



Weekly Briefing

**Poland External Relations briefing:
Three Seas Initiative and Brexit
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Three Seas Initiative and Brexit

Poland conducts more and more active foreign policy in the regional affairs as well as in the global arena. The briefing discusses the latest development in the Three Seas Initiative and the role of the Brexit in shaping the Polish government policy towards the region of the Central and Eastern Europe. To what extent the maritime cooperation between countries in Central Europe might turn into the real projects, and how this projects will be sponsored? Secondly, what are the major driven forces behind the regional policy of the Three Seas and how to understand the role of the Brexit in shaping the Polish policy towards the region?

Andrzej Duda, the president or the Republic of Poland, took part in the Bucharest Three Seas Initiative summit. The summit was attended by representatives of 12 Three Sea countries, i.e. countries located between the Baltic Sea, the Adriatic Sea and the Black Sea namely Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary. The twelve members of the initiative signed the letter of intent regarding the Three Seas Initiative fund, declarations of building the network of the chambers of commerce, and the establishment of the Three Seas Initiative Business Council. The most important issue mentioned by Andrzej Duda is that Tree Seas Initiative is based on the strong Europeanism and Transatlanticism. In this regard the identity of this initiative is part of the European Union and NATO. One of the important pillar of the cooperation should be based on the IT industry and further cooperation with the Western European countries. Moreover, the above mentioned MoU was signed in the presence of the heads of the largest financial institutions in Europe and in the world the World Bank, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, as well as the head of the European Commission and EU sectoral commissioners. From the geopolitical point of

view twelve Central European countries welcomed more presence of the United States and placed itself as a strategic tool for America to build relations with Central Europe. Moreover, as said by the Polish president, American growing business activities in the region were more than welcomed. The initiative is perceived as the new political practices, building the efficient cooperation in the Central Europe. Therefore, regional cooperation is enriched with new components and new instruments of implementation. An interesting point was mentioned by the Polish president who said that countries from the Central Europe hope to be co-creators of the region. In the above discussed context Andrzej Duda said: *The European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance have been and continue to be two keystones for the Tri-Sea Initiative. The identity of the Tri-Sea Initiative is determined by our Europeanness and our transatlanticity.* The major motivations of the Central European countries, and Poland in particular is to have Central Europe well-developed, well-integrated and secure of the Euro-Atlantic world. The Three Seas map includes the investments as the Via Carpatia road or the North-South gas corridor. What should be also mentioned the president of the United States Donald Trump send the letter to the participants of the Business Forum. He confirmed strong US support for the Three Seas Initiative and joint commitment to infrastructure development, improving business relationships, strengthening energy security and reducing barriers to free, fair and reciprocal trade in Central and Eastern Europe. According to the American president there is a great potential to achieve above mentioned goals and build strong relations between the United States and Central Europe. Moreover, what is also very visible the European Union shares the interests in the Three Seas Initiative. the head of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker took part in the meeting.

The second important dynamic in the relations between Poland and neighbouring countries was the joint statement signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Poland Jacek Czaputowicz, Lithuania Linas Linkevičius and Romania Teodor Meleşcanu. The three respective sides called for the close

cooperation between Brussels and London in the field of security. In this context the Brexit will place the breakthrough in European foreign policy. The current debates in the European Union indicated that without the United Kingdom, the position of the Union on the world stage may weaken, making it more vulnerable to external threats. In this context the Ministers called for close cooperation and conduct coordinated activities with the Great Britain especially in the field of security. This means ensuring a constant flow of information. The other important point mentioned in the declarations touches the fact that the Great Britain is the member of the UN Security Council and possess nuclear status. After Brexit the only power with the nuclear capability in the European Union will be France. Paris, not necessary will support the position of Poland, Lithuania or Romania policy towards Russia or any other treat for the Central European security. On the other hand, from more global perspective the Brexit will weaken the European Union position in the global governance structure. In the special declaration published in POLITICO the Ministers of three countries declared: *The UK's explicit commitment to Europe's security, along with its weight and position in the European and Euro-Atlantic family, gives reason to believe that the EU and Great Britain can reinforce each other's defense and cooperate to defend common European interests and values* . More to the point due to its post-colonial legacy London is heavily involved in global politics and will continue to play an important role in developing new and innovative approaches to international affairs. Brussels should be ready to call London to maintain close cooperation to minimize costs and maximize the effects. As a member of the G7, the G20 or UN Security Council, the United Kingdom is an active promoter of our common global agenda, known for presenting creative and innovative solutions to common challenges. It is in our common interest to act side by side here.

As stated by the three Ministers the close cooperation is also in the interest of Great Britain. There are many situations where the agreed European actions bring a more positive result than the steps taken by individual countries. Having

in mind the security issues in the Eastern and Southern border areas of the Union, in the Western Balkans and in the common policy towards Russia, the coordination after Brexit will be particularly important. The EU and the United Kingdom will also be stronger together in terms of development cooperation, relations between the Union and NATO, in combating terrorism, security and defence policy, including sanctions or any other types of actions in the regional and global policy.

Conclusions

The latest actions taken by the Polish government in its foreign policy are mainly driven by the fact that the Great Britain will leave the European Union. First, the Three Seas Initiative places more security agenda on the Central European side. Building common platform for cooperation between the Central European countries will lead to strengthen regional market, and build more independent position in the regional affairs. In other words the countries in the Central Europe acknowledges that even the Great Britain remains the member of NATO, however, in the context of leaving the European Union, the Central European countries and Poland in particular will lose its close ally. From the above discussed points the declaration of three countries Poland, Lithuania and Romania should be perceived as the very important signal for the future cooperation with the Great Britain. The basic motivation of those three government to call for the future close relations with London is driven by the potential threats from Russia. In this context relations between Poland and Lithuania are one the most important. Both countries cooperate with the Great Britain in the military field, and hope to remain its partner. When it comes to the European level, London supports sanctions against Russia and supports the role of the Eastern Partnership in the European Union policy towards its eastern borders. The Brexit might also cause that the pro-transatlantic policy might be limited. From this perspective Poland and other Central European countries the

Brexit means that they will not have bargaining power to persuade Brussels to have more close policy with Washington. Following this dynamic, Warsaw will experience more tensions at the European level, especially when it comes to the European security and external affairs. What should be mentioned here is that the Ministers of Poland, Lithuania and Romania pointed the role of the Great Britain as the nuclear power. In this context the Great Britain, as the nuclear power, plays the critical or pivotal role in the European Union policy towards the region. After the Law and Justice took power the Polish government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs placed the Great Britain as the strategic partner in the European affairs and in the global context. The Brexit, however, undermined this policy, and the Polish government together with Croatia uses the Three Seas platform as the vehicle for bringing security to the region by the growing engagement with the United States.