



GLOBAL GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE

National Backgrounders – European Foreign Policy

Country Profile

Poland

Capital:	Warsaw
Geographical Size:	312 679 km ²
Population:	38 495 659 (2014)
Population as % of total EU population:	7.6% (2014)
GDP:	€ 389.695 billion (2013)
Defense Expenditure:	€ 6.720 million (2013)
Official EU language(s):	Polish
Political System:	Parliamentary republic
EU member country since:	1 May 2004
Seats in European Parliament:	51
Currency:	Polish Zloty (PLN)
Schengen area member?	Schengen Area member since 21 December 2007
Presidency of the Council:	Once: in 2011

Source: Europa.eu

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a. Political System

Poland is parliamentary republic based on the Constitution of April 2, 1997, which declares that Poland is “a democratic state ruled by law, implementing the rules of social justice, safeguarding the independence and integrity of its territory, ensuring the freedoms and rights of persons and citizens and the security of the citizens, safeguarding the national heritage and ensuring the protection of the natural environment in line with the principle of sustainable development”¹. It is also important to note that **Catholicism** has a great influence on Polish society, as it represents about 90% of the population².

The country’s executive power is headed by the President, currently Andrzej Duda (PiS) since August 2015, directly elected by absolute majority vote for a five-year term renewable once. The President appoints the Prime Minister, who is approved by the *Sejm* (lower parliamentary chamber). The Prime Minister, or President of the Council of Ministers, is Ewa Kopacz (PO) since September 2014. Donald Tusk, now President of the European Council, preceded her in this position for the period 2007-2014. The government in function is composed of a **center-right coalition** made of members from the Civic Platform (PO) and from the Polish People’s Party (PSL), and of the Law and Justice party (PiS) in opposition.³ When reshaping the cabinet after Tusk’s resignation, Kopacz notably promoted Defence Minister Tomasz Siemoniak as Deputy Prime Minister and appointed former Minister of the Interior Grzegorz Schetyna Minister of Foreign Affairs, which indicated the new government’s focus on **domestic security**.⁴

The legislative power is exercised in Poland by the bicameral Parliament, composed of a lower house (*Sejm*) and an upper house (*Senat*). The *Sejm* is made of 460 members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation, while the *Senat*’s 100 members are elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote, both for four years⁵. The parliamentary election of October 2015 has seen the **national conservative Law and Justice party** (PiS) winning absolute majority (39% of the vote). This Eurosceptic and pro-NATO party led by former Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczyński has notably proven to be anti-immigration and strongly against abortion and in-vitro fertilization, as well as in favor of greater welfare spending.⁶ Its lead candidate Beata Szydło is expected to be appointed prime minister in the next government, which could happen prematurely. However, the party did not manage to secure two-thirds of the parliamentary seats, which will prevent it from changing laws as easily as in Hungary, despite Kaczyński’s statement that “one day, we will have a Budapest in Warsaw”.⁷

¹ n.a. “About Poland”, Official website of the President of the Republic of Poland, n.d., Web. Accessed October 26, 2015. <http://www.president.pl/en/about-poland/>

² “Poland”, *The World Factbook*, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Web. Accessed October 26, 2015. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pl.html>

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Zbytniewska, K. “Poland unveils new cabinet line-up”, *EurActiv*, September 19, 2014. Web. Accessed October 26, 2015. <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/elections/poland-unveils-new-cabinet-line-308586>

⁵ “Poland”, *The World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Web. Accessed October 26, 2015.

⁶ Duval Smith, A. “Poland lurches to right with election of Law and Justice party”, *The Guardian*, October 26, 2015. Web. Accessed October 26, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/25/poland-lurches-to-right-with-election-of-law-and-justice-party>

⁷ Dempsey, J. “Poland’s Eurosceptic Future”, *Judy Dempsey’s Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, October 26, 2015. Web. Accessed October 26, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=61741>

b. Foreign Policy

Poland is characterized by an active foreign policy triggered by its crucial history and geopolitical position. After the fall of the communist regime, the country joined various organizations and formed multiple regional coalitions. It is however often seen as quite inexperienced, despite its strong determination to defend national interests.

