

Anna Ogonowska*

Polish Information Policy Related to the European Union in 1989–2014¹

Abstract: *This article is a summary of the information policy of the Polish government in matters related to the European Union in the years 1989–2014. It analyses the initial situation and the development of this policy, both before and after Poland's accession to the European Union. It examines the bodies responsible for information activity, differences in information policy between the pre-accession and post-accession periods, objectives of the policy, its efficiency, and its cooperation with the European Commission. It also examines the way Poland prepared information to introduce the euro.*

Keywords: Poland, information policy, information on the European Union

Introduction

Many books and articles have been written on the information and communication policy of the European Union.² However, there are few

* Anna Ogonowska, Ph.D. – Centre for Europe, University of Warsaw.

¹ The remuneration for the Author was financed by the Association of Copyright Collective Administration for Authors of Scientific and Technical Works (KOPIPOL), having its seat in Kielce, from fees collected under Article 20 and 20¹ of the Polish Act on Copyright and Neighbouring Rights.

² E.g. M.R. Gramberger, *Die Öffentlichkeitsarbeit der Europäischen Kommission 1952–1996. PR zur Legimitation von Integration?*, Baden-Baden 1997; M. Brüggemann, *Europäische Öffentlichkeit durch Öffentlichkeitsarbeit? Die Informationspolitik der Europäischen Kommission*, Wiesbaden 2008; Ch. Valentini and G. Nesti (eds.), *Public communication in the European Union. History, perspectives, challenges*, Newcastle upon Tyne 2010; N. Stroeker, A.van der Graaf and B.-J. Buiskool, *Communicating 'Europe' to its Citizens: State of Affairs and Prospects*, Brussels 2014; M. Brüggemann, *How the EU Constructs the European*

publications dealing with the policies of the Member States' governments regarding the dissemination of information about the European Union.³ The existing studies of this problem are fragmentary and do not present the issue from a broad perspective. The aim of this article is to synthesise the Polish experiences concerning the government information policy related to Poland's membership in the European Union during the years 1989–2014. So far, there has been no comprehensive summary of this issue in the academic literature; only works focusing on the evaluation of the dissemination of information related to specific events, such as Poland's accession to the European Union. During the last 25 years the Polish government conducted concentrated information campaigns on several occasions to inform society about some aspect of the European Union. After fifteen years of preparing for membership and ten years as a member state of the European Union, it would seem Poland has sufficient experience to merit a summary.

According to Rowlands,⁴ information policy constitutes a group of norms, directives and policies, either encouraging or discouraging, or policies that regulate the production, use, collection and transmission of information. However, in Braman's opinion,⁵ information policy comprises the norms, regulations, basic assumptions, and other decisions and actions affecting society which are connected to producing, processing and transferring information, as well as to accessing and using it. Theoreticians also point out that determining the boundaries of information policy is challenging,

Public Sphere: Seven Strategies of Information Policy, "The Public", No. 2/2005, pp. 57–74; Ch. Meyer, *Political Legitimacy and the Invisibility of Politics: Exploring the European Union's Communication Deficit*, "Journal of Common Market Studies", No. 4/1999, pp. 617–639; M. Thiel, *European Public Spheres and the EU's Communication Strategy: From Deficits to Policy Fit?*, "Perspectives on European Politics and Society", No. 3/2008, pp. 342–356; Ch. Valentini, *Political Public Relations in the European Union: EU Reputation and Relationship Management Under Scrutiny*, "Public Relations Journal", No. 4/2013, pp. 1–22.

³ E.g. R. Marcella et al., *The pattern of provision of European Union information in France and the United Kingdom: a comparative study of services*, "Library Management", Iss. 5/1997, pp. 243–252; Ch. Valentini, *EU Communication in the Member States: Comparative Analysis of Finnish and Italian Communication Strategies*, "International Journal of Strategic Communication", No. 2/2008, pp. 216–243; *Une approche compare des politiques d'information sur l'Europe, dans les autres pays de l'Union. Il n'existe pas d'exception française* in: *La fracture européenne: Après le référendum du 29 mai: 40 propositions concrètes pour mieux informer les Français sur l'Europe*, dir. M. Herbillon, Paris 2005, pp. 155–167; V. Samardžija and A. Dukes (eds.), *Communicating Integration Impact in Croatia and Ireland*, Zagreb–Dublin 2008.

⁴ I. Rowlands, *Understanding information policy: concepts, framework and research tools*, "Journal of Information Science", No. 1/1996, pp. 13–25.

⁵ S. Braman, *Defining information policy*, "Journal of Information Policy", No. 1/2011, p. 3.

especially since a government rarely follows a single information policy. Rather, a set of overlapping policies are usually involved.⁶ It should be emphasised that information policy has an ancillary function towards other policies, which indicates that it functions as an instrument used to improve the chances of success derived from other activities.⁷ A crucial part of information policy is the issue of governmental communications. In her analysis of the transformation of governmental communications, Gomis⁸ distinguished three variants. Above all, they involve informing people about policies being conducted. In this way, the public authorities carry out their responsibility to the citizens arising from the democratic system. The second form of governmental communication is communication as a policy in itself. Communication as such is integrated into the political process and included in various other policies at each phase: from identifying and defining the problem through to formulating solutions and then to implementing regulations. In this way, government influences society by changing people's attitude or behaviour towards a particular problem, as well as towards measures related to it. The third variant of governmental communication has been defined as 'communicating in policy'. It involves influencing society in an interactive way, most frequently taking on the form of consultations and dialogues. The purpose of this variant is to obtain public support for proposed solutions. Considering the abovementioned variants of government communication, Brüggemann⁹ attempted to examine the process of informing citizens about the European Union as a policy, which for him meant analysing a set of decisions concerning: guaranteeing a right to information, actively informing citizens, promoting or explaining policies, and creating institutions responsible for transmitting information. In this article, Poland's information policy will be understood as those decisions and activities of the government related to informing Polish society about the European Union. The main subject of this discussion will be focused on creating institutions responsible for: information activities, actively informing citizens, guaranteeing a right of access to information, and education policy.

⁶ B. Buckley Owen, L. Cooke and G. Matthews, *Information Policymaking in the United Kingdom: The Role of the Information Professional*, "Journal of Information Policy", No. 2/2012, p. 53.

⁷ M. Bogdał, *Polityka informacyjna jako instrument polityki energetycznej (Information policy as an instrument of energy policy)*, "Chorzowskie Studia Polityczne", No. 6/2013, p. 74.

⁸ A. Gomis, *Integration, Interaction and Accessibility. Developments in Government Communication in: Challenges in Communication. State of the Art and Future Trends*, E. Denig and A. Weising (eds.), London 2000, pp. 28–29.

⁹ M. Brüggemann, *How the EU...*, op.cit., pp. 62–63.

The article is aimed at elaborating answers to the following research questions: What is the stance of institutions responsible for informing the public about the European Union? If there is a difference between the pre-accession and post-accession periods, and what were/are the objectives of this information policy? How effective is/was it? What does cooperation with the European Commission in this area look like? What experiences can Poland rely on to solve the information issue if it were to decide to join the euro area?

In this article the author carries out a deep analysis of government documents (strategies, guidelines and reports) concerning these issues and takes advantage of more than twenty years of observation of the phenomena taking place in Poland. The most important events related to information policy are presented in chronological order. The entire period under study has been divided into two general periods: pre-accession and post-accession. The pre-accession period has been supplemented with information needs and policies prior to 1989, which makes it possible to determine approximately how well informed Polish society was about the European Union at the time Poland commenced the establishment of relations with the European Communities. The post-2004 period has been divided into issues concerning the information activities connected with the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the elections to the European Parliament, the introduction of the euro, and Poland's overall cooperation with the European Commission in terms of information dissemination and policy.

1. Information policy before the accession to the European Union

In 1988, when Poland began to establish its first relations with the European Communities, it still had an operating censorship office.¹⁰ The change in the approach to Western European integration which took place alongside the changes in Poland's political system was, in fact, a radical rejection of the previous attitude of communist governments toward Western Europe. The successive Polish communist governments always treated the integration processes in Europe after World War II with distrust or even hostility, which was often reflected in the state-controlled media in the form of articles criticising the establishment and functioning of the

¹⁰ T. Goban-Klas, *Niepokorna orkiestra medialna. Dyrzygenci i wykonawcy polityki informacyjnej w Polsce po 1944 roku (The Orchestration of the Media: The Politics of Mass Communications in Communist Poland and the Aftermath)*, Warszawa 2004, p. 282.

