

Opening of the Conference

Aleksander Smolar

President of the Stefan Batory Foundation

The long process of Poland's EU accession has covered several stages. At one stage, we negotiated with EU representatives and the Commission in an asymmetrical situation: the Union set forth the conditions that we had to meet before accession. This was a period of interrogations or confessions, as a Western observer ironically remarked. It was followed by a short period of negotiations on specific conditions of our accession; all of our attention was then focused on those conditions, including financial ones. At that stage, we were a partner striving to ensure good conditions of our full EU membership.

A new stage is now ahead. Although Poland is not yet an EU member state, we are now assuming the obligations of a member such as the responsibility for foreign policies. This conference is best proof that this is the case. Poland, the Polish government



and non-governmental organisations are making joint efforts to reflect on the future eastern policy of the European Union.

Poland is no Arabian stud or a Percheron of La Perche in Normandy, nor is it a Trojan horse. Poland will soon be a fully-fledged Member State of the European Union and, as such, it is ready today to discuss the issues at stake.

I declare the conference on the *EU Enlargement and Neighbour Policy* open.

Address by Mr Aleksander Kwaśniewski President of the Republic of Poland

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your Excellencies,

I am very happy to participate in today's conference. As it is, the attention of the general public has been captured mainly by the problems related to the situation in Iraq and the threat posed by the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Poland is actively involved in this world-wide debate; nevertheless, we need to talk about other issues as well, issues to which this conference is devoted, and we must not neglect important affairs shaping the future of our continent and the future of Poland due to our geographic location in the continent and our neighbourhood.

The conference on *The EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy* responds to today's needs very well. I congratulate the organisers, as this conference is best proof of the fact that we can think not only in day-to-day terms but also in a more serious long-term perspective. I want to thank the Stefan Batory Foundation, which has focused on the issue and organised this conference in co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In my opinion, it is a good example of a modern approach to foreign policy where, in addition to governments and traditional diplomacy, an increasing role is played by international organisations, non-governmental organisations, intellectuals and cultural organisations, churches and employers.

We all need the energy, the expertise and the talents of all those who want to be engaged in this activity. I am happy to see a gathering of politicians and experts who represent EU institutions and EU Member States, candidate countries and the soon-to-be eastern neighbours of the European Union. I believe this is a great forum for joint reflection on the outlook of integration and a vision of European co-operation.



The enlarged European Union will move considerably to the east. It will for the first time reach with its eastern frontiers up to the line where the Roman civilisation had for centuries bordered on the Byzantine civilisation. It will cross the borders of the former USSR. The enlarged Union will need to redefine its relationships with those countries, which will become its new eastern neighbours. Poland may and indeed should play a major role in defining the eastern policy of the European Union.

The European Community is right now defining its Common Foreign and Security Policy, a process not without difficulties, hurdles or controversies. This area is subject to a natural division of responsibilities. It is understandable that France and Italy have much more to say with regard to the Mediterranean region than Finland or Germany. It is often pointed out that with the accession of Spain to the EU, the entire united Europe acquired new competencies in its relationships with the countries of South and Latin America. I am certain that the membership of Poland in the Union will contribute new competencies of the entire European Community in its relations with Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. It is hard to imagine that the eastern policy of the European Union which bears strategic weight or the Eastern Dimension of the European Union a vast network of regional co-operation, could be developed without Poland or over the heads of Poles. It is here, after all, that the East will meet the united Europe as of 1 May 2004.

If there are western opinion-makers or politicians who would confine Poland to the periphery, they should now note a new dimension of the periphery, which is not a problem but an opportunity to the entire uniting Europe.

Development of lasting, friendly, trust-based relationships with all our neighbours is one of the greatest achievements of the Polish foreign policy after 1989. Even where painful historical wounds were wide open, we have managed to embark on the path of reconciliation towards a joint future. What Poland and its neighbours, also those in the east, took efforts to build is a great success of Europe – the whole of Europe. If questions are raised today about what we, Poles, can contribute to the eastern policy of the European Union, we say: trust that our eastern partners have in us, experience of co-operation, and expertise concerning transition underway in those countries.

