document analysis and discourse formed by the media. The key areas of analysis are the development of political dialogue, strategic cooperation, security and defence policy, economic and energy cooperation, and questions of ethnic minorities in bilateral relations. Presently in the field there is a lack of thorough investigation of similarities and differences of strategic cooperation between Lithuania and Poland.

### Introduction

Lithuania and Poland are connected not only by their common historical memory but also by cooperation in foreign policy, security, economics, energy, and defence. The relationship between Lithuania and Poland is significant in terms of strengthening regional cooperation, especially in the fields of security and energy, and the development of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Lithuanian-Polish relations are based on two key aspects: bilateral relations and the Euro-Atlantic dimension. The “Polish” vector of Lithuania’s foreign

---

\* *Dr. Andžej Pukšto* is an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science at the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, Vytautas Magnus University, Address for correspondence: Gedimino g. 44-201, LT-44246 Kaunas, Lithuania, tel: +370-37-206704, e-mail: a.puksto@pmdf.vdu.lt

\*\* *Dr. Ieva Karpavičiūtė* is a lecturer at the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, Vytautas Magnus University. Contact details: Gedimino g. 44-201, LT- 44246 Kaunas, Lithuania, tel: +370-37-206704, e-mail: i.karpaviciute@pmdf.vdu.lt

\*\*\* *Mindaugas Norkevičius* is a MA student at the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, Vytautas Magnus University. Contact details: Gedimino g. 44-201, 44246 Kaunas, Lithuania, tel: +370-37-206704, e-mail: norkevicius.mindaugas@gmail.com

policy started to accelerate as early as in 1994,<sup>1</sup> when the states undertook to develop an idea of strategic partnership. It was grounded on and fostered by the processes of Euro-Atlantic integration. The fact that Poland became a member of the NATO in 1999 encouraged Lithuania to reach for even closer cooperation in the hope that strategic partnership with the neighbouring country would speed up the processes of Lithuania's Euro-Atlantic integration.

In the context of Lithuanian-Polish bilateral relations, a greater tension manifested itself when Radosław Sikorski became the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland in 2007, and the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (EAPL) started making demands addressed to the Lithuanian Government in relation to the issues of the Polish national minority, namely, the writing of names and place names in the original (Polish) language and the Lithuanian reform of education, specifically, the question of the Lithuanian language graduation examination. In 2011 Sikorski declared that he would never come to Lithuania until Lithuania's Polish population would be allowed to write names using the Polish alphabet. In 2013 the head of Polish diplomacy participated in a meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European Union (EU) held in Vilnius where he pronounced critical remarks towards the former and the present Lithuanian Government.

The Polish national minority plays an important role in Lithuanian-Polish bilateral relations. On one hand, in Lithuania's public discourse the Polish national minority is pictured as a source of unjustified demands which are further pressed by the EAPL presence in the governing coalition. On the other hand, viewed comparatively, two issues are often brought to the fore, i.e., the situation of Lithuanians in Poland and the fact that integration into society of residence should not only be encouraged by the Government but also the minority group itself. The problems of national minorities, perceived as an internal factor determining Lithuanian-Polish cooperation at the bilateral level, have an impact on common economic plans which eventually affect strategic cooperation. Nevertheless, an evaluation of internal factors (namely, minorities' issues and internal political dynamics) as a potential cause of change in bilateral cooperation, calls for consideration of a wider context of Lithuanian-Polish relations and assessment of external factors, which determine cooperation.

In their official statements Lithuania and Poland emphasize the necessity and benefit of strategic cooperation which points to several strategic directions and spheres. It is important for Lithuania, a state which aims to

---

<sup>1</sup> On the 26<sup>th</sup> of April, 1994, the Treaty on Bilateral Relations and Good Neighbourly Cooperation of the Republic of Lithuania and Republic of Poland was signed.

develop active politics in the sub-region of the Eastern and Central Europe, to have a reliable strategic partner. The development of relations with Poland would help Lithuania expand the boundaries of economic cooperation and open up new opportunities for foreign policy in order to counterbalance Russia's role in the region, especially, in the spheres of economic and trade policy. Lithuania and Poland are also bound by the urgency for cooperation with the USA: a common aspiration to maintain the influence of the USA in Europe, specifically, in security policy.

It is possible to assume from the rhetoric of Polish foreign policy executives that with Poland's accession to the EU and NATO, an idea began to take shape of its image as one of Europe's core countries. Thus, relations with the Weimar Triangle states (France, Germany) and Russia have been strengthened and, at the same time, lesser attention has been devoted to the partners from the Visegrád Group and Lithuania. These external changes, like the internal factors mentioned above, determine strategic cooperation of the present day.

The goal of the paper is to observe, using the constructivist analysis of foreign policy, how transformations of national identity determine changes in foreign policy interests and priorities, and affect Lithuanian-Polish strategic cooperation. The transformation of identity brings about changes in values and standards. Some of them become more dominant, while others gradually lose their importance until they finally wither away and new values are placed on the agendas of foreign policy. The article questions internal and external factors which affect the development of Lithuanian-Polish strategic partnership; and it presents classification of these factors and examines which of these, in one case or another, may determine changes in bilateral cooperation. For the purpose of analysis, the evaluation of national, sub-regional and regional context of cooperation between the states is provided. The authors of the paper attempt to evaluate how potential political interests of the actors determine changes of strategic cooperation, how political communication performed by actors / high-ranking officials influence the change of political interests and priorities, and how this relates to the transformation of national identity.

## 1. Foreign Policy Analysis within the Discipline of International Relations

As Andrew Heywood observes, "it (i.e. foreign policy) reflects the importance of statecraft as an activity through which national governments

manage their relations with other states and international bodies”<sup>2</sup> The analysis of foreign policy has been rather limited for a long time and its integration into the discipline of International Relations has been deliberately avoided. For many years representatives of Political Science used to conduct only sporadic analysis of foreign policy, mainly focusing on the theories of rational choice and public administration; likewise, internal and external processes were not being assumed as related, the insights of investigations were delimited to studying national institutions and other similar objects.<sup>3</sup> The situation has been gradually changing as the discipline of the International Relations develops and the postpositivist theories gain popularity and influence. Specifically, “representatives of the new, critical International Relations theories begin to focus on state behaviour, the process of internal (domestic) decision-making, communication, roles of individuals, bureaucratic structures, normative factors and their effects on foreign policy development.”<sup>4</sup>

Currently foreign policy analysis in the discipline of international relations is undergoing a period of renaissance. It is a multifaceted research field which aims to present a comprehensive account of causes and interactions pertinent to internal and external factors that affect foreign policy of states and examines the ways in which national interests, identity, institutions, political elite or political culture impact state’s foreign policy and its change. Normative aspects are gradually introduced into the Foreign Policy Analysis. It is possible to observe that “with the perception of foreign policy as a continuous process and its study in relation to the national identity, the research of foreign policy and international relations is heading into a completely new, qualitatively redefining direction”<sup>5</sup> More specifically, it reveals the dynamics of bilateral and multilateral relations and helps to evaluate external and internal factors which determine alteration of these relations.

The development of foreign policy analysis has benefited greatly from representatives of constructivism. This theory lends instruments to the researcher to not only link together national and systemic levels of analysis, introduce normative elements to it and bring in more actors but also “permits an in-depth overview of the myriad forces of power, influence and interest”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Heywood A., *Global Politics*, Palgrave Foundation, 2011, p. 128.

<sup>3</sup> Karpavičiūtė I., “Kaita ir nacionalinė tapatybė užsienio politikos studijose: Lietuvos atvejis”, *Politikos mokslų almanachas*, 2013, nr. 13, p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> Karpavičiūtė I., Op. cit. p. 102.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 102.

<sup>6</sup> Smith S., Hadfield A., Dunne T., eds., *Foreign Policy. Theories, Actors Cases*. Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 7.

Thus, this theoretical approach enables the viewing of an object under analysis from a wider perspective and much more thoroughly.

## 1.1. Constructivism and Foreign Policy Analysis

According to Gražina Miniotaitė, “attempts to conceptualize reality as a process, “capture” its mobility, fluidity and change, are characteristic of all social sciences, attempting to get free from long-dominant positivist epistemology and objectivist ontology”.<sup>7</sup> The core statement of constructivism claims that reality is socially constructed, i.e. “objects and subjects of reality are socio-linguistically constructed”<sup>8</sup> and it is shaped and subject to change depending on the actions and motives of social agents (individuals and structures). “In Foreign Policy Analysis representatives of constructivism address social aspects of international relations, the issue of national identity, construction of social ideas and symbols, individuals and institutions, which are involved in such construction.”<sup>9</sup> It introduces a value component into Foreign Policy Analysis, and as Bruce Cronin observes, “identities provide a frame of reference from which political leaders can initiate, maintain, and structure their relationships with other states”.<sup>10</sup>

Constructivism strives to explain how foreign policy is being formed and executed, how national identity, social reality, institutions and political leaders interact with each other and are able to change the processes of foreign policy. Representatives of the constructivist group (who belong to the rationalist wing of this theoretical approach), namely, Nicholas Onuf, Alexander Wendt, Emanuel Adler, Michael Barnett and others in their study of foreign policy in different countries largely focus on the analysis of agent interaction based on identity and interests. They also explore agents’ attempts to fulfill national interests with the help of strategic behaviour.<sup>11</sup> Constructivists analyse foreign policy and strategic partnership by examining the interrelation between national and systemic levels of analysis. In addition, they are concerned

<sup>7</sup> Miniotaitė G., “Search for Identity in Modern Foreign Policy of Lithuania: between the Northern and Eastern dimensions?”, *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review* 2004, p. 70.

