



Weekly Briefing

Poland External Relations briefing:

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The latest dynamics of the Polish foreign policy was mainly concentrated on dealing with Germany, Israel, Ukraine and the European Commission. The questions addressed here are mostly about the motivations of the Polish government in deteriorating relations with Israel and Ukraine? On the other hand, stand for improvement relations with Western Europe? In the briefing, four main issues are discussed: Prime Minister Morawiecki's visit to Germany, relations with Israel through the context of his speech in Munich, relations with Ukraine after the visit of vice prime minister of Ukraine to Poland and détente with the European Commission.

During the visit to Germany Prime Minister Morawiecki hold talks with Chancellor Angela Merkel, meet the public in Korber Foundation and took part in Munich Security Forum. What should be noted that during the visit seven German MPs and MEPs delivered the open letter published in the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" and called on the German government to resign from the planned Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. The politicians called for European solidarity, and wrote that "solidarity is the keyword in the conflict over the gas pipeline that divides the European Union". The resignation from the Russian-German project would be an expression of German solidarity. "Europe cannot cope without solidarity - with this opinion every realist will agree, and yet the call for European solidarity does not have a good reputation" - assess the authors of the letter, i.e. a group of deputies to the Bundestag and the European Parliament from the Christian Democratic CDU / CSU bloc, liberal FDP and Greens. As was argued the plan to build a second Russian gas pipeline through the Baltic Sea to Germany politically separates Europe and puts into question our solidarity with Poland, our Baltic neighbors, Slovakia and Ukraine, but also Denmark and Sweden, "politicians cited by" Deutsche Welle ", for the first time actively undermining Angela Merkel's argument that the project is purely business.

The second important event was the meeting with the broader public audience. During the meeting at the Korber Foundation in Berlin, the Prime Minister discussed the variety of issue. He touched the point of the relations between Poland and China. As was said couple of years ago Poland started its ties with China with lots of enthusiasm. But, after four years it is hard to find the "good project" with China, as Poland has with Germany, France or even the United States. The biggest problem is the disparity in the bilateral trade 1:12, and as was said by the Prime Minister he puts the issues in the very delicate way.

During the meeting in Munich, Prime Minister Morawiecki discussed the issue of the European Union military capacity, common security agenda and answered the questions during the press conference. The Polish Prime Minister while trying to defend new law concerning the Holocaust, mentioned that sometimes not only Germans were responsible for the Jewish extermination, but also Polish, Russian, Ukrainian and Jewish perpetrators were involved. This statement plays the further role in deterioration relations with Israel. In the context mentioned above minister Jacek Czaputowicz during the meeting with Ambassador of Israel to Poland expressed the Polish side's readiness to continue dialogue with Israel to clarifying any matters surrounding the new regulations on the Institute of National Remembrance.

The issue of the historical narrative was also a part of the talk of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki with President Petro Poroshenko in Munich. Both sides discussed the security situation in Donbas and the energy security of the region in the light of the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. The core issue raised by the Polish Prime Minister was dedicated to the historical problems and prohibition of the exhumation and burial of Polish victims of conflicts and repression in Ukraine. What should be noted Ukraine is the only country in the world that prohibits Poles from conducting exhumations in their area. Nothing has been changed since the visit of the Polish delegations, headed by Deputy Prime Minister Piotr Gliński in November 2017. According to the Vice President of IPN prof. Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, the problem of Polish

exhumation in Ukraine, still had not found a solution. - The subject of exhumation and commemoration should not be the object of fairs, and this is more or less the situation on the Ukrainian side. In Kiev, they expect that Poland will lead to the reconstruction of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) monument in Hruszowice and punish those responsible for destroying it. The problem is that the formation responsible for the massacre in Volhynia, and the Polish side cannot accept such a demand.