Poland formed together with France and Germany the “**Weimar Triangle**” after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. This informal platform of discussion has influenced Poland to imitate Germany’s reluctance to use military force to solve conflicts. Nonetheless, this partnership has lately been limited in the field of defense, in view of Russia’s aggressiveness, which is perceived in Poland as a real threat needing action (In April 2014, 47 percent of Poles believed that their country’s independence was at risk). As a result, Poland and France have been closer lately, as the latter is very active in security and defense. The relation reached unprecedented proximity after Poland’s announcement in May 2015 that it will invest about \$40 billion to modernize its armed forces by 2022, which clearly interests France as a provider of military merchandise. In order for the triangle to remain powerful, France and Germany need to take into account Polish interests when negotiating with Russia within the Normandy Format (Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine) to resolve to **crisis in Ukraine**. With this regard, Poland demands to financially and militarily assist Ukraine. In fact, in view of Poland’s fear of and closeness to Russia, it has more in common with the Nordic and Baltic states, with which the country should seek strong cooperation.⁸

Relations between **Warsaw and Moscow** are very complicated, and driven by historical emotion and suspicion. The plane crash of April 2010 killing the Polish President on Russian soil was especially important, as it triggered rapprochement between the two (opening of border between the Kaliningrad province and Poland). However, following the Ukraine crisis, this rapprochement came to an end, and conspiracy theories gained success (especially in the Law and Justice party, who tried to discredit the Civic Platform party’s opening to Russia).⁹ The Republic of Poland joined **NATO** in 1999, and directly took part in its operations in the Western Balkans, driven by its strong bilateral relationship with the US. Today, Polish foreign policy appears to strongly reorient towards NATO and Atlanticism, as a result of the internal division within the EU. Indeed, internal cohesion is essential to Poland, which thus prefers to depend on the Alliance for security.

Poland joined the **EU** in 2004, forming the **Visegrád Group** coalition with Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia (the alliance was initiated in 1991 with the aim to accede the EU). Together, the countries managed to minimize regional inconsistency and to coordinate policies. Recently, however, the Russian threat created some tensions among them, which weakened the group’s influence (Poland clearly sees Russia as an enemy, unlike Hungary and the Czech republic). In addition, the alliance prevented Polish Prime Minister Kopacz to stand up against Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán’s very nationalist, conservative and anti-immigration stance.¹⁰

⁸ Smolar, E. “Letter From Warsaw”, *Judy Dempsey’s Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, June 5, 2015. Web. Accessed October 26, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60322>

⁹ Dempsey, J. “Grounded: Poland-Russia Relations”, *Judy Dempsey’s Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, April 13, 2015. Web. Accessed October 27, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=59752>

¹⁰ Smolar, E. “Letter From Warsaw”, *Judy Dempsey’s Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, June 5, 2015. Web. Accessed October 26, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60322>

European Union (EU)

Poland joined the EU in 2004. Under the Civic Platform government, it has successfully made use of the European Institutions in order to promote national interests at the EU level, such as security and energy. Last, parliamentary elections' results could however trigger a shift in foreign policy, and there seems to be a new attitude among young Poles to focus on domestic development and a **reduced interest in external action**. This would clearly undermine Poland's relation with the EU and NATO. The Law and Justice party could prevent Brussels from reaching agreement regarding the refugee crisis, and more generally undermine the EU's attempt to have single voice and a coherent common foreign and security policy. This would unfortunately be well seen by Russia, which is not in the intention of any Polish political party. Finally, Kaczyński's party's recent success could weaken **Poland's ties with Germany**, as it strongly criticizes Merkel's decisions with regard to Russia, especially its refusal to establish a NATO base in Poland. The Civic Platform is more open with regard to Germany.¹¹