<sup>8</sup> Heikki P., Colin W., After Postpositivism? The Promises of Critical Realism, *International Studies Quarterly*, 2000, vol. 44, iss. 2, June, p. 217.

<sup>9</sup> Karpavičiūtė I. Op. cit. p. 103.

<sup>10</sup> Cronin B., *Community Under Anarchy: Transnational Identity and Evolution of Cooperation*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> Nia M. M., “Understanding Iran’s Foreign Policy: An Application of Holistic Constructivism”. *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 2010, vol. 9. no.1, p. 150.

about regional and sub-regional levels of analysis and treat these as relatively independent factors, which may form autonomous dynamics of regional politics.

Representatives of constructivism emphasize the explanation of change: social reality is continuously changing as it depends on time and space; thus, it marks the constant alteration of identity, ideas, norms, values, institutions and agents. Not surprisingly, constructivism also focuses on the clarification of interdependency between identity and foreign policy change. Ideas, values and norms are perceived as institutionalized collective practices. Their introduction with the means of communication and involvement of agents, i.e., individuals, groups, political parties, etc., institutionalization, socialization, continuity and change are inseparable elements of collective identity. With the transformation of identity, values and norms also change, some gain currency while others lose their importance and finally become extinct, whereas the new ones which are positively assessed and deemed to be adequate are placed on the agendas of foreign policy. As Maria Malksoo notes, politics becomes “the never-ending process of collective identity production and reproduction”.<sup>12</sup>

National identity and the relationship between “Me” and “the Other” are delineated in the process of state formation and, thus, are subject to constant change. The change of national identity depends on the internal and external dynamics of political processes. Internal changes depend on politicians, leaders, institutions, national interests, etc. External factors which subsequently determine changes in identity may be a result of bilateral relations, regional, sub-regional, systemic/global, transnational factors, etc. Xavier Guillaume maintains that, “national identity, resulting from a dialogical framework composed of the international system and the domestic environment, is a form among others—such as ‘interests’ or ‘power’—that state agency takes in international relations”.<sup>13</sup> Foreign policy changes usually occur at the national level; therefore, many constructivists emphasize dominance of the national level over the systemic one.

Decisions made by political elite, public opinion, national identity, historical memory, cultural and social factors play an important role in the formation and change of national interests. Most often identity becomes a foundation for newly formed national interests. Jutta Weldes notes that “it is through the concept of the national interest that policy-makers understand the

---

<sup>12</sup> Malksoo M., From Existential Politics Towards Normal Politics? The Baltic States in the Enlarged Europe. *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No.3, 2006, p. 278.

<sup>13</sup> Guillaume X., “Foreign Policy and the Politics of Alterity: A Dialogical Understanding of International Relations”, *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, 2002, vol. 31, no. 1, p. 14.

goals to be pursued by a state's foreign policy. It thus in practice forms the basis for state action. It (also) functions as a rhetorical device through which the legitimacy of and political support for state action are generated".<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, as constructivists maintain, "interest is determined by state identity which depends on historical, cultural, political, and social backgrounds."<sup>15</sup> Thus, identity and national interests are strongly interrelated factors which affect each other. In their works constructivists tend to focus on the interrelation between internal and external factors which determine foreign policy. Identities of different countries, no matter how unique and independent they might be, are significantly influenced by international environment where state's national identity is defined and then redefined with a resulting change in priorities and interests of foreign policy.

Foreign policy is analyzed in the wider context of state's internal processes, its structures, institutions, historical memory, friendly/hostile relations (global, regional, sub-regional with regard to its neighbour states) and viewed from the perspective of the impact and consequences caused by external factors. Foreign policy in bilateral relations is a continuous construction and reconstruction of expectations in respect to the other country and reaction to its politics. As V. Kubalkova observes, "thus foreign policy encompasses the complicated communications within governments and amongst its diverse agents, plus the perceptions and misperceptions, the images of other countries, and the ideologies and personal dispositions of everyone involved."<sup>16</sup>

## 1.2. The Regional Component of Foreign Policy and Strategic Partnership

Compatibility of foreign and security policy interests and priorities combined with the aim to achieve positive change are highly significant for bilateral strategic partnership and cooperation. In this realm common interests, values, historical memory, mutual bilateral and multilateral, for example, regional, objectives, and joint attempts to define possible results and expectations of cooperation are emphasized. Strategic partnership should not necessarily be based on the lack of differences between two

<sup>14</sup> Weldes J., "Constructing National Interests", *European Journal of International Relations*, 1996, no. 2, p. 275–318, p. 276.

<sup>15</sup> Nia M. M., "Understanding Iran's Foreign Policy: An Application of Holistic Constructivism", *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Spring 2010, vol. 9, no. 1, p. 151.

<sup>16</sup> Kubalkova V., *Foreign Policy in a Constructed World*, New York: M.E. Sharp, p. 17.

countries in cooperation;<sup>17</sup> however, differences should not be fundamental or contradictory towards national identity, key priorities and interests of foreign policy. Changes in national foreign policy priorities normally result in a more or less formal review and reevaluation of their strategic partnerships.

As A. Schmidt maintains, bilateral partnership may contribute to the effective multilateral cooperation<sup>18</sup> which is most intensive at regional or sub-regional levels. Countries become strategic partners not only because their national identities and foreign policy interests are tightly interrelated but it is quite possible that strategic partners' experience of cooperation (positive or negative) determines or has impact on their national identities and foreign policy interests. Hence, bilateral cooperation becomes more intense or restrained—the evaluation is performed in the context of a constantly changing definition of “Me” vs “the Other”.

Bilateral partnership can be used for the purpose of common/mutual multilateral goals. In the case of Lithuania and Poland, this became obvious during the period of both countries integration into the Euro-Atlantic partnership. At the time of Central and Eastern European countries integration into the Euro-Atlantic security community, relations between Lithuania and Poland were exceptionally friendly and intensive. After Poland made it first – the country's NATO accession took place in 1999, it found itself at the border of the Alliance, so it was deemed beneficial from the political, historical and value-based approaches to support the expansion of the Euro-Atlantic area and integration of the three Baltic States into the Euro-Atlantic security community. During the integration process politicians of both countries in their public statements would very often look upon the partnership between Lithuania and Poland in the context of common security development, for example, President Alexander Kwasniewski had noted, “there won't be a secure Poland without a stable and secure Lithuania and a secure Lithuania is impossible without a stable and secure Poland”. Such statement illustrates that the countries seek common security policy and have a need to create a mutual security identity which is directly related to the Euro-Atlantic security community.

After both countries' accession to the EU and NATO, the Baltic States together with Poland have actively supported (and are still supporting) the EU and NATO expansion Eastwards and advocated for the development

---

<sup>17</sup> Bava U.S., “India and the European Union: From Engagement to Strategic Partnership”, *International Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 2-4, 2010, p. 384.

<sup>18</sup> Schmidt A., *Strategic Partnership - A Contested Policy Concept*, SWP Working Paper, FG1, Berlin, 2010, p. 5.

and strengthening of the Eastern Neighbourhood policy, NATO Partnership and “Open Door” policies. By giving support to the political and economic reforms in the EU Eastern Partnership countries, and by encouraging further integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures, the Baltic States and Poland were ahead of the countries which formed the EU New Neighbourhood policy.<sup>19</sup> In 2004, the then Minister of Defence Linas Linkevičius described Lithuania’s chosen position as “Thinking East”. This signified a value-defining, qualitative moment of the expansion of the security community, the members of which the countries had just become, pointed out the aim to strengthen and develop the security community, and, at the same time, to justify and reinforce the countries’ membership. In 2004, the Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Antanas Valionis delivered a speech at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Lithuanian-Polish partnership, where he named the idea of the EU expansion Eastwards as a common goal of Lithuania and Poland:

The dynamic space “from the Baltic to the Black Sea” may become one of the most promising regions in the European Union. <...> Lithuania and Poland are in the centre of this region. We can become its driving force, the crucial connecting link. Certainly, it is possible provided that we continue to work closely in the years ahead. Provided that we solve our issues of practical co-operation which still await legal or political “settlements”. Provided that we build good roads and power transmission lines to connect Lithuania and Poland because poor infrastructure impairs our partnership development.<sup>20</sup>

Antanas Valionis also noted in the same speech that “the Treaty on Bilateral Relations and Good Neighbourly Cooperation has forged incredibly close relations between our countries. A joint military battalion and various bilateral institutions were established, new business contacts were created. Poland has become one of the most important partners of Lithuania in our journey towards a more secure, stable and united Europe.”<sup>21</sup> Thus, by acknowledging possible challenges for the partnership, the aim to ensure a strong and stable security community was highlighted.

According to A. Schmidt, “Frequently strategic partnerships aim at going beyond the typical trade (and aid) cooperation but also looking for joint

<sup>19</sup> Mälksoo M., From Existential Politics Towards Normal Politics? The Baltic States in the Enlarged Europe, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No.3, 2006, p.286.

<sup>20</sup> 2004 04 23 Minister of Foreign Minister Valionis speech in Lithuanian Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of commemorating the Republic of Poland in friendly relations and good neighbourliness contract decade <http://www.mfa.lt/index.php?453829781>;

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.

global e.g. security, energy and environmental concerns”<sup>22</sup> This is also notable for Lithuanian-Polish relations. The bilateral cooperation of these countries is often directed at sub-regional but mostly regional level. Both Lithuania and Poland have joined the same security community (the Euro-Atlantic), they actively support Central and Eastern Europe integration, the countries belong to the Baltic Sea region, and Poland often arranges meetings with the three Baltic States, which also are in close relationship with the Visegrád Group.

