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Strategic Partnerships in Foreign Policy: Comparative Analysis of Polish - Ukrainian and Lithuanian - Ukrainian Strategic Partnerships

This article presents an analysis of the evolution and intensity of Polish-Ukrainian and Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnerships. The secondary purpose of this article is to expand the theoretical understanding of strategic partnerships, by presenting an evolutionary analytical model and scale of cooperation intensity. The application of this model shows Polish-Ukrainian and Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnerships' similarities and dissimilarities, intensity, strategic goals and common benefit. Qualitative analysis of these two cases shows that despite different partners' strategic fit and cooperation, neither partnership can be considered real strategic cooperation.

Introduction

The dissolution of the USSR marked the beginning of the new world order and the cardinal political/economical/social transformation in Central and Eastern Europe. The establishment of diplomatic relations between and with newly independent countries was related to the different forms of international cooperation: strategic partnerships or so-called special relations became the part of a new International System. In order to approach former Warsaw Pact members and NATO members and to eliminate the dividing lines in Europe, a network of strategic partnerships was created. Ultimately, the concept of a strategic partnership became an integral part of political rhetoric and/or foreign policy. The recognition of relations as strategic partnership was considered a point of reference for a concrete strategic partnership. In the new world order this form of international cooperation replaced the Cold War politics of alliances. However, strategic partnerships still had the capacity to influence or change the structure of the International System.

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After restoration of independence, Lithuania and Poland appeared in the changing international environment. Both states had to make decisions in order to protect national security and to take specific measures corresponding to the geostrategic situation. The states did not have enough resources and capacity to guarantee their own security and secure themselves from the threat of Russian expansionism. This was the main reason that oriented Lithuania and Poland towards the West and established NATO and EU membership as the strategic goal of Security and Foreign policy. The states based the implementation of this goal on the cooperation with NATO members or candidates; consequently, they gave priority to strategic partnership with the USA. Moreover, Lithuania and Poland started actively developing the doctrine of a secure and friendly neighborhood: the states initiated closer cooperation with other countries in Eastern Europe, i.e., Belarus and Ukraine. In this way the process of the creation of a network of regional strategic partnerships was started. In 1996, the Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership was established, and in 1997 a partnership between Lithuania and Poland was created, and in 2008 the Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnership was formed.

In 2004, Lithuania and Poland became the members of the EU and both sought to become experts of the European Neighborhood Policy in Eastern Europe. However, despite the similar goal, both countries implemented bilateral, not trilateral, strategic cooperation in order to approach Ukraine's euro-integration process. Notwithstanding the fact that the background of the initiative of strategic partnerships was belonging to the same security complex and the objective to establish the sovereignty of the states, the Polish-Ukrainian and Lithuanian-Ukrainian partnerships reflected different short-term goals, implementation capacity, evolution and intensity of the cooperation. In the context of the changes in the Ukrainian political system and democratic characteristic it is necessary to evaluate whether the Polish-Ukrainian and Lithuanian-Ukrainian bilateral relations can still be considered strategic partnerships.

1. Strategic Partnerships in Foreign Policy

One of the newest forms of international cooperation is a strategic partnership; even though the concept is often used in academic and political-diplomatic discourse, there is no consensus about the uniform definition or theoretical model regarding this form of cooperation. The concept of a strategic partnership defining a bilateral relationship was first mentioned in the Camp

David summit in 1991: the Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the U.S. President George Bush Sr. made a joint declaration, which stated that both states no longer consider each other enemies and commit to the development of a partnership based on mutual understanding and trust. The very essence of the strategic partnership was not been defined; however, its mention reflected an intention to develop a framework for such cooperation when states sought the common benefit at the same time consolidating or expanding area of influence¹.

In the context of the end of the Cold War, the concept of a strategic partnership reflected neo-realism postulates on the structure of the international system: states are sovereign international actors, which belong to a hierarchical category of power and operate under granted opportunities and constraints by that category in order to maximize its benefits and minimize action costs, taking into account the fact that their primary strategic goal is national security. Thus, the concept of a strategic partnership reflected the use of national power in cooperation with other countries when seeking the implementation of national interests. However, this concept was frequently confused with the concepts of coalition (emphasizes a short-term cooperation) and an alliance (emphasizes a military cooperation)².

In time the understanding of a strategic partnership has changed and 'strategic' has been interpreted in different ways. Nowadays strategic partnerships can reflect cooperation for the purpose of reaching a common strategic goal³; that is, strategic bilateral relations are defined by the strategic objectives and cooperation required for achieving these objectives. However, in order to form common objectives states have to identify and match their national interests. The strategic partnership can be defined in the context of national strategic interests; i.e. a state's concrete strategic interests can be implemented only on the grounds of the bilateral cooperation with other state having the same strategic interests. The cooperation in such strategic areas as security, military, politics, economy can also be called a strategic partnership.

The term 'strategic' can be interpreted by means of a partner's power or status in the international structure. In this context the strategic partnership can be determined as the cooperation in various areas between key interna-

¹ Ko S. "Strategic Partnership in a Unipolar System: The Sino-Russian Relationship", *Issues And Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 2006, p. 13.

² Wilkins T. S. "Russo-Chinese Strategic Partnership: A New Form of Security Cooperation?", *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 2008, p. 359-360.

³ Pashkov M. *Реалии и Перспективы Стратегического Партнерства*, Центр Разумкова, 2000, http://www.uceps.org/ukr/article.php?lng=UKR&news_id=104, 2012 02 01.

tional actors⁴ or as the cooperation between two powerful countries, which can perform strategic actions in the international system⁵. There is no single definition of the strategic partnership and the same concept is used describing completely different forms of cooperation of different nature and developed to different objectives; each case of strategic partnership is unique, because partners cooperate with substance according to their interests.

1 Table. **Definition of Strategic Partnership**

Interpretation of 'strategic'	Example	Specific strategic partnership
<i>Strategic goal</i>	NATO/EU membership	Lithuanian - Polish (1997-2004)
<i>Strategic national interest</i>	Hegemony of USA	American - Polish; American - Japanese
<i>Cooperation in the strategically important areas</i>	Stimulation of projects beneficial to trade and economics	EU - Chinese
<i>Strategic actors</i>	(Potentially) powerful and influential states	American - EU; Russo - Indian
<i>Strategic action</i>	Changes of international structure	Russo-Chinese

1.1. Functional Use of Strategic Partnership

The concept of a strategic partnership is teleological, which thus defines the use of strategic cooperation in foreign policy. Consequently, strategic partnerships can be used to form and influence the international structure or to change the autonomy of a state. Powerful countries can use strategic partnerships to form the international system (for example, the USA-Baltic States partnerships), to expand influence zones (for example, the China-Kazakhstan partnership), and small states can use it for the purpose of gaining more security and the greatest economic and political benefit⁶ (the U.S.–Poland or the U.S.–Japan partnership).

First of all, strategic partnerships are distinguished from other forms of international cooperation in that their primary goal is not a specific goal, but security; therefore the basis of cooperation is not a common enemy, but common interests and common security issues or threats. Thus, the basic characteristic

⁴ Crossick S., Reuter E. *China - EU: A Common Future*, World Scientific Publishing Company, 2007, p. 4.

⁵ Emerson M. *The Elephant and the Bear: The EU Russia and their Near Abroads*, Center For European Policy Studies, 2001, p. 45.

⁶ Kay S. "What is a Strategic Partnership?" *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 47, No. 3, 2000, p. 16.

of strategic partnerships is security and economic cooperation⁷. States initiate strategic partnerships on purpose to increase the national security and reduce the lack of power. Moreover, acting as rational actors they choose such a strategic partner, the cooperation with which will guarantee the biggest benefit from all possible alternatives seeking the implementation of specific strategic interests.

Depending on the power of the state, a strategic partnership has different grounds and goals, so one state can use it as an offensive strategy, the other as a defensive strategy: powerful countries increase their political, military, economic power and domination, while small countries seek for security and possibility to restrain rising threats⁸. Moreover, partnerships give opportunities to support or to change the existing international structure thus providing conditions for the rise of the new centers of power or the decline of the old ones. For this reason one country can use it to seek power and domination, and thus form a unipolar international structure (the US strategic partnerships), while other countries can use it to balance the power of a state or states and to form a multipolar structure (the Russian strategic partnerships). This aspect of strategic partnership has the dimensions of dynamism and globalism: the implementation of a strategic partnership between two strategically important powers or rising powers could indicate partners' goal to influence the structure of the international/regional system and its changes, the definition of new influence zones or the restriction of third country power and foreign policy possibilities. Strategic cooperation can be defined as the possibility to establish a position in global policy/politics, i.e., the selection of an appropriate partner, alignment of interests and formation of the strategic goal determine the ability to become a strategic actor (the EU strategic partnerships). However, strategic cooperation must possess efficiency and fulfill the basic principles of strategic cooperation.

One of the most important aspects of a strategic partnership is longevity: a strategic partnership refers to a partner's obligation to develop long-term relationships. The partners must have equal capacity and power to influence the evolution of bilateral relations, with reference to the stability, continuity and common benefit of cooperation. The strategic relations are characterized by reciprocity, the ability to recover and remain flexible and durable in spite of the problems or misunderstandings. Therefore the partnership must be based on tactical opportunism, extensive compatibility of use and purpose, when both of the partners are able to identify common interests and make them a

⁷ Wilkins, (reference 2) p. 360-361.

⁸ Kay S. *Global Security in the Twenty-first Century: The Quest for Power and the Search for Peace*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006, p. 42.

long and real cooperation regarding the similar vision of the structure of the international system and the role of the partners in this structure⁹. The basic aspect of the partnership is the recognition by both partners that bilateral relations are strategic and based on a strategic goal, the cooperation in strategically important areas, the performance of strategic actions or the evaluation that partner is strategically important in the international system. Therefore, each case of strategic cooperation is unique and authentic as states base the partnership on the common decision making and its implementation in order to reach such a goal or in such areas, which are considered by mutual agreement as relevant and corresponding the national interests of the states.

Strategic partnerships are characterized by a flexible voluntary cooperation based on a formal mutual commitment. Therefore, this form of cooperation has a broad application range and can be defined as the process of a formalized, structured and institutionalized international cooperation in order to achieve the common strategic goals, which stem from the national interest and the desire to increase national security. This definition of a strategic partnership allows for the identification of a specific cooperation as strategic by distinguishing its variables, i.e., the matching interests of national security, formulated common objectives, formalization of implementation and institutionalization process.

1.2. Evolution of Strategic Partnership

A specific case of strategic cooperation can be analyzed as a cyclical process, in which the phases of formation, implementation and evaluation can be distinguished. Moreover, strategic partnerships as a continuum are formulated, implemented and evaluated in the context of the internal factors (such as the common vision of the international structure, common values, ideology, interests, goals, commitments, expectations, support, communication, institutions, areas and elements of the cooperation) and the external factors (such as the changes of the international structure or the power of the state, the formation or dissolution of another strategic partnerships and security threats).

