



# RECOMMENDATIONS

to the Government of the Republic  
of Poland on its relations with  
Ukraine prepared by the Poland-  
Ukraine Research Centre Foundation

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# Content

<b>Opening comment</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Experts' comments</b>	<b>5</b>
Karol Bijoś	5
Wojciech Jakóbiak	6
Renata Runiewicz-Jasińska, PhD	7
<b>Recommendations to the Government of the Republic of Poland</b>	<b>8</b>
Foreign policy	8
Economic policy	10
Security and Energy	11
Information policy	13
Policy on history	13
Developmental aid	14



# Opening comment

**Dariusz  
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*Chairman of the  
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It is not an exaggeration to say that current relations between Poland and Ukraine are among the best in the history of bilateral relations between these two states. Today, Poland and Ukraine are sovereign and independent states, which is worth emphasising because the history shows that such a state of affairs has not always prevailed. but on the contrary is in a way an exception. Both countries share not a declared common interest but a real one as well as a range of mutual dependencies. This is best described by a paraphrase of a famous statement which Marshall Józef Piłsudski told Semen Petlura, a founding father of Ukraine's independence, on one of their meetings: „There is no free Poland without a free Ukraine, and vice versa”.

A good political relationship in the past 25 years, both between heads of states and governments of both countries, became a standard and a good practice regardless of political changes, which often took a violent path, especially in the case of Ukraine. However, in many other areas a development of current collaboration opportunities or seeking new ones is highly recommended.

First of all, special attention is required in economic relationships (especially in energy which is key to security of both countries), but military or cultural cooperation also have initiatives worth developing. Existing sticking points should not be neglected. They include for example different perspectives on many events in a shared, though very often difficult and tragic past of both nations. Neglecting them now could turn against Poles and Ukrainians in the future, especially as the world of information is yet another conflict zone similarly to all other fields of human activity,

Bearing that in mind, together with a group of leading experts the Poland-Ukraine Research Centre Foundation prepared a set of recommendations and comments on particular areas of current relations between Poland and Ukraine. We hope they will contribute to optimising collaboration priorities for both countries and paying attention to the most crucial, so far not really noticed issues and problems.



# Experts' comments

## **Karol BIJOŚ**

*Member of the  
Policy Committee of the Polish  
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We often look at Ukraine through the lenses of Poland's achievements. It should be kept in mind, however, that during the 25-year period of independence Ukraine went through two revolutions and a war. The clampdown on corruption has only begun and the economic crisis is deepening. Introducing reforms in these circumstances meets many obstacles, and their effects could be painful. Two rounds of regional elections — on October, 25, and November, 15 were the last leg of changes which began with presidential and parliamentary elections in 2014. A complicated voting system introduced two months before, a lack of personnel and deficiencies in supplies, did not stand in the way, Members of electoral commission tirelessly conducted detailed procedures of vote counting and taking the minutes, which together lasted even up to 20 hours. Some incidents of frauds were recorded, but it was nothing in comparison with the scale of embezzlement and the level of „threat” in the country during previous local elections. These successes at home could serve as Ukrainian bargaining card during negotiations with the West. However, too sluggish reforms or even lack of thereof deter partners and allies of Ukraine, instead of drawing them in. A lot depends on the Ukrainian elites which should mobilise itself and get out of the box of mentality established in the post-Soviet era. International environment changes all the time and a number of governments ready to help can fall down drastically within a year. Against this background, civil initiatives in Ukraine shed a much more positive light. The emerging civil society still has a long way to go but it will be a forward-looking stimulus. The Polish Forum of Young Diplomats, created in the wake of Poland's integration with the European Union, is a strong manifestation of Polish civil society, and it actively supports newly created initiatives in Ukraine, including Ukrainian Forum of Young Diplomats.