National priorities of states change as they react to international environment, regional, sub-regional processes, events that take place in neighbouring states and also due to their internal developments. For example, in 2011, when cooperation between the Baltic and Nordic countries gained momentum, Lithuania turned its focus towards the Nordic direction. More articles appeared on the Balto-Scandia idea in the media and, generally, the public discourse concerning the direction of the Baltic-Nordic cooperation broadened. Thus, such processes demonstrate how the country’s regional identity gradually obtains additional elements, reinforces aspects which were previously less accentuated but now are placed on political agendas and gradually become a part of national identity. This is a way of responding to external processes, indicating community’s expectations, and echoing the priorities of national institutions. However, the final and critical decision to change the country’s foreign policy (by embracing new or fostering old prioritized directions) is made at the national level, i.e. inside the country, although the reasons for this are often regional.

It is possible to state that the continuity of strategic partnership is established and ensured by regional and sub-regional cooperation, especially, taking into account the fact that these countries belong to a sound and solid security community. As soon as positions on values, norms and identity are aligned with the EU and NATO the countries’ multidirectional foreign policies are developed even though interests and priorities defined by the strategic partners may not necessarily coincide. As far as Poland is concerned, it focuses more on relations with Germany and the Visegrád Group whereas Lithuania turns its focus towards the Nordic countries more and more often.

---

<sup>22</sup> Schmidt A., *Strategic Partnership - A Contested Policy Concept*, SWP Working Paper, FG1, Berlin, 2010, p. 5.

### 1.3. Changes in Bilateral Relations: National Identity, Internal and External Factors

As in any other political realm, a states' foreign policy, which also includes strategic partnerships, is constantly changing. As Alexander Wendt notes, "identities and interests are endogenous to interaction thus they are dependent variables in process. A structural change occurs when subjects determine anew what they are and what they want."<sup>23</sup> J. Holland expresses similar observations in his examination of political leaders' decisions and communication with the community as they try to introduce new elements into the foreign policy, i.e. make changes in foreign policy. He notes that "frequently, the most powerful way of achieving a dominant foreign policy is through its framing in ways that link it irrevocably to national identity."<sup>24</sup>

In foreign policy analysis the constructivist approach enables the researcher to join internal and international processes. According to D. Campbell, "in this understanding, global politics is comprised of states, their (domestic) subsystems, and international systems."<sup>25</sup> Campbell perceives national systems as subordinate to the international system but "these systems and sub-systems exist independently of, and prior to, any relationship that results from their joining by the 'bridge' of foreign policy. That bridge is consciously constructed by the state in an effort to make itself part of the larger system and to deal with the dangers and uncertainties that larger system holds for its own security."<sup>26</sup> Thus, national survival and national priorities are above systemic priorities. Constructivists often stress that levels of analysis are independent, however, they do not deny the existence of certain relationship between them, and they agree that due to different circumstances one level may dominate over another.

This dualism of foreign policy reveals the relationship between the two powers that influence foreign policy. On one hand, there are internal norms, values, actors which support, maintain and ensure the continuity of its national interests and priorities whereas, on the other hand, there are external factors, such as international values, global, regional processes, expectations of neighbouring countries. This dualistic relationship determines changes

<sup>23</sup> Wendt A., *Tarptautinės politikos socialinė teorija*, Vilnius: Eugimas, 2005, p. 357.

<sup>24</sup> Holland J., Foreign Policy and Political Possibility, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2013, p. 55.

<sup>25</sup> Campbell D., *Writing Security: US Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

<sup>26</sup> Campbell D., *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

in foreign policy agendas and priorities. Taking into account their internal dynamics, countries need to assess external processes and react to them and these reactions are often reflected in the national foreign policy.

While the change in the country's internal policy is most often determined by internal processes ongoing inside the country, its foreign policy changes at the intersection/interrelationship between internal and external processes. "When foreign policy, along with events perceived to be linked to international affairs, is articulated in ways that invoke a particular understanding of the national Self, it becomes particularly difficult to challenge the basic assumptions upon which any foreign policy debate would take place",<sup>27</sup> and which would result in any possible changes. A similar situation has been observed in Lithuanian-Polish relations when the question of name and place name writing in the Polish language was raised. Both Lithuanian and Polish politicians have recognized this particular situation as closely related to the national identity, which later provoked tension in bilateral relations.

As Jack Holland observes: "in short, foreign policy becomes not something the state *does*, but rather what the state *is*; in such a situation, to contest foreign policy is often to contest a prevalent and popular understanding of the national identity".<sup>28</sup> For this particular reason, both Lithuanian and Polish political elite could hardly enter into constructive negotiations regarding the writing of names and place names in the Polish language as they were defending their national identity perception. Some authors note that strategic agents, such as representatives of the political elite, always attempt to direct political mobilization towards some specific expected result. For this purpose they use symbols, metaphors, and cognitive references, seek to summarize experience and record the meaning of events. The political elite act in this way not only because they hope to explain events, give interpretations to problems and establish a common understanding but because they also strive to mobilize and divert social action in a particular direction.

According to the representatives of constructivism, one of the most important internal factors which determines transformations in countries' foreign policy is the change of ruling political parties. Specifically, changes in ideologies are viewed as highly significant internal factors in terms of their impact on foreign policy. However, constructivists differ in opinions as to whether, after the change of the ruling majority, the new majority may

---

<sup>27</sup> Holland J., Op. cit. p. 55.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, p. 55.

initiate changes in foreign policy based on ideological differences.<sup>29</sup> M. Barnett remarks that in a conflict situation the change of governments would tend to provoke an ideological change in foreign policy, whereas during the period of international security and stability it is less expected to happen.<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, a study conducted by Douglas Brommesson and Ann-Marie Ekengren in 2013, illustrated how the change of ruling parties (or coalitions) in Sweden and the United Kingdom resulted in changes in foreign policy priorities and this change was not ascribed to any national or international security and stability factors.<sup>31</sup> Juliet Kaarbo (in 1996, 2012) was one of the first to analyze coalition governments and their impact on foreign policy changes. She noted that junior parties within coalitions are able to change the country's foreign policy when they are unanimous and self-determined to attain this.<sup>32</sup> Some researchers believe that ideologies of foreign policy may serve as guidelines for decision makers (Goldstein and Keohane) while others maintain that foreign policy ideologies have a unifying effect on agents, i.e., the political elite, especially, when there are differences in opinions on questions of lesser importance (Barnett, Schelling).<sup>33</sup>

The following sections of the paper present an overview of the Lithuanian-Polish strategic partnership, evaluation of its change with regard to internal and external factors, and the interaction between national interests and identity.

<sup>29</sup> Brommesson D., Ekengren A. M., What Happens When a New Government Enters Office? A Comparison of Ideological Change in British and Swedish Foreign Policy 1991-2011, *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 48, No. 1, 2013, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> Barnett M., "Culture, strategy, and foreign policy change: Israel's road to Oslo", *European Journal of International Relations*, 1999, 5: 5-36, quoted in Brommesson D., Ekengren A.M., "What Happens When a New Government Enters Office? A Comparison of Ideological Change in British and Swedish Foreign Policy 1991-2011", *Cooperation and Conflict*, 2013, vol. 48, no. 1, p. 21.

<sup>31</sup> Brommesson D., Ekengren A.M., "What Happens When a New Government Enters Office? A Comparison of Ideological Change in British and Swedish Foreign Policy 1991-2011", *Cooperation and Conflict*, 2013, vol. 48, no. 1, p. 21.

<sup>32</sup> Kaarbo J., "Power and influence in foreign policy decision making: the role of junior coalition partners in German and Israeli foreign policy", *International Studies Quarterly*, 2012, vol. 40, no. 4, p. 501-530. Kaarbo J., *Coalition Politics and Cabinet Decision Making: A Comparative Analysis of Foreign Policy Choices*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1996.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

## 2. The Development of Lithuanian-Polish Strategic Partnership and Political Dialogue

Lithuania's strategic cooperation, its foreign policy priorities and possibilities can develop in several directions. Specifically, these include Poland, countries of Northern Europe, connections with Latvia and Estonia, the Baltic region, the Nordic-Baltic cooperation, Central and Eastern Europe, the USA, and France. At the regional level, strategic directions and cooperation often intersect, coincide or intertwine through causal links. Frequently they are directly related with the country's national identity and the ensuing foreign policy interests. Normally cooperation with neighbouring countries is based on geographical proximity, historical experience (positive or negative), common interests (at sub-regional, regional and global levels) and, most often, similarities in national identity. Cooperation with the countries which are close not just geographically but also in terms of their values and belong to the category "Us", is supposed to be more intense and solid than with the countries under "the Other" category.

Lithuania's sub-regional cooperation is fostered in the following frameworks: the Baltic states, the Baltic sea, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Nordic-Baltic (Balto-Scandic) countries. Regionally, the state has forged close ties with the EU, NATO, OSCE and other international organizations. The development of regional and sub-regional cooperation falls under the influence of bilateral relations with neighbouring states and communities in either a stimulating or restrictive fashion. Lithuania and Poland's directions of cooperation are linked and overlap at all levels (sub-regional, regional, bilateral), although they do not necessarily coincide. Both countries focus on separate priority spheres which largely depend on national interests (see: Table 1). Foreign policies of both countries can be described as multidirectional.