The mutual commitment to develop strategic relations for mutual benefit, recognition of a specific cooperation as a strategic partnership and the evaluation of partners' interest and motivation to seek a compromise in the implementation of the common strategic objectives are the primary steps in

⁹ Lo B. *Axis of Convenience: Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics*, Brookings Institution Press, 2008, p. 42.

strategic relations' initiative. The common benefit is associated with national security, but understanding of the benefit depends on the national interests of the partners and the capacity to translate it to specific common strategic goals. The strategic goal can be defined as an objective that cannot be reached without the implementation of the strategic partnership between two countries. Essentially, the common goals arise from the compatibility of the national interests with the vision of the international structure.

The need to respond to the challenges in the international environment, the common security threats or the same strategic interests are the primary factors that determine the formation of a strategic partnership. However, in this phase, it is important to take into account other elements of the compatibility between the strategic partners: values, ideology, real gain potential, partner's power and ability to use this power for its own behalf, mutual expectations, commitments and the set of the specific objectives¹⁰. The higher the compatibility between the strategic partners (political systems, ideology, foreign policy tradition, geopolitical situation, resources, etc.), the more congruous or complementary interests the states would have, i.e, the strategic partnership will be more enduring.

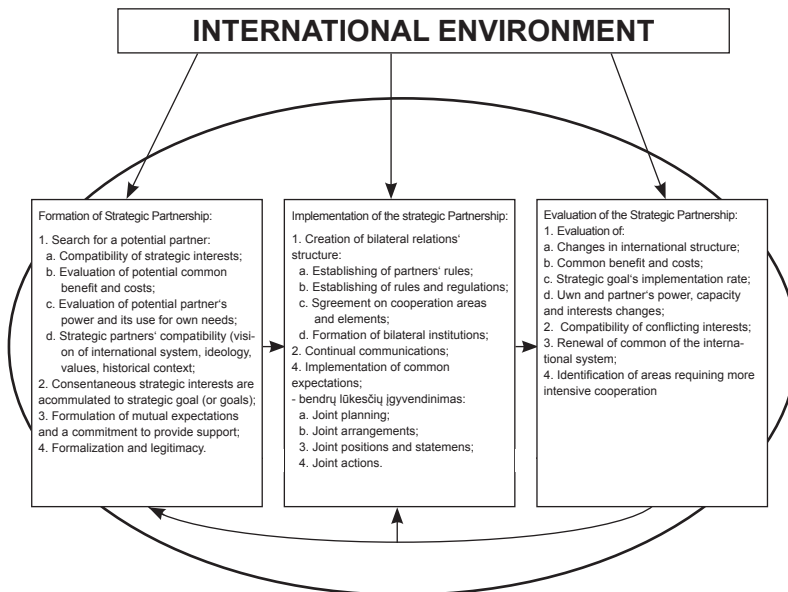


Figure 1. Evolutionary model of strategic partnership¹¹

¹⁰ Wilkins, (reference 2) p. 363-364.

¹¹ The analytical model of the Studies of Organization adjusted to the studies of the International relations, on the grounds of Wohlstetter P., Smith J., Malloy C. L. "Strategic Alliances in Action: Toward a Theory of Evolution", *The Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 33 No. 3, 2005.

When taking into account common interests, and when a state finds a potential partner and defines the common strategic objectives, there is a need to formalize and legitimize the strategic partnership. The formalization grants legal status to the partnership, as well as specificity, greater commitment and reciprocity, which arise from the agreement signing ritual¹². The formal agreement enables the implementation of the strategic goals through the institutionalization of relations, in which the partners exercise joint, coordinated actions in the cooperation areas. This process reveals the idea of the bilateral coordinated action¹³ and lasting commitment to develop close cooperation in various political spheres, when both partners recognize the importance of the mutual liability and attempt to reach an agreement and to cooperate whenever this is possible¹⁴. Accordingly, in order to coordinate actions and solve problems arising during the implementation of the formal agreement, partners create bilateral institutions that define the roles of the partners, procedures, mechanisms, rules and elements. Communication and cooperation in strategic areas is exercised through the establishment of mechanisms and institutional structures, which guarantee that strategic objectives and commitment to the common benefit should not be influenced by changing internal political powers and strategic cooperation would be maintained on local, national and international levels.

The institutional structure has a direct impact on the partners' behavior, and this structure, the definition of goals, and the power balance and/or conflict between the partners lead to the successful implementation of the strategic partnership and its endurance as "united security actor"¹⁵. The implementation of the strategic partnership reveals the real dynamics of the interstate relations, as well as intensity, uniqueness, responsibility and mutual commitment. In this phase mutual expectations must be implemented, that is, the specific outcomes of cooperation must be seen as joint planning, agreements, statements, actions demonstrating the depth and extent of the cooperation. Each of the functional areas requires the involvement of the cooperation elements, which indicate the intensity and effectiveness of the strategic partnership.

¹² Snyder G. H. *Alliance Politics (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs)*, Cornell University Press, 1997, p. 8.

¹³ Sautenet A. "The Current Status and Prospects of the „Strategic Partnership“ between the EU and China: Towards the Conclusion of a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement." *European Law Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 6, 2007, p. 706.

¹⁴ Crossick S., Reuter E. (reference 4).

¹⁵ Wilkins, (reference 2) p. 365-366.

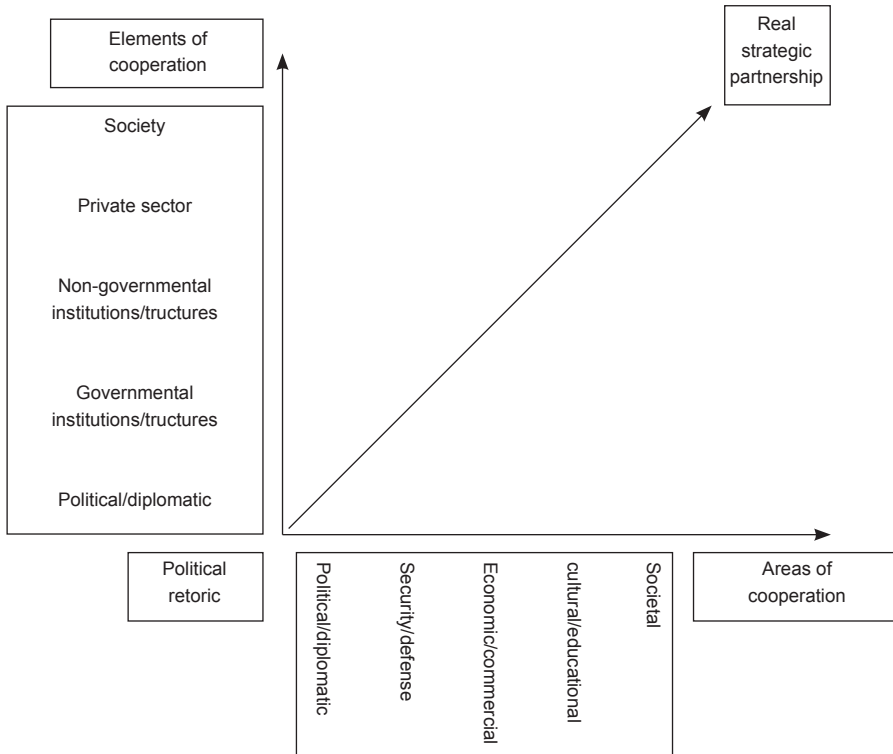


Figure 2. **Scope of strategic partnership**

Wide and deep inclusion of functional cooperation areas and cooperation elements provide greater common benefit; therefore, states are more interested in sustaining and developing concrete cooperation as strategic. The cooperation includes several strategically important areas: functional cooperation areas are defined by bilateral agreements, declarations, guidelines and implementation plans (diplomatic/politic, security/defense, economic, cultural and societal). The key area of the strategic cooperation is security/defense, because the initial impetus for strategic partnership formation is the national security or common security threats. The elements of cooperation must be included in the process of cooperation and they must to coincide with cooperation areas¹⁶: diplomatic/politic area necessitate the inclusion of politics, diplomats, governmental institutions of all levels, security/defense area requires also cooperation between militaries and other structures responsible for national security, economic area includes cooperation between private sectors,

¹⁶ Ibid.

cultural and societal areas includes nongovernmental institutions and different society groups. The more cooperating elements and areas are included in the implementation process, the more common expectations are fulfilled, the more intense and real becomes the strategic partnership.

The last phase of the strategic partnership, which confirms the continuity of the partnership and the perspectives for the achievement of the common goals, is evaluation. The evaluation of strategic cooperation includes analysis of the international environment, changes of partners' international vision, power, national interests, motivation, obtained benefit and the rate of the implementation of the formal bilateral agreements. The strategic partnership can be evaluated by the specific data of commerce (import/export rate), direct foreign investment, credits, common strategic projects (in such areas as security, economy, energy, infrastructure, transport, culture, etc.), constant exchange of information (in such areas as politics, economy, regional development, technologies, etc.), intensity of the political dialogue and the obligation to provide military help in the case of aggression by other countries or alliances¹⁷.

The effectiveness of the partnership is measured not only by specific results, but also in terms of the capacity to form new common objectives by taking into account all changes in the international arena, values of the partners, ideology, interests, and power. The trust in the partner, the covert interests of the partner, resources and motivation should be evaluated. Any change in the strategic interests, which are difficult to reconcile, an increasing number of the hidden interests, the changes in the proportion of power, imbalance in expectations and received support, the violation of the reciprocity principle, the negative evaluation of benefit, prolonged friction or disagreement not only about common decisions or actions, but also about domestic policy, leads to the dissolution of the strategic partnership.

The main factor with the longevity of the strategic relations and the capacity to remain effective is the continual renewal of strategic goals. If the partners evaluate and update the cooperation, the partnership deepens, expands, and adapts to the internal and external environment, and if the transformation of the strategic goals leads to greater institutional structures and the integration of cooperation areas, then stronger and deeper links are established which can form a "full-fledged security alliance"¹⁸ in a long-term perspective. The cycle of the strategic partnership is not only under the sway of the internal factors of the bilateral relations, but also of the international system. The constant

¹⁷ Pashkov, (reference 7).

¹⁸ Wilkins, (reference 2) p. 366-367.

revision of the strategic partnership guarantees increased mutual benefit and the implementation of strategic interests through international cooperation. The evaluation leads to further upgrade and deepening of the partnership and enables further strategic cooperation. Therefore, the whole process from the search of a potential partner to the specific common actions in the international system must be analyzed: changes and results determine the renewal of the strategic partnership, demand for new or adapted agreements, institutions, rules, regulations and increase of the intensity of the partnership.

1.3. The Intensity of Strategic Partnership

The concept of a strategic partnership in foreign policy reflects bilateral relationships of varying degrees of efficiency and intensity. The intensity of the strategic partnership can be determined by qualitative indicators of functional areas, an element of cooperation, an internal institutional structure, mutual expectations and strategic objectives, and such quantitative indicators as bilateral agreements in the areas of strategic importance, the number of common strategic projects, the number of the diplomatic corps in the country of the partner, etc. The intensity of each indicator has specific characteristics which allow the evaluation of a strategic partnership along the lines of the dichotomy of formality-reality. On the basis of the indicators and the evolutionary concept of the strategic partnership, it is possible to distinguish four categories of intensity: a formal partnership, a relevant-formal partnership, a real partnership and a real-effective partnership. Each of these categories not only has specific indicators, but also provides the possibility to evaluate the phases of the partnership formation, implementation, and evaluation. A specific strategic partnership may correspond to a different category of intensity at different phases and periods of time.