May I make another comment to outline the change of the past years and where we are now? This conference is being held in Warsaw, the capital of Poland, whose borders have not shifted an inch over the past several years. In the meantime, all neighbours of Poland have changed. None of our pre-1990 neighbours are in existence: there is no USSR, no German Democratic Republic, and no Czechoslovakia. We have seven new neighbours, well known to all of you: Germany, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, Lithuania. We have signed bilateral treaties and built trust and good co-operation with all our neighbours, best proof that our region is a beacon of European stability. We know that many parts of the continent abound in instability, violence, tensions and conflicts, including ethnic strife. I am proud to say that and to make an offer to all those who would like to follow our example of building co-operation, trust and dialogue under changing circumstances.

Today we also need to reflect on the borderline of the European Union. It is not unlikely that in a more distant future the continent will be integrated to a much greater extent; some eastern countries, for instance Ukraine, have already signalled their intention to become associated with the EU and later to become full members. The EU will review its common strategies towards Russia and Ukraine this June and July, after four years of implementation. The

European Commission and the EU High Representative for the CFSP will this year present their proposed actions in the framework of the New Neighbours Initiative. We are happy that the proposals will be consulted with the future EU Member States. Poland will offer new initiatives in this regard.

This mutual rapprochement must be helped. The European Community needs to invest in overcoming the economic and legal gap between the European Union and its eastern neighbours. The specificities of these new countries have to be taken into account, and the countries must be supported in further transition, fostering democracy, rule of the law, effective open-market economies and civic society. The conference *Ukraine in Europe* held four months ago in Warsaw was a good example of such an initiative recognised internationally.

Poland strives for best possible understanding, trust and co-operation from the Baltic Sea to the Adriatic Sea and to the Black Sea. The countries of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe, both those aspiring to EU and NATO membership and those who will remain outside these organisations, should strengthen mutual relations and share experiences. This was the philosophy behind the Riga Initiative, which I presented last July. The main goals of this extensive regional co-operation include support for transition and joint fight with international terrorism and crime. This initiative will also prevent a sense of alienation in those countries, which remain outside Euro-Atlantic structures and preclude their marginalisation in European relations. I want to announce that seventeen countries interested in the Initiative will attend a consultative meeting in Warsaw this March.

As the time of EU enlargement approaches, we must become more attentive to the expectations of our eastern neighbours. They have serious concerns that the EU enlargement will divide the continent with a new curtain, be it a velvet one. Countries such as Ukraine are concerned that the new EU Member States will be focused on reaping the benefits of EU membership while turning their backs on their eastern neighbours who are coping with a plethora of problems. We understand those concerns and we try to be responsive. At a recent meeting, the President of Ukraine and myself, in communication with

the Polish government, agreed that Ukraine will not introduce visas for Polish nationals as of 1 July 2003 while Poland will waive fees for visas issued to Ukrainian nationals*; that we will continue to improve the network of consulates and border crossings; that we will make best efforts to ensure that our border is secure and effectively protects against negative phenomena, such as terrorism and organised crime, while making the border a friendly one.

The experience of Poland over the past several years leads to a banal but nonetheless important conclusion: one must not forget one's neighbours or turn one's back on them. We need to get them involved as much as possible in partnerships and co-operation, to encourage them to implement necessary reforms, and to support them on that difficult route, often much more difficult than the one we have covered. But first and foremost, we must have trust in them and have faith in a common future in the united Europe. We live in difficult times when tensions abound and harsh words are spoken unnecessarily; yet I believe that once the dust settles we will see that we are working for a worthy cause: a real unification of Europe to offer our nations, countries and the entire continent security, fruitful co-operation and an optimistic outlook.

I am certain that once we take this approach and seek fundamental values different from ad hoc issues which grasp our attention today, we will build a united Europe to accommodate the West and the East, the South and the North, a home for all people who want to live in security, peace and hope for themselves and their children.

* Visas were finally introduced as of 1 October 2003. (editor's note)

The Eastern Dimension of the European Union. The Polish View

Speech by Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz **Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs**

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to this week's conference, convened at the joint initiative of the Batory Foundation and the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And here, let me salute the Foundation and its President Mr. Aleksander Smolar, for their immense effort made in preparing this conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we meet, truly fundamental changes are taking place on the international scene, including in Central and Eastern Europe. The NATO and the European Union enlargements are underway. When all new and prospective members have been embraced by the two organisations, the infamous post-war division of Europe will become a distant memory, a mere footnote in the history books, and our continent will be more prosperous and more secure place to live.

I do hope that the conference, which has attracted such an excellent and distinguished audience, will foster positive thinking and provide a strong impetus to initiate dialogue with our Eastern neighbours in the wake of enlargement.