**Wojciech  
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Polish government should overhaul Poland's mining sector, invest in new power blocks and use changes in gas sector to revise its relations with Gazprom. Overhauling the mining sector means difficult but necessary changes to increase sector's efficiency and hence give hope of selling Polish coal more expensive. On the other hand, it is connected with investing in sustaining output in places which could bring more profits in the future. These include buying machinery, changing crews' rosters and other changes. If we assume an increase in demand in the future, investment in new output capacities is necessary to provide more energy from national resources instead of importing. Import should be complementary to the national output which should guarantee energy security, Therefore the government should decide which power blocks it wants to invest in. The first decisions have already been made. New coal blocks are going to be established in Kozienice and Opole. As the EU climate policy must be carried out, the calculations should take into account the need to limit CO2 emissions in this sector. Launching a gasport and new gas interconnectors, including a possible gas pipeline to Norwegian deposits, will give Poland a better bargaining position in its relations with its chief supplier, Gazprom. Poland should use negotiations windows to lower the price and volume included in compulsory purchase „take or pay” clause and prepare for a renegotiation of the agreement which is due to expire in 2022.



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Our task is to make the Ukrainian side aware that the Russian minority in Ukraine should receive special, strategic care. It is widely known that Ukraine, like the Baltic States, has a Russian minority. Now, at the beginning of a revolutionary transition, it should be prepared and educated for being a part of a European state, formally linked with the European Union. It has not been done at the beginning of the 1990s in the Baltic States. Instead of influencing their minorities, Baltic States tried to fight them (e.g. by giving thousands of Russians the status of stateless persons). Up to these days, they do not trust them, which could be somehow justified if we look through their lenses — the Russian living in the Baltic States still pose a risk of revisionism from the end of the 20th century. A large part of Russian minority in Ukraine stands at the crossroads, in the so-called identity ambivalence, especially people from mixed Russian/Ukrainian families. If Ukraine neglects the process of influencing this group, the Russian soft-power, that is Russian cultural expansion into Ukraine and especially Russian e-colonisation of the network society (that is the young generation of Russians living in Ukraine), and Russian propaganda machine, are all ready to succeed in this sector. For a number of years Russians have been aiming at creating a so-called Russian national/genetic code, a „global Russian” whose identity is closely linked

Incompetent policy towards  
Russian minority in the Baltic States  
is a warning signal for Ukraine

with Russia so when there is a need these citizens of other countries, but of a Russian nationality, became Russia political, economic or social tools. In this context, Russian agencies

use patterns currently employed by Muslim terrorists who began to create a model of ideological and national upbringing for the newcomers at the beginning of the 1990s in the US and in Europe at the beginning of the 21 century, especially during the post-2004 period. It is one of aspects of the so-called national foreign policy strategy of Russia until 2020. Moulding a Russian into an Ukrainian should start from a proper law on national minorities to be written by the Kiev government. Earlier, some constitutional provisions on very diplomatic treatment of national, linguistic and ethnic minorities should be created. Here lies a huge opportunity for Poland. Persons belonging to the Russian minority should feel wanted and trusted in Ukraine. Within the current state of affairs it is difficult but not impossible to use historic facts and links for this purpose to neutralise the message from Russia. Being aware that they are an inseparable part of the contemporary Ukrainian society should ultimately oblige Russians to obey the rules of cohabitation with the majority.



# Recommendations to the Government of the Republic of Poland

## Foreign policy:

- The main internal challenge the Polish government — and broadly speaking the Polish political class — is facing now is to leave foreign policy out of temporary disputes and internal political games. Lack of coherent information policy increases the risk of failure of carried out and planned activities in economic and foreign policy related to Ukraine. It also allows external factors to disrupt decision-making processes.
- The next foreign policy challenge important for Poland is pursuing its interests without antagonising foreign partners, especially those from NATO and the EU. A partnership dialog with Germany, which may be considered one of the fundamentals for pro-Ukrainian coalition in Europe, cannot overshadow the fact that pro-Russian lobby in, e.g. Spain, Italy or France, is advancing. Therefore, Polish government should be more flexible with fulfilling its objectives, basing them also on collaboration and agreement with the neighbouring Baltic States and other partners, whose interests even short-term, overlap with Polish ones.
- Poland's interests and differences with Ukraine should be specified and some diplomatic methods developed, such as soft pressure, including grants, subsidies and a right to withdraw them.
- Deepening the cooperation within the Intermarium project is recommended to minimise the risk of „Magyarization” of Zakarpacie, and to minimise Russian influences in Poland and other countries in the region. A special role in this context could be played by Visegrad Group (V4) initiatives directed to Ukraine.
- Poland's policy towards the Polish minority in Ukraine should involve strong reactions to all kinds of discrimination while simultaneously supporting the integration of Polish communities within Ukrainian society. On the other hand, there may be a need to introduce a standardised exam requirement for the Polish Charter [Karta Polaka] and to have a closer look at procedures and processes related to issuing of thereof.
- This year, the Council of the European Union, in accordance with the European Commission's recommendations, is going to