European Communities. The National Library in Warsaw and the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation reminded us of this era by organising exhibitions (in 2003 and 2008) which presented selected articles and caricatures published in the Polish press in the 1950s, demonstrating a very negative attitude towards the integration processes in Western Europe.¹¹ This hostile attitude towards European integration is also presented by Kaźmierczak in his article¹² on caricatures of the 1950s, based on the example of the communist propaganda deriding the attempts to create the European Defence Community. The propaganda and caricatures of that time fuelled the fear of Germany and of another war, presenting e.g. the Schuman Declaration as a threat to peace. In summing up the Polish government's attitude towards European integration, the authors of the aforementioned exhibition in the National Library posited that it underwent a gradual transformation. Initially, it was characterised by an official aversion, which later turned into cautious interest and finally became genuine enthusiasm. A good example of what the period of 'cautious interest' looked like can be found in *The black book of Polish censorship*,¹³ which cites the instructions for the censorship office from the 1970s. They clearly show how the authorities were trying to suppress pro-Western sympathies in the Polish society. In accordance with these instructions, writing too broadly or too positively about Western Europe was unacceptable. The same was true with respect to good relations between the Poles and the other nations of Western Europe.

Unfortunately, as a result of the many years of aversion and cautious interest, the general public was not very well-informed about the development of European integration, which allows us to venture the thesis that on the eve of the 1990s, the Polish society as a whole had either no or very limited knowledge about the European Communities. Only a handful of Polish experts had any considerable knowledge in this respect. A review of the titles of Polish publications on European integration and the European Communities written in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and contained in the Polish national bibliography shows that interest in these

¹¹ A.D.Kamińska, *Z Biblioteką do Unii Europejskiej (Together With the Library to the European Union)*, "Biuletyn Informacyjny Biblioteki Narodowej", No. 1/2003, pp. 6–8; A. Radwan-Rörhenschef, *Plan Schumana w karykaturze i propagandzie (The Schuman Plan in the Caricature and Propaganda)*, Warszawa 2008.

¹² J. Kaźmierczak, *The Community That Never Was. The European Defense Community and Its Image in Polish Visual Propaganda of the 1950s*, "Journal of Cold War Studies", No. 4/2009, pp. 118–141.

¹³ J.L. Curry, *The black book of Polish censorship*, New York 1984, pp. 130–136.

issues was scarce and fragmentary. This also explains why Polish libraries had only a few foreign publications on these topics.

When the Iron Curtain, which obviously stifled the free exchange of ideas between the East and the West, was lifted, there were no longer any official obstacles to the process of accumulating knowledge on issues which had earlier been considered as more or less taboo. European integration was one such issue. It took almost ten years before the new Polish non-communist governments started actively supporting the process of informing society about the European Union by, for example, introducing additional European content into the school curricula. The main reason that these actions had not been undertaken earlier was due to the lack of adequate human resources to execute these tasks. This does not mean, however, that nothing happened in this field in the 1990s. An intensive formal and/or informal education of the public administration, scientists and teachers, politicians and journalists in everything related to the European Union took place throughout the 1990s.

In the early post-communist period, when means of information were still very scarce, the European Commission took actions which proved of great help to Poland in this area. It used elements of its own information system to inform Poles about the European Union. In this context, the opening of the Delegation of the European Commission in Warsaw, including an information point, as well as the establishment of information centres belonging to EU information networks in Polish cities, constituted especially important events. These included: The Depository Library of the European Communities, European Documentation Centres for the academia and Euro Info Correspondence Centres for entrepreneurs. Another entity created in this period was the Polish group Team Europe, the members of which expressed the intention to promote knowledge about the European Union. Formally, cooperation in the field of information-sharing between the Polish government and the European Union was regulated by Article 90 Point 1 of the Europe Agreement,¹⁴ which established an association between Poland and the European Communities. Under the provisions laid down therein, the parties were required to exchange information and conduct programmes aimed at providing information to the society. The Agreement was in force from 1994 until 2004, when Poland became a Member State of the European Union.

¹⁴ Europe Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Poland, of the other part, OJ 1993 L348/2.

As previously mentioned, the first information strategy relating to the processes of preparing for EU membership was formulated only in the second half of the 1990s. Its main principles were presented in the *National Strategy for Integration*,¹⁵ prepared by the Committee for European Integration (the most important Polish government institution dealing with issues related to integration with the EU) and approved by the government in 1997. The document stated that information activities directed at Polish society would be carried out. They were planned in detail in the *Public Information Programme*,¹⁶ presented by the Office of the Committee for European Integration in 1999. The Programme also stated that it was a part of the official state information policy. Surely this was meant to emphasise the Programme's special importance, but it is rather hard to link it to the other parts of that policy, as it was not clearly defined and announced to the public. Responsibility for the implementation of the Programme was spread among numerous state institutions, such as the Office of the Committee for European Integration, the Government Information Centre, departments for European information in various ministries, the parliamentary information service, the information service of the Government Plenipotentiary for Poland's Accession Negotiations to the European Union, etc. Partners of the Programme included non-governmental organisations, the media, local governments, universities, European clubs at schools, etc. With so many entities involved in providing information to the society, it became necessary to appoint a single body coordinating these activities. This role was given to the Government Plenipotentiary for European Information, which in 2003 was replaced by the Minister for the European Referendum.

According to both the *National Strategy for Integration* and the *Public Information Programme*, the main objective of the domestic information activities was to build social support for Poland's membership in the European Union. Thus formulated, the objective heralded activities which proved to be largely propagandistic in nature. This feature of the information activities was all the more important in light of the provisions contained in new Polish Constitution of 1997. In addition to the possibility to have the Accession Treaty ratified by the Parliament in order for Poland to join the EU, the constitution also permitted the

¹⁵ Komitet Integracji Europejskiej, *Narodowa Strategia Integracji* (The National Strategy of Integration), Warszawa 1997, http://polskawue.gov.pl/files/Dokumenty/dok_przyjete_RM/Nsipl.pdf (last visited 4.12.2015).

¹⁶ Urząd Komitetu Integracji Europejskiej, *Program informowania społeczeństwa* (The Public Information Programme), Warszawa 1999, http://polskawue.gov.pl/files/Dokumenty/dok_przyjete_RM/Pispl.pdf (last visited 4.12.2015).

organisation of a national referendum. All the major political parties, both those supporting the accession and those opposed to it, were in favour of such a referendum.

The government and state institutions were clearly in favour of Poland becoming a member of the European Union and conducted their information activities in this spirit. A telling example of this is the motto of the information activities conducted by the Office of the Committee for European Integration – ‘Polska w Unii Europejskiej. Mówię TAK!’ (“Poland in the European Union. I say YES!”). We should bear in mind that in the 1990s and at the beginning of the 21st century, civil society was only just emerging in Poland, which made it difficult to present the European Union in a variety of ways. This one-sided presentation of the European Union began to change only in the second half of the 1990s, when the opponents of the accession became more active and when the Polish debate on Europe became more lively. As a consequence, the support for Poland’s accession to the EU dropped by 20 percentage points between 1996 and 1999,¹⁷ which confirmed the authorities’ conviction that persuasive information activities were necessary.

In this context, the provisions of the National Referendum Act, passed in 2003, on the eve of the referendum on Poland’s accession to the European Union, are revealing. Modelled after the British provisions, guaranteeing equal rights and the possibility to voice opinions to both the proponents and opponents of the issue submitted for a referendum, the act gave the right to free broadcasts on public radio and television to the main actors in the political arena, as well as to associations, foundations and other social organisations which had been active in Poland for more than a year and statutorily involved in the issue subject to the referendum.¹⁸ The practical application of this right was much criticised, mainly because the broadcasts were said to lack professionalism, but this does not change the fact that the Referendum Act strengthened the position of civil society organisations and gave the opponents of European integration more

¹⁷ Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, *Ocena skutków przystąpienia Polski do UE po trzech latach członkostwa. Komunikat z badań (Poland’s Accession to the European Union – Impact Assessment after Three Years. Research Report)*, Warszawa 2007, p. 2, <http://www.skpn-szz.org/downloads/2007r/KKiSIS/ocena%20skutkow%20przystapienia%20do%20UE.pdf> (last visited 4.12.2015).

¹⁸ M. Grabowska, *Polish National Referendum Act. The Accession Referenda*, “Yearbook of Polish European Studies”, No. 6/2002, pp. 186–189; P. Biskup, *Instytucja referendum w brytyjskiej praktyce konstytucyjnej (Institution of Referendum in the British Constitutional Practice)*, “Przegląd Sejmowy”, No. 1/2007, pp. 99–100.

opportunities to present their views, which previously had been subject to severe limitations, to the general public.