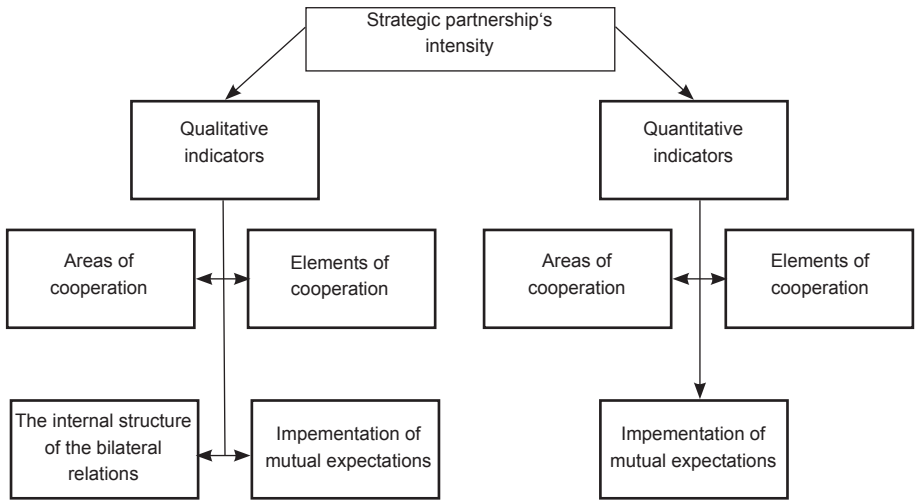


Figure 3. Analysis of intensity of strategic partnership

Table 2. Intensity categories of strategic partnerships

Cooperation areas	Cooperation elements	The internal structure of the relations	Implementation of mutual expectations	Category of strategic partnership's intensity
Political/diplomatic	Political/diplomatic	Establishment of roles of partners	Joint planning	<i>Formal</i>
Security/defense	Governmental institutions/structures	Agreement on cooperation areas and elements	Joint arrangements	<i>Formal/formal-relevant</i>
Economic/commercial	Private sector	Establishment of rules and regulation	Joint statements	<i>Formal-relevant</i>
Cultural/educational	Non-governmental institutions/structures	Formation of effective bilateral institutions	Joint actions	<i>Real</i>
Societal	Society	Regular monitoring	Joint positions in the International arena	<i>Real-effective</i>

A formal strategic partnership can be described only as a part of political/diplomatic rhetoric: the role of the partnership is defined in foreign policy; however, cooperation is implemented only on the political level. The partners

limit their cooperation only in the political/diplomatic area and the cooperation in other areas is not different from that in the international arena. In principle, the partners cooperate only when it is useful or when a powerful partner controls the opportunities of the formation of the cooperation. The ground for a long-term and stable cooperation is not created: such bilateral relations are defined by volatility and instability, when attention is paid to partners' internal situation rather than potential common benefit. Frequently the formal strategic partnership is defined by signed formal agreements and declared common goals, also by planning to implement those goals; however, the implementation has no real results.

- A formal-relevant strategic partnership shows a single-sided or mutual motivation to develop a strategic partnership, which would have a specific function in the foreign policy of a state and effectively contribute to the implementation of national interests. Therefore, one or both of the partners have the necessity to implement the strategy of balancing/bandwagoning. The key area of the cooperation is security/defense and the cooperation includes not only the elements of the political/diplomatic level, but also of that of governmental institutions and structures. Moreover, such cooperation enables intensified cooperation in the fields of economy and energy. The partnership is formalized, i.e., the functional areas of the cooperation and elements are clearly defined; therefore bilateral institutions can be created. However, cooperation remains limited and depends on the motivation of specific cooperation elements and their decisions. Nevertheless, the partners can express common political/diplomatic position in the international arena, if it coincides with how both partners understand security.
- A real strategic partnership shows compatibility of strategic partners when partners can reach not only specific short-term goals, but also can implement national interests in a long-term perspective. Both partners evaluate the common benefit, partner's power and capacity and ways to use it for its own behalf, i.e., the implementation of national interests and increase of security. Both partners mutually commit to provide support and justify expectations related not only to the specific functional cooperation areas, but also to common vision of the international structure. The states may include to the cooperation as many cooperation elements and areas as possible, moreover, the strategic partnership is constantly renewed and estimated. The complex of strategic goals is resolved into specific goals, their implementation process is periodically sorted

through and evaluated taking into consideration the common gain, i.e., the partners actively implement strategy of the internal and external balancing. Nevertheless, the partners cooperate in the international arena (has common opinion, provide support for each other's decisions and proposals in international forums, organizations) only when it is very beneficial and has a direct impact on own interests.

- A real-effective strategic partnership is defined by continuously enduring evaluation and improving the process: conflicting interests are being adjusted. The partners actively seek to implement the common vision of the international structure and entrench both partners' position in it. For this reason, states evaluate and monitor the international environment, characteristics of international actors, powers, interests, changes of the internal and external policies; moreover, they seek coordination of foreign policies. The societies of the states are actively involved in the cooperation process, i.e., they not only express support for further cooperation, but also act as pressure groups in the case of change of political elite so that a specific strategic partnership could be further developed.

The strategic partnership as a form of international cooperation embraces uniqueness and flexibility, capacity to adapt and persist. Sometimes a formally formed strategic partnership develops into real strategic relations, sometimes it remains formal, and in some cases, in the event of disagreement between formal partners on domestic policy decisions or actions, it simply disappears from the political/diplomatic rhetoric. This form of cooperation not only has stages of evolution such as development, implementation, and evaluation, but also the characteristic of intensity. Consequently, this form of interstate relation not only evolves in the phases of formation, implementation and evaluation, but also in the characteristic of intensity. However, the intensity of strategic partnership is influenced by internal and external structure and the influence of risks in a long-term perspective can lead to the reduction of intensity despite the category of partnership's intensity.

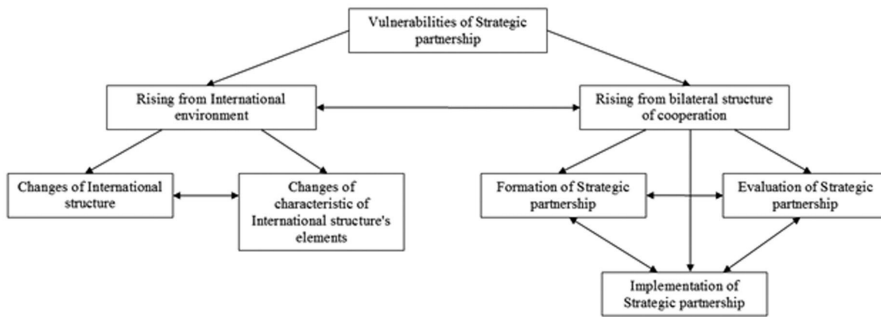


Figure 4. Risks of strategic partnership's intensity

Risks of strategic partnership's intensity rising from external environment are the changes of the international structure or changes of the characteristic (power) of its elements (states). For example, in the international system, a new center of power is rising (China); here we see changes not only of the characteristics of the element, but also eventual changes in the structure (from unipolar to bipolar/multipolar). In this context, if a concrete strategic partnership is defined by imbalance of power between partners (the USA-Russia partnership in early 90's), then the weaker partner can seek intensified cooperation with the rising power on the purpose to increase national security. For this reason in the phase of evaluation of the partner's power in the strategic partnership and gained benefit would be compared with the potential common benefit in the case of the formation of partnership with the rising power (the dissolution of the USA-Russia partnership, the initiative of the China - Russia partnership in late 90's). Eventually, the feedback provided by the partnership's evaluation would become insufficient with respect to a (real or perceptive) understanding of costs and gain. Consequently, the weaker partner's lack of motivation would negatively affect all the entire bilateral cooperation structure and the justification of expectations. If the weaker partner formed a strategic partnership with the rising power, this would increase the latter's power and this increases the effect of the rising power's capacity to influence a change of the international structure.

The risks rising from the internal bilateral structure can appear in all phases of the evolution of strategic partnership. In the formation phase it could be a small overlap of the strategic interests, a narrow set of the common strategic objectives, hidden or competing partners' goals and motives, limited compatibility of the strategic partners, the absence of a common vision of the international system or partner's disapproval of the vision, a blurred definition of mutual expectations, the lack of formalization, underestimating

of other potential strategic partners or the compatibility of the formed strategic partnership with other strategic partnerships in the foreign policy. In the phase of implementation the most common risks of intensity are the following: lack of formulated cooperation guidelines, undefined roles of the country-partner, lack of created effective cooperation mechanisms, common institutions, limited and unchanging areas of cooperation and inclusion of elements, there is no permanent and stable communication in various levels of cooperation in all fields of the cooperation, lack of elements' motivation, general justification of expectations is limited (just planning), lack of monitoring of the cooperation results. In the phase of evaluation the following risks can arise: changes in the international environment and its effect on the implementation of the strategic partnership, underestimating the changes in the characteristics of the partner, the compatibility of partner's and national interests, failure to appreciate the other potential strategic partners, failure to appreciate the conflicting interests and the objectives of misalignment, low common benefit, expected greater potential benefit or lower costs of the cooperation with another country in order to achieve the same national interest. The emergence of vulnerabilities in one stage eventually leads to the formation of other vulnerabilities and threat to the intensity, efficiency and sustainability of the strategic partnership only increases.

The formation phase of the strategic partnership reflects the category of the intensity of the formal or formal-relevant strategic partnership, and only the implementation phase highlights the genuine properties of the strategic partnership. The implementation elements corresponding to the quantitative and qualitative intensity indicators are gradually incorporated into the strategic partnership. This process reflects whether the evolving strategic partnership is going to expand and deepen or simply remain formal and in foreign policy does not acquire any functional significance. If the implementation of the strategic partnership satisfies common expectations, the process of achieving strategic goal is effective, and the regular multidimensional cooperation progresses; over time the strategic partnership intensifies and becomes real. However, cooperation may be considered effective only when the strategic partnership is continually evaluated and feedback on cooperation is given; regular monitoring and renewal suggest necessary arrangements, adaptation guidelines and action plans for implementation. Thus, if the evaluation of the strategic partnership becomes the part of the concrete partnership's internal cooperation, communication culture and structure, the provided feedback operates as a mechanism for increasing the efficiency of cooperation, the intensity of the strategic partnership can be evaluated as real-effective.

2. Context of the Formation of Polish-Ukrainian and Lithuanian-Ukrainian Strategic Partnerships

After dissolution of the USSR the bipolar International System became unipolar: the USA became the system's hegemon and NATO became the dominant security and defense alliance. Despite that, Russia remained a strategic actor that could influence security and stability in Europe. The USSR-initiated Warsaw pact alliance effectively lost importance when positioned alongside NATO. However, the Commonwealth of Independent States became the dividing line between post-communist countries, which were oriented towards the West and actively sought NATO membership (Baltic states, Poland, Czech, Slovakia and etc.), and post-communist countries, which became members of the Commonwealth of Independent States and were oriented towards Russia (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and etc.). In this context Ukraine was considered a strategically important part of the European security structure: a new Eurasian union would become impossible without Ukraine. Thereby Russian imperialism still remains directly dependent upon Ukraine's capacity to remain an independent country and preserve a geopolitical balance in the region¹⁹. NATO members and candidates for membership started to develop more active bilateral relations with Ukraine in order to promote Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration and orientation to West. At the same time Russia sought to keep Ukraine as part of its traditional influence zone and made an impact on Ukrainian internal and external policy.