Table 1. Directions of Lithuanian - Polish Cooperation

	Lithuania	Poland
Strategic partnership	Poland; the USA; France; Latvia; Estonia; Ukraine	Lithuania; Hungary; Ukraine; Romania; UK; South Korea; China
Sub-regional cooperation	The Baltic states; Baltic-Nordic Europe (Balto-Scandic formation); Central and Eastern Europe; The Baltic Sea Region	The Visegrád Group; The Weimar Triangle; Central and Eastern Europe; The Baltic Sea Region
Regional cooperation	NATO; EU; OSCE; European Council	NATO; EU; OSCE; European Council

Cooperation among the Baltic States is exceptionally important for Lithuania. The three Baltic States work together in multilateral formats/structures, especially, in the field of security. However, examples of political disagreements may be singled out. Such as disagreements regarding the Baltic air-policing mission when Lithuania's and Estonia's interests and positions were at odds. As for the differences, Estonia pays more attention to Northern Europe, and sees its national identity more akin to this sub-region. Lithuania and Latvia also oriented themselves towards the Nordic dimension although their interests in this region are not as distinctly defined as in Estonia's case. In 2013-2014, the Embassy of Lithuania in Sweden performs the functions of NATO Contact Embassy. This is one of the examples which illustrates Lithuania's attempts to intensify relations with the Nordic countries in the areas of security and defense. Similarly, Lithuania and Latvia seek to keep their roles in the development of the Eastern Partnership Policy within the Central and Eastern Europe region. This aim also coincides with Poland's priorities.

Poland has a more distinct role, influence, and greater ambitions within the EU than Lithuania, which is a great advantage in terms of advocating Lithuania's interests and initiatives. Poland could become a partner of common projects in the EU. "By developing its ties with the Scandinavian countries and, in particular, Sweden, Lithuania should, first of all, aim for trilateral or multilateral cooperation as it would raise it to a more efficient level of cooperation".<sup>34</sup> In other words, Poland should not be forgotten while fostering relations with Scandinavia.

Table 2. **Internal and External Factors in Lithuanian-Polish Cooperation**

	<b>Internal factors which determine bilateral cooperation</b>	<b>External factors which determine bilateral cooperation</b>
Lithuanian and Polish bilateral cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar positions on regional security and the EU Eastern Neighbourhood Policy;</li> <li>• Governmental programme priorities in regional and bilateral cooperation;</li> <li>• Parliamentary party positions towards bilateral issues;</li> <li>• Changes in Lithuania's and Poland's political elite;</li> <li>• Smolensk Crash in 2010 and the completion of Lithuanian and Polish foreign policy on integration;</li> <li>• Decline in the states' strategic compatibility and common interests;</li> <li>• Problems of national minorities;</li> <li>• Historical memory and tradition of bilateral cooperation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EU Common Energy Policy;</li> <li>• The development of the EU common security and defence policy;</li> <li>• NATO evolution;</li> <li>• The dynamics of the EU major states strategic cooperation;</li> <li>• The Russian factor;</li> <li>• The USA factor;</li> <li>• The development of the Baltic sea region;</li> <li>• The development and cooperation of the Nordic-Baltic region.</li> </ul>

<sup>34</sup> Dambrauskaitė Ž., Janeliūnas T., Jurkonis V., Gira V., "Lithuanian-Polish Relations Reconsidered: A Constrained Bilateral Agenda or an Empty Strategic Partnership?", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 2011 (26). Accessed on 2013 09 20 at: <http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/2011-26/Dambrauskaite%20el%20al.pdf>;

The directions of Lithuania's strategic and regional cooperation with Poland are defined in governmental programmes. For example, the programme by the 15th Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 2008-2012 specified an objective to maintain and develop a more extensive partnership with Poland based on common security interests and political priorities and regulations. The programme expressed the aim to further expand the Lithuanian and Polish strategic partnership based on common security demands in this region, the European integration of energy and transport systems, mutual interests in implementing common infrastructure projects, and also traditional European internal and external policy directives. In order to put these goals into effect a plan to establish a forum of Lithuanian and Polish intellectuals under the Prime Ministers' support came into being, with the aim of analyzing the possibility to write place names in the languages of national minorities and, if necessary, to prepare drafts of respective legal acts and a draft law on the writing of first and last names in the Republic of Lithuania (approved by the Act No 529 by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the 30th of May 2007 and submitted to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Project No XP-689A).

The Programme of the 15<sup>th</sup> Government of the Republic of Lithuania specified the intention to conduct a project on the gas network link implementation which would open up alternative opportunities for gas supply from the European network and would strengthen Lithuania's energy security. The Government together with Poland's representatives intended to deliver an application to the European Commission regarding the financing of feasibility studies for Lithuania and Poland gas system connection and, provided that funds from the European Commission budget for the TEN-E programme would be received, adopt a decision regarding the financing of the study on the part of Lithuania.<sup>35</sup> The 15<sup>th</sup> Government of the Republic of Lithuania promoted various projects for infrastructural improvement and economic development. The 16<sup>th</sup> Government of the Republic of Lithuania seeks to continue working with the projects undertaken by the previous Government. Following the directives of the Programme for 2012-2016 of the 16<sup>th</sup> Government of the Republic of Lithuania, greater attention is paid to regional energy infrastructure projects. This signifies the continuity of the Lithuanian-Polish cooperation during the change of the governments. One of the aims of the Programme is to ensure the construction of Lithuania-Poland electricity interconnections (LitPol Link). Similarly, the

---

<sup>35</sup> The Resolution No. 189 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania "Regarding the Approval of the Implementation Measures of the 2008-2012 Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania" of 25 February 2009. Accessed on 2013 10 15 at: [http://www.lrvk.lt/bylos/vyriausybes/n0189\\_priemones.pdf](http://www.lrvk.lt/bylos/vyriausybes/n0189_priemones.pdf).

task has been set to start building a gas network link between Lithuania and Poland. In the sector of transportation the plan is to reconstruct the rail link of Rail Baltica from Poland-Lithuania border to Kaunas: the border of Poland-Lithuania-Mockava. In order to develop the vision of Lithuania as an active member of the EU, one of the primary goals is to keep a more active political and public dialogue between Lithuania and Poland. In terms of regional cooperation the objective has been set to expand cooperation with Poland in the fields of defense and security.<sup>36</sup>

A closer look at Lithuania's foreign policy directions in terms of bilateral, sub-regional and regional levels warrants a question whether the partnership with Northern European countries may have an impact on Lithuania's cooperation with Poland. The Nordic countries have been supporting Lithuania's independence since it was declared, these states remain to be close regional partners in strengthening Lithuanian's defense capacity. More active cooperation with the Nordic countries provides Lithuania with a strategic opportunity to become a state connecting Central and Eastern Europe with Northern Europe. This direction could extend the space of regional security community<sup>37</sup> spreading from Scandinavia throughout the entire Central and Eastern Europe. Such a strategy would enable Lithuania to have more active participation in the EU policy, particularly, in the fields of economy and security.

The Resolution of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on the Approval of National Security Strategy, in its new edition adopted in 2012, states that Lithuania will seek to strengthen its partnership and cooperation with the Republic of Poland in military, energy security, transportation and other spheres, while developing further common projects on regional infrastructure.<sup>38</sup> The emphasis placed on these positions in the strategy of national security of the Republic of Lithuania indicates priority spheres of the Lithuanian-Polish cooperation at the present period. The development of a Lithuanian-Polish strategic partnership is based on common goals determined by bilateral relations: the integration of security, energy and transportation systems and a shared

---

<sup>36</sup>The Resolution No. 228 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania "Regarding the Approval of the Implementation Measures of the 2012–2016 Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania" of March 13, 2013. Accessed on 2013 10 15 at: <http://www.lrvk.lt/bylos/veikla/priemones13.pdf>;

<sup>37</sup> Security community is based on a shared concept of identity, the notion of "Us", the insurance of security among states, common institutions, trust, loyalty, and regional subjectivity. The features outlined above allow for an establishment of common security perspective and common defence policy by a group of states functioning as a completely integrated, undivided entity in the international system.

<sup>38</sup> Resolution No. XI-2131 of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania "Regarding the Approval of the National Security Strategy". New edition of the Resolution as of 2012-07-01. No. XI-2131, 2012-06-26, Žin., 2012, No. 76-3945 (2012-06-30).

interest in the implementation of joint infrastructure projects. The relationship between the states is also based on traditional regulations for European internal and external policy. The strategic cooperation is aimed at developing a forum of intellectuals, analyzing the possibility of writing place names in the languages of national minorities and, if necessary, to prepare drafts for respective legal acts.<sup>39</sup> As the official documents of the two countries suggest, their bilateral cooperation is oriented towards the development of economic and infrastructure projects often leaving other strategic issues aside.

The study of the official positions of the institutions of the Republic of Lithuania expressed in the programmes of Lithuanian governments and the National Security Strategy, the dynamics of the international security policy, and directions and priorities of the Nordic countries' security policy lends a conclusion that the Nordic direction will be fostered; however, the demand for the cooperation with Poland remains, and presumably, it will stand out in the future. Bearing in mind the perspective of the security policy, it may be assumed that formal division of the Trans-Atlantic security community into security sub-regions is not beneficial to Lithuania. Bilateral relations with Poland have always been one of the foreign policy priorities of Lithuania. However, occasional changes in the rhetoric and public communication style of both countries may be observed. For example, according to the Polish internet portal *wiadomosci.wp.pl*, during the period when A. Ažubalis was holding the office of the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, the bilateral relations between Lithuania and Poland deteriorated.<sup>40</sup> The tension between the two foreign ministers has been mentioned several times in R. Sikorski's public statements. In his interview with BNS in April 2010, A. Ažubalis commented on Lithuanian-Polish relations:

Directions have not changed. What has changed is the style of conducting politics. It is only natural that my, as minister's, public rhetoric differs from that of my predecessor or the official who had held the office even earlier, Petras Vaitiekūnas. Every politician has his own style, manner of communication, attitude. <...>I believe that key interests of Poland as a state and the political perception of its leaders about Poland's role in the region can not change greatly, irrespective of who holds the top positions in the country.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup>The Implementation Measures of the 2008–2012 Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Accessed on 201310 15 at: [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=405318](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=405318);

<sup>40</sup>More information on the deterioration of bilateral relations between Poland and Lithuania in: Article „Lithuanian - Polish Relations – the worst ones in the EU” (lenk., „Relacje Polski z Litwą najgorsze w UE”) in internet news portal *wiadomosci.wp.pl*; Accessed on 201310 15 at: <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1023303,title,Relacje-Polski-z-Litwa-najgorsze-w-UE,wid,13035175,wiadomosc.html?tcid=1e245>.