In the context of the implementation of the programme aimed at informing society, we should pay special attention to the government's pre-referendum campaign, which lasted from mid-2002 to June 2003. Its aim was not only to encourage people to vote for accession to the European Union, but also to ensure that a sufficient number of Poles participated in the referendum. Under the Polish Constitution of 1997, the result of a referendum is binding only if at least half of those persons entitled to vote actually participate in it. However, the referendums held in the 1990s showed that Polish citizens generally tended not to participate in voting on them. The highest turnout in the three referendums prior to that time was only 43 per cent.¹⁹ While an insufficient turnout to make the referendum binding would not have automatically halted the process of accession to the European Union, such an obvious lack of social interest in the issue would have cast a shadow on Poland's membership in the EU. For this reason, the campaign was very intense and, as it turned out, quite successful – the National Electoral Commission announced that the turnout for the referendum was almost 59 per cent, with more than 77 per cent of those who voted supporting Poland's accession to the EU.²⁰

In communist Poland not all international agreements, and particularly the negotiations leading up to them, were publically announced.²¹ In this context, the decision made by Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek in 1999 to inform the people about the progress of the negotiations concerning the conditions of Poland's accession to the EU was a groundbreaking event.²² It was unprecedented in the history of more countries than just Poland, as

¹⁹ In the 1990s, there were three national referendums held in Poland; concerning privatisation and granting property rights to citizens in 1996; and on the new constitution in 1997. In all these referendums, the turnout was far below the necessary 50 per cent threshold, at 32, 32 and 43 per cent respectively.

²⁰ Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza, *Zestawienie wyników głosowania w ogólnokrajowym referendum w sprawie wyrażenia zgody na ratyfikację Traktatu dotyczącego przystąpienia Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej do Unii Europejskiej* (Summary Results of the Voting in the Nationwide Referendum on Granting Consent to Ratification of the Treaty of the Accession of the Republic of Poland to the European Union), 2003, <http://pkw.gov.pl/g2/i/23/23.pdf> (last visited 4.12.2015).

²¹ A. Wyrozumka, *Umowy międzynarodowe: teoria i praktyka (International Agreements: Theory and Practice)*, Warszawa 2006, p. 504.

²² J. Kułakowski, *Słowo wstępne (Preface)* in: Pełnomocnik Rządu do Spraw Negocjacji o Członkostwo RP w Unii Europejskiej, *Stanowiska Polski w ramach negocjacji o członkostwo Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Unii Europejskiej (Poland's Position Papers for the Accession Negotiations with the European Union)*, Warszawa 2000, p. 7.

many democratic states do not inform the general public about the course of negotiations of international agreements before they are concluded. Brüggemann²³ points out that the European Commission provided no official information to the citizens of the Member States on the accession negotiations preceding the 2004 enlargement. This only further proves that Prime Minister Buzek's decision was a unique event, aimed at greater transparency and openness, as well as at raising the awareness of the Polish public. However, while appreciating the significance of this decision we should also note that not all information activities accompanying the Accession Treaty can be considered as proof of a carefully prepared information policy. The fact that the text of the Accession Treaty was published in the Polish Journal of Laws only shortly before the actual accession to the EU – and a year after the accession referendum – and the fact that official translations of EU and Community treaties into Polish, published as appendices to the Accession Treaty, were not made available on the Internet are clearly at variance with any genuine concern for keeping the general public as well informed as possible.

The second event deserving particular attention is the reform of the Polish education programme. In 1999, the curricula of subjects such as civics, history, geography, and Polish and foreign languages were expanded to cover more issues related to Europe, its history, cultural heritage and European integration, with particular focus on the functioning of the European Union. The reform opened up the possibility to create classes specialising in European issues, to devise original curricula, and encouraged the establishment of school clubs dedicated to these issues. In 2004, European Studies officially became a major in higher education.²⁴ The introduction of 'European education' to primary and secondary schools was a unique move. Comparative analyses of education in Europe conducted by the European Information Network show that Poland introduced these subjects to the curricula of general education to a much greater extent than most European countries.²⁵ In terms of informing society, this is an extremely effective solution as it ensures that

²³ M. Brüggemann, *Public Relations between Propaganda and the Public Sphere: The Information Policy of the European Commission* in: *Public Communication in the European Union: History, Perspectives and Challenges*, Ch. Valentini and G. Nesti (eds.), Newcastle upon Tyne 2010, p. 80.

²⁴ E. Gaweł-Luty, *Reforma systemu edukacji w Polsce wobec perspektyw przystąpienia do Unii Europejskiej (The Reform of Education System in Poland in the Perspective of Poland's Accession to the European Union)* in: *Edukacja wobec integracji europejskiej (Education about European Integration)*, J. Kojkoł and P.J. Przybysz (eds.), Gdynia 2004, pp. 103–108.

²⁵ Eurydice, *Citizenship Education at School in Europe*, Brussels 2005, p. 52.

generations of young people will be entering their adult lives with basic knowledge about the European Union. However, we should also bear in mind that the British opponents of the European Union view such actions as a form of indoctrination. This opinion is probably exaggerated, but we should take note of it as there could be something to it. For example, a detailed analysis of the documents prepared by the Ministry of National Education which specify the content taught in Polish lower secondary schools shows that in terms of knowledge about Poland's membership in the European Union, students should be able to point out the benefits of membership, but there is nothing about the costs.²⁶

When analysing the information and promotion activities undertaken in relation to Poland's accession to the European Union, we should also consider how much they have changed the information system of the Polish state. The information campaign preceding the referendum on the accession to the EU has long been forgotten, but some decisions made at that time have permanently changed the landscape of state information policy. The Polish information centres which appeared in this period are still in operation as the European Information Centre and the network of regional European information centres. In the period of the greatest information fever, right before the accession referendum, there also emerged several thousand local European information points. While most of them were rather short-lived and closed after only a few months of operation, nonetheless those information points which remained active, together with the EU information centres, constitute the basic information providers for issues related to the European Union in Poland today.

The establishment of regional European information centres by the Office of the Committee for European Integration stirred a certain controversy. Some experts believed that Poland should not create a separate information structure, but rather use the existing network of public libraries.²⁷ This position was dismissed by the authorities, but contrary to what was expected, the regional European information centres were not just a temporary solution. While following Poland's accession to the EU their total number fell to roughly a dozen, they were then transformed into a network of regional centres used for international debate about public

²⁶ Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej, Podstawa programowa przedmiotu wiedza o społeczeństwie (Basic Civics Curriculum), 2011, <https://men.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/4d.pdf> (last visited 4.12.2015).

²⁷ A. Ogonowska, *Zagrożenia i szanse bibliotek polskich po wejściu Polski do Unii Europejskiej – terra incognita i mity (Threats and Opportunities for Polish Libraries after the Polish Accession to the European Union – Terra Incognita and Myths)*, "Biuletyn EBIB", No. 7/2001, <http://www.ebib.pl/2001/25/ogonowska.html> (last visited 4.12.2015).

diplomacy affairs, but informing and educating the Polish society still remains within their competences.²⁸ It should also be noted that the state authorities' attitude towards public libraries and their role in informing Polish society about the European Union has changed over time as well. In the second half of 2011, during the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, public libraries were involved in the information campaign in equal measure along with the regional European information centres.

2. Information Policy after Poland's accession to the European Union

The years before the accession to the European Union were a time of very intensive information activities in Poland. It is little wonder that compared to this time, the period after the referendum and the actual accession may be perceived as a slowdown in information activities. However, it only seems so. While the activities promoting information about the European Union are different today, they remain an important channel and direction of government information activities. In some respects one might even speak of an increase in their intensity. A good example of this are the activities related to the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. If we add the information concerning the elections to the European Parliament, the availability of European funds, and concerning the introduction of the euro, it is hard to dismiss the thesis that EU-related information activities still constitute a priority in governmental information activities.

So far, the most significant information activities since Poland's accession to the European Union concerned the first Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union (second half of 2011).²⁹ In order to

²⁸ A. Tuz, *Regionalne Centra Informacji Europejskiej w Polsce (Regional European Information Centres in Poland)* in: *Sieci informacyjne Unii Europejskiej w Polsce (The European Union information networks in Poland)*, M. Grabowska (ed.), Warszawa 2012, pp. 289–301; Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, *Osrodek Debaty Międzynarodowej (The Centre for International Debate)*, 2013, https://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/ministerstwo/osrodek_debaty_miedzynarodowej/ (last visited 4.12.2015).