The neighborhood of Poland and Ukraine, common history and inclusion in the same security complex demanded intensive cooperation. Poland's strategic goal to become a member of NATO and the EU conditioned the compulsory implementation of a friendly neighborhood principle and the Warsaw goal to promote Ukraine's NATO and EU membership. Consequently, the strategic goal of Polish foreign policy was formulated not only as Poland's Euro-Atlantic integration, but as regional Euro-Atlantic integration. So "the ambition to return Europe to historical borders"²⁰ showed Poland's objective to make Ukraine similarly a member of NATO and EU.

The national security of Lithuania was not so directly related to Ukraine's geopolitical orientation and gravitation. Lithuania's being a small coun-

¹⁹ Kuzio T. and Moroney J. "Ukraine and the West: Moving From Stability to Strategic Engagement", *European Security*, Vol.10, No. 2, 2001, p. 112-113.

²⁰ Shapovalova N. and Kapusniak T. "Is Poland still committed to the Eastern neighbourhood?" Policy Brief, No. 91, 2011, p. 35.

try conditioned not only the incapacity to influence other states' security and foreign policies, but also the dependence on other states' foreign policy and necessity to bandwagon with more powerful members of International System or to become the member of security and defense alliance. Hence, Lithuania's security and foreign policies' resources were used in order to become a member of NATO and jump on the bandwagon with the USA. Consequently, intense cooperation between Lithuania and Ukraine emerged only when Lithuania became a member of Euro-Atlantic structures. The European Neighborhood policy also became imperative to promote more intense bilateral cooperation, because creation of this policy endued Lithuanian foreign policy with new priorities and goals. The Orange revolution in Ukraine was considered Ukraine's transformation to the democratic system; consequently, this process also gave impulse to closer cooperation. The Orange revolution attained wide response in Lithuania and Poland; for this reason, both countries started planning more active policy towards Ukraine and its Euro-Atlantic integration process. Lithuania and Ukraine (NATO and EU members) have been started to be considered as external factors of Ukrainian democratization and inclusion into European security system.

2.1. The Formation of a Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership

Poland actively supported Ukraine's striving for national independence. This was motivated by national security and geopolitical assumptions. Poland implemented "two-track diplomacy" regarding USSR government and separate republics, at the same time Polish and Ukrainian dissidents established contacts in order to promote states' independence²¹. Sovereign Ukraine eliminated Poland's strategic dilemma "that Poland had always faced, namely that of threatening powers existing simultaneously on its western and eastern frontiers"²². Polish geopolitical location has been defined as "imprisonment between two historical enemies"²³, i.e., German and Russia; hence, the direct dependence of Poland's security on Ukraine's geopolitical orientation and geographical proxi-

²¹ Каганов Ю. О. «Опозиційний Рух В Україні І Польщі В Контексті Суспільно-Політичних Трансформацій (70-80-Ті Рр. XX Ст.): Компаративний Аналіз», *Наукові праці історичного факультету Запорізького національного університету*, Вип. XXVII, 2009, p. 357-358.

²² Brzezinski Z. "Ukraine's Critical Role in the Post-Soviet Space", *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 19, 1996, p. 4.

²³ *Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Fotyga, A.: Niemcy chcą nas upokorzyć i spiskują z Rosją*, 2007, <http://www.wprost.pl/ar/112141/Fotyga-Niemcy-chca-nas-upokorzyc-i-spiskuja-z-Rosja/?K=1>, 2012 02 13.

mity, and the common security challenges determined the need to develop bilateral cooperation.

The incentive to develop bilateral Polish-Ukrainian relations was based on the agreement that Poland's foreign policy with its eastern neighbors had to be implemented according to Jerzy Giedroyc and Juliusz Mieroszewski's idea to maintain friendly and peaceful relations with Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine. For this reason Poland was the first country to congratulate Ukraine on its decision to declare independence. In 1991, after Ukraine's declaration of independence (on the 24th of August) and a referendum (on the 1st of December) in which citizens of Ukraine approved the declaration of independence, Poland was the first country that *de jure* recognized Ukraine as a sovereign state (on the 2nd of December).

Ukraine's independence in the geopolitical context was valued as geopolitical pluralism and at the same time as the weakening of the Russian-centric system²⁴. The Polish support for Ukraine was determined by the perception that repeated loss of Ukraine's independence will have direct consequences for Poland, i.e., Poland would become united Europe's eastern border²⁵ and it would negatively affect national security and the Euro-integration. Inspiration to seek partnership with Ukraine was also determined by other reasons:

- Poland and Ukraine belong to the same security complex - one's national security is directly dependent on other's national security;
- The aspiration to reduce Ukraine's gravitation towards Russia and to encourage orientation to the West (Western Europe and the USA);
- A stable, democratic, economically developed Ukraine is condition of the safe and good Poland's neighborhood and Poland ensures to Ukraine strong links with the EU and NATO (potential) member states, which can not only be an advocate of Ukrainian membership, but also a guide to reforms;
- The strategic cooperation with Ukraine and the ability to influence its democratization process would establish Poland as expert in the European Eastern policy and would guarantee the importance of Poland in the EU.

The promotion of cooperation between new neighbors was also forced by changes in territorial borders and ethnic minorities issues. Before the Second World War the current western territory of Ukraine was the part of

²⁴ Brzezinski Z. "A Plan for Europe", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 1, 1995, p. 38.

²⁵ Brzezinski Z. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its - Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, 1998, p. 49.

Poland, and although in 1945 - 1947 ethnic groups were artificially separated in the border area (repatriation of Poles from Ukrainian territories and Ukrainians resettlement in Poland to the north and west regions), but a complete ethnic homogeneity was not achieved. Ethnic minority status and historical heritage have become another cause, which resulted in the need to develop cooperation, despite Poland's fears about the USSR's (later Russia's) adverse reaction.

Simultaneously, the formation of strategic cooperation was affected by the International environment's pressure. The 1996 Russian presidential elections led to doubts about the future of the Russian democratic development and the desire to strengthen the influence in the former USSR republics. Another important aspect was the wider US involvement and intensification of bilateral relations, i.e., strategic security cooperation has been established with the Baltic States, Poland, Ukraine, Czech Republic, etc. on purpose to expand the network of pro-American countries. Thus, the intersection of two geo-political forces in the region influenced the initiative of the strategic partnership between Poland and Ukraine in order to reduce Ukraine's gravitation towards Russia and Russia's influence to the region's Euro-integration perspectives. The basis of the strategic partnership was a formal strategic objectives' coincidence, bringing mutual Euro-integration support and the common vision of Europe under the NATO security umbrella.

2.2. The Formation of a Lithuanian-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership

Although Lithuanian-Ukrainian diplomatic relations were established in 1991, after the mutual recognition of independence, and in 1994 the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed, an intensive political dialogue started only in 2004. Three parallel processes were the preconditions for the formation of the Lithuania-Ukraine strategic partnership. In 2004, the EU developed a new external Neighborhood Policy on purpose to adapt to the changed international security environment after its enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe. That same year, Lithuania implemented strategic security and foreign policy goals and thus became the EU and NATO member, so it was necessary to re-define foreign policy priorities. In Ukraine during the 2004 presidential elections massive protests started, which led to the Orange Revolution. The result was the intensification of European integration processes and more active policy towards EU and its members.

In 2004, Lithuania achieved the strategic security and foreign policy goal, i.e., Lithuania became a NATO and EU member. Lithuania had to define a new foreign policy agenda and as a result the concept of the regional leader or expert on Eastern Neighborhood was generated²⁶. This concept was formulated according to EU's "Wider Europe" vision and established external European Neighborhood policy. Furthermore, this vision was presented as the long-term goal of Lithuanian foreign policy and Lithuania proclaimed commitment to further NATO's and EU's expansion to Eastern Europe and South Caucasus²⁷. Consequently, Lithuania initiated the formation of the security partnerships with Eastern Neighborhood countries.

Lithuania committed to support Ukraine's Euro-integration processes, internal reforms, consolidation of the market economy, membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to promote the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement signing²⁸. This commitment was based on a provision formed in the doctrine of "New Lithuanian foreign policy", i.e., the vision that Ukraine is an integral part of the Europe and Euro-Atlantic institutions, and that Lithuania should not only support the political, economic, social and other reforms, but also to encourage the EU and NATO to support these reforms. Thus, the external factors (geopolitical change in the environment, the need to reduce external security threats and the goal to expand the sphere of influence) led to the formation of the EU's Neighborhood Policy, which became the external cause and the context of the Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnership.

Although Lithuania's objectives regarding Ukraine coincided with the Polish goals, the states did not seek to develop effective trilateral cooperation. Lithuania and Poland based the development of relations with the Eastern Neighborhood countries on bilateral cooperation. The states rarely coordinated their actions and so reduced the benefit of Polish-Ukrainian and Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnerships and missed opportunities to form the new systematic principle for a Lithuanian-Polish strategic partnership, which would have changed in 2004 implemented strategic goal (partners' membership in the EU and NATO). Despite that, Lithuania and Poland both played an active role in the Orange Revolution and the involvement of Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus and Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski in

²⁶ „Naujoji Lietuvos Užsienio Politika“ - Laikinojo Prezidento A. Paulausko kalba Vilniaus universitete, 2004 05 24, Vilnius.

²⁷ LR UR ministro A. Valionio kalba Lietuvos Respublikos diplomatinė atstovybių vadovams, 2004 07 07, Vilnius.

²⁸ LR UR ministro A. Valionio pranešimas II-ojoje tarptautinėje konferencijoje „Demokratija už Baltijos – euroatlantinis įnašas“, Ryga, 2005 05 06.

the solution of the political crisis produced the formation of a Polish-Lithuanian-Ukrainian Parliamentary Assembly. The Orange Revolution became the driving force for Polish-Ukrainian and Lithuanian-Ukrainian cooperation, but the most prominent achievement of trilateral cooperation in the security context can be stated only in 2009 made decision to transform Lithuanian-Polish military battalion (LITPOLBAT) to the brigade and to include the Ukrainian troops in it (LITPOLUKRBRIG).

3. The Evolution of Polish-Ukrainian and Lithuanian-Ukrainian Strategic Partnerships

The cooperation between Poland and Ukraine can be seen as the attempt to reduce the dividing line between Eastern and Western Europe, and thus to provide conditions for a broader Euro-integration space. Several aspects had the greatest impact on the development of the cooperation in the implementation of the Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership: Ukrainian-Russian bilateral relations, partners' political and economic development and interpretation of common history. Although Ukraine's foreign policy was characterized by maneuvering between Russia and the EU (the Eurasian doctrine), relations with Poland "reflected a balance between European and Eurasian vector, which allowed Ukraine to avoid the complete marginalization in the EU and USA agenda"²⁹.