As regards enlargement, the timing of the conference is perfect, too. The accession negotiations have been brought to a successful conclusion. The finishing touches are being given to the Accession Treaty. Poland and other candidate states are getting ready first for the observer status, and then for full membership of the EU. Poland's foreign and security policy has for several years now been in line with the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU and we shall soon be directly participating in shaping the Union's external policies.

We look forward to assuming this new responsibility which will certainly provide us with new opportunities. Our contribution to the discussion on the future of the EU, which has been conducted within the framework of the Convention, testifies to this commitment.



Poland attaches particular importance to relations with neighbouring countries. While getting ready for EU membership, Poland has spared no effort in ensuring that no new division lines emerge along our Eastern borders which, as we know, are soon to become the Eastern borders of the enlarged Union. My distinguished predecessor, Professor Bronisław Geremek, had precisely this in

mind when he called for a creation of an Eastern Dimension of the EU in 1998 in his speech inaugurating Poland's accession negotiations.

That is also why Poland welcomed the discussion launched within the EU a year ago on the British and Swedish initiative, followed by contributions of the Secretary General and High Representative for CFSP Javier Solana, and Commissioner Chris Patten. I was pleased when the EU encouraged candidate states to make similar contributions of their own.

Almost two months ago I put forward the Polish proposals on the future relations of the enlarged EU with its Eastern neighbours to my colleagues in the EU, in the candidate countries, and in Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus.

I believe that most of you, Ladies and Gentlemen, have by now become familiarised with the Polish Non-paper. Let me only briefly outline that proposal.*

Europe does not end at the EU's Eastern borders, nor will it end there after enlargement. Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova are deeply rooted in Europe — with their culture, history, tradition and science. Over the last few years they all, except Belarus, have established intense contacts with

* The full version of this document can be found on pages 85-98. *Non-paper* with Polish proposals concerning policy towards new Eastern neighbours after EU enlargement was published in January 2003 (editor's note).

the EU in the political, economic and social terms. Nevertheless, their relations still do not meet expectations of both sides for the transformation process in Eastern European countries is far from being over.

There are several arguments in favour of a more active Eastern policy of the EU. The stabilising role of the EU is not confined to the Member States, it extends also to the Union's neighbourhood. This is due to political dialogue based on common values, Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSFP), economic co-operation, assistance and people-to-people contacts. Moreover, co-operation with Eastern European states driven by common interests and values, is mutually beneficial. The European Union and the Transatlantic community need Eastern European allies to combat common threats like terrorism, proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and organised crime.

The EU and Eastern European economies, which are to a great extent complementary, need each other — modernising industries in Eastern Europe need EU investments, technologies and know-how, while the growing Eastern European market attracts European companies.

Therefore the forthcoming enlargement, which will result in the EU having common borders with the Eastern European states, shall provide enhancement of co-operation with Eastern neighbours. It should enable us to seize the existing opportunities and create new ones by accelerating transformation in these countries.

The countries of Eastern Europe face a lot of similar problems and challenges due to their common historical experience in the 20th century. Moreover, their economies are still dependent on each other and strong political connections exist between them. Therefore it seems reasonable for the EU to have a coherent, comprehensive framework of its Eastern Policy. It should be flexible enough to enable individual development of relations with each of the countries concerned without prejudicing their final formula.

Poland suggests that this framework should constitute the Eastern Dimension of the EU. It should allow for co-ordination and synergy of the activities of the EU and other regional as well as international structures and organisations, particularly assistance projects.

The Central European Initiative, in which Poland holds presidency this year, could contribute to the development of the Eastern Dimension of the EU. We hope to discuss it next month with partners at the European Commission and with the EU Presidency. Last, but not least, the Eastern Dimension formula would facilitate greater involvement of international financial institutions and private capital in assistance projects.

The Eastern Dimension would be complementary to the Northern Dimension of the EU. I believe that it can use the experience of the Northern Dimension as well as other policies of the EU towards adjacent regions.

The Eastern Dimension of the EU should have a strong non-governmental pillar and enable using the expertise of NGOs and the unique instruments they have at their disposal. We highly appreciate the role of Polish NGOs, including our host, the Batory Foundation. They have been involved in various assistance projects in Eastern Europe. Let me also use this opportunity to express my thanks to the NGOs for their co-operation and contribution to our Non-paper.