²⁹ K. Niklewicz, *Działania informacyjne rządu RP w trakcie polskiego przewodnictwa w Radzie Unii Europejskiej (1 lipca–31 grudnia 2011 r.). Analiza skuteczności (Polish Government information activities during the Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union (1 July–31 December 2011). Analysis of effectiveness)*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 67, 95–96; Sz. Ruman, *Informacja o niezbędnych działaniach podejmowanych przez państwa członkowskie Unii Europejskiej w ramach przygotowań do prezydencji w Radzie UE ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Francji, Czech i Szwecji (The Information on Necessary Actions Undertaken by EU Member*

plan and conduct national information activities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the Office of the Committee of European Integration was merged into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2009) prepared the communication strategy *Informing the Polish public on the Polish presidency of the Council of the European Union*, along with guidelines concerning communication for all organs involved in these actions, and required them to devise information plans.³⁰ These actions were aimed at improving public knowledge about the functioning of the European Union, and especially the Council of the European Union. They were also meant to make the people aware of the benefits of membership and stimulate the debate on European issues. While these actions were scheduled for 2009–2012, most of them took place in 2011. In contrast to the information activities preceding Poland's accession to the EU, the government's actions were no longer of a propagandist nature, but instead had a considerable educational value. Partners of the programme executed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs included employees of the central and local government administrations, Polish and EU information centres, non-governmental organisations, as well as universities and various media. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed many of its actions to them inasmuch as it considered them as multipliers of information. Once again the public administration, politicians, journalists, and teachers were improving their knowledge of the European Union in order to later pass it on to the rest of society.

First of all, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs focused on cooperating with social organisations and on spreading information through the

States Due to the Preparations to the Presidency of the Council of the European Union: The case of France, Czech Republic and Sweden), "Zeszyty Prawnicze Biura Analiz Sejmowych", No. 1/2010, pp. 107–113; L. Kolarska-Bobińska et al., *Polska prezydencja w Radzie Unii Europejskiej: współpraca administracji publicznej z sektorem pozarządowym (Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union: Cooperation of the Public Administration with the Non-Governmental Sector)*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 32–91; M. Pilecka, *Postawy pronijne oraz oczekiwania społeczne wobec UE w kontekście przyszłej polskiej prezydencji (Pro-EU Attitudes and Society's Expectations towards the European Union in the Context of the Future Polish Presidency)*, "Biuletyn Analiz UKIE", No. 22/2009, p. 136.

³⁰ Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, *Informowanie społeczeństwa polskiego o prezydencji Polski w Radzie Unii Europejskiej w II połowie 2011 roku. Założenia działań (Informing the Polish Public on the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the Second Half of 2011. Action Principles)*, Warszawa 2010; Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, *Wytoczne dotyczące polityki komunikacyjnej polskiej prezydencji w Radzie UE w 2011 r. (The Guidelines for the Communication Policy of the Polish Presidency of the EU Council in 2011)*, Warszawa 2010.

Internet.³¹ It also took advantage of the existing structure of regional European information centres, and involved public libraries in this process as well. The information activities took the form of trainings and actions addressed to teenagers. Considering that television was the dominant source of information on the European Union in Poland, suitable spots with information about the Presidency were prepared, but printed information materials were published as well. Some of the information activities took the form of events propagating knowledge about the Presidency, such as the installation of clocks counting down the time left to the beginning of the Presidency, a cycle of sports events, or exhibitions and festivals dedicated to the Presidency. Furthermore, there was also a cultural programme which was meant to draw the public's attention to Poland's Presidency of the Council.³²

If we analyse the information activities undertaken by the Polish government in relation to the Presidency, it is obvious that they were prepared on the basis of and drawing from other countries' experiences. There is not much of a Polish specificity to them, but at the same time there is also little proof of any neglect. The information campaign conducted with respect to the Polish Presidency shows the professional approach adopted toward informing the Polish society about the European Union, while the growing general public interest in the Presidency, documented in the report on Poland holding the Presidency, reflects the scale of its success.³³

In the context of these activities, the process of amending the Polish law concerning access to public information, which took place in the Summer and Autumn of 2011, seems particularly controversial. Due to the requirement³⁴ to implement Directive 2003/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 November 2003 on the re-use of

³¹ Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, *Wytyczne dotyczące promocji polskiej prezydencji 2011 w Internecie* (The Guidelines for the Promotion of the 2011 Polish Presidency on the Internet), 2010.

³² Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego, Instytut Adama Mickiewicza, Narodowy Instytut Audiowizualny, *Strategiczne założenia programu kulturalnego polskiej prezydencji w II połowie 2011* (Strategic Guidelines for a Cultural Programme of the Polish Presidency in the Second Half of 2011), 2009.

³³ Ministerstw o Spraw Zagranicznych, *Przewodnictwo Polski w Radzie Unii Europejskiej. Raport końcowy z przygotowania i sprawowania prezydencji* (Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union. Final report on the Preparation and Holding the Presidency), Warszawa 2012, p. 112–119, <https://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/cca83422-8661-4b6e-9e32-f94e9bc3db4b> (last visited 4.12.2015).

³⁴ The deadline for implementing the Directive was 1 July 2005, hence Poland was implementing this law with a six-year delay.

public sector information, the government devised a draft amendment to the Polish act on access to public information. The draft included not only provisions implementing the directive, but also several restrictions concerning the extent of the right of access to information, including access to information concerning the manner of representing the Polish national interests in the European Council and the Council of the European Union. The draft was highly criticised by the public and by some political parties, but after a rather unusual legislative process,³⁵ it was eventually adopted by the Parliament. In April 2012, however, the Constitutional Tribunal ruled that the mode of processing the amendment in the Senate (the upper house of the Polish parliament) was inconsistent with the constitution.³⁶ Consequently, the law was rescinded. This event took place during the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union and was clearly at variance with the goals of the government programme for informing society.

In Poland the elections to the European Parliament have been held three times so far: in 2004, in 2009 and in 2014. None of them have sparked any great interest on the part of the voters. The turnout was almost 21 per cent, almost 25 per cent, and almost 24 per cent respectively, which is among the lowest in the entire European Union, as the average EU turnout was 45, 43, and 43 per cent respectively.³⁷ In addition, the turnouts were

³⁵ Prezes Rady Ministrów, Rządowy projekt ustawy o zmianie ustawy o dostępie do informacji publicznej oraz niektórych innych ustaw (Government's Proposal for an Act Amending the Act on Access to Public Information and Some Other Acts), 2011, [http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druki6ka.nsf/0/C74C2E31DC6EE286C12578CC005B205F/\\$file/4434.pdf](http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druki6ka.nsf/0/C74C2E31DC6EE286C12578CC005B205F/$file/4434.pdf) (last visited 4.12.2015); Senat Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Stanowisko Senatu w sprawie ustawy o zmianie ustawy o dostępie do informacji publicznej oraz niektórych innych ustaw (The Position of the Senate on the Act Amending the Act on Access to Public Information and Some Other Acts), 2011, <http://ww2.senat.pl/k7/pos/083/083porz.htm> (last visited 4.12.2015).

³⁶ The Constitutional Tribunal, *Judgment of 18 April 2012. Ref. No. K 33/11*, 2011, http://trybunal.gov.pl/fileadmin/content/omowienia/K_33_11_en.pdf (last visited 4.12.2015).

³⁷ Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza, Obwieszczenie Państwowej Komisji Wyborczej z dnia 15 czerwca 2004 r. o wynikach wyborów posłów do Parlamentu Europejskiego przeprowadzonych w dniu 13 czerwca 2004 r. (The Announcement of the National Electoral Commission of 15 June 2004 on the Results of the Elections for the European Parliament held on 13 June 2004), Warszawa 2005, <http://pe2004.pkw.gov.pl/WynWyb/pdf/obwieszczenie.rtf> (last visited 4.12.2015); Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza, Obwieszczenie Państwowej Komisji Wyborczej z dnia 8 czerwca 2009 r. o wynikach wyborów posłów do Parlamentu Europejskiego przeprowadzonych w dniu 7 czerwca 2009 r. (The Announcement of the National Electoral Commission of 8 June 2009 on the Results of the Elections for the European Parliament held on 7 June 2009), Warszawa 2009, <http://pkw.gov.pl/g2/i/17/00/29/170029/obwieszczenie.pdf> (last visited 4.12.2015); Państwowa Komisja

considerably lower than the average turnout in national parliamentary and local government elections. The low turnout in European elections is usually explained as reflecting the fact that elections to the European Parliament are treated by voters as less important, second-order elections.³⁸ However, it seems quite surprising that Poles were already convinced of this within days of obtaining membership in the European Union.

The government's involvement in encouraging the people to participate in the elections was rather minimal, essentially limited to providing information on organisational issues. The responsibilities of Member States related to elections to the European Parliament are regulated by each state's national election statute. Additional obligations in terms of providing information result from the fact that citizens of other Member States can participate in these elections as well. These obligations are defined in Article 12 of Council Directive 93/109/EC laying down detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament for citizens of the Union residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals.³⁹ According to Eurostat data for 2011, the number of immigrants living in Poland and being nationals of a different EU Member State was very low – about 0.04 per cent of the total number of inhabitants, while the EU average at the time was 2.5 per cent.⁴⁰ Consequently, it is no wonder that the information activities addressed to foreigners eligible to participate in the elections to the European Parliament went virtually unnoticed.