Ukraine considers Poland an example of economic and market transformations, industry adaptation and the EU's *acquis communautaire* application model. As for Poland, Ukraine is an important element of regional stability and security on its eastern border, a trade partner, a transit country for energy resources and a link to the Black Sea. Consequently, a common European political, economic and security space became the context for the Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership. This required defining the roles of the partners: Ukraine became a supporter of Poland's NATO and EU membership, while Poland became an advocate of Ukraine's Euro-integration. The recognition of Ukraine's role as a strategically important transit country for energy resources was impelled by the Russian-Ukrainian gas wars (2005-2006, 2007-2008, 2009), because of which the

²⁹ Natorski M. and Herranz A. *The Impact Of German-Russian And Polish-Ukrainian Special Relations On European Foreign Policy: Energy Supplies And Visas In The EU Neighbourhood*. Paper presented for the conference "Reflecting on a wider Europe and beyond: norms, rights and interests" organized by the Central and East European International Studies Association (CEEISA), 4th Convention University of Tartu, Estonia, 25 – 27 June 2006, p. 8.

supply of energy resources to Western and Central European countries ceased. Thus, Ukraine has been recognized as a determinant of the common European energy security space.

The roles of the partners of the Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnership were also defined in the context of Euro-Atlantic integration: Lithuania became a supporter of Ukraine's membership in NATO / EU. The evolution of the partnership was also influenced by the Ukrainian-Russian bilateral relations, the orientation of Ukraine's domestic development, but even more influenced by the lack of common territorial borders and the power imbalance (territory, population, military and economic power). For these reasons, Lithuania has a limited impact on the democratic, economic and social development of Ukraine. However, Lithuania can contribute to the implementation of the EU's *acquis communautaire* in Ukrainian public policy.

3.1. The Implementation of the Polish-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership

Negative historical experience remains one of the most important aspects that reduced mutual confidence in Polish-Ukrainian relations. The Polish representatives accused the Ukrainians of collaboration with the Nazis during World War II (for example, the SS "Galicia" Division, which actively operated in the Warsaw Uprising), playing an active role in the genocide of the Jews and ethnic cleansing conducted by the Ukrainian Rebel Army and by the right wing of the Organization of the Ukrainian Nationalists, led by Stepan Bandera (for example, the Volhynia massacre in 1943-1944). The main causes of some of their historical phobias can also be considered: the Khmelnytsky Uprising against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (in 1648-1654), the border conflicts after World War I (Polish - Ukrainian War in 1918-1919) and Polish actions towards the Ukrainian ethnic minority during the interwar period³⁰. However, in 1997, an important step was made: the Joint Presidential Declaration of Understanding and Reconciliation was signed in order to reduce the effect of painful common history and negative stereotypes not only on the development of the bilateral relations, but also to show to the European community that Poland and Ukraine can develop a friendly relationships on the basis of trust.

³⁰ Copesey N. *Echoes of the Past in Contemporary Politics: the case of Polish-Ukrainian Relations*. Working Paper, No. 87, Sussex European Institute, 2006, p. 7.

In 1996, Poland and Ukraine initiated the formation of a strategic partnership. The partnership was inspired by a common perception of security, which has been expressed by the catchphrase “without independent Ukraine, there is no independent Poland”³¹. An important aspect for the implementation of the systemic principle, the Ukrainian Euro-Atlantic integration, was the declaration of the integration as the Ukrainian strategic goal and its implementation by means not only of foreign policy, but also of domestic policy. In 1998, the Ukrainian political elite began to shape the EU membership strategy and this strategy became the official doctrine for the Ukrainian domestic and foreign policy reforms in order to implement the conditions of the associate membership by 2007. An approved Cooperation Program with NATO was also presented, which defined the agenda for the development of the Polish-Ukrainian security/defense cooperation on the basis of the NATO-Ukraine Special Partnership Charter signed in 1997. Since 1999, a joint Polish-Ukrainian battalion took part in the joint exercises and military operations in the Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina; Kosovo), stabilization operations in Iraq, and later in Afghanistan³². The implementation of the joint programs aimed to bring Ukraine closer to the EU and NATO standards.

Despite the positive developments in the security/defense cooperation, “balancing” became the official doctrine of Ukraine’s security policy in 2001: at the same time a multi-vector foreign and security policy was implemented in cooperation with Russia (emphasizing the lack of the alternatives in strategically important economic cooperation) and NATO (emphasizing US capacity to reduce Ukraine’s dependence on Russia), though, in 2002, Ukraine announced that NATO membership is a strategic goal of the security policy and signed the bilateral cooperation plan with the Alliance³³. In 2008, Ukraine was close to a NATO Membership Action Plan (the NATO summit in Bucharest), but Western European countries opposed the US’s desire to grant Ukraine the status of a candidate (US compensation to Ukraine was the Charter on Strategic Partnership), and in 2010, Ukraine abandoned the goal of NATO membership; consequently, the cooperation with NATO has become formal³⁴. Thus, Polish-Ukrainian security cooperation also remains limited.

³¹ *Wspólna deklaracja Prezydentów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej i Ukrainy*, 25 czerwca 1996 r., Warszawa, http://www.wspolnota-polska.org.pl/indexce6e.html?id=u_pd3, 2012 02 15.

³² Drzewicki A. “Stosunki z Ukrainą w sferze bezpieczeństwa: polski punkt widzenia”, *Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe*, No. 1 (17), 2011, p. 161-162.

³³ Celewicz M. and Nizioł-Celewicz M. *Relations Between Poland And Its Eastern Neighbours After The 1999 NATO Enlargement*, UNISCI Discussion Papers, No. 10, 2006, p. 237-238.

³⁴ Woehrel S. *Ukraine: Current Issues and U.S. Policy*, Research paper, Congressional Research Service, 2011, p. 5-6.

From the formation of the strategic partnership, the Polish-Ukrainian economic cooperation was aimed at liberalizing trade and developing a free market economy in Ukraine. After Poland's accession to the EU, trade barriers or provision of prerogatives defined by the bilateral cooperation agreements lost value. Poland became a part of the EU's internal market and Ukraine became a third country. Poland supported Ukraine's ambition to become the member of Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA), WTO and EU, therefore economic cooperation is the most widely institutionalized area of functional cooperation: the Polish-Ukrainian Chamber of Industry, the Polish-Ukrainian Chamber of Construction Industry and Commerce, Ukraine's and Poland's Support and Development Center, the Joint Trade and Economic Cooperation Commission, etc. The economic cooperation is also developed through the annual summit meetings, economic forums and Polish-American-Ukrainian Cooperation Initiative, which provides support to small businesses and local government. The importance and commitment to deepen the economic cooperation, to promote trade, and investment has become an integral part of the political rhetoric on the bilateral and the EU level.

In 1998, at the beginning of the EU membership negotiations, Poland proposed the creation of The Eastern European dimension, in which "the most important role should be given to Ukraine's democratization, Euro-integration and eventual EU membership"³⁵. In 2003, on the basis of this proposal, The European Neighborhood Policy was formed, and in 2009, the Eastern Partnership Initiative, which became the context of Poland-Ukraine cooperation. From 2001, Poland was trying to include Ukraine to the EU's agenda as a strategically important energy transit country: it was proposed to pave the Odessa-Brody-Gdansk oil pipeline to connect the region of the Caspian Sea with Europe. In 2003, the European Commission approved the project of Eurasian Oil Transportation Corridor and added studies concerning the Odessa-Brody-Plock oil pipeline construction to this project. Regional cooperation has also been invoked to promote the economic, socio-economic cooperation not only on the regional, national level, but also on the local level: the EU Twinning programs, Euroregional projects - Carpathian Euroregion and Bug Euroregion, the trilateral cooperation (Poland - Lithuania - Ukraine, Poland - Romania - Ukraine, Poland - Ukraine - Germany), B4 + (the Visegrad States and Ukraine), B4 + 3 (the Visegrad States and Ukraine, Germany, Austria).

Despite a large number of initiatives and joint projects, Polish-Ukrai-

³⁵ Shapovalova N. and Kapusniak T. *Is Poland still committed to the Eastern neighbourhood?* Policy Brief, No. 91, 2011, p. 2.

nian economic cooperation still has many obstacles: insufficient Ukraine's internal market liberalization (structural incompatibility of the economic systems), unfavorable investment environment, customs, the lack of protection and insurance of the capital and investment, administrative and legal barriers, corruption, complicated bureaucratic processes, the lack of developed infrastructure and cross-border cooperation. For these reasons, the private and public economic elements are reluctant to get involved in the economic cooperation at a strategic level. The Polish functional elements focus on the EU's internal market and cooperation with the major European countries, while Ukraine actively cooperates with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and China. Effective economic cooperation could only be achieved if Ukraine became an Associate member of the EU.

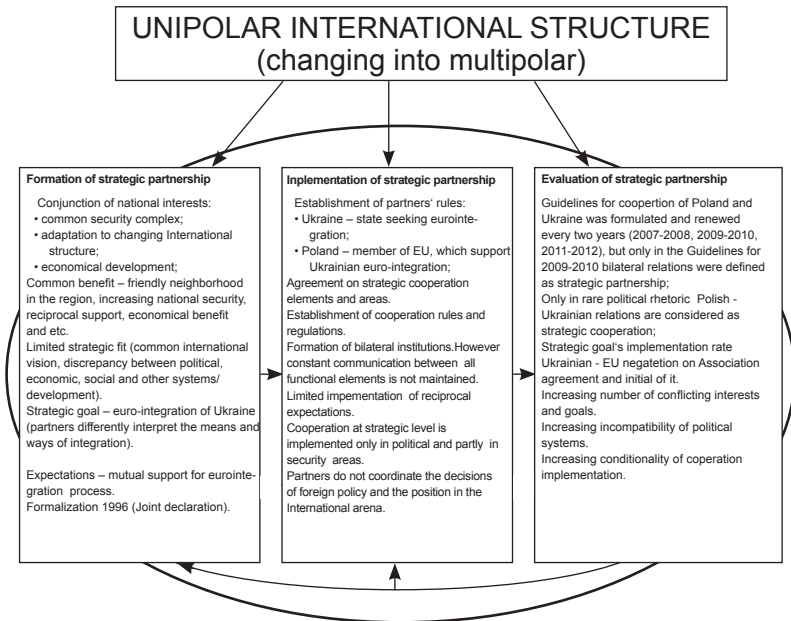


Figure 5. **The Evolution of Polish - Ukrainian strategic partnership**

In 2006, in order to introduce the European standards to Ukraine, Warsaw and Kiev began the process of the mutual planning at the highest level: this illustrates a regular improvement of the commitment to cooperate in the strategically important areas by providing common several year goals. The 2007-2008 plan reflected Ukraine as a country seeking the accession in the EU and NATO and Poland as the EU and NATO member able to provide support for Ukraine's objectives and roles: the main spheres of the cooperation have been

identified as political dialogue, the Euro-integration, the Euro-Atlantic integration, economy, energy, security, cross-border, culture, science and common history. The political cooperation has been developed using bilateral institutions: the Presidential Advisory Committee; Economic Cooperation Commission, Economic Forum, Euro-Integration Commission, Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (and the Trilateral Inter-parliamentary Assembly, including Lithuania), Interregional Cooperation Coordination Board, etc. An extensive bilateral institutionalization grants conditions to communicate continuously at the various levels of the government.