The mid term objective of the EU Eastern Dimension could be the establishment of a European space of political and economic co-operation within the area of Wider Europe. Relations with the countries concerned should be individually shaped according to their readiness, progress in transformation process and the will to have closer co-operation with the EU.

The new concept of the Union's relations with its Eastern neighbours should not prejudice their final formula. The situation in Eastern European states is still evolving. The expectations of those countries regarding their relations with the EU are also changing. This is clearly visible in the discussions between the EU and Russia on the concept of the Common European Economic Space, as well as in the significant change of approach towards the EU in the Ukrainian and Moldovan foreign policies over the last 2 years.

For Ukraine and Moldova, which aspire to the European structures, a prospect of future membership can provide necessary incentives for the political elites and for the societies to carry out further reforms. A prospect, not a promise of EU membership, should be conditional on reforms and

meeting strict criteria. Such a prospect should also be open for Belarus, provided it initiates democratic reforms. Poland will advocate the further strengthening the EU's strategic partnership with Russia, which does not aspire to the membership of the Union.

The evolving European space of political and economic co-operation should comprise a wide scope of collaboration with Eastern neighbours.

Political dialogue should be enhanced. It should be comprehensive and focus on issues of interest as well as concern for both sides, including human and minority rights, democratic reforms, resolution of regional tensions and conflicts in accordance with international standards. It should also cover fighting terrorism, trans-national crime, non-proliferation and other global problems. Another area to be explored is the EU co-operation with third countries in the field of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), including possible contribution of Eastern European states to EU missions.

Over the last few years the co-operation in justice and home affairs within the EU as well as with third countries has greatly expanded. Particularly after September 11th, 2001 security ranks high in EU priorities and its external relations. As a result of the EU enlargement, the importance of co-operation in justice and home affairs with the Union's Eastern neighbours will increase even further due to the common border.

There are several common problems, especially terrorism, organised crime, money laundering, illegal immigration and corruption. They can be tackled more effectively if the EU and its Eastern neighbours join efforts and if the EU provides Eastern European states with assistance. This concerns a variety of areas from joining as well as observing international agreements, adopting and enforcing relevant internal laws, establishing effective border control regimes with third countries, to fighting corruption and strengthening judicial capacity.

However, it would be a mistake to perceive the common EU borders with Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova as a factor posing a threat to the Union's internal security. Poland has committed herself to meeting the Schengen standards. A surge in international criminal activity is a side-effect of

globalisation on the one hand and of transformations on the other, therefore it is our common interest to co-operate and counter it. If we succeed, and if Eastern European states meet appropriate standards, for example of border and immigration controls as well as travel documents, the EU might consider some flexibility in the visa regime. It would be helpful for the local communities in the border regions if a solution could be found, in conformity with the Schengen *acquis*, making possible local traffic in border areas.

If abolishing divisions in Europe is to become a reality, the EU co-operation with Eastern European states should have strong social and human dimensions. Rapprochement between the EU and its Eastern neighbours cannot be achieved only by high level political decisions, without an extensive involvement of the public. It is sometimes much more difficult to achieve mutual understanding and respect between societies or nations than between their leaders. In the process of Poland's accession to the EU we have had to face a lot of prejudice, therefore we are perhaps more aware of sensitivities in mutual perception of Eastern and Western Europe. Additionally, the problems people in Eastern Europe have to cope with in the transformation processes are probably more familiar to us due to our recent experience in this respect. Therefore we believe that the social and human dimension of the EU Eastern Policy needs strengthening. It should aim at enhancing people-to-people and cultural contacts, access to knowledge and information, and know-how sharing.

The fact that I mention economic co-operation at the end of my presentation does not mean that I find it the least important. I fully agree with my Swedish colleagues, as well as with Mr Patten and Mr Solana that trade and investment, development of private sector and economic growth are the major factors of the transformation process in Eastern Europe. They facilitate the modernisation and necessary restructuring of the economy, including the labour market. Thus, economic co-operation should be one of the EU priorities as both sides can benefit from it.

Energy co-operation is of particular importance for Europe, seeking stable and reliable energy supplies. Other obvious areas are the infrastruc-

ture, environment protection and space technologies. Economic co-operation of the EU with Eastern European states should involve substantial assistance in improving the regulatory and administrative framework for enterprises, while meeting WTO membership criteria. Market economy status, for example in the case of Ukraine, would allow its exporters to be treated fairly. After the accession of Ukraine, Russia and Belarus to WTO, free trade should be established gradually with free trade agreements facilitating harmonisation of business law in Eastern European states with the *acquis communautaire*. As a further stage, integration in some other sectors of the Single Market could be explored.