Wyborcza, Obwieszczenie Państwowej Komisji Wyborczej z dnia 26 maja 2014 r. o wynikach wyborów posłów do Parlamentu Europejskiego przeprowadzonych w dniu 25 maja 2014 r. (The Announcement of the National Electoral Commission of 26 May 2014 on the Results of the Elections for the European Parliament held on 25 May 2014), Warszawa 2014, http://pkw.gov.pl/g2/oryginal/2014_05/966be725a42d277a1cd313ba2af21e6f.pdf (last visited 2.12.2015); European Parliament, *Results of the 2014 European Elections*, 2014, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/turnout.html> (last visited 4.12.2015).

³⁸ A.H. Trechsel, *How Much Second-Order Were the European Parliament Elections 2009?* in: *The 2009 Elections to the European Parliament. Country Reports*, W. Gagatsek (ed.), Florence 2010, pp. 3–11; S. Hix and M. Marsh, *Second-Order Effects Plus Pan-European Political Swings: An Analysis of European Parliament Elections across Time*, "Electoral Studies", No. 1/2011, pp. 4–15.

³⁹ Council Directive 93/109/EC of 6 December 1993 laying down detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament for citizens of the Union residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals, OJ 1993 L329/37.

⁴⁰ Eurostat, *EU citizens living in another Member State accounted for 2.5% of the EU population in 2011*, "Eurostat News Release", No. 105/2012, p. 2, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/5156166/3-11072012-AP-EN.PDF> (last visited 4.12.2015).

The low turnout in elections for the European Parliament is a problem for Poland. An analysis⁴¹ of the reasons for voter abstention shows the complexity of this issue and also shows many players in public life would have to become involved to solve it. In 2011, the government implemented an amendment to the electoral code, which included regulations on propagating knowledge about elections among teenagers and regulations on the responsibility of the National Electoral Commission for disseminating information.⁴² These changes, however, did not result in a significant improvement in the turnout for the 2014 European Parliament elections.

Upon joining the European Union, Poland undertook to replace the Polish zloty with the euro. However, since Poland's economic situation did not allow this to take place within a short time following its accession, the date for introducing the euro was repeatedly postponed. Nevertheless, the obligation was not dismissed, as proven by the establishment of the office of Government Plenipotentiary for Euro Adoption in Poland in 2009⁴³ and by the opening of the Euro Information Center in Łódź in 2012 by the National Bank of Poland.⁴⁴ For five years now the Plenipotentiary has been preparing the country for this eventual operation, which involves planning and conducting information activities. However, there is still no political decision on the date of entry into the euro-zone, and as a consequence these actions are not very intensive at this time and are essentially limited to issuing recommendations concerning the preparations.⁴⁵

⁴¹ A. Jackiewicz, *Wybory do Parlamentu Europejskiego jako wybory drugiej kategorii. Uwagi na temat przyczyn, konsekwencji oraz prób przeciwdziałania niskiej frekwencji wyborczej (Elections to the European Parliament as Second-Order Elections. Comments on the Causes and Consequences of the Low Turnout and Attempts to Prevent It)*, "Przegląd Sejmowy", No. 2/2014, pp. 9–20; M. Solon-Lipiński, *Aktywizowanie wyborców w Polsce. Inicjatywy profrekwencyjne w latach 2001–2011 (Motivating voters in Poland. Pro-turnout initiatives in 2001–2011)*, Warszawa 2012, p. 19.

⁴² Art 108 § 3 and Art 160 § 1 point 9 Ustawy z dnia 5 stycznia 2011 r. Kodeks wyborczy (Act of 5 January 2011. Election code), Dziennik Ustaw (Journal of Laws) of 2011, No. 21, Item 112.

⁴³ Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 13 stycznia 2009 r. w sprawie ustanowienia Pełnomocnika Rządu do Spraw Wprowadzenia Euro przez Rzeczpospolitą Polską (Council of Ministers regulation of 13 January 2009 establishing a Government Plenipotentiary for Euro Adoption in Poland), Dziennik Ustaw (Journal of Laws) of 2009, No. 11, Item 60.

⁴⁴ Narodowy Bank Polski, *Centrum Informacji o Euro w Łodzi. Nowa inicjatywa NBP (Euro Information Centre in Łódź. A New Initiative of the National Bank of Poland)*, 2012, http://www.nbp.pl/home.aspx?f=/aktualnosci/wiadomosci_2012/201202029_cie.html (last visited 4.12.2015).

⁴⁵ Ministerstwo Finansów, *Pełnomocnik Rządu do Spraw Wprowadzenia Euro przez Rzeczpospolitą Polską (Government Plenipotentiary for Euro Adoption in Poland)*, 2012, <http://www.mf.gov.pl/ministerstwo-finansow/dzialalnosc/integracja-ze-strefa-euro/pelnomocnik-rzadu-ds-euro#> (last visited 4.12.2015).

At this point we should note that the global economic situation and the crisis in the euro area saddled the Plenipotentiary with a very difficult task. As a consequence of the falling support for the adoption of the euro, the information tasks connected with the change of currency are conducted in much different circumstances than those related to the Polish EU accession and the Polish Presidency. The Government Plenipotentiary will probably not be able to take advantage of the traditional pro-Western sentiment of the Polish society, which played a key role in the campaign preceding the referendum in 2003. While Poles remain great enthusiasts of the European Union, for the last several years they have been demonstrating an eroding support if not an aversion to the euro.⁴⁶ It is hard to imagine any information activities which could significantly affect this attitude. Perhaps in this situation it would be wisest to wait for restoration of the image and reputation of the euro area. Another problem is the fact that in this case it will not be sufficient to follow the experience of other Member States. The information campaigns executed by the European Commission and the Member States before the introduction of the euro in 2002 involved a great unknown. Many societies were afraid of the adoption of the common currency, but eventually their concerns were alleviated. The success of the first information campaign allowed the countries which introduced the euro in the following years to draw on the experience and example of other countries. Estonia was in a slightly different situation, as during its information campaign it had to face the first wave of the financial crisis, which was obviously causing additional anxiety in the society.⁴⁷ Afterward, Latvia and Lithuania faced the same problem, and they have not managed to convince a substantial group of their citizens to introduce the euro.⁴⁸

Taking these circumstances into account, one can conclude that the information activities related to the introduction of the euro in Poland

⁴⁶ K. Waćko-Jasińska, *Poparcie dla wprowadzenia euro (Support for the introduction of the euro)*, "Monitor Opinii Publicznej", No. 6/2014, p. 2, http://www.mf.gov.pl/documents/764034/1002547/monitor_opinii_12_2014.pdf (last visited 4.12.2015).

⁴⁷ A. Ogonowska, *Kampanie informacyjne programu PRINCE Unii Europejskiej (The European Union's PRINCE Programme Information Campaigns)*, "Studia Europejskie", No. 1/2010, pp. 143–147; A. Ogonowska, *Polityka informacyjna państw członkowskich o Unii Europejskiej na przykładach okresów wzmożonej działalności informacyjnej (Member States' Information Policy on the European Union – a Case Study of Periods of Increased Information Activities)*, "Studia Europejskie", No. 3/2011, pp. 120–125.

⁴⁸ According to the Eurobarometer poll, opponents to introducing the euro constituted the largest group of citizens just a couple of months before the euro was officially introduced. See *Support for the single currency*, "Flash Eurobarometer", No. 400/2014, p. 64; *Support for the single currency*, "Flash Eurobarometer", No. 377/2013, p. 65.

will be a true test of the competence and skills of the people responsible for the state information policy. The only asset held by the government is the fact that Poland already has some experience in changing its currency, as a redenomination of the zloty was conducted at the turn of 1994 and 1995, which symbolically ended the period of hyperinflation.⁴⁹

3. Cooperation with the European Commission

Another issue is the Polish government's cooperation with the European Commission in the area of information policy. Under the EU Treaties and the accession treaties, the Member States are neither required to conduct such a policy, nor to cooperate with EU institutions in this regard. The absence of treaty obligations, however, does not prevent the European Commission from regarding the Member States as responsible for this policy.⁵⁰ In their official communications the Member States do not confirm this responsibility, but they do not deny it either. This is probably because they are aware of the need to conduct information activities in their territories and of the benefits of cooperation with the European Commission. In the absence of legal obligations, however, the Member States enjoy a considerable latitude in establishing information cooperation with the EU institutions. The European Commission would benefit the most from a formalisation and standardisation of this cooperation, and thus it has made efforts to sign an agreement with each Member State concerning common information activities. It has managed to sign such agreements with 18 countries, including Poland.⁵¹ These agreements are referred to as management partnerships.⁵² Under the partnerships, the European Commission and European Parliament on the one hand, and the Member States on the other, commit to implement

⁴⁹ Ustawa z dnia 7 lipca 1994 r. o denominacji złotego (Act of 7 July 1994 on redenomination of the zloty), *Dziennik Ustaw* (Journal of Laws) of 1994, No. 84, Item 386.