<sup>41</sup>BNS, “A. Ažubalis: „Apie tautinių mažumų teises Lietuvoje turi būti aiškina daugiau”. *Lrytas.lt* Accessed on 2013 10 16 at: <http://www.lrytas.lt/-12724508581271764103-a-azubalis-apie-tautiniu-mazumu-teises-lietuvoje-turi-buti-aiskinama-daugiau.htm>;

Thus the minister noted that foreign policy depends on its executives and key changes take place only within the limits of the implementation of political decisions, however, this should not have greater impact on the choice of the directions of cooperation.

The officials' rhetoric is notably stricter; for example, the Prime Minister of Poland Donald Tusk has given an open signal: the time of excellent, more than neighbourly relations between Lithuania and Poland is over. Lithuanian reviewers observe that Warsaw does not find in Vilnius either strategic partner or a significant ally in the EU and NATO any longer.<sup>42</sup> According to D. Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, the current situation has formed not just because the Polish minority in Lithuania became indignant about current circumstances but also due to Poland's decision, based on economy and pragmatism, to cooperate with Russia rather than Lithuania in the energy sphere (a decision to cancel its participation in the Visaginas nuclear power plant project). From the observations on Lithuanian and Polish foreign policy changes it can be presumed that Lithuania to Poland is not so useful strategically. With the country's national interests changing, Lithuania's position on Poland's foreign policy priority list was also modified; whereas the importance of Poland for Lithuania was more conspicuous in the context of the EU and NATO membership, in attempts to establish themselves within the international community and especially in the regional security community. The rhetoric by Lithuanian and Polish officials indicates that the altered foreign policy of Poland towards Lithuania has impacted bilateral cooperation. Lithuania's expectations towards Poland as a strategic partner are naturally changing. The interests of national cooperation are more focused on specific projects. Although despite external factors (the decline of Poland's interests) Poland is still placed at the top of Lithuania's foreign policy priority and interest list.

The effect of bilateral relations on regional and sub-regional dynamics is not that evident, although, for example, the Estonian historian and political scientist Andres Kasekamp notes that "disagreements between Lithuania and Poland may have repercussions on energy security of the entire Baltic region since Poland is presently giving priority not to geopolitical but commercial interests".<sup>43</sup> The cooperation on issues related to the Baltic Sea region is

<sup>42</sup> Bačiulis A., "Anei Putino, anei Tusko", *Veidas*, 2010 05 31.

<sup>43</sup> BNS, "Politologas: Lietuvos ir Lenkijos nesutarimai gali atsiliepti viso Baltijos regiono energetikos saugumui", 2010-10-26. *Delfi.lt* Accessed on 2013 10 16 at: <http://www.delfi.lt/verslas/energetika/politologas-lietuvos-ir-lenkijos-nesutarimai-gali-atsiliepti-viso-baltijos-regiono-energetikos-saugumui.d?id=37895687#ixzz2llqu4HKz>;

a relevant example of bilateral dialogue development but throughout the region the policy of more general nature should be implemented instead of just focusing on the roles of separate sub-regions (the Baltic States, Nordic dimensions, and distinct positions by Germany, Poland and Russia).

At the national level and in the context of changing bilateral relations, an issue of national minorities started to show up. For example, in her annual address delivered on June 11, 2013 President D. Grybauskaitė stated that:

the Lithuanian language is becoming a hostage of political agreements made by the governing coalition. The controversial Lithuanian language exam has started to generate other demands that divide the country. While at the same time, Lithuanian schools are being closed outside our borders.<sup>44</sup>

Criticism directed at the education policy of the left-wing government is part of the issue of national minorities in Lithuanian-Polish relations. Whereas statements made by Waldemar Tomaszewski, often radical in their nature, constitute another part of the implementation of this policy. Therefore, thoughts expressed by one or the other side sometimes draw the international community's attention.

Comparing the Lithuanian presidents' foreign policy with respect to Poland, we notice some differences. Valdas Adamkus' relations with the Polish leaders were rather personal. Grybauskaitė has a different attitude. Her view on international relations is more pragmatic, and less interpersonal. For example, President Grybauskaitė's refusal to attend the meeting of Polish and the Baltic countries' Presidents held in 2012 has caused a wide public discussion. The President's office has explained such position by stating that issues for the preparation for the NATO Summit in Chicago had already been discussed both with the President of Poland and the President of Latvia.<sup>45</sup>

Lithuanian and Polish cooperation on issues of the Eastern Partnership is an excellent example of bilateral cooperation in the EU framework. Progress on Association Agreements with Moldova and Georgia, the dialogue maintained with Ukraine, a strong push towards visa regime simplification and liberalization processes can be treated as results of common operation. On the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2013 the third Eastern Partnership Summit was held in Vilnius. In alignment with the initiative of the Eastern Partnership<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Annual presidential address by the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaitė of June 11, 2013. Accessed on 2013 10 16 at: [http://www.president.lt/lt/prezidento\\_veikla/metinis\\_pranesimas/2013\\_m..html](http://www.president.lt/lt/prezidento_veikla/metinis_pranesimas/2013_m..html);

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>46</sup> The Eastern Partnership entails the EU relations with six Eastern partners: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and the Ukraine.

the bilateral and multilateral cooperation is reinforced with the Eastern neighbours of the EU Neighbourhood Policy, support is extended to reform processes in the countries while efforts are being made to draw them closer to the EU. The established structure of multilateral framework enables partner countries to exchange experience, information and implement projects. This can be evaluated as a result of a political dialogue between Lithuania and Poland. As a result of the initiative by Lithuania and Poland the development of cooperation in sectors is enhanced and various frameworks are introduced in the Eastern Partnership as vehicles of cooperation, namely, the Civil Society Forum, the Conference of Regional and Local Authorities, Business Forum, and Youth forum. It is likely that in the future the bilateral cooperation between Lithuania and Poland will be driven by regional level cooperation the EU and NATO.

The strategic partnership between Lithuania and Poland can be evaluated as a dynamic mutual cooperation process which reveals an idea that common and coordinated actions by the two countries are given priority. This is obvious both in the rhetoric of politicians and diplomats and in specific bilateral projects and initiatives. The cooperation is not unvarying but instead highly influenced by internal and external factors which determine bilateral relations. It is also affected by the countries' national priorities, regional/sub-regional orientations, changes in identity and national interests.

## **2.1. Security Policy and Energy Independence Factors in Bilateral Relations**

The cooperation between Lithuania and Poland in the sphere of defense constitutes a substantial part of the strategic partnership. The countries are running several joint defense projects. In the report of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Lithuania issued in 2012, the cooperation with Poland is identified as consultations held with Poland on different issues of strategic importance, and coordinated actions undertaken in order to seek higher NATO visibility in the region. During the consultations special attention was drawn to the NATO Response Force exercise "Steadfast Jazz 2013" performed in the autumn 2013.<sup>47</sup> In 2012 the Polish Minister of Defence was invited to attend the meetings of the Ministers of Defence of the Baltic States in order

<sup>47</sup> Annual Report of 2012 of the Ministry of Defence to the Committee of National Security and Defence of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. Accessed on 2013 10 21 at: [www.kam.lt/.../2012\\_kam\\_ataskaita\\_%20nsgk\\_%202013-05-02](http://www.kam.lt/.../2012_kam_ataskaita_%20nsgk_%202013-05-02);

to strengthen regional cooperation in defence planning. Lithuania is taking part in the activities of NATO Multinational Corps Northeast, dislocated in Szczecin, Poland. In 2012 the cooperation among special operations forces intensified. Also in 2012 Lithuania and Poland continued their cooperation in military cartography. During the same year the countries were more actively working on harmonization of an agreement on creation of the joint brigade of Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine, LITPOLUKRBRIG.

In the spring 2013 the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Lithuania Juozas Olekas met with the Polish Minister of Defence Tomasz Siemoniak and discussed the creation of the joint military brigade of Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine, military exercises, the NATO Air Policing mission in the Baltic States, and Lithuanian Presidency of the European Council. According to the bilateral agreement the strategic partnership between Lithuania and Poland shall be developed by strengthening and organizing mutual defence-related military forces. Establishment of the joint Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian military brigade LITPOLUKRBRIG can be treated as one of the major priorities of this cooperation.<sup>48</sup> Setting up of this brigade is a long-term process and a priority project for Lithuania in terms of its participation in military arrangements. The idea of LITPOLUKRBRIG indicates how interwoven the interests of Lithuania and Poland in Eastern Europe are and reflects their goal to foster the Eastern Partnership.

Lithuania and Poland aim for closer cooperation with the Eastern partners and intend to incorporate the cooperation into the EU Common Security and Defence Policy. Both countries strive for intensive cooperation with Ukraine as their continual political and military consultations and joint exercises testify. Defense cooperation with NATO is an important factor.<sup>49</sup> This signifies intention to contribute to the strengthening of the Euro-Atlantic security community. Poland's fighter aircrafts have participated in the NATO Air Policing mission over the Baltic States four times so far. Lithuania's officers work in the Multinational Corps North-East of Denmark-Germany-Poland (MNC NE). This is, of course, more technical cooperation; however, within the wider context of the Euro-Atlantic security community, it is highly notable and

---

<sup>48</sup> Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine entered into official negotiations on the establishment of a trilateral military entity in 2011. This brigade could participate in international operations of the EU and stay on duty in the EU combat groups. It is foreseen that the trilateral LITPOLUKRBRIG brigade will comprise three battalions; its headquarters will be based in Lublin, Poland. The highest governing body of the joint brigade will be rotating among the three countries. Plans have been made for this brigade to act as a unifying entity in international operations, common international exercises, and be part of response forces.