propose legal changes allowing Ukraine to be taken of the list of countries whose citizens require visa when they want to travel to the Schengen area. The European Commission's assessment says this would hugely increase the frequency of visits paid by Ukrainian citizens to the European Union Member States. Poland should be prepared for it. It requires not only diplomatic actions but also technical and organisational preparations. It is worth beginning the preparations for an increased number of border crossing points at the border between Poland and Ukraine and development of those already existing based on agreements with the Ukrainian government. This also involves an increased number of National Border Guards and Customs Service in this section of the border. Alongside opening new border crossing points, road infrastructure improvements in Ukraine could be financed through a loan already granted to Ukraine by Polish government.

- It is especially worth considering establishing an institution in Poland and Ukraine which would aim at improving mutual cultural and academic dialogue, exchanges of students and experts, based on the model of Polish and Russian Dialogue and Reconciliation Centre and its Russian counterpart. This institution should have financial means at its disposal, necessary first and foremost for carrying out joint research projects, conferences and seminars.
- It is also essential to develop a governmental scholarship programme for young scientists and graduates of selected Ukrainian high-schools with excellent academic achievements or experience in business, media, active citizenship or politics. During their stay in Poland they would be obliged to participate in lectures, seminars and working meetings with Polish academics, researchers, journalists, and NGO representatives, and prepare joint reports and recommendations on selected issues within specialised groups. It would be justified to convince Ukrainian side to host a twin project. This enterprise would aim at building lasting ties between different expert circles, supporting young and ambitious people on their career path, acting towards reconciliation between Poland and Ukraine, and breaking the information barrier. It is also recommended to develop an efficiency assessment test for such projects and decide the amount of scholarship at a level which allows to fully focus on and engage into the project for 6, 10 or 12 months without the necessity to take up employment
- From the Ukrainian perspective of seeking deeper collaboration with EU structures, it is necessary to grant Kiev technical and know-how support on institutionalisation and management of European integration processes, including an exchange of best practice on the functioning of the Polish European Integration Committee. Simultaneously it is recommended to avoid any forms of placing a representative of Polish government within Ukrainian governmental structures.



## Economic policy:

- There is a visible lack of large-scale investments of state-owned and private companies from Poland in Ukraine. It derives from stereotypes and prejudice, a language barrier, unclear legal regulations and a high level of corruption in Ukraine. Placed in the context of Warsaw's political engagement in Kiev, and a broadly understood national interest as well as a hugely positive attitude of Ukrainians towards Poles, these deficiencies in economic activity could be judged as losing a historical opportunity and misusing the potential. Poland's government should support Polish investors, both private and national, in their expansion into Ukraine. From Warsaw's perspective, it would be very important if Polish financial institutions, banks especially, entered the Ukrainian market. It is, however, impossible, without collaboration with the Ukrainian government. Other option includes mobilising firms from IT, construction, consulting and other fields.
- On January, 1, 2016, the trade part of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine came into force creating the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). An increase in interest in the cooperation with Ukrainian contractors is therefore expected, as well as a larger interest in direct foreign investment. It is great time to consider strengthening the Promotion, Trade and Investment Department at the Polish Embassy in Kiev both financially and administratively, and create a similar unit at the Polish Consulates General in Ukraine.
- First and foremost, Polish government should focus its economic engagement on creating strong, transparent and non-discriminatory institutional framework for the Ukrainian economy. A special attention should be paid to technical and expert assistance, necessary to implement provisions of the trade part of the Association Agreement. Removing an overwhelming number of tariff and non-tariff trade restrictions between the European Union and Ukraine opens the path for Polish entrepreneurs to transform and diversify production and services, especially regarding a geographical proximity of both countries. In this context, the implementation of western standards in customs practice in Ukraine acquires a special meaning.
- Polish assistance should include a wide range of twinning projects and it should put a special emphasis on cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian entrepreneurs, e.g. in the form of joint visits or work-placements which could be used not only to tighten the cooperation between Poland and Ukraine but also to strengthen Poland's position in the EU as a part of a broader strategy. The introduction of a pilot project should be considered to support cross border cooperation in innovative sectors, especially Podkarpacki IT companies cluster and emerging IT sector in Lviv Oblast with the emphasis on cybersecurity. Its experiences could be used to develop bilateral cooperation in other industries.