⁵⁰ Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council, European Parliament, Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions on a new framework for co-operation on activities concerning the information and communication policy of the European Union, COM(2001) 354.

⁵¹ European Commission, Commission decision concerning the adoption of 2012 work programme in the field of communication, Brussels 2011, pp. 22–24, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/contracts-and-grants/annual_work_programme/awp/progr2012_en.pdf (last visited 4.12.2015).

⁵² Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on implementing the information and communication strategy for the European Union, COM(2004) 196, pp. 11–12.

joint information activities, establishing the subjects of these activities and their sources of financing. In practice, the agreements lead to the appointment of a national institution (an intermediary body) to which the European Commission delegates its competences regarding the execution of information activities. The Commission offers the same information topics to all the Member States, but it is left open to negotiation which of these subjects will actually be executed in a given country.

In 2009, Poland concluded a management partnership agreement for four years.⁵³ The institution executing the agreed-upon information activities was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (after taking over the responsibilities of the Office of the Committee for European Integration). A review of the issues related to the information activities shows that the priorities included those topics common to all the Member States, such as: the European years (e.g. European Year of Volunteering) and the elections to the European Parliament. These were complemented with leading topics, such as the Treaty of Lisbon, economic recovery, climate change and related energy issues; as well as topics particularly important for a given country. In Poland's case, the latter included: the summary of Poland's five years of membership in the EU, the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and the 20th anniversary of the democratic transformation in Poland. In order to carry out the agreement, the European Commission agreed to provide Poland with a total amount of EUR 2.2 million between 2009–2012.⁵⁴

In 2012, the European Commission evaluated its agreement with Poland. The evaluation was positive overall, although it indicated an inability to assess the effectiveness of the actions that had been

⁵³ Komisja Europejska, *Partnerstwo w zarządzaniu. Umowa o delegację*. Dotyczy: GCI-PG-A-PL-COMM-01 (Management Partnership. Delegation Agreement. Reference GCI-PG-A-PL-COMM-01), Warszawa 2009.

⁵⁴ *Annual Work Programme on Grants and Contracts in the Field of Communication for 2009*, 2009, p. 15, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/contracts-and-grants/annual_work_programme/awp/prog2009_en.pdf (last visited 4.12.2015); European Commission, Commission Decision of 6.10.2010 on the Amended Annual Work Programme for Grants and Public Contracts in the Field of Communication for 2010, Brussels 2010, p. 22, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/contracts-and-grants/annual_work_programme/awp/c_2010_6827_decision_de_la_commission_en.pdf (last visited 4.12.2015); Amended Work Programme in the Field of Communication for 2011, 2011, p. 20, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/contracts-and-grants/annual_work_programme/awp/amend_prog2011_en.pdf (last visited 4.12.2015); European Commission, Commission Decision Concerning the Adoption of 2012 Work Programme in the Field of Communication, op.cit.

undertaken.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, due to cuts in the EU budget, the European Commission decided to terminate all management partnership agreements with Member States. In return, it proposed establishing strategic partnerships, in which the main responsibility for funding information activities and selecting their topics would be taken by the governments of the Member States themselves. Poland expressed dissatisfaction with this proposition.⁵⁶ So far, there has been no indication that Poland would undertake such obligations in the near future, and this state of affairs is reflected in the evolution of Polish institutions responsible for information policy. Following Poland's EU accession, the Office of the Committee for European Integration was responsible for information activities until 2009. This institution implemented the decisions of the Committee for European Integration and of the European Committee of the Council of Ministers. When both of these committees were replaced with the Committee for European Affairs,⁵⁷ the informative role of the Office was taken over by the Department of European Information of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the summer of 2012, this Department was liquidated, and some of its responsibilities were taken over by the Office of the Spokesman on Foreign Affairs, while the supervision of regional centres for international debate was entrusted to the Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy. Unfortunately, the organisation of dynamic information activities propagating knowledge about the European Union no longer falls under the Spokesman's authority, since the Department of Public Diplomacy is more focused on influencing the international community.

⁵⁵ PSDB, Końcowy Raport Ewaluacyjny. Ewaluacja dotychczasowych prac Partnerstwa w Zarządzaniu zawartego między Ministerstwem Spraw Zagranicznych a Komisją Europejską (Final Evaluation Report. Evaluation of the Former Works of the Management Partnership concluded between the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs and the European Commission), 2012, <http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/search/download.do?documentId=10991705> (last visited 4.12.2015).

⁵⁶ Council of The European Union, Outcome of the proceedings of the Working Party on Information on 28 October 2013, Brussels 13.11.2013, p.3, document no. 16069/13.

⁵⁷ Ustawa z dnia 27 sierpnia 2009 r. o Komitecie do Spraw Europejskich (Act of 27 August 2009 on the Committee of European Affairs), *Dziennik Ustaw* (Journal of Laws) of 2009, No. 161, Item 1277; Uchwała nr 15 Rady Ministrów z dnia 26 stycznia 2010 r. w sprawie upoważnienia Komitetu do Spraw Europejskich do rozpatrywania, rozstrzygnięcia lub uzgadniania w sprawach związanych z członkostwem Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Unii Europejskiej (The Council of Ministers' Resolution of 26 January 2010 on the authorisation of the Committee on European Affairs to examine, settle or agree upon the issues related to Poland's membership in the European Union), *Monitor Polski* (Official Gazette) of 2010, No. 6, Item 53.

We must also mention those situations in which states are required to conduct information activities in accordance with EU guidelines. Since the European Commission is not allowed to impose on the Member States any general obligation to promote information about the European Union, it is forced to refer to partial solutions. For instance, it automatically imposes a series of information-related obligations on those countries receiving support from European funds. These obligations are regulated in detail and are aimed at conveying to the country's society the fact that the European Union contributes to the development of the country through EU funds.⁵⁸ In Poland, which is the largest beneficiary of European funds, the information activities are particularly broad and visible. The responsibility of the Polish government in this regard has been to prepare a communication strategy. In order to ensure the dissemination of information on the origin and use of these funds, the information and promotion activities have been conducted in cooperation with: non-governmental organisations, trade and professional associations, entrepreneur organisations, the EU information centres located in the country, education institutions, and state authorities, both regional and local. Within the scope of these information and promotion activities, information campaigns dedicated to the principles of structural funds have been implemented. Furthermore, the letters of beneficiaries have been made public and they have been required to display information signs informing the public about the subsidies. The Polish communication strategy assumed that within seven years more than EUR 300 million would be spent for this purpose.⁵⁹ In the meta-evaluation report,⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 of 8 December 2006 setting out rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund, OJ 2006 L371/11–16.

⁵⁹ Strategia komunikacji funduszy europejskich w Polsce w ramach Narodowej Strategii Spójności na lata 2007–2013 (The European Funds Communication Strategy within the National Cohesion Strategy for the years 2007–2013), 2012, https://www.funduszeuropejskie.2007-2013.gov.pl/ZPFE/Documents/finStrategia_komunikacji_modyfikacja%2016_01_2012_tekst_jednolity.pdf (last visited 4.12.2015).

⁶⁰ Evaluation for Government Organizations, Meta-ewaluacja wyników dotychczasowych badań ewaluacyjnych i innych (wniosków i rekomendacji) dotyczących informacji i promocji Funduszy Europejskich oraz poszczególnych programów operacyjnych [Meta-Evaluation of Results of the Previous Evaluation Reports and Other Researches (Conclusions and Recommendations) Relating to the European Funds' and Other Particular Operational Programmes' Information and Promotion], Warszawa 2013, pp. 13–16, https://www.ewaluacja.gov.pl/Wyniki/Documents/metaewaluacja_infopromo_raport_koncowy.pdf (last visited 4.12.2015).

which was prepared for the Ministry of Regional Development and was the result of analyses of dozens of detailed reports examining the dissemination of information about European funds, it was determined that the application of diversified information tools had contributed to the success and effectiveness of the information and promotion activities. It was also noted that public information needs were quite diversified and that in some instances information activities could be further improved. However, according to a public opinion poll,⁶¹ between 2006 and 2011 an upward trend was observed in the level of Poles' knowledge about the availability and usage of these funds.