<sup>49</sup> "Lietuvos ir Lenkijos strateginė partnerystė bus stiprinama toliau", *Voruta.lt*, Accessed on 2013 10 21 at: <http://www.voruta.lt/lietuvos-ir-lenkijos-strategine-partneryste-bus-stiprinama-toliau/>.

important, because it marks the continuity of the countries' mutual security and defence interests<sup>50</sup>, despite the dynamics of political cooperation.

Alongside other spheres of Lithuanian-Polish niche cooperation, infrastructure enhancement and development of economy can be singled out. Energy issues became the most significant examples of bilateral cooperation. The link between Lithuanian-Polish gas pipelines should become a part of the plan for the Baltics' energy market interconnections. According to this plan, the energy markets of the Baltic Sea region shall be integrated by international energy links. BEMIP (the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan) is one of the priorities in developing energy infrastructure which has been specified by the EU in its Second Strategic Energy Review.<sup>51</sup> The purpose of such plan is to unite gas and electricity markets of the Baltic Sea region and to terminate separation of the Baltic States from the European energy market.

Poland serves as the gates of Lithuania's energy infrastructure leading to the EU because Lithuania is able to technically connect to the European energy market and to its continental networks only via Poland. The gas pipeline between Lithuania and Poland, its link 562 km long, would diversify gas supply sources and create preconditions for the free gas market.<sup>52</sup> The Business Environment Analysis on the Lithuanian-Polish gas pipelines link has been already carried out, a comprehensive feasibility study is under preparation. The Polish company Gaz-System is planning to extend the gas pipeline to Lithuania in 2018. The linkage of the Lithuanian and Polish pipeline systems

<sup>50</sup> According to representatives of the governments the bilateral military cooperation of Lithuania and Poland is one of the most important areas in the strengthening of our state's defence and security. In a bilateral meeting which took place in April of 2013 the Defence Minister of the Republic of Lithuania thanked Poland for its active participation in NATO air policing mission in the Baltic countries thus underscoring the necessity for cooperation with Poland. During the meeting an Agreement Memorandum was signed regarding the cooperation of Lithuania's and Poland's special operations forces. The Memorandum defines the principles of bilateral cooperation in the development of special operations forces. The cooperation of special operations forces would entail joint training sessions, exchange of experience and information about transformation and development of special operations forces, and other mutually beneficial activities.

<sup>51</sup> "Parengta Lenkijos – Lietuvos dujotiekių jungties verslo aplinkos analizė", *Verslo žinios*, 2012 02 10. Accessed on 2013 10 26 at: <http://vz.lt/Default.aspx?PublicationId=1c22e8d7-2dba-4aaa-8ce6-f9c59a3e819a#ixzz2kG6oTkWm>;

<sup>52</sup> Estimates have been presented to the effect that the capacity of the interconnection to the Baltic states would be up to 2,3 billion cubic metres per year. Poland's gas supply system operator Gaz-System S.A. and Lithuania's company "Lietuvos dujos" signed a document which lays down principles of cooperation between the companies on the research type of work regarding the construction of gas pipeline to interconnect Poland and Lithuania. Results of the Business Environment Analysis carried out in February of 2012 indicated that Lithuania – Poland gas pipeline interconnection would be highly useful to the gas markets of the region, enhance the reliability factor of gas supply, and expand market possibilities. The document also covered issues to be solved.

is an integrational step towards common EU energy market.<sup>53</sup> Construction of this link is of strategic importance to the integrity of the European Union gas market and has been initiated by Lithuanian and Polish leaders as well as supported by the European Commission.

Lithuania and Poland prioritize energy issues as of strategic importance of cooperation. According to the Minister of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania Jaroslav Neverovič, common energy projects may get Lithuania and Poland even closer to each other. As the minister believes, “our common principles can already be named today: to create a real market and real competition in electricity, gas and heating sectors and to avoid the dominance of vertically integrated monopolies. Thus producers will also reap benefits as they will be compelled to work as efficiently as possible and the users will enjoy a guaranteed lowest price for the product.”<sup>54</sup> For this reason, in the strategic documents of the Republic of Lithuania, the Lithuanian-Polish energy cooperation is granted exceptional importance.

In autumn 2012, at the forum of the countries’ investors of the Baltic Sea region, Janusz Michalski, the head of the Energy Policy Unit of the Polish Energy Department, stated that both the forthcoming terminal in Klaipėda, set to begin operations in 2015, and a terminal in Poland that Warsaw hopes to build in two or three years, would contribute significantly to the energy security in the region. According to the Polish official, these projects should not be an obstacle for the planned gas link.<sup>55</sup> Poland is reasoning its intention to expand both shale gas extraction and nuclear energy development, yet, it refuses to comment on the possibility to return to the Visaginas nuclear power plant project.

During the 15<sup>th</sup> intergovernmental session of Lithuanian and Polish economic cooperation commission held in autumn of 2012, the countries exchanged the latest information on the implementation of the projects important to the economies of both states, especially in the fields of energy, transportation and tourism. Much attention was paid to cooperation in energy and transportation sectors: construction of gas terminals, possibilities to use the potential of shale gas, changes in electric energy field, the course of

<sup>53</sup> The Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania. Accessed on 2013 10 26 at: [http://www.enmin.lt/lt/activity/veiklos\\_kryptys/strateginiai\\_projektai/LietuvosLenkijos\\_dujotiekis.php?clear\\_cache=Y](http://www.enmin.lt/lt/activity/veiklos_kryptys/strateginiai_projektai/LietuvosLenkijos_dujotiekis.php?clear_cache=Y);

<sup>54</sup> Jokūbaitis M., “Energetikos ministras J. Neverovičius: „Lietuvą ir Lenkiją suartins energetika”, *Lrytas.lt*. 2012 12 17. Accessed on 2013 10 26 at: <http://www.lrytas.lt/verslas/izvalgos-ir-nuomones/energetikos-ministras-j-neverovicus-lietuva-ir-lenkija-suartins-energetika.htm>;

<sup>55</sup> “Lenkija tikisi ES paramos dujų ir elektros jungtims su Lietuva, remia dujų terminalą Klaipėdoje”, *Verslo žinios*, 2012 10 26.. Accessed on 2013 10 26 at: <http://vz.lt/article/2012/10/26/lenkija-tikisi-es-paramos-duju-ir-elektros-jungtims-su-lietuva-remia-duju-terminala-klaipedoje#ixzz2kFqbODRr>;

implementation of transportation projects *Rail Baltica* and *Via Baltica*.

In the context of their bilateral relations Lithuania and Poland seek closer cooperation at the level of the European Union in the fields of investments, protection of user rights, market supervision, public procurement, innovations. It is notable that development of interrelations is of the utmost importance for the economies of the countries.

Defence, security, economic and energy cooperation spheres are obviously less influenced by the political dynamics of bilateral cooperation. They are closely linked to regional security and economic policy, with the countries' aim to ensure continuity of security community, and thus to take care of its national security. Pragmatic national interests, geographical proximity and previous experience of cooperation determine the continuity of specific niche projects. The countries' aim to maintain and strengthen the Euro-Atlantic security community plays an important role in security cooperation. Moreover, within the community, the interests of security policy and the understanding of NATO development are very similar.

## **2.2. National Minorities in Bilateral Relations: Lithuania's Position**

Relations between Lithuania and Poland have been lately marked by disagreement due to differences in the assessment of national minorities' situation. In Lithuania's public discourse the threat to the state raised by the Lithuanian Polish community is being constructed on political assumptions. The latter are blamed for civil and political disloyalty. Every ethnic group in Lithuania is associated with a specific set of issues. In this respect the Lithuanian Polish population<sup>56</sup> does not differ from the Roma community, Jews and Russians; all of them are within well-established and static portrayal frameworks. However, the Polish national minority is singled out by three main topics: issues of national minorities' education, the writing of names and place names in the Polish alphabet, and the factor of national minority in the state's internal and external policy.

The Lithuanian Polish community's demands to the Lithuanian Government have intensified recently. An important issue is the writing of first and last names in the Polish alphabet in the documents of the Republic of Lithuania. Another relevant topic is about the situation in Šalčininkai and

---

<sup>56</sup> Poles comprise more than 25 percent of residents in Vilnius, Šalčininkai, Švenčionys and Trakai regions.

in Vilnius districts where a request has been expressed to write place and street names in two languages. Moreover, this district faces the problem of land return to its owners. However, the most important issue currently is an argument regarding the education reform implemented in the Republic of Lithuania. With the escalation of problems and tensions running high, the underlying issue remains whether the unified examination of the Lithuanian language is rational in respect to the national minority. The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania has clarified that the principle of equality shall be observed, whereas the representatives of the Polish national minority demand for additional conditions thus the issue is being intensified and more problems are being created in relation to the situation of national minority in Lithuania, aiming to become a visible political power.