Regarding the current refugee crisis in Europe, Polish Foreign Minister Grzegorz Schetyna explained for *Politico* in September 2015 that the country is willing to take refugees, but that **EU borders must be sealed** in priority in order to avoid "chaos and brutal skirmishes". Indeed, he points out that all EU countries get overwhelmed by the issue due to weak border controls and lacking law enforcement. Schetyna argues for a more coherent and cooperative work of EU Member States, so that decisions can be taken more effectively and more rapidly, for both internal and external matters. Indeed, he emphasizes Europe's South East instability as a weakness that could be used against it, and therefore that urgently needs to be tackled. Finally, he put forward that bilateral cooperation with Germany with regard to EU migration policy is a "good idea".¹²

c. Peace & Security Policy

Poland is a partisan of the **comprehensive approach** to security and thus is a member of multiple international organizations providing security in different manners, including NATO, the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the UN, the OSCE, and the Council of Europe. In the 2014 *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, the country's stated interests¹³ clearly show a will to **boost its independence** and own capabilities. Correspondingly, Poland's strategic security objectives notably include maintaining and showing readiness of its national security system and building a strong Polish position in NATO and the EU security frameworks. Furthermore, Poland markedly aims at developing close cooperation with its neighbors, improving and developing the national crisis management system, protecting Polish borders, increasing public awareness in the domains of security and human rights, as well as ensuring energy security and climate security.¹⁴

¹¹ Dempsey, J. "Poland's Euroskeptical Future", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, October 26, 2015. Web. Accessed October 26, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=61741>

¹² Schetyna, G. "Opinion – Poland: Seal EU borders", *Politico*, September 21, 2015. Web. Accessed October 27, 2015. <http://www.politico.eu/article/sel-eu-borders-poland-migration-refugees/>

¹³ Poland's security interest include: possessing effective national security capacities, having a strong international position and membership in international security systems, protecting its citizens' rights and freedoms, and ensuring a sustainable and balanced development of the state (Government of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, Warsaw, 2014. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/NSS_RP.pdf).

¹⁴ Government of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, Warsaw, 2014. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/NSS_RP.pdf

As previously mentioned, Poland's reaction to Russian aggressiveness and US away-from-Europe pivot has been strong. As the country clearly sees peace in Europe as an outdated ideal, it will **upgrade its military capabilities** accordingly (about \$ 40 billion are to be invested over a decade) and thus plans to be in line with NATO's two percent of GDP recommended defense spending. The country appears to aim at having an open command and control system allowing multiple launchers, missiles and radars to plug into the system. The US and the EU (especially France, Germany and Italy) are thus now competing to sell their military merchandise to Poland. Polish Defense Minister Tomasz Siemoniak (PO) chose to buy US Raytheon's Patriot anti-missile system in April 2015, but since the election of President Andrzej Duda (PiS) in August 2015, Poland is likely to privilege a more modern company: the Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS Group), which includes companies from the US, Italy and Germany.¹⁵

Tomasz Siemoniak launched its **Regional Security Assistance Program (ReSAP)** to be in force by 2022 in order to support Eastern European armament efforts by providing loans to purchase military equipment, and by organizing non-commercial transfers of weapons. The Visegrád Group of countries (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Czech Republic) will be the first beneficiary, as well as the Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia), Romania and Bulgaria. This could be seen as a move from part of Poland to enhance its role in regional defense and security cooperation, according to Marek Jablonowski from the University of Warsaw, but also as a mean to boost its national defense companies' international footing.¹⁶

European Union (EU)

Poland's role within the EU as a security actor is clearly stated throughout its *National Security Strategy*. In this document, Poland seems to particularly push for more EU **integration** and more **collaboration** between the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) and NATO. Poland is also advocating for renewed national financial commitments to defense, especially in the EU, which must continue promoting united political will and active involvement of Member States.¹⁷