Despite the growth in the development of the cooperation in the areas of culture, science and education and involvement of societies and separated groups (academics, students, artists) in the bilateral cooperation, the general attitude of the societies of both Poland and Ukraine is not homogeneous: 32 percent of Poles assess Ukraine positively, while 29 percent neutrally, and 33 percent negatively (2011). 46 percent of Ukrainians assess Poland positively, 25 percent neutrally and only 17 percent negatively (2011), but since 2005, the positive ratings have been declining and negative evaluations reveal a growing trend³⁶. In addition, only 9 percent of Ukrainians see Poland as a European country, 40 percent believe that Warsaw helps to develop closer ties with the EU, but the same number of respondents believe that Poland's role in the Ukraine's Euro-integration process is negligible³⁷.

The main problem in this context remains the fact that "common historical experience is not seen as a political problem"³⁸, thus the development of the strategic cooperation in the cultural, educational and humanitarian areas is hindered. Accordingly, public awareness, formation of a positive public opinion and elimination of negative stereotypes do not become the part of public policy, thus the commemoration of the common historical events remains a political ritual, which does not involve the said societies. The implemented assimilation policies and the destruction of symbols associated with the past of multi-ethnic diversity in the region still do not allow the societies to develop mutual tolerance and understanding, and the attempts to restore historic ties and establish effective cooperation in the cultural, educational and

³⁶ *Neighbouring Countries' Attitude To Poland*, Public Opinion, CBOS Public Opinion Research Center, June, 2011, p. 1.

³⁷ *Ukrainians positively about Poles and Poland* Press release from a study of the Institute of Public Affairs, 2011, <http://www.isp.org.pl/uploads/filemanager/pliki/PE/Wizerunek%20Ukraina%202010/UkrainianspositivelyaboutPolesandPoland.pdf>, 2012 02 15.

³⁸ Copsey N. "Remembrance of Things Past: the Lingering Impact of History on Contemporary Polish-Ukrainian Relations", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 4, 2008, p. 542.

humanitarian policies causes disaffection and nationalistic mood in the border regions³⁹. The positive public opinion and the promotion of intercultural communication in this context are of critical importance. In the case of the Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnership, the common history and negative public opinion has no such connotation, but cooperation still remains similarly limited, despite a positive evaluation of the historical relations.

3.2. The Implementation of the Lithuanian-Ukrainian Strategic Partnership

In 1995 the Declaration on the Prospects of Cooperation between Lithuania and Ukraine was presented. The declaration noted that there are no sources of fundamental disagreement which could hamper the development of friendly relations between the countries in order to consolidate democracy, market economy, promote and maintain cooperation in the NATO's Partnership for Peace program and avoid the formation of new dividing lines in the region. Hence, Lithuania, like Poland, supported Ukraine's aspirations for transatlantic integration. Although, preeminently Lithuania was interested in its own accession to NATO and the EU, Ukraine was considered an essential element in the process of building a common European security structure.

Despite mutual high-level political visits, joint declarations and several treaties signed in 1997, the bilateral relationships between Lithuania and Ukraine was neither constructive, neither effective until 2002. Lithuania gravitated to the West and supported the Euro-Atlantic relations, while Ukraine orientated itself towards Russia and developed a shifting and unpredictable foreign policy. Only in 2002 did the intensification of the bilateral relations start: the bilateral institutional framework was planned and created. The Council of Presidents, the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, Intergovernmental Cooperation Council, Business Forum, Intellectuals Forum and Working Groups were initiated. The preconditions for continuous communication and dialogue at the highest level were created, which guaranteed the possibility of coordination of cooperation programs.

The Orange Revolution, a nationwide democratic revolution in Ukraine, was a major turning point for the Lithuanian-Ukrainian relations, where both Lithuania and Poland played the roles of the external stability and me-

³⁹ Wolczuk K. "The Polish-Ukrainian Border: On the Receiving End of EU Enlargement", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2002, p. 248-251.

diation factors. The Orange Revolution led to change of political elite from pro-Russian to pro-Western. NATO and EU membership was established as a national strategic goal and incentive for internal reform. From 2004 the development of a new form of bilateral cooperation began, which reflected the change in the roles of the states: Lithuania as an EU and NATO member and Ukraine as a country seeking to join the EU and NATO. However, if Poland was regarded as a bridge between EU/NATO and Ukraine, Lithuania played the role of the supporter of Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration and exercised the function of transferring the accession experience in the areas of public policies and administrative reforms.

The maximum contribution to promoting Lithuanian-Ukrainian and Lithuanian-Polish bilateral relations was made by Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus (1998-2003, 2004-2009) and the Polish President Lech Kaczyński (2005-2010), who continued the president Alexander Kwasniewski's (1995-2005) active policy towards Kiev. The presidents sought to create effective strategic partnerships and shift Ukraine closer towards NATO and EU membership; therefore they personally were involved in the promotion of cooperation and the maintenance of communication between the EU, USA and Ukraine.

The personal efforts of Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus and pro-Western Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko (2005 - 2010) led to the formation of the Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnership. In 2005, the bilateral cooperation was promoted to the level of a strategic partnership. The following main areas of the cooperation were identified: cooperation between non-governmental organizations and academic institutions, cooperation in the economic, energy, transport, environment and sustainable development areas⁴⁰. The emphasis was not only on strategically important projects (in the field of energy, infrastructure and other) as in the case of the Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership, but also implementation of EU *acquis* in public policy and administrative practices. Lithuania was obligated to share the experience in the sphere of the creation of the overall social dialogue, in the social and labor sphere, in the sphere of improvement of rural infrastructure, in the adjustment of the public procurement legislation to the EU standards, in the implementation of the electronic public procurement system, in the harmonization of the regulation systems of the insurance market with international and other

⁴⁰ Joint Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania on cooperation in the field of European and Euro-Atlantic integration and regional cooperation, Vilnius, 23 December 2005.

standards⁴¹, thus creating a broad inter-governmental and inter-agency cooperation solving issues in specific spheres. Accordingly, during the process of implementation of the Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnership the focus was on lobbying Ukraine's EU/NATO membership and the implementation of specific membership requirements.

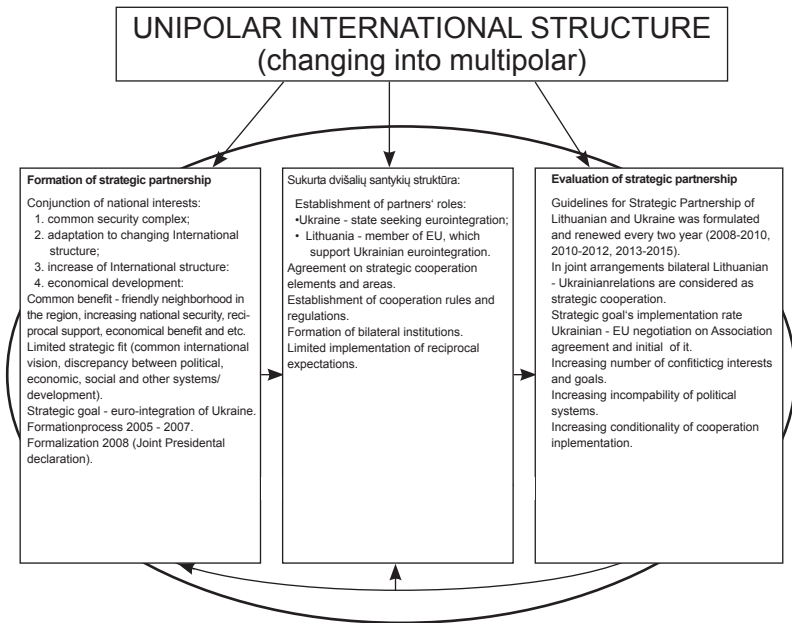


Figure 6. **The Evolution of Lithuanian - Ukrainian Partnership**

In 2008, at the level of Heads of States, Lithuanian-Ukrainian relations were declared a strategic partnership on the basis of democracy, respect for human rights and values of the law supremacy and Ukraine's European and Transatlantic integration became the common strategic goal or systemic principle⁴², similar to the case of the Polish-Ukrainian partnership. European integration was identified as the key area of the strategic cooperation and the main purpose of this functional cooperation became the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and acceleration of the EU-Ukrainian negotiations regarding visa-free regime. Energy security became another important area of the functional

⁴¹ Joint Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Mr. Borys Tarasyuk and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania Mr. Petras Vaitiekūnas on cooperation in implementing Ukraine – EU Action Plan, 2006.

⁴² Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidento Valdo Adamkaus ir Ukrainos Prezidento Viktoro Juščenkos Bendra deklaracija, 2008 05 12, Vilnius.

cooperation. The aim of the area is the security of energy supply and the transparency of the energy sector, also Ukraine's integration into the EU energy market. The main issues in the area are the creation of Caspian-Black Sea-Baltic Sea energy transit space, energy infrastructure projects and Lithuania's involvement in the solution of Ukraine's problems regarding integration into the EU energy market. The functional cooperation in the area of transport and infrastructure was linked with increase of the number and extent of transportation: improving the operating conditions of the combined transport train VIKING and load-flow network, increasing the transit through the Baltic and Black Sea ports.

In the period of 2008–2010, 14 bilateral visits took place, some meetings were held on extremely important occasions, therefore the recognition of the significance to each other demonstrated (the Celebration of Lithuanian Millennium, the Holodomor 75th Anniversary Commemoration, the inauguration of the Ukraine President Victor Yanukovich). In 2011, when Lithuania chaired the OSCE, Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic political cooperation became more intense: regular government and parliamentary meetings allowed the maintaining of an effective political dialogue. In addition, in 2012, in the bilateral cooperation agenda included Lithuanian's sharing of experience with Ukraine as the latter is to chair this organization in 2013. Continuous communication was maintained not only at the highest political level. Private business elements are more frequently involved in the cooperation at the strategic level: the annual business forums promote bilateral trade rates⁴³, albeit the Lithuanian-Ukrainian economic cooperation is hampered by geographical distance, disproportion of the markets, inconsistency of the economic systems, etc. Another important achievement is a signed Memorandum between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the Cooperation in the Field of Energy, which provides the increasing energy security, the diversification of the energy supply, transparency of the energy sector and integration of energy markets⁴⁴ (Lithuania's involvement in the Odessa-Brody-Gdansk oil pipeline project).

The cultural cooperation was marked by the Lithuanian Days in Ukraine in 2008 and further events on the pretext of Lithuanian Millennium Celebration in 2009. In 2010, a lot of common art events and festivals took place to promote cultural cooperation. Moreover, The Programme of Cooperation in

⁴³ Кінах А. В Україні і Литви спільне бажання – розвиватися за сучасними європейськими стандартами, <http://www.partyofregions.org.ua/ru/news/faces/show/6746>.