The problems of the Polish national minority are constructed in relation with the political tension in the country. The Law on National Minorities expired on the 1st of January 2010 and at the moment there is no law regulating the situation of national minorities. During his visit to Lithuania at the end of 2011, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Knut Vollebaek, stated, “there is no such obligation to have a law on ethnic minorities and there are many countries which do not have it. In my opinion, there is a problem in your case since you had the Law on National Minorities which has expired. Symbolically, it creates a specific situation as opposed to the one if you hadn’t had that law. As per the European Council report, it would seem that once a law expires legal vacuum is created.”<sup>57</sup>

A working group under the guidance of the Vice-Minister of Culture Edvard Trusevič, delegated by the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania, has prepared a draft of Law on National Minorities which would allow bilingual place names in locations where representatives of a national minority make up not less than 25% of the population. Also in such locations speaking the national minority language would be allowed in state institutions. As this draft has raised arguments and doubts within the governing coalition, the EAPL has also suggested to temporarily restore the Law on National Minorities adopted in 1991.<sup>58</sup>

In public statements the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic

---

<sup>57</sup> BNS, “Tautinių mažumų įstatymo nebuvimas sukuria teisinį vakuumą”, *Diena.lt*. 2011-11-16. Accessed on 20131028 at: <http://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/salies-pulsas/tautiniu-mazumu-istatymo-nebuvimas-sukuria-teisini-vakuuma-268622#.Un-LXUCRbYs>;

<sup>58</sup> BNS, Lenkijos ambasadorius: tautinių mažumų įstatymas yra Lietuvos vidaus reikalas. *Delfi.lt* Accessed on 2013 11 22 at: <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/lenkijos-ambasadorius-tautiniu-mazumu-istatymas-yra-lietuvos-vidausr-reikalas.d?id=63332288#ixzz2lK0Zr8s8>;

of Lithuania emphasizes that the demands of Polish national minority are groundless, whereas the situation of education of national minorities in Lithuania is the best in Europe. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, Linas Linkevičius, was visiting Vytautas Magnus University in May 2013. To the question of what place in the context of bilateral relations the policy of national minorities took, he gave a two-fold answer: first of all, the minister pointed out that this was not a field of priority because the main focus was on national interests, and, secondly, in support of his statement he noted that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland Radosław Sikorski also had the same attitude.<sup>59</sup>

In public discourse the Polish national minority is still depicted as a disloyal part of society to the state of Lithuania—one which can threaten its stability. In Lithuania the Polish national minority is presented through politicized education problems. Poles in Lithuania are represented as a minority which seeks a special status and special rights in the state. According to the opinion of the Polish Ambassador in Lithuania Jarosław Czubiński, “Poland cannot interfere into another country’s state of affairs or solve problems which do not fall under the competence of the Republic of Poland, although we constantly ask for a higher level of empathy towards the issues raised by the citizens of Lithuania who are of Polish ethnicity”.<sup>60</sup>

In Lithuania the number of schoolchildren is decreasing in all schools of general education. In Polish schools operating in Lithuania all subjects, except the Lithuanian language, are taught in the Polish language. It is a unique case in the European education system and Lithuania is the only country where individuals who belong to the Polish national minority have an opportunity to receive a complete education in their national language (from primary to higher education).<sup>61</sup> The facts presented below demonstrate once again that the education system in Lithuania does not discriminate against Lithuanian Poles but, on the contrary, creates exceptional conditions for this national minority (see Table No. 3 and 4).

<sup>59</sup> On the 16th of May 2013 the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania Linas Linkevičius visited Vytautas Magnus University where he gave a lecture to the VMU community. According to him, one of the most important problems which remains to be solved and is of concern not only to Lithuania but also to our neighbouring countries, namely, Latvia, Poland and Estonia too, is energy independence and security.

<sup>60</sup> BNS, Lenkijos ambasadorius: tautinių mažumų įstatymas yra Lietuvos vidaus reikalas. *Delfi.lt* Accessed on 2013 11 21at: <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/lenkijos-ambasadorius-tautiniu-mazumu-istatymas-yra-lietuvos-vidaus-reikalas.d?id=63332288#ixzz2lK0Zr8s8>;

<sup>61</sup> Rytų Europos tyrimų centras. Vytautas Sirijos Gira. Lietuvos - Lenkijos dvišalių santykių vertinimai: probleminiai klausimai, *Rytų pulsas*. 2011 Nr. 2 (36). Accessed on 2013 11 21 at: [http://www.eesc.lt/uploads/news/id286/Rytu%20pulsas%202%20\(36\).pdf](http://www.eesc.lt/uploads/news/id286/Rytu%20pulsas%202%20(36).pdf);

Table 3. Number of schools<sup>62</sup>

Languages of instruction	1990-1991	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Polish	44	63	62	56	56	50
Lithuanian-Polish	7	17	16	12	12	13
Polish-Russian	47	11	12	10	8	11
Lithuanian-Polish-Russian	25	8	6	5	7	5

Table 4. Number of schoolchildren learning in Polish<sup>63</sup>

1990-1991	2000-2001	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
11 407	22 303	15 064	14 170	13 393	12 895	12 265

The research carried out by the Lithuanian Social Research Institute shows that society receives one-sided information about national minorities. They are mostly portrayed as unreliable, causing problems and even as threats.<sup>64</sup> The research states that participation of national minorities should be established by specific laws, whereas integration is minorities' objective to be part of the state they reside in by retaining their identity. It is maintained that the modern state establishes individual rights, citizenship, norms of state sovereignty, although it cannot yet find ways how to meet the demands of national minorities without breaching lawful regulations.

An exceptional problem escalation related with the Polish national minority in public discourse during 2012 and 2013 remains unchanged. Key issues are the same: education of the Polish national minority, lack of loyalty to the state of residence. In this context the problem of inappropriate representation of the EAPL and Poland's interference into these politicized issues becomes very distinct.

According to the opinion of political analysts and historians<sup>65</sup> it is possible

<sup>62</sup> Compiled by authors based on the data presented by the Lithuanian Statistical Department in a publication Švietimas 2012.

<sup>63</sup> Compiled by authors based on the data presented by the Lithuanian Statistical Department in a publication Švietimas 2012.

<sup>64</sup> The public discourse in Lithuania constructs an image of the Polish ethnic minority as a minority which is not integrated into society, does not speak Lithuanian, discriminates against local Lithuanians. The summary of the integration problems of the Polish national minority which includes poor knowledge of the state language and a lower social status, contributes to the current status of the situation in Lithuania.

to conclude that the Polish national minority in Lithuanian society is portrayed with exceptionally political aspect on popular web portals. Cultural, historical and social factors are brought into discussion only as a part of political context in order to compare or validate arguments at the centre of which Lithuanian Poles appear. Therefore, the main issues under discussion in the society are most often one-sided, and different opinions are expressed using opposing rhetoric.

### 2.3. Lithuania's Place in Poland's Foreign Policy

Analysis of Polish foreign policy towards Lithuania shows that 2010 was a chronological turning point registering the decline of relations when the candidate of the *Civic Platform* Bronisław Komorowski won the presidential election. Thus, the largest parliamentary party took over the control of major Polish political institutions and became fully responsible for the formation of the country's foreign policy. In Lithuania some regrets used to be heard, and are still sometimes registered, for the losses of the second largest Polish political power the *Law and Justice* which, according to the majority of local political commentators, was much more favourable and friendly to Lithuania.

In the last edition of a monthly *Tribūna* there is an article titled "Political Right in Lithuania and Poland" in which young author Jonas Švagždys pays compliments to the *Law and Justice*, and presents it as an example to the Lithuanian right-wing politicians. Importantly, however, the *Law and Justice* is far more eurosceptical than the *Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats*, and models of historical memory or world view proposed by Jarosław Kaczyński are acceptable to a group of Polish citizens that is not too big but of a fixed number. We should not forget that during the time when the *Law and Justice* had the majority in the Government and during the presidency of the late Lech Kaczyński, who perished in the aircraft crash, the relations between Poland and Germany deteriorated, although previously they were slowly but successfully improving, whereas the cooperation with Russia came to a dead-end, which was reminiscent of a conflict from the Cold War epoch.

Brothers Kaczyński were trying to create a wide anti-Russian coalition. Interestingly though, they wanted to achieve this bypassing major EU institutions. Much hope was placed on the USA. Several politicians and public figures from the USA and even Zbigniew Brzezinski himself have warned the then Polish leaders that such hopes were often unjustified. The *Law and Justice* leaders took upon themselves a special mission of Europeanisation of

postsoviet space and its integration into the West.<sup>65</sup> In this context Lithuanian politicians were reliable and loyal partners for them. Although we cannot state that Jarosław Kaczyński and his associates had or have now a clear vision of the Lithuanian-Polish relations. The one and only Kaczyński's connection with Lithuania is the anti-Russian platform. If we also add here some arrogant speeches by the politicians from the *Law and Justice* against Lithuania in the context of the Polish national minority (for example, Konrad Górski's), the foreign policy vision of this party appears even more obscure and indistinct.

How does the vision of foreign policy of the Polish social democrats, the ones who are on the other side of political stage, appear? A short time ago in Brussels Aleksander Kwaśniewski declared that "Lithuanian-Polish bilateral relations are bad because I am not in power". The statement is truly arrogant, but it must be admitted that during the governing period of Kwaśniewski and the post-communists, the cooperation between the countries was particularly intensive. The Kaunas City Council – not many remember this – has even awarded the President of Poland with the name of Honorary Citizen of Kaunas highlighting the fact that he was hosting Lithuanian-Polish economic forums in Kaunas.

Not without the favor of the Polish left-wing, the Advisory Committee of the President of the Republic of Lithuania and the President of the Republic of Poland, the Lithuanian-Polish Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, the Council of Governments of both countries were in action for many years. Under the initiative of the Presidents the Foundation of Adomas Mickevičius Lithuanian and Polish Cooperation Support Foundation were established. Undoubtedly, unresolved issues of Lithuanian Poles and Polish Lithuanians were often raised in bilateral meetings; however, the questions of Euro-Atlantic integration dominated over all other topics during the above mentioned bilateral forums thus leaving no chance for their consideration. At the same time it must be noted that the Polish social democrats cooperated with Lithuanian politicians very successfully in questions of integration to the EU and NATO. Also, currently the Democratic Left Alliance (pl. *Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej*) stands out due to its firm position on fostering the European policy, which, in parallel, does not prevent from raising the issue of forging closer relations with Russia.