- The financial assistance provided to Ukraine should be used to establish new border crossing points or improvements and development of those existing already. It would additionally benefit Poland's and Ukraine's economy through decreased transport costs from Ukraine to the European Union Member States and back. It will also allow to increase border crossing capacities and deal with long waiting times. All arguments mentioned above will have a positive influence on developing cross border tourism and trade.

### Security and Energy:

- First strategic challenge Poland faces is to initiate collaboration between Polish and Ukrainian arms industries before Poland is overtaken by western competitors. It is recommended to consider engaging Ukrainian defence companies into modernising Polish army's equipment and use their current experiences from the Donbass conflict (e.g. fitting their systems of active anti-tank missile protection to Polish armoured vehicles). The issue of new joint projects proposals is still on the table. Employing Ukrainian battle-gained experiences and achievements from the last two years should occupy a special place on the list of Polish government's priorities, not only in the military area but also regarding science and technology.
- Polish government should not abandon plans of engaging into Ukrainian military personnel training within Polish borders. What is more, many facts clearly favour intensifying collaboration and exchange of experiences between Polish and Ukrainian Special Forces and various counterterrorism agencies, including those responsible for hybrid war.
- Poland's Defence Ministry could also increase the number of military operations carried out together with Ukraine, that is exercises and manoeuvres in Poland as well as joint participation in peace and stabilisation missions. Alongside industry and academic cooperation, Poland could play a bigger part in Ukraine's transfer to NATO standards.
- Difficulties and restrictions in communication between Poland and Ukraine remain a crucial issue. It is worth considering solutions facilitating the crossing of the Poland-Ukraine border — which is also an external border of the EU — for businessmen, scientists and journalists. Notwithstanding this, there is a need to improve services at border crossing points. Frequent queues and long waiting times cannot be justified.
- For Poland, developing energy interconnectors between Poland and Ukraine should be one of the most important issues, especially increasing natural gas export and electricity import capacities. Regarding energy projects and Ukraine, Poland's government should be guided by pragmatism and support those projects promising benefits for both countries.



- The plans to build a new gas interconnector between Poland and Ukraine look very interesting. For Kiev it would create an interesting alternative of supplying gas from Germany (already possible within the current cross border capacities) and from the LNG terminal in Świnoujście or from floating gasport (FSRU) in Klaipeda Including Ukraine in the North-South Corridor (currently under construction) between Poland and Croatia is a natural choice and it would limit the influence of Gazprom even more strictly. However, a sceptical approach to president's Petro Poroshenko's idea of storing gas for Visegrad countries in western Ukraine is recommended. Poland herself should seek to become a gas hub (that is a storage and trade centre) and the Ukrainian project could mean competition for the Polish one.
- The cooperation between Poland and Ukraine in oil supplies, the so-called Euro Asian Oil Transportation Corridor from Azerbaijan to Georgia, the Black Sea Odessa-Brody oil pipeline connected to Poland's Adamowo, Płock and further to Gdańsk, is an interesting aspect. It is highly unlikely to see the daylight due to the pressure from Russia on Azerbaijan (oil supplier), on Georgia (illegal storage threatening Baku-Supsa oil pipeline, that is the transfer from the East to the West) and on Ukraine (Odessa is currently kept at a stalemate position between separatist Transnistria and occupied Crimea). Equally interesting seems the option to correct the above mentioned project and send the resources from Poland to Ukraine through the Odessa-Brody oil interconnector, if Ukraine shows her interest in this project. Chances are good because Arseniy Yatsenyuk's government talks to Turkmenistan and others attempting to diversify its resources.
- On the other hand, the chances to resituate electric energy interconnector between Poland and Ukraine are not looking promising. Polish authorities lack financial resources to reconstruct Khmelnytskyi-Rzeszów line on their side of the border. Development of nuclear energy plant in Khmelnytskyi in Ukraine, which could supply energy to Poland, is also questioned. Other sticking point is the influence of such investment on Polish mining sector or on constructing a nuclear energy plant in northern Poland (which similarly to the restitution of connectors with western Ukraine, requires funding for transmission networks).
- Despite media reports on coal export from Bogdanka mine to Ukraine, these Polish natural resources have poor chances to conquer Ukrainian market. Ukrainians are interested in importing high calorific coal to Poland where demand is high. The reports about improvements to the Dnieper River electricity plant (mostly anthracite-fired) to adjust it to resources from Poland, allegedly funded from the loan granted by Ewa Kopacz's government, also turned out to be untrue. Therefore, on the one hand there is a resistance of Polish producers, and on the other, the resistance from Ukrainian government.