⁴⁴ Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės ir Ukrainos Ministrų Kabineto memorandumas dėl bendradarbiavimo energetikos srityje, *Valstybės žinios*, 2008-05-20, Nr. 57-2144.

the Science, Innovation, and Information Technology in 2011–2015 was created. The dialogue between civil societies, non-governmental organizations, research and educational institutions is being promoted by using a bilateral humanitarian forum and the amplification of interpersonal cooperation between societies⁴⁵. The cooperation in these areas is facilitated by positive interpretation of the common past. Both Lithuanian and Ukrainian societies often emphasize the negative aspects of the common history with Poland. Although the discourse of the Lithuanian-Ukrainian bilateral relations both in Lithuanian and Ukrainian media and political rhetoric is limited, Lithuania is presented as a “loyal friend”. This image is reinforced by the fact that Vilnius implements the principle of non-interference to the internal affairs of the other states and expresses limited criticism regarding Ukraine’s undemocratic development; however it emphasizes “the necessity of the EU’s further enlargement to Eastern Neighborhood countries”⁴⁶.

Despite the positive results in the Lithuanian-Ukrainian and the Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnerships in 2004–2010, the euphoria created by the political rhetoric began to falter after airplane catastrophe in Smolensk in 2010, during which almost all Polish political elite, which actively promoted Ukraine’s membership in the EU/NATO, perished. Moreover, that same year, the political leaders of Lithuania and Ukraine changed. Bronislaw Komorowski became President of Poland and Dalia Grybauskaitė became President of Lithuania. Although the new presidents repeated predecessors’ commitment to develop a strategic partnership with Ukraine, it remained just a formal priority and did not receive more personal attention from the presidents (both in Warsaw and Vilnius has begun to focus on the cooperation with EU member states). In addition, in 2010, pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovich became the President of Ukraine. The new Ukrainian president declined the goal of NATO membership and foreign policy became multi-vectoral, i.e., Ukraine began to maneuver between the partnership with the EU and the partnership with Russia.

After Viktor Yanukovich’s controversial actions, not only Warsaw and Vilnius, but also the EU started to implement with Ukraine the strategy of a conditional dialogue. He canceled already obscure democratic achievements: Amendments of the Constitution introduced in 2004 were declared invalid, the President powers were re-strengthened and foreign policy once

⁴⁵ Декларація Четвертого засідання Міжпарламентської Асамблеї Верховної Ради України, Сейму Литовської Республіки, Сейму і Сенату Республіки Польща, Київ, 22 березня 2011 року.

⁴⁶ Комюніке Спільної Ради Міністерства закордонних справ України та Міністерства закордонних справ Литовської Республіки, Вільнюс, 17 червня 2010 року.

again took multi-vectoral nature, “ignoring Poland” as a bridge between the EU and Ukraine, and starting to cooperate directly with the EU institutions and member - countries (Ukraine president Viktor Yanukovich’s first visit to Warsaw took place only in 2011). In 2010, a new law was announced, outlining the principles of Ukraine’s domestic and foreign policy: a document identified Ukraine as a non-aligned European country, which develops an open foreign policy with all countries, avoids dependence on particular countries or international organizations (Article 11)⁴⁷, seeks membership in the EU, but at the same time cooperates with Russia and the United States. This foreign policy strategy has been defined as a pragmatic and striving to implement Ukraine’s economic interests, i.e., the choice of partners and the development of international cooperation has been linked with the economic benefits⁴⁸, trade agreements and foreign investment (Ukraine’s foreign policy became a lobbying instrument of oligarchic system).

Viktor Yanukovich’s first visit to Poland, a year after the beginning of his tenure and after visits in more than twenty states, was determined by the need to update the guidelines for bilateral cooperation, thus providing conditions for greater support for Ukraine’s Euro-integration and smoother Ukraine-EU Association Agreement negotiations during the Polish presidency of the EU. However, the illusion of a strategic partnership was destroyed: Cooperation Guidelines for the period of 2011-2012 did not determine the bilateral relations as a strategic partnership and did not include any strategic objectives.⁴⁹ The same situation emerged in 2013, when Viktor Yanukovich came to Lithuania in order to update the guidelines for the bilateral cooperation. The political rhetoric was moderate, but the visit showed the search of supporters of the signing of Ukraine-EU Association Agreement during the Lithuanian presidency of the EU. However, Lithuanian-Ukrainian relations again were determined as strategic partnership and the guidelines for the cooperation included short-term strategic goals. Despite that Lithuania’s capacity to influence the signing of Ukraine-EU Association Agreement is strictly limited.

⁴⁷ Про засади внутрішньої і зовнішньої політики, Відомості Верховної Ради України. № 2411-VI, 1 липня 2010 року, Київ.

⁴⁸ Тригуб П. М., Тригуб О. П. «Євроінтеграційний Процес В Україні В Перший Рік Президентства В. Януковича: Здобутки І Перспективи», *Наукові праці: науково-методичний журнал*, Вип. 142., Том 154, 2011, р. 52.

⁴⁹ «Аналіз Теми Тижня: Візит До Польщі Як Спроба Надолужити Провал Стратегічного Рівня Взаємин Між Двома Державами», *International Weekly*, No. 4-5, 2011, <http://fpri.kiev.ua/?p=997>, 2012 03 05.

Table 3. **Convergence of EU - Ukrainian, Lithuanian - Ukrainian, Polish - Ukrainian and Russian - Ukrainian Relations**

EU - Ukrainian relations	Lithuanian - Ukrainian relations	Polish - Ukrainian relations	Russo - Ukrainian relations
1991-1998 Overture (Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed)	1991-1996 Mutual recognition (Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed)	1991-1996 Mutual recognition (Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed)	1991-1996 Hostility (revision of common borders, disagreements about military base in Sevastopol, strategic arms, that rested in the territory of Ukraine after the collapse of the USSR, the Russian requirement for dual citizenship, energy supplies, Ukrainian refusal to join the CIS Collective Security Treaty)
1998 - 2004 Formal strategic partnership (Partnership and Cooperation Agreement came into force. The EU membership announced as a strategic goal of Ukraine's internal and external policy. EU formulated Common Strategy towards Ukraine)	1996 – 2004 Formal support (priorities of bilateral relations formulated, emphasizing mutual support for each other's objective to become members of EU. The institutionalization of relations)	1996 – 2004 Formal strategic partnership (relations declared as strategic partnership, priorities of bilateral relations formulated, emphasizing mutual support for each other's objective to become members of EU)	1997-2004 1996 Mutual recognition (Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed, Treaty of Long-term economic cooperation signed, Treaty of gas supplying signed, in 2001 multi-vector doctrine was introduced in the Ukraine's foreign policy)
2004 – 2008 Neighborhood (Ukraine became a partner in the context of Neighborhood policy. In 2005 the Action Plan was presented. In 2008 the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement expired)	2005 - 2008 Formation of strategic partnership (Lithuanian-Ukrainian relations declared as strategic partnership)	2004 - 2006 Intensive political dialogue (common planning and agreements)	2005-2006 Crisis (Orange revolution, Gas wars)

2009 - 2010 First among equals (The negotiation on Association Agreement started and the Association Agenda was presented. EU introduced the Eastern Partnership initiative)	2008 – 2010 Implementation of strategic partnership (In 2008 Guidelines for Strategic Partnership of Lithuania and Ukraine was formulated and renewed after few years)	2007-2010 Implementation of strategic partnership (In 2008 Guidelines for Strategic Partnership of Lithuania and Ukraine was formulated and renewed after few years)	2006-2010 Uncovered Animosity (After the political crisis in Ukraine pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovich became Prime Minister, Gas Wars)
2010 – now Conditional dialogue (Yulia Tymoshenko's trial: Ukraine showed signs of "managed democracy", therefore Association Agreement's final accords and signing have become conditional. Increasing isolation of Ukraine)	2011 - now Evaluation of strategic partnership and renewal (Concept of strategic partnership is used as part of political rhetoric, however, dialogue between partners is moderate and conditional. Formal renewal of Guidelines for Strategic Partnership of Lithuania and Ukraine)	2011 - now Evaluation of strategic partnership (The concept of strategic partnership is rarely used in political rhetoric. The evolution of partnership is frozen.)	2010-dabar Formation of strategic partnership (Russian-Ukrainian relations declared as strategic partnership. Agreement on a military base in Sevastopol, the Law on the language policy, signed a package of long-term cooperation agreements and announced the declaration on the formation of strategic partnership)

Poland's ability to accelerate the negotiation process, which began in 2008 with Ukraine-EU Free Trade Agreement, which will become the core of the future Association Agreement in order to establish a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, has also been limited even in the period of Polish Presidency. Though Poland tried to re-include the priority of the bilateral cooperation with Eastern neighbors to the EU's agenda and encourage more active dialogue between Brussels and Kiev, Eastern Partnership countries' refusal to sign the declaration on human rights and the rule of law violations in Belarus (EU Summit in 2011) obliterated Poland's wishes to crown its EU presidency with the signing the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. Chronic lack of reforms in Ukraine's political, economic and social system further reduces the potential intensity of the strategic cooperation; when Poland and Lithuania joined NATO/EU the gap between the countries, despite Ukraine's Euro-integration objectives, was steadily increasing. Moreover, Ukraine seeks to combine Euro-integration and the development of a strategic partnership with Russia and its vision of the Eurasian Union.

In addition, internal policy decisions in Ukraine jeopardized Ukraine's prospects of Euro-integration and showed the tendency of authoritarian

tendencies. The imprisonment of pro-Western former Ukrainian Prime Minister and the opposition candidate of the 2010 presidential elections Yulia Tymoshenko and her allies has been named a political elimination. Selective application of law has been the critical point in the relationship between the EU and Ukraine. Furthermore, continuous maneuvering by Ukraine between EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan Customs Union does not promote mutual trust. Sentencing Yulia Tymoshenko for 7 years by accusing her of abuse of authority in negotiations with Russia on the 2009 gas contract led to the EU's boycott of the European Football Championship 2012 that took place in Ukraine and Poland, as well as the boycott of the Central European Summit, which was held in Yalta. In this way the EU has begun to isolate Ukraine while the latter started engaging in a formally closer cooperation with Russia. In 2010, Ukraine and Russia signed the agreement on the operation of the Russian military base in Sevastopol until 2042 (Kharkov Agreement), and in 2012, formed the Russian - Ukrainian strategic partnership and Ukraine's rapprochement with Russia was crowned by Viktor Yanukovich initiated Law on Language Policy Basis, granting the Russian language an official status in Ukrainian regions.

3.3. The Intensity of Polish-Ukrainian and Lithuanian-Ukrainian Strategic Partnerships

The goal of Polish foreign policy was clear: Ukraine's membership in NATO and the EU. But the Ukrainian representatives were reluctant to support the commitments and declarations of Euro-integration with "the effective programs and specific actions"⁵⁰; political rhetoric remains a critical element, which defines the intensity of the Polish - Ukrainian strategic partnership. Poland as a formal strategic partner plays the role of Ukraine's "advocate and lobbyist"⁵¹ in order to implement for Ukraine useful legislation decisions, strategic projects in the regional and international structures, but only when it meets Poland's national interests. Although Ukraine is identified as a partner, it should be noted that, *de facto*, it is considered as a source of threats to Poland's national security: illegal migration,

⁵⁰ Mroz, M. Strategiczne partnerstwo polsko-ukraińskie i program Partnerstwa Wschodniego w kontekście relacji Warszawa-Kijow. Proba oceny i perspektywy na przyszłość. Międzynarodowy Ekspertski „Okrągły Stoł”. *Partnerstwo Wschodnie a idea europejskiej integracji. Możliwości, ograniczenia i pola współpracy z punktu widzenia Polski i Ukrainy*. Forum Polityki Wschodniej, 2010, p. 28.