As explained by Dominik P. Jankowski in *The Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives*, Poland is right when it expresses that EU and NATO should further collaborate in the field of security, as the two organizations have everything to gain from more cooperative responses, exercises, and prioritization. Also, he exposes that EU's armament needs to be upgraded and that the EU must remain operationally engaged (especially in Eastern Europe) if it wants to remain a safe environment.¹⁸ In the same collection of contributions, Jacek Bartosiak argues that Poland clearly sees the CSDP as **less relevant than NATO**, due to the EU's lack of cohesion and to the perceived leading role of Germany in building the Union's security agenda (which is not well seen because of

¹⁵ Judson, J. "Poland's missile defense needs still up for grabs", *Politico*, May 28, 2015. Web. Accessed October 27, 2015. <http://www.politico.eu/article/polands-missile-defense-needs-still-up-for-grabs/>

AFP, "Poland To Spend Billions on Defense", *Defense News*, February 16, 2015. Web. Accessed October 27, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/international/europe/2015/02/15/poland-spend-billions-defense-amid-rumblings-war-europe/23457827/>

¹⁶ Adamowski, J. "Poland Launches Effort to Help Arm E. European Allies", *Defense News*, October 4, 2015. Web. Accessed October 27, 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/budget/2015/10/04/poland-launches-effort-help-arm-e-european-allies/73148772/>

¹⁷ Government of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, Warsaw, 2014. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/NSS_RP.pdf

¹⁸ Jankowski, D. P. "Poland and the CSDP: from Wales to Warsaw with a strategic stopover in Brussels" In Fiott, D. (ed.) *The Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives*, Egmont Institute, No. 79, May 2015. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015. <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ep79.pdf>

Germany's soft approach to Russia). Therefore, the author makes clear that the CSDP matters for Poland only in its capacity to provide assistance if the state or the Baltic countries need so (i.e. in case of hostilities or Russian actions). This could change in the future, if the CSDP becomes more cohesive and involves real military capabilities.¹⁹

Poland committed in January 2014 to provide for 2,97% of the ATHENA mechanism budget (financing of EU military and defense operations that are not financed through EU budget)²⁰. In terms of CSDP missions, Poland participates in the EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform in Ukraine (EUAM) started in December 2014 by providing ten police officers²¹. In addition, it provided troops for the CSDP military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR ALTHEA) and surveillance aircraft for the CSDP operation in the Mediterranean against human smugglers and traffickers (EUNAVFOR MED)²².

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Poland joined NATO in 1999, and sees the organization as “the most important political and military Alliance and a **guarantor of Poland's security**”²³. The country participated in 2,63% of NATO's budget for the period 2014-2015²⁴, and notably hosts the **Joint Force Training Centre (JFTC)** in the city of Bydgoszcz. Furthermore, the next NATO Summit will take place in Warsaw on July 8-9, 2016. Poland participated in the Kosovo Force (KFOR) going on since 1999 (its first NATO mission) by providing 230 Polish soldiers, the Baltic Air Policing mission to protect Lithuania's, Latvia's and Estonia's airspace established in 2004, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operation in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014 (in 2014, there were 500 Polish soldiers in Afghanistan), and the Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean (2001-2011) by deploying Polish vessels²⁵.

In its *National Security Strategy*, Poland mentions the defense budget cuts of NATO and EU countries as having a negative impact on both organizations' ability to act. In fact, **reinforcing NATO** is one of Poland's three priorities in the field of security policy. It particularly aims at consolidating NATO's defensive function and improving strategic cooperation between NATO and the EU²⁶. Indeed, in consideration of the changing

¹⁹ Bartosiak, J. “The CSDP is a remote concept in Poland”, In Fiott, D. (ed.) *The Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives*, Egmont Institute, No. 79, May 2015. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015. <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ep79.pdf>

²⁰ Council of the European Union, *Financing of military operations: the ATHENA mechanism*, January 2014. Web. Accessed October 13, 2015.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/139880.pdf