Conclusions

During the 25 years examined in this article, several institutions at the government level in Poland have been responsible for informing society about the European Union. The most important of them included the Committee for European Integration, the European Committee of the Council of Ministers and the Committee for European Affairs, which is still in operation. The main executors of their decisions were: Government Plenipotentiaries for European information, for preparing and holding the Presidency, for introducing the euro; the Minister for the European referendum; the Office of the Committee for European Integration; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Also, many of the highest national authorities, e.g., the National Election Commission, were obliged to provide information to society within narrower scopes, e.g., about elections to the European Parliament. In terms of the institutional solutions adopted, two opposite trends can be observed: a tendency to create special institutions for a pre-defined period of activity; and a tendency to create institutions that take over responsibility for informational activities over the long term. The first solution was more popular during periods of increased demand for information about the European Union, whereas the second one has been preferred during periods of a less dynamic informational campaign. Even though the institutional solutions adopted by Poland turned out to be effective in practice, it is worth pondering whether such methods contribute to pooling experiences. With respect to the evolutionary

⁶¹ Group IQS, *Badanie efektów działań informacyjnych i promocyjnych na temat Funduszy Europejskich dla społeczeństwa oraz analiza społecznego odbioru tych działań. Edycja 2012 (Analysis of the Effects of Information and Promotion Activities on European Funds for Society and Analysis of its Social Reception. Edition 2012)*, Warszawa 2013, p. 67, https://www.ewaluacja.gov.pl/Wyniki/Documents/Raport_MRR_Fundusze_2012.pdf (last visited 4.12.2015).

development of institutions, such as the absorption of the Office of the Committee for European Integration by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one could expect a continuity of current policies. However, the continuation of current policies is more problematic in instances like the rotation of Government Plenipotentiaries. Also, thought should be given to the idea of entrusting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the major responsibility for disseminating information about the EU to the Polish society. However, as the Ministry's main role is to operate abroad, one might ask whether it would be appropriate to entrust such an institution with carrying out of domestic tasks. While Poland's membership in the European Union is without doubt a part of Polish foreign policy, it also encompasses other areas in the domestic sphere, i.e. areas within the competences of national authorities. Therefore, perhaps it would perhaps be more appropriate to entrust such a role to a ministry that operates mainly on the domestic level.

Despite having an existing network of public libraries, in order to propagate knowledge about the EU to society the Polish authorities decided to create a separate structure for information dissemination: regional centres of European information and local centres of European information. This model existed in both the pre-accession and post-accession periods, but has been subjected to re-configurations. The local centres of European information existed only for a few months, and the number of regional centres of European information was reduced following Poland's accession to the EU. In this respect it seems that a detailed analysis of the costs and benefits of maintaining the current solution or transferring these tasks to selected public libraries is needed.

Also, in recent years regional centres of European information have been transformed into regional centres for international debate, which constitute a public diplomacy tool used by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They have retained their role of informing and educating Polish society about the European Union, but it is worth enquiring whether it is appropriate to combine the role of informing society with the role of public diplomacy. The role of public diplomacy is to influence communities abroad. It seems worthwhile to consider combining informational activities addressed to Polish society with some other activity(ies) associated with the European Union, albeit addressed to the national community, e.g., informing about the use of structural funds.

By comparing the pre-accession and post-accession periods, one may conclude that public authorities' involvement in disseminating information to society was similar in both periods, but was expressed in a slightly different way. Particularly visible in the pre-accession period

was the increasing intensification of information activities, which reached a culmination point before the referendum on accession to the European Union. Following accession, the intensity of information activities varied. It increased and declined periodically, based on the calendar of events related to the Poland's role and involvement in the European Union. While it may be claimed that throughout this entire period the Polish government has continued to treat information dissemination as a priority, nonetheless the lower level of interest in information activities during certain periods could raise certain doubts. In the end however it seems that this claim should be accepted, as even in periods of weakened information activities the institutional efforts did not fade away completely. What's more, the high level of authorities' involvement during particular periods reflects the considerable importance that was attached to this issue. However, in order to answer the question whether the significance given to EU information activities reflects the priority given to activities related to the European Union, or whether it is more the result of the established tradition of communicating with society, a separate research study would have to be conducted.

In the pre-accession period, all information activities were directed toward two aims: preparing the country for accession and obtaining membership. These two aims determined the type of information activities implemented, i.e. activities to inform and educate Polish society on one hand, and activities aimed at persuading people to vote for Poland's accession to the European Union in the referendum on the other hand. This example quite aptly illustrates the ancillary nature of information policy to Polish foreign policy. Particular attention should be paid to the efforts to extend the scope of information about the EU within the Polish education system and the propagandist nature of governmental activities prior to the accession referendum. It is possible to relate these efforts to the singular lack of knowledge about the European Union prevailing in Poland at the beginning of the 1990s. The intensive attempts by the government to disseminate a positive attitude toward the EU may be viewed partly as a result of this situation.

After 2004, the objectives of Polish information policy were to improve the level of public knowledge about the EU and about Poland's participation in the organisation. During the first ten years of its membership, the issue of convincing society about the value of membership in European Union did not reoccur, but this does not mean that it cannot occur again in the future. If such a situation were to arise, persuading society to adopt a particular behaviour may be more complicated the next time around, as successive decades of the free circulation of ideas have filled in the

information gaps which existed in the past. There are also more Polish experts in EU affairs, who can present their varied opinions during public debates. In addition, information policy could become quite a challenge for the government if there were a considerable difference between the stance of government and that of the general public.

When comparing information policy before and after 2004, a subtle difference can be observed in the governments' activities. While the first period was characterised by a great transparency and openness about the EU accession process (e.g. the decision to inform the public about negotiations), during the second period the first signs appeared of a trend to limit information about Poland's membership in the EU (e.g. the attempt to amend the act on access to public information). Nevertheless, the abovementioned examples are not sufficient or weighty enough to assume the emergence of any clear trend.

The simplest way to measure the efficiency of the information policy during the pre-accession period would be to refer to the results of the accession referendum. Of course such a measure contains a certain defect, inasmuch one cannot rule out the possibility that the information activities were not actually effective, but that in spite of this the Poles overwhelmingly favoured accession to the European Union. In any case it must be acknowledged that these activities were at least *sufficient* to achieve the policy's goal. Another measure of the information activities during this period would be to examine the group of institutions created, which became the foundation for conducting information policy in subsequent periods. Their efficiency during the first period determined the continuation of their activity afterwards.

It is more difficult to clearly verify the effectiveness of activities after 2004. This is due mainly to the diversity of the areas covered by information policy. For activities related to the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, effectiveness can be measured by the increased public interest in this subject, and the results should be deemed quite good. As for informing the public about the use of European funds, this can also be assessed as successful, as reflected in the incremental increase in the number of people declaring at least average knowledge about them. In addition, expert-based analyses indicate that these activities were quite effective. The situation is different when it comes to elections to the European Parliament. It should be stated at the outset that the public authorities reduced their information activities on this subject to a minimum, which undoubtedly negatively impacted the electoral turnout. The amendment of the election code, which was a remedial measure taken by the government, did not change this situation.

Information cooperation between the Polish government and the European Commission officially started in 1994, but the EU side had already earlier launched its activities in Poland. It is difficult to speak about joint information activities for the 1994–2004 period. During this time each side was conducting its own projects, while willingly accepting the offer of the other side to participate with them. Joint activities on a larger scale were taken after the Management Partnership Agreement in 2009. However, it should be noted that this agreement demonstrated an effort on the part of the European Commission to oblige each Member State systematically carry out information activities about the EU. The way the topics of the joint information projects were selected demonstrates that the European Commission had greater influence on this issue than Poland. Still, when the European Commission terminated this type of cooperation the representatives of the Polish government expressed their disappointment, which indicates that Poland cooperated willingly and not out of a sense of duty. Nonetheless one may ask whether the money provided by the European Commission was the main incentive for this cooperation. By the end of 2014, the Polish side had not brought forward a proposal to establish further cooperation with the European Commission in the area of information policy, even under the different conditions.

In sum, the Polish information policy in the years 1989–2014 was very successful and, above all, left Poland with a lot of accumulated experience. This can certainly be useful in the future, for instance with respect to joining the euro area. This event, however, may also constitute a crucial problem for the institutions responsible for information activities, since as a result of the euro area crisis the Poles' attitudes toward introducing the single currency have become increasingly hostile. Finally, government information policy should be viewed as being of an ancillary nature to other policies, although information policy should support national economic and monetary policies. However, it will be crucial to evaluate whether an improved information policy will be able in the future to meet everyone's expectations.

Bibliography

- Biskup, Przemysław, *Instytucja referendum w brytyjskiej praktyce konstytucyjnej (Institution of Referendum in the British Constitutional Practice)*, "Przegląd Sejmowy", No. 1/2007.
- Bogdał, Monika, *Polityka informacyjna jako instrument polityki energetycznej (Information policy as an instrument of energy policy)*, "Chorzowskie Studia Polityczne", No. 6/2013.