The contribution of Social Democrats into the activity of the Parliament is not great: they received only 6% of votes, and even the most optimistic prognoses do not leave hope of more than 7-8% for them. Even more so,

---

<sup>65</sup> Kuźniar R., *Polityka zagraniczna III Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa, 2012, p. 283-293.

Aleksander Kwaśniewski is in opposition with the main left-wing political power, which is the abovementioned the Democratic Left Alliance. Thus, it is high time to ask: what kind of foreign policy do the Civic Platform and their leaders Bronisław Komorowski, Donald Tusk and Radosław Sikorski implement? It is worth mentioning that the current President of Poland was an activist in the Polish anti-communist underground movement who was fighting not only for human rights, against socialist dictatorship but also created the vision of the future foreign policy of Poland where the independent country is in close cooperation with its neighbours, states independent from Russia. Such biographies are characteristic of several tens of members of the *Civic Platform*. It is essential to stress that the Polish generation for which the slogan "For our freedom and yours" means a lot, is still alive. These romanticists, who were acting and still are, according to Jurgis Giedraitis, make up the minority. Instead, the new generation is coming to politics (this phenomenon is not yet detectable in Lithuania as the people from *Sąjūdis* are still very active in social and political life).

As previously mentioned, constructivists view the change of ruling political parties as one of the most important internal factors which determines alterations in the country's foreign policy. They especially emphasize the impact of the change of ideologies on foreign policy. Constructivists do not agree upon whether in view of the ruling majority shift in power, the new majority may initiate changes in foreign policy, based on ideological differences, although in Poland's case, such changes are obvious. So what changes of foreign policy did Tusk, Komorowski and Sikorski bring about? Apparently, it is relations with Germany. R. Sikorski's statements, pronounced a year ago, about the necessity to have more Europe in the European Union and more Germany in the EU, were highly appreciated, although the Polish right-wing opposition did not conceal its resentment.<sup>66</sup> Let us note here that the intensification of relations with Germany coincided with the warming, not too significant though, between Poland and Russia. These two phenomena are not contradictory, on the contrary, they perfectly match each other. The "Standardization" of pro-American romanticism also looks well on this "landscape".<sup>67</sup>

Optimists of Polish-German relations went one step further: they

<sup>66</sup> Kuźniar R., Op. Cit. p. 339 – 349.

<sup>67</sup> Góralski W., *Polska-Niemcy: trudny proces pojednania (sprawy zamknięte – sprawy otwarte)* [in:], *Dokąd zmierza świat?* Redaktor naukowy A.D. Rotfeld, Warszawa 2008, p. 405-430; K. Pełczyńska-Nałęcz, A. W. Malgin, *Stosunki polityczne między Polską a Rosją po 1990 roku* [in:] *Białe plamy - czarne plamy. Sprawy trudne w relacjach polsko-rosyjskich (1918-2008)*, pod red. A. D. Rotfeld i A. W. Torkunowa, Warszawa, 2010, p. 669-689.

attempted to inspire new energy to the Weimar triangle cooperation, especially, when relations between Bronisław Komorowski and Francois Hollande got warmer. Nevertheless, a new axis of the European Union—Germany-France-Poland—if possible at all, could appear in much further perspective. Komorowski, Tusk and Sikorski managed to revive cooperation of The Visegrád Group, regardless of the fact that during the last four years the leaders kept changing in Prague and Bratislav. The idea of a strong Central Europe, cherished a long time ago and sometimes mythologized, seems to be moving forward towards realization. It is essential to ask: what place in this vision does Poland project for the Baltic States, including Lithuania?

Coming back to the comparison of the Kaczynskis' and Tusk's foreign policy, it is necessary to note that a great enthusiasm remains – maybe even too excessive – to execute the EU Eastern Neighbourhood policy. It is possible to assert that decision making about the future of Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and Southern Caucasus carries the sense of an exceptional and very special mission.<sup>68</sup> There is a place, but not very important, for Lithuania in all the projects mentioned above. Poland has placed the situation of the Polish national minority at the very top in its relations with Lithuania. During his visit to Vilnius in 2011 the Prime Minister of Poland met with the Polish people in the Church of St Theresa of Avila and assured them that bilateral relations will depend on benevolent actions by the Lithuanian Government towards the Polish national minority.

Other Polish senior officials and politicians were urging Lithuania to keep to the European standards in protection of national minorities' rights. It is worth noting that the concept of "European standards" is rather vague. Currently, the topic of national minorities' rights does not dominate in the EU institutions. More often the European Council is engaged in these issues while implementing a monitoring on the EC Convention for the Protection of National Minorities but the role of the European Council has deteriorated lately. In this context Poland can only effectively drawn on the Treaty on Friendly Relations and Good Neighbourly Cooperation signed in 1994.

The model of relations mentioned above is slightly odd; however, it can be found in the Central and Eastern Europe. The best example of this, maintaining some similarities with the Lithuanian-Polish situation, is Hungary's foreign policy towards Slovakia and Romania. Although, in this context the poise of the Hungarian minority in the countries mentioned above differs greatly: they

---

<sup>68</sup> *Priorytety polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2013 roku*, <http://www.platforma.org/pl/artykul/platforma/europa-i-swiat/priorytety-polskiej-polityki-zagranicznej-w-2013>;

are far more integrated into their country's political and social life. Also, it is much more complicated for the politicians of neighbouring countries to find allies among them.<sup>69</sup>

## Conclusions

International influence and the roles of Lithuania and Poland are different. Relations between Lithuania and Poland are asymmetric—a feature which became particularly obvious in 2010-2013. However, the countries are attempting to retain their cooperation, continue working on the projects as they acknowledge changes in political processes. The Lithuanian-Polish strategic partnership continues, yet it is different, its tempo is slower, another level of ambitions, different priorities and national interests of the countries develop. Obviously, Poland's foreign policy interests are gradually moving away from Lithuania, a fact evidently signified by the changing rhetoric of both states and changes in Poland's foreign policy priorities. One of the top goals Poland has is a wish to establish itself among the biggest, the most influential countries of the European Union in close cooperation with Germany, France and Russia. These goals determine Poland's weakening focus on the relations with Lithuania and other countries of the Central and Eastern Europe.

It is possible to assume that, in a sense, the partnership with Lithuania has been transformed into an intense cooperation with Germany. The continuity of strategic partnership among the countries that belong to the same security community is established by regional and sub-regional cooperation. Thus with value systems, normative, and identity bonds embedded in relation to the EU and NATO, multidirectional foreign policies of the countries have been recently developed, whereby interests of strategic partners and foreign policy priorities do not necessarily coincide. The states continue to cooperate in security and defense fields, expand mutual energy projects although the cooperation is not as close as it used to be during the integration to the Euro-Atlantic community. In Poland's case, a more distinct preference is given to relations with Germany whereas Lithuania is leaning more and more towards Nordic countries. Presumably, in the future the bilateral cooperation between Lithuania and Poland will be concentrated on regional level, the EU and NATO.

As observed above, the strategic partnership that united Lithuania

---

<sup>69</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. *Polish foreign Policy priorities 2012-2016*. Accessed on 2013 11 15 at:<http://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/d31571cf-d24f-4479-af09-c9a46cc85cf6:JCR>;

and Poland in the period of eurointegration, started to change (especially notable since 2010) due to several reasons: no more strategic objectives as integration into NATO and the EU has been achieved, Poland's interests within the EU have moved apart from Lithuania's interests. At the same time, the representatives of national minorities, i.e. Poles in Lithuania and Lithuanians in Poland, have started to measure their situation according to the standards that dominate in the EU, although the EU institutions do not present a single answer on how a political and cultural life of national communities should look like. The writing of names and place names as well as education policy reveals how the problems closely related with national identity impact and have real consequences on other spheres of bilateral cooperation. A chain of internal-external interrelations and factors that determine them is forming, which highlights and sets the problems within the local level and aligns them with the factors that are more symbolic at first sight but in fact directly related with the countries' national identity.

It is possible to draw the conclusion that at a bilateral level the problems related with national minorities influence common economic plans which are highly important for the development of strategic cooperation. To this day, in Poland the myth of "kresy" (marginals) is still very strong as is the support for the Poles living outside the country. In other words, the idea is alive that all achievements of Polish culture and civilization stemmed from the periphery of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Hence it is of vital importance to support fellow countrymen, especially, in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, and at the same time nurture "Polishness" in this territory. It is hardly possible in Belarus and Ukraine due to either weak democracy (the case of Ukraine) or authoritarian regime (the case of Belarus). Yet, it is conceivable to expect the most in this regard from Lithuania.

Relations between Lithuania and Poland, having had deteriorated in 2010-2011, started to improve by the end of 2012, when the centre-left coalition formed in Lithuania and the Electoral Action of Poles became part of it. Only time will show how long this "warm period" will last. However, it is possible to forecast that bilateral cooperation in energy will continue, because it is high priority for both countries and gives them greater independence from Russia.

Defense, security, economic and energy cooperation spheres are obviously less influenced by the political dynamics of bilateral cooperation. They are closely related to regional security and economic policy and are largely based on the countries' efforts to ensure the continuity of security community, and thus to take care of their own national security. Pragmatic national

---

interests, geographical proximity and previous experience of cooperation determine the continuity of specific bilateral projects.

Common infrastructure development projects may see a shortage of European funds, because for this purpose both countries must have very close cooperation in the main EU institutions. Cooperation in the Eastern Partnership implementation looks optimistic. Political cooperation after the term of Lithuania's Presidency in the EU will probably slow down, and Poland will come back to address actively the issues of Lithuanian Poles.

*February 2014*