## Information policy:

- There is a need to create a coordinated information policy for the Polish government. Partners from Ukraine should get a clear and beyond-doubt understanding of Poland's policy towards Ukraine and of Poland's interests. Comments from the members of parliament, government ministers and the President of the Republic of Poland should be fully consistent.
- The main challenge Polish government faces here is the lack of media message coordination regarding:
  - a) Poland's internal affairs
  - b) Poland's foreign policy
  - c) Poland's activities within the European Union
  - d) EU actions towards Poland and Ukraine.
- The top solution would be to produce a formal, long-term national strategy having regard to a language barrier and an almost complete lack of knowledge about the current state of affairs in the neighbouring country.
- It is highly recommended to support NGOs from information and media sector and encourage to use their experiences and knowledge about current state of affairs in Ukraine for diplomatic and economic purposes. It is also recommended to engage them in interdepartmental consultations in such areas of governmental activity as language, history, grants, and others.

## Policy on history:

- Strengthening academic as well as history- and art-related initiatives should be a priority. Additional funds should be allocated for exchange programmes for these areas as this is the most effective way to deliver reconciliation between Poland and Ukraine.
- First, it is worth bringing back the issue of creating an information strategy for Poland. The achievements of academic collaboration between Polish and Ukrainian academic circles, including works by historians, are not being promoted in any way and hence do not reach people and media in both countries.
- All actions leading to student exchanges between history faculties in Poland and Ukraine are of key importance. They could contribute to the growth of mutual understanding among elites. The works of Polish and Ukrainian Historians Forum should be promoted, while joint research and projects by young people should also get a boost.
- In our opinion, the positive attitude towards Poles among Ukrainians — proved in opinion polls conducted last year in Ukraine — is linked to a range of factors: the right to work legally in Poland, Polish government's liberal visa policy, easier and easier access to higher education in Poland and attitudes of many experts, journalists and volunteers from Poland who



expressed solidarity with the efforts of Ukrainian society on their way through reforms and against the background of the Donbas conflict. It is important that the western Ukraine — the area hugely affected by the events of the 2nd World War — shows particularly positive attitude towards Poles. It is perfect timing to undertake actions to maintain this trend and build on it to achieve a consensus and historical agreement based on historical truth, and to draw on the current attitudes, experiences, and political, social and geopolitical circumstances.

- Russian propaganda is one of principal factors jeopardising Polish and Ukrainian efforts to bring the two nations closer together. Authorities from Poland should take concrete steps to limit negative and destructive influences, inspired by external intelligence operations, which damage Polish national interest. It is one more field to tighten the cooperation with the Ukrainian partner and coordinate joint efforts in this area.

#### **Developmental aid:**

- It is essential to increase, integrate and boost promotion of Poland's developmental aid. Currently Poland is not visible enough, both in this area and in integrated projects lined up by international donors. Poland's efforts need effective promotion in Ukrainian media.
- All people in charge of international communication and developmental projects in different institutions should cooperate within one network supported by Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This collaboration should not be subject to the usual professional hierarchy in order to facilitate coordination of delivering aid and exchange of information between participating institutions.
- In 2015, a municipal reform began in Ukraine envisaging for merging smaller municipal structures into larger, self-dependent units. From Poland's perspective it is justified to continue technical, organisational and expert support of these actions. Exchanges of officials and local politicians are a great way to build long-term partner relations. Together with coordination efforts between different departments it could contribute to forging business relations, and in a longer term, to developing Polish investment on the Ukrainian market.
- Poland's government should be ready to deliver short-term technical and financial assistance to solve particular problems in collaboration with government departments from Ukraine as well as state services, agencies and other institutions in Ukraine, especially in gathering theoretical and practical knowledge.