- Braman, Sandra, *Defining information policy*, "Journal of Information Policy", No. 1/2011.
- Brüggemann, Michael, *Europäische Öffentlichkeit durch Öffentlichkeitsarbeit? Die Informationspolitik der Europäischen Kommission*, Wiesbaden 2008.
- Brüggemann, Michael, *How the EU Constructs the European Public Sphere: Seven Strategies of Information Policy*, "The Public", No. 2/2005.
- Brüggemann, Michael, *Public Relations between Propaganda and the Public Sphere: The Information Policy of the European Commission in: Public Communication in the European Union: History, Perspectives and Challenges*, Chiara Valentini and Giorgia Nesti (eds.), Newcastle upon Tyne 2010.
- Buckley Owen, Barbara, Cooke, Louise and Matthews, Graham, *Information Policymaking in the United Kingdom: The Role of the Information Professional*, "Journal of Information Policy", No. 2/2012.
- Curry, Jane Leftwich, *The black book of Polish censorship*, New York 1984.
- Gawęł-Luty, Elżbieta, *Reforma systemu edukacji w Polsce wobec perspektywy przystąpienia do Unii Europejskiej (The Reform of Education System in Poland in the Perspective of Poland's Accession to the European Union)* in: *Edukacja wobec integracji europejskiej (Education about European Integration)*, Jerzy Kojkoł, Piotr Jan Przybysz (eds.), Gdynia 2004.
- Goban-Klas, Tomasz, *Niepokorna orkiestra medialna. Dyrygenci i wykonawcy polityki informacyjnej w Polsce po 1944 roku (The Orchestration of the Media: The Politics of Mass Communications in Communist Poland and the Aftermath)*, Warszawa 2004.
- Gomis, Agnes, *Integration, Interaction and Accessibility. Developments in Government Communication in: Challenges in Communication. State of the Art and Future Trends*, Eric Denig, Anita Weising (eds.), London 2000.
- Grabowska, Marta, *Polish National Referendum Act. The Accession Referenda*, "Yearbook of Polish European Studies", No. 6/2002.
- Gramberger, Marc R., *Die Öffentlichkeitsarbeit der Europäischen Kommission 1952–1996. PR zur Legimitation von Integration?*, Baden-Baden 1997.
- Hix, Simon and Marsh, Michael, *Second-Order Effects Plus Pan-European Political Swings: An Analysis of European Parliament Elections across Time*, "Electoral Studies", No. 1/2011.
- Jackiewicz, Andrzej, *Wybory do Parlamentu Europejskiego jako wybory drugiej kategorii. Uwagi na temat przyczyn, konsekwencji oraz prób przeciwdziałania niskiej frekwencji wyborczej (Elections to the European Parliament as Second-Order Elections. Comments on the Causes and Consequences of the Low Turnout and Attempts to Prevent It)*, "Przegląd Sejmowy", No. 2/2014.
- Kamińska, Anna Dorota, *Z Biblioteką do Unii Europejskiej (Together With the Library to the European Union)*, "Biuletyn Informacyjny Biblioteki Narodowej", No. 1/2003.
- Każmierczak, Janusz, *The Community That Never Was. The European Defense Community and Its Image in Polish Visual Propaganda of the 1950s*, "Journal of Cold War Studies", No. 4/2009.

- Kolarska-Bobińska, Lena et al., *Polska prezydencja w Radzie Unii Europejskiej: współpraca administracji publicznej z sektorem pozarządowym (Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union: Cooperation of the Public Administration with the Non-Governmental Sector)*, Warszawa 2008.
- Kułakowski, Jan, *Słowo wstępne (Preface)* in: Pełnomocnik Rządu do Spraw Negocjacji o Członkostwo RP w Unii Europejskiej, *Stanowiska Polski w ramach negocjacji o członkostwo Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Unii Europejskiej (Poland's Position Papers for the Accession Negotiations with the European Union)*, Warszawa 2000.
- Marcella, Rita et al., *The pattern of provision of European Union information in France and the United Kingdom: a comparative study of services*, "Library Management", Iss. 5/1997.
- Meyer, Christoph, *Political Legitimacy and the Invisibility of Politics: Exploring the European Union's Communication Deficit*, "Journal of Common Market Studies", No. 4/1999.
- Niklewicz, Konrad, *Działania informacyjne rządu RP w trakcie polskiego przewodnictwa w Radzie Unii Europejskiej (1 lipca–31 grudnia 2011 r.). Analiza skuteczności (Polish Government information activities during the Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union (1 July–31 December 2011). Analysis of effectiveness)*, Warszawa 2013.
- Ogonowska, Anna, *Kampanie informacyjne programu PRINCE Unii Europejskiej (The European Union's PRINCE Programme Information Campaigns)*, "Studia Europejskie", No. 1/2010.
- Ogonowska, Anna, *Polityka informacyjna państw członkowskich o Unii Europejskiej na przykładach okresów wzmożonej działalności informacyjnej (Member States' Information Policy on the European Union – a Case Study of Periods of Increased Information Activities)*, "Studia Europejskie", No. 3/2011.
- Ogonowska, Anna, *Zagrożenia i szanse bibliotek polskich po wejściu Polski do Unii Europejskiej – terra incognita i mity (Threats and Opportunities for Polish Libraries after the Polish Accession to the European Union – Terra Incognita and Myths)*, "Biuletyn EBIB", No. 7/2001, <http://www.ebib.pl/2001/25/ogonowska.html>.
- Pilecka, Maja, *Postawy pronijne oraz oczekiwania społeczne wobec UE w kontekście przyszłej polskiej prezydencji (Pro-EU Attitudes and Society's Expectations towards the European Union in the Context of the Future Polish Presidency)*, "Biuletyn Analiz UKIE", No. 22/2009.
- Radwan-Rörhenschef, Anna, *Plan Schumana w karykaturze i propagandzie (The Schuman Plan in the Caricature and Propaganda)*, Warszawa 2008.
- Rowlands, Ian, *Understanding information policy: concepts, framework and research tools*, "Journal of Information Science", No. 1/1996.
- Ruman, Szymon, *Informacja o niezbędnych działaniach podejmowanych przez państwa członkowskie Unii Europejskiej w ramach przygotowań do prezydencji w Radzie*

- UE ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Francji, Czech i Szwecji (The Information on Necessary Actions Undertaken by EU Member States Due to the Preparations to the Presidency of the Council of the European Union: The case of France, Czech Republic and Sweden)*, “Zeszyty Prawnicze Biura Analiz Sejmowych”, No. 1/2010.
- Samardžija, Višnja, Dukes, Alan (eds.), *Communicating Integration Impact in Croatia and Ireland*, Zagreb–Dublin 2008.
- Solon-Lipiński, Marek, *Aktywizowanie wyborców w Polsce. Inicjatywy profrekwencyjne w latach 2001–2011 (Motivating voters in Poland. Pro-turnout initiatives in 2001–2011)*, Warszawa 2012.
- Stroeker, Natasha, van der Graaf, Amber and Buiskool, Bert-Jan, *Communicating ‘Europe’ to its Citizens: State of Affairs and Prospects*, Brussels 2014.
- Thiel, Markus, *European Public Spheres and the EU’s Communication Strategy: From Deficits to Policy Fit?*, “Perspectives on European Politics and Society”, No. 3/2008.
- Trechsel, Alexander H., *How Much Second-Order Were the European Parliament Elections 2009?* in: *The 2009 Elections to the European Parliament. Country Reports*, Wojciech Gagattek (ed.), Florence 2010.
- Tuz, Anna, *Regionalne Centra Informacji Europejskiej w Polsce (Regional European Information Centres in Poland)* in: *Sieci informacyjne Unii Europejskiej w Polsce (The European Union information networks in Poland)*, Marta Grabowska (ed.), Warszawa 2012.
- Une approche compare des politiques d’information sur l’Europe, dans les autres pays de l’Union. Il n’existe pas d’exception française* in: *La fracture européenne: Après le référendum du 29 mai: 40 propositions concrètes pour mieux informer les Français sur l’Europe*, dir. Michel Herbillon, Paris 2005.
- Valentini, Chiara, *EU Communication in the Member States: Comparative Analysis of Finnish and Italian Communication Strategies*, “International Journal of Strategic Communication”, No. 2/2008.
- Valentini, Chiara, *Political Public Relations in the European Union: EU Reputation and Relationship Management Under Scrutiny*, “Public Relations Journal”, No. 4/2013.
- Valentini, Chiara and Nesti, Giorgia (eds.), *Public communication in the European Union. History, perspectives, challenges*, Newcastle upon Tyne 2010.
- Waćko-Jasińska, Katarzyna, *Poparcie dla wprowadzenia euro (Support for the introduction of the euro)*, “Monitor Opinii Publicznej”, No. 6/2014, p. 2, http://www.mf.gov.pl/documents/764034/1002547/monitor_opinii_12_2014.pdf.
- Wyrozumska, Anna, *Umowy międzynarodowe: teoria i praktyka (International Agreements: Theory and Practice)*, Warszawa 2006.