²¹ n.a. “Poland to send police team to Ukraine to assist in reforms”, *UNIAN Information Agency*, May 6, 2015. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. <http://www.unian.info/politics/1075025-poland-to-send-police-team-to-ukraine-to-assist-in-reforms.html>

²² “Ongoing missions and operations”, *European Union External Action*, October 2015. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. <http://www.eas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/>; Cirlig, C.-C., *At a glance: EU mounts new maritime operation to tackle Mediterranean people traffickers*, European Parliamentary Research Service, June 5, 2015. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2015/559489/EPRS_ATA\(2015\)559489_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2015/559489/EPRS_ATA(2015)559489_EN.pdf)

²³ Government of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, Warsaw, 2014, p. 20. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/NSS_RP.pdf

²⁴ “NATO Common-Funded Budgets & Programmes”, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, Web. Accessed September 22, 2015.

http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_06/20140611_20140601_NATO_common_funded_budgets_2014-2015.pdf

²⁵ Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Poland, *15 Years in NATO*, 2014. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://en.mon.gov.pl/z/pliki/dokumenty/rozne/2014/09/MON_NATO.pdf

²⁶ Government of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, Warsaw, 2014, p. 28. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/NSS_RP.pdf

geopolitical regional context (especially Russian threat and US pivot), Poland sees the Alliance as complementary to the CSDP but clearly as a faster and more acute tool²⁷. Polish President Andrzej Duda (PiS) explicitly called for increased NATO commitments and for the creation of a new permanent military base in Poland (which was refused by Germany as it would unnecessarily provoke Russia), as it does not want to be a mere “buffer zone”. With this regard, Duda criticized NATO for not responding effectively enough to Russia’s actions in Georgia and Ukraine. In an interview for the *Financial Times*, he expressed the will to be “the real eastern flank of the alliance” and the necessity to establish a permanent NATO basis in Eastern Europe, which should be a central issue during the upcoming Warsaw Summit.²⁸

United Nations (UN)

Poland is part of the group of countries that founded the UN in 1945. It initially participated largely in UN-led missions, but the collapse of the Soviet Union led to a higher involvement in NATO-led and EU-led operations abroad. Indeed, the country currently privileges NATO as security provider and thus aims at becoming a more active component in the latter organization.²⁹ Poland is however contributing to UN assistance/stabilization missions in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the DRC (MONUSCO), Liberia (UNMIL), Kosovo (UNMIK) Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI), South Sudan (UNMISS), and the Western Sahara (MINURSO). In September 2015, a total of fourteen Polish personnel were involved in UN missions: eleven experts and three police officers.³⁰ During his speech at the 70th UN General Assembly (Poland was the third speaker), President Duda emphasized the need to work for the rule of law, and mentioned the issue of veto in the UN Security Council with regard to mass violations of human rights. He also referred to modern threats to international peace and security such as climate change, development, and economic inequalities.³¹

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Poland joined the OSCE in 1973, at its creation under the name of the *Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe*. It holds the oldest institution of the Organization: the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (**ODIHR**) created in 1991 and based in Warsaw. In 2014, the country contributed to 0,7% of the OSCE’s unified budget with €1,658,490 and had 23 nationals involved in the Organization’s staff. Poland is notably part of the group of countries that visited Ukraine for military inspection in 2014 under the auspices of the OSCE and as provided in the Vienna Document.³²

²⁷ Jankowski, D. P. “Poland and the CSDP: from Wales to Warsaw with a strategic stopover in Brussels” *In* Fiott, D. (ed.) *The Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives*, Egmont Institute, No. 79, May 2015. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015. <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ep79.pdf>

²⁸ Foy, H. “NATO treats Poland like a buffer state, says new president”, *The Financial Times*, August 13, 2015. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/d6749156-410e-11e5-b98b-87c7270955cf.html#axzz3pxGWQgjf>

²⁹ Tarnogorski, R. “Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: Poland”, *Providing for Peacekeeping*, October 2012. Web. Accessed November 2, 2015. <http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-poland/>