⁵¹ Стрільчук Л. В. «Роль Республіки Польща як стратегічного партнера у процесі входження України в європейські та євроатлантичні структури», *Збірник навчально-методичних матеріалів і наукових статей Історичного Факультету*, Вип. 14, Волинський державний університет ім. Лесі Українки, 2008, p. 292-293.

organized crime, human trafficking, AIDS, tuberculosis, cooperation of national security agencies with that of Russian intelligence, limited investment and foreign capital protection and many other problems⁵² decrease the involvement of the functional elements into the strategic cooperation. The costs of cooperation often outweigh the potential benefits. In addition, the estimation of Ukraine as a threat is strengthened by the fact that Poland is a NATO member and Ukraine refused these plans; consequently, Ukraine cannot be regarded as a (potential) part of the common European security system. Given that Poland is under the NATO umbrella, Ukraine is no longer considered as a guarantee of national security, but rather as a “buffer” to the external pressure of Russia⁵³.

Table 4. Intensity of Polish - Ukrainian Strategic Partnership

Cooperation areas	Cooperation elements	The internal structure of the relations	Implementation of mutual expectations	Category of strategic partnership's intensity
(Partly) Political/diplomatic	(Partly) Political/diplomatic	Establishing of partners' roles	Joint planning	Formal
(Partly) Security/defense	(Partly) Governmental institutions/structures	Agreement on cooperation areas and elements	Joint arrangements	Formal/formal-relevant
(Partly) Economic/commercial	(Partly) Private sector	Establishing of rules and regulations	(Partly) Joint statements	Formal-relevant
(Partly) Cultural/educational	(Partly) Non-governmental institutions/structures	Formation of bilateral institutions	-	Real
-	-	-	-	Real-effective
Evolution of intensity		From formal to formal - relevant; from formal - relevant to formal.		

⁵² Adamski Ł. “Partnerstwo Wschodnie a stosunki polsko-ukraińskie”, Międzynarodowy Ekspertki „Okrągły Stoł”, *Partnerstwo Wschodnie a idea europejskiej integracji. Możliwości, ograniczenia i pola współpracy z punktu widzenia Polski i Ukrainy*. Forum Polityki Wschodniej, 2010, p. 52.

⁵³ Знахоренко О. *Стратегічне Партнерство В Українсько-Польських Відносинах*. Автореферат дисертації на здобуття наукового ступеня кандидата Політичних Наук, Київський Національний Університет Імені Тараса Шевченка, 2005, p.11-12.

In the formation phase, the Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership has been characterized by the risk: unresolved bilateral issues (historical phobias, different interpretations of history, manifestations of chauvinism remained the most important bilateral relationship problems), underestimation of partner motives (in the Ukrainian context, this means constant maneuvering between Russia and the EU regarding the geopolitical situation and the internal fragmentation; in order to strengthen its statehood and reduce Russia's political and economic influence, Ukraine approaches the EU and NATO, while in order to get the economic or political concessions from the latter Ukraine approaches Russia⁵⁴), the possibility to develop a real strategic partnership (the Russia factor in Ukraine's domestic and foreign policy, the USA factor in Poland's), unclear definition of the mutual expectations, strategic objectives in the functional cooperation areas, low compatibility with other strategic partnerships in foreign policy (at the same time, Ukraine has established strategic partnerships with Russia, Uzbekistan and the United States), and a low degree of formalization (lack of legal obligation).

Along with the lack of economic, legal and administrative reforms, corruption, confusing bureaucratic system, and weak political institutions, the Russian influence is only a part of the problems hampering the deepening and development of Polish-Ukrainian partnership. The most important factor remains the fact that Poland is a Central European country while Ukraine, despite the claimed geopolitical identity and demand to recognize this identity, "does not apply the Central European standards for itself"⁵⁵. In most cases, Ukraine may be defined as the Polish mission but "the inability to make Ukraine the mission of EU"⁵⁶ reduces Polish enthusiasm to perform the function of Ukraine's advocate, because the lack of Euro-integration is determined by Ukraine's lack of the internal reforms and the negative political development.

Limited achievements are also based on the fact that Polish foreign policy regarding Ukraine has been reactionary rather than a coherent and long-term strategy. Ukraine remains one of the declarative priorities of Poland fo-

⁵⁴ Lopata R., Bielinis L., Sirutavičius V., Stanytė – Toločkienė I. *Lietuvos užsienio politikos Rytų kryptis: santykių su Rusijos Federacijos Kaliningrado sritimi, Baltarusija ir Ukraina perspektyva*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2007, p. 106.

⁵⁵ Pavliuk O. "The Ukrainian-Polish Strategic Partnership and Central European Geopolitics", ed., Müller D. and others, *Between Russia and the West: Foreign and Security Policy of Independent Ukraine*, Vol. 2, Issue 1, 1999, p. 202.

⁵⁶ Wolczuk R. "Polish-Ukrainian Relations: A Strategic Relationship Conditioned by Externalities", ed., Zaborowski M. and Dunn D. H. *Poland - a New Power in Transatlantic Security*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, p. 147-149.

reign policy, but “the real Poland’s strategic objective”⁵⁷ in order to increase its influence in Europe and to become the regional leader is the western vector and cooperation with the EU countries. Thus, the Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership can be described as “magical incantation, whose repetition compensates for the lack of content”⁵⁸. The cooperation continues in the following fields: EU Association Agreement, EU-Ukraine visa-free regime, the Ukrainian administrative, territorial reform, the Euro-Asian Oil Transportation Corridor, the Odessa-Gdansk oil pipeline project. However, the concept of strategic approach, describing the results of the cooperation, is not necessary and is rarely expressed even in Poland and Ukraine.

Table 5. **The Intensity of Lithuanian - Ukrainian Strategic Partnership**

Cooperation areas	Cooperation elements	The internal structure of the relations	Implementation of mutual expectations	Category of strategic partnership's intensity
Political/diplomatic	Political/diplomatic	Establishing of partners' roles	Joint planning	Formal
(Partly) Security/defense	Governmental institutions/structures	Agreement on cooperation areas and elements	Joint arrangements	Formal/formal-relevant
(Partly) Economic/commercial	(Partly) Private sector	Establishing of rules and regulations;	(Partly) Joint statements	Formal-relevant
(Partly) Cultural/educational	-	Formation of bilateral institutions	-	Real
-	-	-	-	Real-effective
Evolution of intensity		From formal to formal - relevant; from formal - relevant to formal.		

Even though since 2010 the Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnership can be seen as formal, it is necessary to take into account the relative power differences, absence of territorial borders, the potential changes in Ukraine's

⁵⁷ Павленко С. М. «Сучасний стан українсько-польських взаємин та перспектива співпраці РП і України в контексті майбутнього членства Польщі в ЄС. Україна і Польща – стратегічне партнерство.» *Збірник наукових праць*. Видавництво Українського фітосоціологічного центру, 2002, р. 101.

⁵⁸ Mroz (reference 55), p. 26.

foreign policy, the increasing isolation of Ukraine, violations of the human rights, rule of law, and democratic values. The following priority areas of the bilateral cooperation still remain: Ukraine's Euro-integration (exchange of the experience regarding Lithuania's accession to the EU), economic cooperation, bilateral trade (improving the investment environment, removing barriers, protectionist measures), transportation (the train Viking), infrastructure projects, diversification of energy resources and supply (energy security), and international security (participation in reconstruction mission in Afghanistan's Ghor province, the frozen conflict in Transnistria). The most important aspect enabling the maintaining and constant updating of the strategic partnership is the expansion of EU context, i.e., signing the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. The process of Ukraine's European integration remains both the context and the systemic principle of the Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnership. The success of the strategic partnership continues to depend on the ability to combine interests and to coordinate cooperation in the functional areas by promoting the growth of common benefit.

Conclusions

The Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership was initiated as a formal partnership in 1996, but the cooperation was not upgraded to the real strategic level. Over time, due to low strategic compatibility, the dependence on Russian foreign policy and changing political elite in Poland and Ukraine, as well as the already low intensity of the strategic partnership, has begun to decline. Since 2010, even in the political rhetoric, the bilateral relations have been rarely identified as a strategic partnership. Moreover, the ultimate result of the Euro-integration process should be Ukraine's membership in the EU. However, with or without the development of the Polish-Ukrainian strategic partnership, Ukraine's prospects of EU membership remains obscure even in a long-term perspective. The change of the political/diplomatic rhetoric, which was the basis of the strategic partnership, indicates the eventual dissolution of the strategic partnership.

The limited achievements of Lithuanian-Ukrainian relations are based on the fact that both Lithuania and Ukraine implemented a reactionary policy towards each other. Moreover, both of them, due to their relative lack of power, are oriented towards direct cooperation with the EU and its major member states. Lithuania's role as a mediator between Brussels and Kiev cannot be fulfilled due to the lack of its influence in the EU. The development of the Lithu-

anian-Ukrainian strategic partnership was smoother than the Polish-Ukrainian cooperation. Nevertheless, Ukraine's democratic and socio-economic development, the implementation of the EU *acquis*, membership conditions are not directly dependent on whether the states develop strategic cooperation. Although the goal of the Polish-Ukrainian and the Lithuanian-Ukrainian strategic partnerships is the same (Ukrainian Euro-integration) and it follows from the the overlapping national interests of partners, the achievement of this goal depends on the EU-Ukraine bilateral relations and the internal political developments in Ukraine. Consequently, Poland and Lithuania can only play the role of Ukraine's supporters.

The Polish-Ukrainian and the Lithuanian-Ukrainian partnerships are defined more by formality than effective strategic cooperation. Ukraine's multi-vector foreign policy (the Russian factor), the gap between Ukraine's geopolitical gravity (to the east) and the orientation (to the west), the chronic lack of democratic and market economy reforms decrease the capabilities of Euro-integration. For those reasons Poland and Lithuania have limited ability to affect the intensity of the cooperation. The evolution of the partnerships is determined by the implementation of pragmatic short-term interests, rather than ability to ensure effective cooperation in strategic areas. The process of the cooperation itself depends on the goals and orientation of the ruling elite (groups of interests) and opportunities to develop a more efficient cooperation can be created only by changes in Ukraine's political situation and by EU Association Agreement's entering into force. Despite Ukraine's domestic development scenario, the promotion of the Polish-Ukrainian bilateral relations is inevitable due to the common territorial border and direct dependence of national security. For Lithuania, Ukraine will remain a formal priority in the context of the EU Neighborhood Policy. However, the lack of resources in Lithuania, the deficit of influence in the EU, the geographical distance between Vilnius and Kiev, as well as the power imbalance will continuously result in the marginalization of the bilateral relations in both countries' foreign policy.

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