During the talks (February 2018), the Ukraine vice prime minister Rozenko raised the issue of concerns regarding the amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance, the situation of the Ukrainian community in Poland and underlined the necessity of solving problems related to memorial sites in Poland and Ukraine. Both sides agreed on the measures to create conditions for the inventory and further legalisation of memorial sites in two countries, as well as renewal from the traces of the destruction of memorial sites that was destroyed in Poland. After the visit the head of the President's office, Krzysztof Szczerski expressed a deep disappointment with the result of talks between the deputy prime ministers of Ukraine and Poland. The fundamental issue of abolishing the ban on Polish exhumations on the territory of Ukraine was not resolved, and it will have a significant impact on the political relations.

Ukraine is in the position to counter the amendment of the law of the Institute of National Remembrance. The Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance issued in response to the adoption by the Polish parliament of this amendment a communication in which he announced that "the adoption of a new law on the Polish National Remembrance Institute, which provides, inter alia, criminal responsibility for denying "the crimes of Ukrainian nationalists in 1925-1950" seriously limits the field of discussion and dialogue between historians". The Institute of National Remembrance in Kiev stated that in connection with the amendment it could not "guarantee Ukrainian researchers freedom of speech on the territory of Poland" and even "security during their stay" in Poland.

In February the tension with the European Commission has been eased. During the meeting with High Representative Federica Mogherini, Minister Jacek Czaputowicz discussed Poland's growing involvement in the EU's southern neighbourhood. The Polish government decided to increase contribution to the EUNAVFOR MED Sophia and EUBAM Libya EU missions. Furthermore, Minister Czaputowicz remarked further involvement in Frontex operations in the Mediterranean Sea and increasing financial support for measures aimed at combating illegal migration and aiding refugees from the region. As regards the EU eastern policy, the interlocutors agreed that sanctions imposed on Russia need to be sustained, due to the lack of progress in the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. According to Jean Claude Juncker: *people in Poland are beginning to understand that this is not a conflict between the Commission and Poles, it is not a conflict between Mr Timmermans and the Polish people. This is a conflict between the EC and the Polish government. We'll solve the problem.* This positive tone from the European Commission means that in the foreseeable future the conflict with the European Union will be eased.

Conclusion

To sum up, the relations between Poland and Ukraine sounds like the paradox. The military and academic cooperation blossoms, the cooperation between armaments industries and national banks of both countries have been tightening. The new railway connections are created, one million Ukrainians work in Poland, contribute to its economic growth, and at the same time transfer the earned money to their families in Ukraine, thus saving their financial situation. However, the atmosphere of mutual relations is getting worse and might be the worst in the history. The problem from the Polish side is that by reviving the UPA tradition Ukraine's historical policy acts like the provocation. But it is also depended on the interpretation. The state-owned glorification of the UPA was initiated - naturally as an anti-Soviet (anti-Moscow) partisan, not an

organisation responsible for the genocide of Poles, whose Ukrainians were commonly ignorant.

The second issue is the relations with Israel, that has been gradually worsening. The sharp answer from Israel should be instead understood through the domestic politics lenses. The government in Jerusalem needs to win the public support. From the realistic view, the historical problems should not be recognised as the most critical issue in bilateral relations. Poland and other Central European countries, contrary to Germany, de facto supported Israel in the latest United Nations vote. The German coalition agreement between the CDU / CSU and the SPD impacts the policy of the state of Israel. Although the document confirms the right of Israel to self-determination, at the same time it proclaims that the Jewish "settlement policy" is "contrary to international law", because it rejects the scenario of the creation of two states preferred by Berlin. The creation of free Palestine indirectly supports it. The agreement also says that the status of Jerusalem should only be "clarified in the course of negotiations". This, in turn, strikes at the decision of Donald Trump to transfer the US embassy to this city. When a resolution condemning the gesture was voted in the United Nations, Poland, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Romania and Hungary abstained from EU countries.

Finally, in its foreign policy, the government realised that could not fight 'two wars'. Along with the deteriorating relations with Ukraine, and Israel, Warsaw needs to find the way to resolve the problems with the European Commission. The further improvement with the European Commission is conditional upon the negotiation of the next budget post-2020 European budget and from this perspective might be understood as negotiating strategy taken by the government in Poland.