³⁰ “UN Mission’s Summary detailed by Country”, *United Nations Peacekeeping*, September 30, 2015. Web. Accessed October 13, 2015. http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/sep15_3.pdf

³¹ Krzywosadzki, A. “Poland’s president speech at the 70 session UN GA general debate”, *Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations in New York*, September 28, 2015. Web. Accessed November 2, 2015. http://www.nowyjorkonz.msz.gov.pl/en/poland_in_the_un/speeches_and_documents/poland_s_president_speech_at_the_70_session_un_ga_general_debate_

³² The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), *Annual Report 2014*, July 2015. Web. Accessed September 1, 2015. <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/169971?download=true>

Poland sees the OSCE as an important forum for political discussion and practical actions to solve conflict situations, thanks to its broad range of instruments for solving crisis situations. Nonetheless, the Organization's high dependence on member states' commitment is stressed in Poland's 2014 *National Security Strategy* as clear weakness, because of current division in Europe. Furthermore, the document points out the weakening of the conventional arms control regime and the instrumental use of provisions of OSCE document to legitimize military activities.³³

Council of Europe (CoE)

Poland joined the Council of Europe in 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Its contribution to the Organization's budget for 2015 is of €8.325.976 (2% of total budget)³⁴. It was recently criticized by the CoE because of recurrent homophobic statements in political discourses, especially towards the Muslim community³⁵.

Strategic Culture

The post-Cold War period, characterized by multipolarity and interdependence, clearly influenced Poland's strategic culture. The country's foreign policy priorities include supporting Polish participation in UN operations to maintain peace and security, even though **NATO and the EU are preferred frameworks** to answer international crises. Poland's foreign and defense policies are in fact dominated by NATO and EU memberships, as well as by the country's strategic alliance with the US.³⁶

The country's **bilateral relationship with the US** has been driven by its added security value (direct proximity to Russia). The US has established close links with Poland since the early 1990s. According to Zaborowski and Longhurst, the country became the US' "protégé" and NATO became the security guarantor for Poles following the Alliance's enlargement in the East. This connection has been illustrated by Poland's unconditional devotion to (official or not) US-led operations, such as in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Furthermore, Poland has proven to distinguish from France and Germany by representing a European state that aligns with US policy and that could highly influence future European foreign policy.³⁷ Nonetheless, Eugeniusz Smolar argues in his *Letter From Warsaw* that this relationship is currently crumbling in view of the US pivot towards the Asia Pacific Region, and of the failed US-led interventions in Iraq, in which Poland was strongly involved (about 2.200 Polish troops were deployed in August 2003, and Poland was responsible for one of the occupation zones^{38,39}).

³³ Government of Poland, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, Warsaw, 2014, p. 22. Web. Accessed October 29, 2015. http://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/NSS_RP.pdf

³⁴ "Poland", *The Council of Europe*, Web. Accessed November 2, 2015. <http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/poland>

³⁵ Gotev, G. "Council of Europe criticizes racism in Hungary, Poland", *EurActiv*, June 9, 2015. Web. Accessed November 2, 2015. <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/elections/council-europe-criticises-racism-hungary-poland-315222>

³⁶ Tarnogorski, R. "Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: Poland", *Providing for Peacekeeping*, October 2012. Web. Accessed November 2, 2015. <http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-poland/>

³⁷ Zaborowski, M. and Longhurst, K. "America's protégé in the east? The emergence of Poland as a regional leader", *International Affairs*, No. 79, Issue 5, 2005, p. 1009-1028. Web. JSTOR. Accessed November 2, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3568950>

³⁸ Hummer, H. "A Survey of Involvement of 10 European States in the Iraq War 2003", *PAKS Working Paper No. 9*, Parliamentary Control of Security Policy, Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf School of Social Sciences, 2007. Web. Accessed November 2, 2015. http://paks.uni-duesseldorf.de/Dokumente/paks_working_paper_9_rev.pdf