Assistance has proved to be an effective instrument of the Union's external policy, and its relations with Eastern Europe. Respective programmes should be adjusted to the changing needs and priorities. The TACIS programmes have provided Eastern European states with valuable assistance. Presently they cover a vast area of countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, which have diversified needs.

In our opinion the ongoing review of EU Eastern Policy should be used for constructive evaluation of the present assistance programmes, taking into account the opinion of the countries concerned, and making necessary adjustments.

Assistance should concentrate on priority areas that are essential for further reform process, for example democratic reforms, development of civic society including local governments, improvement of regulatory framework and administrative capacity as well as establishment of civilian control over the armed forces. Much effort should be taken to help Eastern European countries cope with the problems that pose threat to reforms and society, such as corruption and crime. Assistance instruments should be tailored to the stage of development of co-operation and the progress in the reform process. Increase in assistance would obviously be welcome, though particularly after Copenhagen we are aware how difficult it can be to discuss finances within the EU. Effective use of the available resources should be a priority. This requires improved access to information and advice as well as simplification of procedures.

In its Non-paper Poland has proposed several important measures. Let me start from the most evident, which results from our experience — better co-ordination and synergy of the INTERREG and TACIS CBC programmes. A significant part of the EU assistance is provided by non-governmental organisations. They should concentrate on their core activities, avoiding excessive bureaucratic work and cumbersome procedures. There are examples of solutions proving how public money can be efficiently used, which could in my opinion be introduced in the EU assistance programmes for Eastern European states, ensuring necessary flexibility. This was the reason behind our proposals to establish the European Democracy Fund, or the European Freedom Fund and the European Peace Corps.

Investment in human capital always pays off. Europe should not hesitate to extend this kind of assistance to its Eastern neighbours. I have proposed launching a special scholarship programmes for Eastern Europe — the European Scholarship Programme and the European Internship Programme for university graduates, young professionals and people with professional experience wishing to acquire new skills. These programmes would enable them to gain experience in companies and institutions in the EU countries and later use it in their home countries. Other initiatives, like supporting European chairs or European programmes at Eastern European universities as well as joint projects carried out with EU universities would also make a difference. If administrative capacity is the main obstacle for reforms in Eastern Europe, let us strengthen assistance programmes in institution building, through study visits, twinning projects and advice on specific reforms. If properly tailored, such assistance should bring substantial effects while being cost-effective. We should share with our Eastern neighbours the experience concerning local government, its role and effective management at the local community level, so that they gain necessary know how and incentives to pursue reforms.

Small and medium sized enterprises are a major driving force of economic development and further reforms in Eastern European states. They need assistance, even more than the their counterparts in the EU. They usually lack basic information, know-how, capital, management and marketing skills.

Some form of business incubators or the European Investment Fund for Eastern Europe would help, not only facilitating access to a start-up capital, but also offering necessary advice, information and assistance.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasise the great role of access to information for real rapprochement of the Union with its Eastern neighbours. People are often indifferent or scared because they lack knowledge. Fears exist both in the EU and in Eastern Europe. In the latter, they concern border traffic, access to markets and risk of isolation. There is certainly a need for a more vigorous promotion of the European Union. More light needs to be cast on the Union's forthcoming enlargement and opportunities it will furnish, as well as on benefits that can be drawn from closer co-operation with the EU.

As a result of their transformations and preparations for EU membership candidate states, including Poland, have developed unique know-how and experience that can be useful for our Eastern neighbours in their transformation process. Poland is ready to share her experience with interested Eastern European countries. Our track-record of co-operation with Ukraine is a case in point. I am confident the EU could incorporate our experience into its own assistance programmes.

I would like to conclude by referring to the concept of an EU Eastern Dimension Action Plan. Our own experience in dealing with the EU has proved that without a time table, or a road map, progress in co-operation can be much slower and more difficult to carry forward. A clearly designed road map would be of great help. It should set dates and highlight both the conditions that have to be met for a project to move on the next stage, and benefits its progress is expected to deliver. In getting ready for co-operation with the East, the EU would be well advised to draw up such a road map in close dialogue with its Eastern neighbours. It is action not words that can bring together the East and the West of Europe. I very much hope that we can look forward to substantial progress in this area.