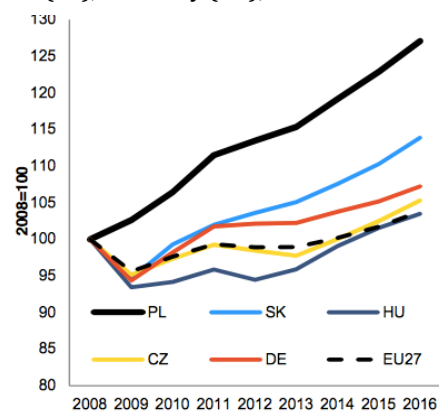
Poland's strategic culture is strongly influenced by its geopolitical history. Firstly, its location between Russia and Germany has made it difficult to remain stable and safe. As a result, Poland's security policy is focused on territorial defense, and privileges the NATO framework as a security provider notably through the execution of Article 5. Secondly, it strongly supports newly independent states from the former Soviet Union (e.g. Lithuania and Belarus) and favors proactive engagement in case of threat to regional stability as a consequence from its past failure to defend Polish territory by pacific means (i.e. against Hitler in 1939). Finally, Poland's strategic culture is characterized by ambivalence between **multilateralism and utilitarianism** with regards to security institutions (except for NATO). These characteristics have made Poland the best ally the US could find in Europe at the end of the Cold War, and a strong supporter of US position in Europe (notably when endorsing the US Missile Defense Program and when going along US skeptical position towards EU's defense initiative).⁴⁰

d. Economic Policy

European Union (EU)

Poland is one of the few EU countries that managed to handle the effects of the 2008 economic crisis well. According to the European Commission's 2015 Country Report of Poland, national GDP has increased by 19% since 2008, which is unique in the EU. After 2012, the country **countered economic decline** by boosting domestic demand, which replaced external trade as the main growth driver in 2014, through higher employment and real wage levels. Indeed, labor market conditions improved (unemployment fell from 10,3% in 2013 to 9,1% in 2014) as result of employment growth and rising private investment.

Real GDP growth of Poland (PL), Slovakia (SK), Hungary (HU), the Czech Republic (CZ), Germany (DE), and the EU 27.



Source: European Commission

The Commission stresses issues of high youth unemployment, low participation rate, high temporary employment, low labor productivity in agriculture, low levels of education, and limited mobility in the country. In its 2014 analysis of Poland, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) already stressed the Polish economic **weaknesses in the labor market**, namely structurally low employment, insufficient product market competition, low internal mobility, and important segmentation of the labor market. Furthermore, the country had the advantage of presenting competitive labor costs in the aftermath of the economic crisis, and of benefiting from growing private investment. Nonetheless, the country still faces challenges related to its relatively low scientific and technological performance and to its deficient transport, energy and communication networks according to the European Commission. In addition, the OECD mentioned in 2014 restrictive market regulations (e.g. heavy barriers to entrepreneurship and extensive state involvement) as factors weakening competition and hindering economic activity.

³⁹ Smolar, E. "Letter From Warsaw", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, June 5, 2015. Web. Accessed October 26, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60322>

⁴⁰ Zaborowski, M. and Longhurst, K. "America's protégé in the east? The emergence of Poland as a regional leader", *International Affairs*, No. 79, Issue 5, 2005, p. 1009-1028. Web. JSTOR. Accessed November 2, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3568950>

Finally, Poland's **public finances** are improving, as the government deficit has been decreasing from 7,6% of GDP in 2010 to 3,6% of GDP in 2014, and the government debt-to-GDP ratio remained below 60% in the past years. Fiscal contraction and monetary expansion are some of the causes of such developments. Nonetheless, the Commission points out structural challenges for the country: increasing health care expenditures, low tax compliance, and extensive use of reduced rates of the Value Added Tax.⁴¹

The newly established Law and Justice party (PiS) majority in the Polish Parliament might initiate a shift in Poland's macroeconomics according to *Fitch Ratings*. Indeed, the party's spending pledges (e.g. in social welfare and defense) could lead to an expansionary fiscal policy and potentially to an increase of Poland's government deficit. Moreover, the Law and Justice party could argue for a more resilient banking sector.⁴²

Economic Diplomacy & Foreign Trade

Poland's trade balance increased overall in the past years. It was consistently negative until 2013, and has been stabilizing at positive levels since, with recent record high levels in 2015 (€639 million in January and €539 million in May 2015). According to *Trading Economics*, its foreign trade turnover increased almost ten-fold since 2000. The country's exports mostly consist of food consumption products (fruit, vegetables, meat, and dairy), but also include electromechanical products, vehicles, aircraft and vessels. Its imports are mainly capital goods necessary for industrial retooling and for manufacturing inputs (e.g. machinery and transport equipment). The EU is Poland's largest trading partner (79% of exports and 64% of imports).⁴³

Poland's economic diplomacy mainly focuses on cooperation with the OECD countries and the US, regarding reforms in Ukraine with the OECD countries and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the US. Poland also aims its economic diplomacy towards developing countries of South America (e.g. Brazil) for trade and investment cooperation and of the Asia Pacific region (e.g. India, Hong Kong) for cooperation in the energy and innovation sectors. At a conference in 2014, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary of State for Africa, Asia and Middle East Policy, Public and Economic Diplomacy, Katarzyna Kacperczyk, stressed Poland's objective to strengthen Polish companies' presence abroad.⁴⁴

e. Other Diplomatic Priorities

Priorities at the European Level

According to the European Council on Foreign Relations, Poland is one of the top leaders of the EU. It focuses on encouraging a firm stance on Russian actions in Ukraine, and supporting

⁴¹ European Commission, "Country Report Poland 2015", *Commission Staff Working Document*, COM(2015) 85 final, Brussels, February 26, 2015. Web. Accessed November 3, 2015.

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/cr2015_poland_en.pdf ; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *OECD Economic Surveys: Poland 2015*, OECD Publishing, Paris, March 2014. Web. Accessed November 3, 2015. http://www.oecd.org/eco/surveys/Overview_Poland_2014.pdf

⁴² n.a. "Fitch: PIS Win May Drive Polish Fiscal Easing, Hit Bank Profits", *Fitch Ratings*, October 27, 2015. Web. Accessed November 3, 2015. <https://www.fitchratings.com/site/fitch-home/pressrelease?id=992927>

⁴³ "Poland Balance of Trade", *Trading Economics*, August 2015. Web. Accessed November 3, 2015. <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/poland/balance-of-trade>

⁴⁴ MFA Press Office, "Search: Economic Diplomacy", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland*, April 7, 2015. Web. Accessed November 3, 2015.

http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/p/msz_en/search?searchTag=economic+diplomacy+&search=true&searchInTags=true

its US partner by investing great energy to ensure that the TTIP negotiations continue to advance. It is also greatly promoting the diversification of gas supplies away from Russia. In fact, Poland is supporting greater EU-US cooperation with regards to Russia. It decreased aid provided in proportion to its GDP and concessions secured in climate change discussions.⁴⁵

Priorities at the Global Level

The European Council on Foreign Relations indicates that Poland has a leading position in coordinating EU position towards China. Indeed, the country is highly promoting China's "Silk Road Economic Belt" project (also called "One Belt, One Road"). Poland is particularly pushing for its involvement in the project's implementation and for Polish food and agricultural companies' access to the Chinese market, as discussed during the Poland-China Intergovernmental Committee in Beijing of June 17, 2015.⁴⁶

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⁴⁵ "Poland", *European Foreign Policy Scorecard 2015*, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2015. Web. Accessed November 4, 2015. <http://www.ecfr.eu/scorecard/2015/countries/Poland>

⁴⁶ Wojciechowski, M. "Chief of Poland's diplomacy visits China", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland*, June 18, 2015. Web. Accessed November 4, 2015. http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/news/chief_of_poland_s_diplomacy_visits_china

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